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SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE WEST SUMATRAN VILLAGE : 1908-1945

by

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This thesis is based on my own research except where otherwise acknowledged.

ABSTRACT

This is a study of social change in the West Sumatran village from the introduction of monetary taxation in 1908 to the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945. The study begins with the reconstruction of the pre-Dutch village social structure, characterized as an entity with a high degree of autonomy and a relatively closed society based on subsistence economy and led by lineage heads. The nature of the villages began to be undermined after the introduction of monetary taxation in 1908; the penetration of a monetary economy; the expansion of cash crop cultivation; and the emergence of new Islamic and secular political organizations which challenged the leadership of traditional lineage heads. The deeper penetration of Dutch administration also accelerated the erosion of the old village social and economic system.

The great economic crisis at the end of 1929 and successive world trade depression in the 1930s slowed down the process of social change. The economy largely returned to a subsistence one concentrating on rice on lineage land instead of cash crops on individual land. There was a notable revival of the influence of traditional leadership groups in the 1930s based on the increased importance of lineage heads for supervising lineage rice fields. However, the development of a nationalist movement after the beginning of the 1930s intensified the challenge to traditional leadership. As a result the conflict between the traditional leadership and its challengers continued to be heightened towards the end of Dutch rule. During the Japanese occupation, the economy was further pushed to subsistence economy and the lineage heads became the key figures for increasing rice and delivering it to the Japanese who were trying to accumulate as much rice provisions as possible. This situation allowed lineage heads to retain their influence at the village level. The potential for social change was again reduced during the Japanese occupation. Although the rivalry between traditional leadership and its challengers did not appear in a violent form under the Japanese military regime, it erupted violently shortly after the Japanese surrender.

Preface

This is a study of social change in the West Sumatran village. It goes without saying that regional study is important in understanding the general history of a nation because each part must contribute to shaping the course of the general history. This is particularly true for Indonesia, which consists of many ethnic groups located in separate regions with distinctive histories. It seems to me that empirical study of social change at the village level during the Dutch and Japanese periods has been less popular among historians than other subjects, political history in particular. One reason for this may be a relative difficulty in obtaining source materials for such a study in comparison with, for instance, political history for which we can use not only governmental but also sources written by Indonesians themselves. Another reason seems to be that history at village level, describing daily life instead of dramatic political events, appears less spectacular to historians. Nevertheless the bulk of Indonesian people (about 85 per cent in 1961) lived in rural villages.

I have chosen West Sumatra as my field of investigation because of a high degree of village autonomy there in the pre-Dutch period. Although the West Sumatran village almost lost its political independence after the Dutch pacification of West Sumatra in 1837, some essentials of the pre-Dutch village social structure were still observed until the 1910s, perhaps in more perfect form than in any other type of Indonesian villages: in the 1910s the Dutch launched a profound village reorganization. The fact that the West Sumatran village held on to their autonomous character until relatively recently is important for two reasons. First of all, we can trace the process of the decline of village autonomy from the pre-Dutch to the present time successively. Secondly, the study of this process in West Sumatra would help us to understand what happened to other types of Indonesian village, of which little study has been done, or at least provide a convenient model to compare with them.

The autonomy of the village in West Sumatra under Dutch colonial rule had a twofold implication. On the one hand, it gave the villagers strength to resist colonial oppression in trying to defend their own

interests. On the other hand, the Dutch tended to promote the 'concept' of village autonomy, even though it was in practice nominal, for practical reasons: to facilitate colonial administration, for instance by transferring financial burdens from the Dutch government to the villages; to avoid social unrest which might arise when the villagers became aware of the destruction of village autonomy. Because of its potential to resist the Dutch restricted autonomy, but because of the convenience of the concept of village autonomy, they advocated it at the same time. As will be discussed in this thesis, Dutch village administration was based on this seemingly contradictory policy. It is likely that a similar situation was observed in other parts of Indonesia during the Dutch period. It should be remembered that the continuation of village autonomy tends to delay social development, as the mental basis of village autonomy is essentially conservative.

In addition to the high degree of village autonomy, West Sumatra is an interesting region in various respects. The people of West Sumatra, the Minangkabaus, constituted the largest matrilineal society in the world. The coexistence of a matrilineal social order and patrilineal Islamic discipline is unique. Also of note are their outstandingly enterprising characters; the large proportion of emigration (perantau); and the frequent uprisings during the Dutch period, e.g., the Islamic reformist (padri) movement at the turn of the 19th century, the anti-tax rebellion in 1908, and the communist-led uprisings at the end of 1926.

Apart from regional characteristics, I have chosen West Sumatra because there has been little study of the socio-economic history of West Sumatra since the remarkable work of B.J.O. Schrieke, "The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra" for the period between the late 19th century and 1927. However, it seems that Schrieke's study needs re-examination, as he tended to underestimate regional differences in social and economic conditions within West Sumatra and the development of the cleavage between the poor and rich among the population in the economic expansion of the 1910s and 1920s. As a result, his description might give the misleading impression that social change and economic expansion took place evenly over all West Sumatran regions and in all economic groups.

In investigating social change in the village, special attention is directed to the question of what happened to the following aspects: (1) the indigenous political and judicial system; (2) social continuity; and (3) the economic basis. For convenience, we will focus on the function and authority of the penghulus or lineage heads who formed the village adat (customary law) council for the first aspect, the coherence of the matrilineal family system for the second, and the village taxation and land tenure system for the third. Of these, I consider the system of land tenure to be the key indicator to measure the degree of change in village structure in an agricultural society such as Minangkabau. Social change could be caused by several factors such as the economic situation, a foreign administration, and education. I assume the economic factor was by far the most important, and this aspect of West Sumatran history has not been studied fully. I have therefore given this a lot of attention.

The present study surveys social change in West Sumatra between 1908 and 1945, or from the introduction of monetary taxation to the end of the Japanese occupation, with special reference to the changes in village structure mentioned above. The period covered in this thesis is divided into three; 1908-1929; 1930-1942; and 1942-1945. The first period is characterized by the spread of a monetary economy and the disintegration of the traditional village community. The second can be marked by the economic depression and the revival of the influence of adat chiefs and the intensification of rivalry between the major groups (adat, Islam and nationalist). The third, the Japanese occupation period, will be described in a slightly different way, paying detailed attention to the Japanese administration as well as to social change, since this was an entirely new experience for the Minangkabaus and has been little studied.

The present survey is based on research in the Central Museum (Pusat Museum) in Jakarta to see Minangkabau newspapers and periodicals, and a short trip to West Sumatra. This trip was of great value for understanding the geographical setting, the general atmosphere of West Sumatra, and the sentiment of the people. In the Netherlands major

sources are available from the archives of the former Ministry of the Colonies, the Netherlands State Archive (The Hague), the Koninklijk Instituut voor Tropen (Amsterdam) and the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde (Leiden). In Japan I examined archival material of the Defence Agency, and the collection of the Institute of Social Sciences of Waseda University, both in Tokyo. Furthermore, I interviewed Japanese who were involved in the military administration in West Sumatra during the Japanese occupation and collected their personal material.

As for spelling I adopted the present new system begun in 1972 for Indonesian words (e.g. 'c' for 'tj', 'y' for 'j', 'j' for 'dj'). All foreign words are underlined except for adat, nagari and penghulu, which, because of their frequent use, are underlined in the first instance only.

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A.O.

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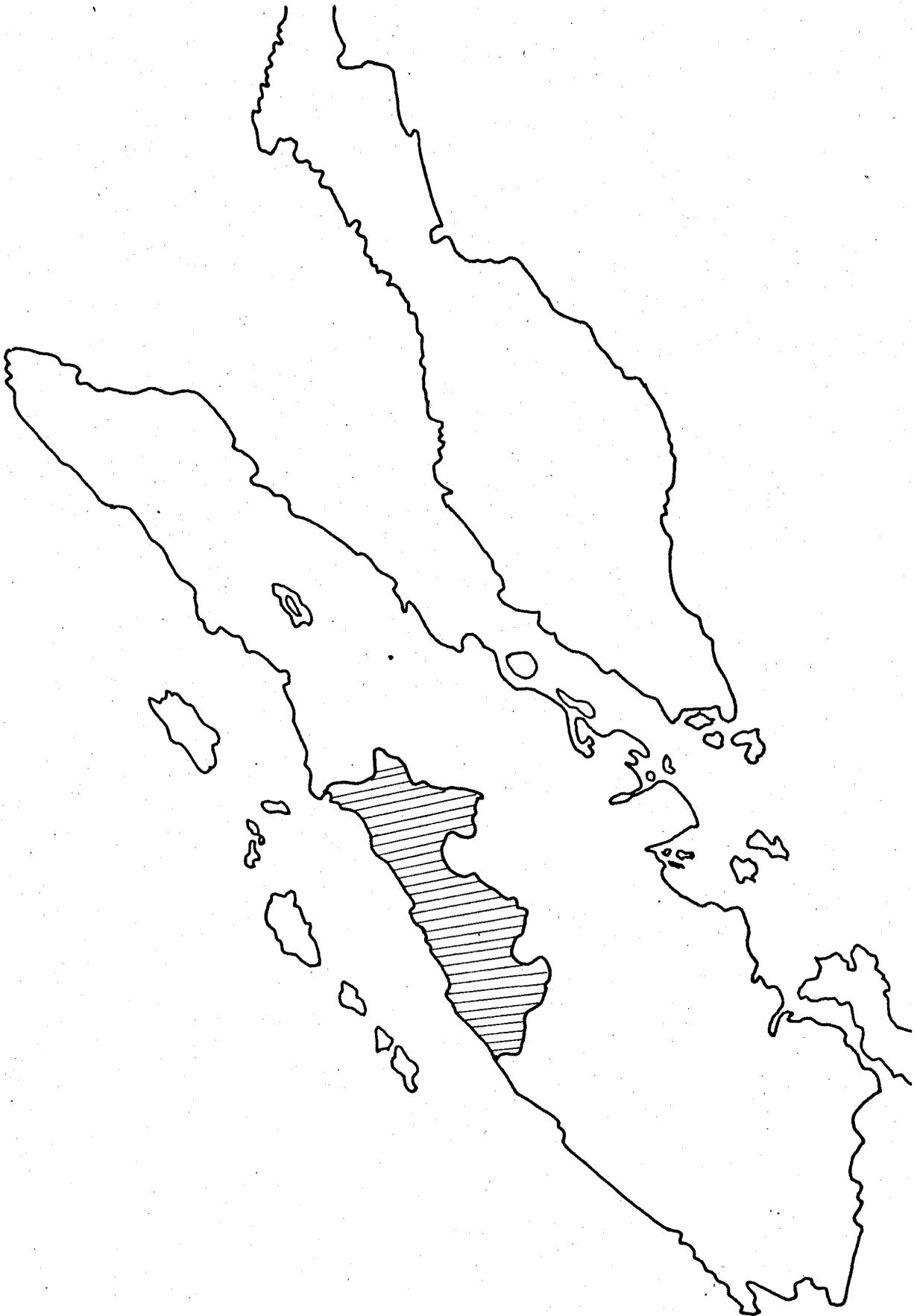
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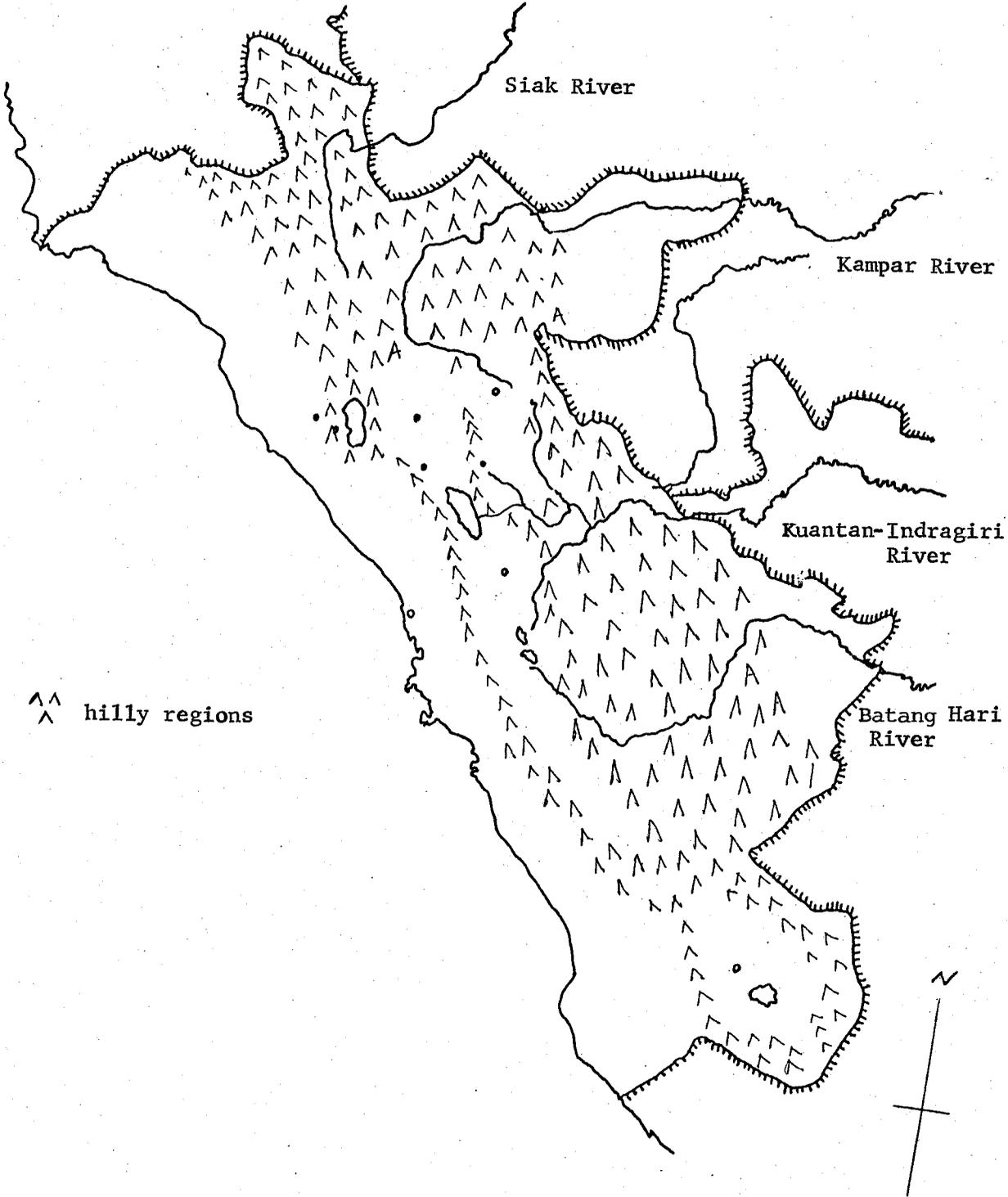
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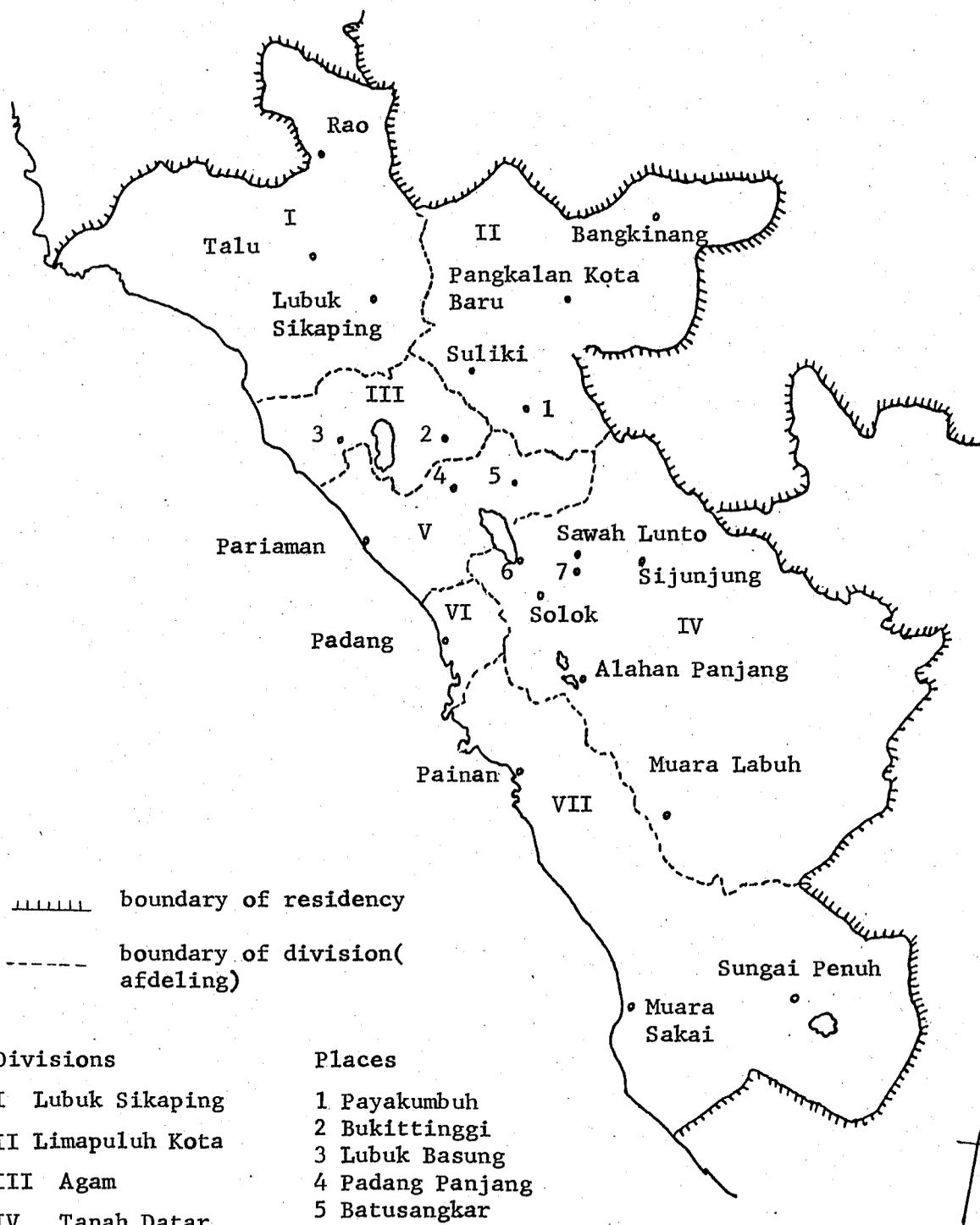
The West Sumatran Residency in 1926



Geographical Features of West Sumatra



Names of Places



CHAPTER I

The Features of the Minangkabau Nagari

In 1930 the residency of West Sumatra occupied 4,978.1 sq.km in the western part of central Sumatra. It was divided into two parts by the Barisan mountains stretching parallel to the coast from north to south: the long and narrow Padang Lowlands on the coast and the Padang Highlands consisting of the three districts (luhaks) of Tanah Datar, Agam and Lima Puluh Kota, and the outlying areas. The census of 1930 counted a total population of 1,910,298, giving a population density of 38.38 per sq.km.¹ The village unit was known as nagari² except in Korinci, a southern region which was included in the West Sumatran residency in 1922, where it was known as dusun, and had some differences in its institutional framework caused by proximity to the system of neighbouring ethnic groups, particularly Jambi people.³ Around 1922, the total number of villages in West Sumatra, without Korinci, was 567 and their total population 1,368,991. The average population per nagari was about 2,375, although the smallest had 250 inhabitants and the largest 16,000.⁴

The term nagari derives from a Sanskrit word for 'town'.

L.C. Westenenk guessed the term was given by Hindu-Javanese invaders about the end of the 13th century to denote 'a village state'.⁵ Sometimes the

1. Volkstelling 1930, Deel IV Inheemsche Bevolking van Sumatra (Department van Landbouw, Nijverheid en Handel. Batavia; Landsrukkerij, 1935), p. 114.
2. I use the Minangkabau spelling 'nagari' instead of 'negeri' in modern Indonesian spelling to indicate that the 'nagari' is a distinctively Minangkabau type of village and to avoid confusion which might be caused by the term 'negeri' which mainly means 'country', 'land', and 'state' in modern Indonesian usage.
3. We do not discuss the structure of dusun here. A detailed description for this can be found in A. Aken, Nota Betreffende de Afdeeling Koerintji (Encyclopaedisch Bureau, Aflevering VIII, 1915).
4. See tables in Mailrapport (reports from the Netherlands Indies to the Minister of Colonies in The Hague, which are numbered according to the order of arrival) 479/1923, compiled in Verbaal (minutes) 12 March 1925, no. 47. Hereafter the Mailrapport is abbreviated as Mailr., and Verbaal as V. See also Handelingen van den Volksraad 1930-1931 (IV), Onderwerp 102, Afdeling IV, Stukken 1-3, Bijlage VI.
5. L.C. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari (Encyclopaedisch Bureau, Aflevering VIII, 1915), p. 90.

nagari is understood as a village republic owing to its autonomous character.⁶ No study of Minangkabau fails to mention the high degree of nagari independence. One contrasts the Minangkabau village as a real independent entity with the Javanese village (desa) which is nothing more than a tax paying body,⁷ while another says that the nagari is an autonomous society per excellence more perfect than any other type of village in Indonesia.⁸

To examine the independence of the nagari we must investigate how the nagari was formed. Two difficulties however are involved in this investigation. Firstly, it is very difficult to know the natural process of nagari formation after the Dutch penetration into the Highlands in the wake of the padri war or Islamic reformist movement at the beginning of the 19th century, because they began to control the process artificially. This intervention also obscured what is meant by the term 'nagari' as will be mentioned later. Secondly, information concerning the history of individual nagaris before and even after the commencement of Dutch administration is very limited. It was only after the communist-led uprising in 1926/27 that the Dutch realized the inadequacy of their knowledge of the nagari, particularly its history. Responding to a recommendation by the Commission for the investigation of the uprisings,⁹ a comprehensive study of all Minangkabau nagaris was launched in 1929 and continued in the 1930s. Although it is not clear whether the project was completed or not, we can see part of the monographs on individual nagaris and a statistical summary for those

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6. For instance, Rapport van de Commissie van Onderzoek ingestelt bij het Gouvernements besluit van 13 February 1927, no. 1a, Deel I, written by B. Schrieke (Landsdrukkerij, Weltevreden, 1928), p. 93. Hereafter this report is referred to as Westkust Rapport.
 7. H. Beeuwkes, "De Wettelijke Regering van Indonesische Gemeenten Sumatra's Westkust", Koloniale Tijdschrift (thereafter K.T.), 1916, I, pp. 561-62.
 8. L. Adam, De Autonomie van het Indonesisch Dorp (Amersfoort, 1924), p. 2.
 9. Westkust Rapport, Deel III, p. 29, no. 106. For this argument, see also G.F.E. Gonggrijp, "Memorie van Overgave" (memoir of outgoing Dutch officials, hereafter abbreviated as M.v.O., 1933. Detailed information on M.v.O. is available in the BIBLIOGRAPHY of this thesis.

investigated by May 1931, amounting to 331 nagaris.¹⁰ A remarkable characteristic of this investigation was the fact that data were collected through oral evidence from old people and notables because governmental materials could not satisfy the requirements. Due to the difficulty of obtaining information, we must reconstruct the natural process of nagari formation relying on sources produced later and involving some speculation, and also we must be satisfied with investigating the sequence of various stages rather than giving specific dates.

Formation of the Nagari

The cradle of the Minangkabaus is believed to be the southern slopes of Mt. Merapi, especially the twin nagari Pariangan Padang Panjang near Batusangkar in the Tanah Datar kabupaten (regency). When asked the origin of their ancestors, most notables in the Highlands said it was the twin nagari, even though this was quite unlikely. Notables of the Maninjau areas claimed so, for instance, although the people consisted of Minangkabaus from the Oud Agam region.¹¹ These stories simply mean that the Minangkabaus were inclined to believe their origin to be from Pariangan Padang Panjang. Inhabitants of the coastal areas were descendents of immigrants from various parts of the Highlands¹² and sometimes from Batak and Acehnese lands in Sumatra and also from the Mentawai islands off the West Sumatran coast. The same can be said of northern, eastern and southern fringe areas in the Highlands where non-Minangkabaus also migrated to some extent.

It is not clear whether the Highlands and the Lowlands had already been inhabited by non-Minangkabau people when the Minangkabaus entered the land. According to a legend in the nagari Air Haji near Indrapura, the first Minangkabau migrants came from Sungai Pagu (Muara Labuh) in the

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10. Part of these adat monographs is available in the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-Land, en- Volkenkunde (Leiden), Korn Collection, and also in Mailr. 935/1931.
 11. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Manindjau", Korn Collection, no. 330.
 12. For instance, Tambo Tarusan tells of the relationship of the two nagaris on the coast, Indrapura and Tarusan, with Solok and Selayo in the Highlands. See, "Adat Monographie, Nagari Solok", Bijlage I, Korn Collection, no. 327.

Highlands and had visits from the orang rupit, a taller and tougher people, when they settled in the place. In the 1930s tombs of supposed orang rupit, which were designed in a quite different way from those of Islamic form, were still observed. This suggests the existence of a non-Minangkabau people on the coast before the Minangkabaus moved there. However, the orang rupit have not been identified yet.¹³

Since we do not know how the first Minangkabau nagari was established, we have to presuppose the existence of nagaris and trace how other nagaris emerged from the earlier ones. One of the main driving forces for migration was the scarcity of arable land caused by population increase.¹⁴ When suitable land could not be found within the nagari or neighbouring area, people had to look further afield.

Migration was not undertaken at random. Sometimes leaders alone searched for a ladang or dry field and called people when they found promising places. Sometimes, a relatively large number of people moved together initially. In any case it was organized by the suku or clan (see below) comprising family groups. Migration was undertaken either by one suku or by a number of sukus together.¹⁵ In the former case, new settlers were required to have easy access to people of other sukus or to find a place large enough to invite them so as to avoid endogamy within the suku as far as possible. As population increased, the community developed from a hamlet to a cluster of hamlets - in the Minangkabau terminology, from the taratak, dusun, and koto, to the nagari as the apex. These four stages depended on the degree of institutionalization.¹⁶

It may have taken a long time to fill the whole of the darat (nucleus of the Highlands) and the rantau (the Lowlands plus fringe areas of

13. B.A. Bruin, M.v.O., Chapter XXI, n.p.

14. The scarcity of arable land is not in an absolute but in a relative sense in relation to technology employed and the availability of other land easier to cultivate. Apart from population increase, migration could take place because of epidemics and other natural disasters.

15. See, for instance, "Adat Monographie, Nagari Soengai Aboe", Mailr. 935/1931.

16. Anthony Johns, Rantjak diLabueh: a Minangkabau Kaba (Ithaca, Cornell University, 1958), p.34.

the Highlands). The establishment of Negeri Sembilan by the Minangkabaus on the Malay peninsula about the end of the 15th century indicates that the expansion of the Minangkabaus was very energetic, and the major part of the Highlands may have been inhabited, although sparsely, by that time. This does not mean however that no open frontier was left. Large areas of fertile land with only alang alang or tall grasses were still observed in the Highlands around the middle 1830s,¹⁷ whereas unoccupied land became more and more scarce towards the end of the 19th century mainly because of the development of cash crop cultivation and also because of the increase in population. However migration within West Sumatra itself continued in the 19th and 20th centuries to sparsely populated areas like Ophir and Korinci, but conditions for migrants became increasingly severe (see Chapter IV).

Within the nagari there existed plots which were not used. Several factors stimulated the establishment of new communities in these plots as a long term trend, such as the influx of newcomers and expansion of cultivation by the villagers. The members of these new communities were subject to their respective clan heads (penghulu suku or simply penghulus) and the communities were regarded as colonies of the nagari. The penghulus functioned as protectors of their clan members on the one hand, and administered the members in all respects: social, cultural, political, and economic. When the new communities grew in number and size, they claimed the right to install their own penghulus and to build an independent nagari within the existing nagari. The emerging nagari was obliged to satisfy requirements such as obtaining permission from, giving feasts and contributions to penghulus of the mother nagari, being equipped with the balai or the village council hall, and so forth. In most cases such a request was granted by the mother nagari, but sometimes it was refused or granted with conditions. The nagari Padang Sibusuk (in Solok) refused in 1887 the request of some newly established kampongs or hamlets to become an independent nagari, although the kampongs were already equipped with the village council hall, mosque, and other facilities, and had given

17. H. Burger, "Aantekeningen gehouden op reis door eenige districten der Padangsche Bovenlanden", Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kusten en Wetenschappen, no. 16 (1836), p. 186.

feasts with tributes of rice, a buffalo and money.¹⁸

Once a new nagari was built, it was considered to be independent of the mother nagari in internal affairs. However the relationship was long remembered by both of the parties and the daughter nagari paid homage to the mother nagari.¹⁹ The repetition of the process increased the number of nagaris in the long run spreading the mother-daughter nagari relationship. The time of split of a nagari is not always clear, but sometimes can be traced roughly from the generation of the penghuluship. For instance, the nagari Parit Panjang was formed out of the nagari Matua (both in the Maninjau district) and the penghuluship of the nagari was handed down six times by 1929, which means the split and installation of the first penghulu took place about 150 years earlier (about 1780), one office term being calculated as lasting about 25 years.²⁰

By what process did the formation of supra-nagari institutions take place? As we have seen above, constituent parts of the nagari tended to become independent nagaris rather than to remain in the mother nagari. There are a few cases in which one nagari conquered and confiscated the territory of other nagaris. Part of the nagari Kasik is said to have been surrendered by Solok and other nagaris.²¹ Although war itself was not rare, it seldom led to permanent surrender of territory to other nagaris. If the absorption of nagaris by war had been common, supra-nagari political institutions would have developed in Minangkabau. However we can find little evidence to indicate the existence of such political institutions except for the Minangkabau dynasty, which seems to have controlled the gold trade of the Tanah Datar region but have been titular in other spheres (see below). We must be careful about translating terms such as 'raja' and 'yang di pertuan' into supra-nagari political authority without examining the substance of real power. These titles often denote nothing more than the head of a

18. "Tertoelis de Padang", dd.24 November 1887, Korn Collection, no. 327.

19. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Pasir Talan", Korn Collection, no. 327.

20. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Parit Panjang", Korn Collection, no. 330.

21. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Tanjung Barit"; "Adat Monographie, Nagari Kasik", both in Korn Collection, no. 326.

nagari, as was the case of the 'raja' of the Sungai Pagu 'kingdom'.²²

The laras, a group of nagaris loosely connected by adat rather than a 'federation' of nagaris, might be considered to constitute some sort of supra-nagari authority. At the end of the 17th century when the Dutch concluded treaties with some nagaris on the coast, they observed the existence of the laras in the Painan area.²³ However this was not a politically united body. When a constituent nagari could not solve adat problems, it could call for a laras council consisting of prominent penghulus of the laras to settle the problems. Nevertheless each nagari could keep its independence and was not forced to consult the council. The laras council was an advisory body responding to requests from the constituent nagaris. Moreover it did not have its own permanent administrative and executive apparatus. We do not have convincing evidence that the laras was originally a political unity. However perhaps we can safely say that the laras was not a political unit at least after the end of the 17th century. In the 1930s, the people of both the Highlands and Lowlands replied to Dutch officials that the laras council could be summoned mostly for gelar (adat title) problems, but in practice it was seldom called. What then were the reasons for forming the laras? Although decisive information is not available I would suggest two: geographical proximity which stimulated intimacy through frequent association; mutual intimacy among the constituent nagaris arising from the mother-daughter nagari relationship sharing similar adat.

Nagari as a Socio-Economic Body

We have examined how the nagari was formed and discussed how the nagari tended to remain as an independent village community or be split into other such communities rather than incorporated into a supra-nagari body. Of

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22. During the Company period, Sungai Pagu was described as a kingdom. Report of A.Meis, Padang 29 March 1860, no. 1014 in V.7 March 1863, no.26; G.E. Graves, "The Ever-Victorious Buffalo: How the Minangkabau of Indonesia Solved Their 'Colonial Question'" (unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Wisconsin 1967), p. 90.
23. Bruin, M.v.O., Chapter XX, XXI. For detailed discussion on laras, W.J. Leyds, "Larassen in Minangkabau", K.S. 1926, no.1, pp. 387-416.

what then does this autonomy consist? Although the nagari is often described as an autonomous entity, the meaning of the term has not been precisely defined. Despite numerous studies of the Minangkabaus, it is hard to draw a clear-cut picture of the nagari as a socio-economic body. Most of these are sociological and anthropological studies of the internal matrilineal organization, kinship and marriage system rather of the nagari itself. These approaches aim at the analysis of the fundamental or primordial structure of the society, which does not necessarily require making the nagari the focal point.²⁴

When we think of elements of village independence, at least three aspects must be taken into account: (1) a consistent socio-cultural system; (2) its own political and judicial organization and power; (3) independent economic base. As the first two aspects have been fully studied, for instance, by Josselin de Jong, we will discuss them briefly and focus on the third one in terms of land rights and village taxation system. Since little information is available on the pre-colonial period, we must reconstruct a pre-colonial nagari system from later sources produced during the Dutch colonial period. It is essential to note that these sources do not necessarily tell us about the pre-colonial situation even when they claim to be descriptions of 'traditional' nagari,²⁵ since the Minangkabau

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24. An outstanding example is, Josselin de Jong, Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan (Bhratara/Jakarta, 1960). For a criticism of this Josselin de Jong work, see Umar Junus, "Some Remarks on Minangkabau Social Structure", Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land, en Volkenkunde (B.K.I.) vol.120 (1964), pp. 293-326. Umar Junus pointed out that the nagari should be considered as an administrative unit, not a social entity as was described by Josselin de Jong. As far as the Dutch period is concerned, however, a large proportion of nagaris were still social units as well as administrative bodies, though the villagers were often those who came originally from various places in former times.
25. The term 'traditional' does not mean 'original' here. The nagari may have experienced some change after the introduction of Islam. However we do not know the nagari situation in the pre-Islamic era. Here, the term 'traditional nagari' is used for the pre-Cultivation System nagari, i.e., 1847, though there may have been changes in nagari structure even by that time. Nevertheless, the Minangkabau nagari could largely retain its indigenous elements until the introduction of the Cultivation System.

nagari underwent considerable change after the introduction of the coffee Cultivation System in 1847. We will therefore give dates and describe changes as far as possible.

1. Social and political organization

According to legend, the original ancestors of the Minangkabaus were Kyai Katumanggung and Parapatih nan Sabatan. These two family lineages were split into four original clans (sukus): Koto, Piliang, Bodi, and Caniago, each of which had its own system of customary law (adat). Of these, Koto-Piliang and Bodi-Caniago formed two sets of combinations (lareh) because of the affinity of their adat, that of the former being more democratic than that of the latter in its social and political organization.

An ideal nagari is expected to contain the four original clans. However, in reality there were many other names which emerged from the four original clans.²⁶ The number of sukus in one nagari therefore varied from three - the minimum number to avoid the accumulation of 'inbreeding' - to eight or sometimes more. Although suku is translated as clan for convenience, it is not a genealogical unit but regarded as an exogamy unit, so that marriage within the same suku tended to be avoided as far as possible. Nevertheless sukus with the same name but in different nagaris cannot be considered as exogamy units in any sense. Sometimes sukus had their sub-sukus which branched off from the former, often with their own suku names, under the supervision of their mother sukus.

The suku consisted of several paruiks or extended families, each of which comprised those who had a common ancestral mother about five generations back on the maternal line. The paruik was the crystallizing unit in daily life because it was the owning unit of the ancestral family properties, most importantly family land. The paruik was further divided into jurais or sub-lineages. However the jurai did not always appear; it was a feature which varied according to region. The smallest unit was the samandai consisting of a mother and her children. In the traditional form of dwelling, the members of the maximum lineage group (paruik) lived in the rumah adat or the long house, although the dwelling form did not affect

26. In the early 1830s, a Dutch official counted 40 suku names. See, C. Couperus, "De Instellingen der Maleiers in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", Tijdschrift van Bataviasche Genootschap (T.B.G.), vol.4 (1855), pp.3-4.

the membership. The headship and political institution were based on the family system delineated above, but had a considerable local difference in name and organization. We do not enter this intricacy. However it may be worth mentioning that the families of original founders of the nagari had generally a higher position than the others.

The head of the jurai was the mamak (lit., uncle), the eldest brother of the oldest woman. The paruik's head was kepala paruik, although that of a distinguished paruik sometimes bore the title of penghulu andiko. In any case, he was the mamak in his own jurai. The head of sub-clan was the penghulu kecil. Finally, the head of the whole of the suku was the penghulu suku, the oldest brother of the oldest woman in the suku's most distinguished lineage. The office of penghulu suku was normally hereditary in the penghulu's maternal family, ideally passing to the eldest son of the eldest sister. Within these general guidelines, however, there was the possibility of disputes among a number of nephews and uncles who claimed these titles, for the titles required qualifications not only of genealogical position but also wisdom, leadership ability, and especially wealth.

The suku had its own council (rapat). In the Koto-Piliang nagari, the distinction between the penghulu suku and other fellow penghulus was sharper than in the Bodi-Caniago nagari. Furthermore, the Koto-Piliang nagari usually installed some suku functionaries such as the manti (clerk), the malim (an Islamic official) and the dubalang (a guard). These three, together with their penghulu, formed the orang empat jinih or the men of four kinds. In the Bodi-Caniago nagari all the penghulus were regarded as equal in position, though the penghulu suku was more respected than other types of penghulu. Hereafter, the term 'penghulu' is used to denote all kinds of penghulus as the general title for adat authorities except when the distinction is particularly necessary.

Above the suku level, the nagari had the village adat council (rapat adat) held in the nagari council hall. In the Koto-Piliang nagari, the nagari head (pucuk nagari) was elected from among the penghulu sukus, while there was no pucuk nagari in the Bodi-Caniago nagari. The members of the council consisted of the nagari head (in the Koto-Piliang nagari), penghulus, the cerdik pandai (lit., the intellectual), and the malim (an Islamic official), the last two being included on the basis of merit. In either type of nagari, the adat council was the highest institution in the nagari. Although Islamic affairs were in the hands of mosque officials,

the mosque and the officials were under the control of the adat council. The Islamic doctrines applied were those of sufi-oriented mystical tarekats or Islamic brotherhoods which were closely assimilated to local customs. It is not altogether clear how the tarekat Islam was introduced and institutionalized in Minangkabau, though Syech Buruhanuddin is believed to have been the most important teacher at the earliest stage before he died in 1704. It could be speculated that initially Islam was propagated through the teacher-disciple relationship centering on religious schools and was gradually institutionalized in the nagari. Probably the institutionalization process continued even during the early decades of the 19th century, the pattern being that each nagari equipped one mosque. After the padri war Islamic reformist influence, based not on mosque but on schools which were out of the control of nagaris, gradually began to challenge the authority of the adat council.

Besides these formal members, common villagers also could have some voice in the council. All the judicial problems concerning a single suku were discussed first by the lineage members; if not solved, they were taken to the suku council, and finally to the nagari adat council. When a case involved a number of sukus, it was brought straight to the adat council. The penghulus collectively represented the nagari as a whole in cases involving other nagaris.²⁷

2. Land rights of the nagari

Every nagari had its own territory demarcated by mountains, ravines, ditches, fences, and so forth. The boundary was known by villagers through oral traditions or written chronicles (tambo).²⁸ Nagaris did

27. Information on the social and political structure of the nagari can be obtained from, for instance, Josselin de Jong, Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan, op.cit., Chapter IV and V; Taufik Abdullah, "Adat and Islam; An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau", Indonesia, no.9 (October 1966), pp.1-24. On the introduction and spread of Islam in Minangkabau, see Christine Dobbin, "Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century", Modern Asian Studies, 8,3(1974), pp.319-356; B. Schrieke, "Bijdrage tot de Bibliographie van Huidige Godsdienstige Beweging ter Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.G., no.59 (1920), pp.249-325; Ph.S.van Ronkel, "Het Heiligdom te Oelakan", T.B.G., no.56 (1914), pp.281-316.

28. Th.A.L. Kroesen, "Het Grondbezit ter Sumatra's Westkust", Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Indie (T.N.I.), New Series, 3e j.g. (1874) II, pp. 3-4.

not always border each other. There were sometimes strips of land stretching between nagaris, which did not belong to any nagari. Such neutral zones, usually forests, were called the tanah raja (lit., king's land).²⁹ This neutral land functioned as a battle field for a rather ceremonial battle with stones (perang batu) to settle quarrels between the nagaris. In the wake of the spread of cash crop cultivation, especially after the introduction of the Cultivation System in 1847, the neutral land was also put into cultivation. At the end of the 19th century there remained only one tanah raja near Padang Siantal, a junction point of the three luhaks, i.e., Agam, Tanah Datar, and Lima Puluh Kota.³⁰

3. The hak ulayat or the territorial right of the nagari

Land was one of the most important foundations of the matrilineal social organization. The highest land right of the nagari was the hak ulayat or simply ulayat which the Dutch described as the beschikkingsrecht (the right of disposal). The origin of the term is not clear. Three explanations have so far been given, all of which agree that the term is Arabic and that hak means 'right'. One explanation divides the term

29. After the Dutch administration was consolidated the perang batu seldom happened, perhaps because the Dutch banned it by the Plakaat Panjang (Long Declaration) in October 1833. A comprehensive description of this battle can be found in, C. Couperus, "De Instellingen der Maleiers", op.cit., pp.21-22; H.J.J.L. Ridder de Stuers, De Vestiging en Uitbreiding der Nederlanders ter Westkust van Sumatra, vol. II (P.N. van Kampen, Amsterdam, 1850), p.10. See also William Marsden, History of Sumatra (3rd edition, London, 1811), pp.348-78.

30. Verkerk Pistorius, Studien over de Inlandsch Huishuiding in de Padangsche Bovenlanden (Zalt-Bommel, 1871), p.129; A.L. van Hasselt, Volksbeschrijving van Midden-Sumatra (Brill, Leiden, 1882), p.302; Resume's van de Onderzoek naar de Rechten welke in de Gouvernementslanden op Sumatra op de onbebouwde gronden uitgeoefend (Landsdrukkerij, Batavia, 2nd edition, 1896), pp.15-16; Kroesen, "Het Grondbezit", op.cit., p.6. J.S. Kahn argued that the tanah raja was worked by the villagers for the Minangkabau king. However there is no evidence yet for this argument. I consider that one of the functions of tanah raja was to avoid direct conflict between the neighbouring nagaris, demarcating a sort of no-man's land. See, J.S. Kahn, "Matrilineal and Change among the Minangkabau of Indonesia", B.K.I., vol.132 (1976), p.89.

'ulayat' into a Malay word, ulu (head, to begin) and an Arabic word haiyat (to be alive). By this assumption and with some extrapolation, the hak ulayat is explained as the right to make (dead land) alive, or to put it into cultivation.³¹ The second understands the term 'ulayat' as the Minangkabau corruption of the Arabic wilayat signifying originally the power of a king over his people, or of a father over his children. However in Minangkabau it is used for the land rights obtainable by cultivation.³² The third understands the term as 'hakku 'allah' (the right of Allah). This explains the Minangkabau saying of hak ulayat as follows:

'hak ulah didalam satu-satu nagari', i.e., 'the right which Allah granted the nagari is state right' or 'Allah decided a boundary of each nagari as an inviolable landed property'.³³

Although the third explanation seems to be closest to the actual contents of the term, the first two may also be valid at the initial stage of setting up the nagari. As the concept of the hak ulayat is so significant for nagari autonomy, we will examine it historically through the process of nagari formation.

As discussed above, the establishment of a new community was organized by the suku comprising its family branches. Cultivated land and homesteads belonged to individual families in the first instance. This stage could still be observed in one nagari of the sparsely populated Kwantan area in 1931. There, the concept of the hak ulayat was more relevant to the individual family than to the nagari. The increase of population and cultivated land resulted in a complex of hamlets. It must be noted that the families belonging to the same suku mostly lived and worked in adjacent plots. When these families installed their own head (penghulu), the scattered plots of constituent families were put together as the clan land (tanah suku). At this stage, the head of the suku was regarded as the holder of ulayat. In the late 19th century, a saying expressed the extent of tanah suku as 'sadangan kukuh ayam', that is, as far as a hen's voice can

31. P.J.V., "Oorsprong van het Woord 'Halayat'", T.N.I. (1869), pp.104-105.

32. V. Pistorius, Studien, op.cit., p. 184, not (1).

33. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., p.98; c.f. W.J. Kroon, "Rechttoestand van de Woest Grond op Sumatra's Westkust", K.T. 1921, II, p.379; Kroesen, "Het Grondbezit", op.cit., pp.3-4, 14-15.

be heard. This suggests the tanah suku originally included only land in the immediate vicinity of a dwelling. However, this area was gradually expanded.³⁴

The nagari was established, from a territorial point of view, by amalgamating several tanah sukus. This process can be observed from the difference in the types of the hak ulayat held by the suku. Roughly speaking, there existed three types of forms in which the hak ulayat was exercised. The difference should not be ascribed simply to local variation but to a historical change. In one form, the penghulus exercised the right over respective suku land as the ulayat holders. For instance, five penghulu sukus were ulayat holders in the nagari Kota Baru near Silungkang.³⁵ In other cases, an increase in the number of ulayat holders can clearly be discerned, which could happen when part of a suku branched off and established its own penghuluship or when newcomers who had been under the supervision of original settlers attained their own penghulu. However the penghulus of original settlers did not always allow the newcomers to set up their own penghulu and tanah suku.³⁶ Sometimes the penghulus of the original settlers exclusively monopolized the ulayat-holdership at the expense of newcomers.³⁷ As for the size of the tanah suku, no generalization is possible. Sometimes it was uneven and sometimes equally divided among the sukus. In the latter case, an artificial adjustment of land distribution among the sukus is clear. Presumably this form is closer to what we will discuss below.

In the second form of control over the tanah suku, the collective penghulus appeared as the ulayat holders. At this stage, the right of each suku was largely absorbed in that of the nagari as a whole, although the tanah suku itself still remained.³⁸ The change from the first to the

34. J. Couvreur, "Nagari's in de Koeantandistricten (1931)", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 35, p.485.

35. Kroesen, "Het Grondbezit", op.cit., pp.9-10.

36. For instance, see adat monographs for Sitalan and Selaras Air, Korn Collection, no. 330.

37. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Manggopo", Korn Collection, no. 330.

38. See, adat monographs for the nagaris Lubuk Melako, Lubuk Gedang, Abai, Bidar Alam, Koto Baru (all in Korn Collection, no. 327), and Tarun Tarun (Korn Collection, no. 326).

second form was perhaps caused by the increase of population and mobilization resulting from the former. As population increased a certain area which was previously inhabited by a specific suku group came to be merged with the areas of other suku members. In such a situation, each suku could not retain the actual validity of the hak ulayat over the tanah suku.³⁹ The weakening of kinship ties as a long term trend may have also contributed to this change.

The third and last stage, so far observed by the beginning of the 1930s, retained little of the hak ulayat held by sukus. Now the nagari, from a territorial viewpoint, is not the amalgamation of the tanah suku in any sense, and the nagari alone exercised the right as an abstract legal entity over the whole of the territory. The function of the penghulus in relation to land had to be changed from right holders for respective tanah suku to protectors for the nagari as a whole.⁴⁰

What we have seen above should be regarded as an 'ideal type'. There may have been numerous transitional forms. Nevertheless we can elicit a clear direction of change in the hak ulayat with regard to the right holder, namely from a family through the clan to the village community. However it is almost impossible to make a statistical generalization of what stage Minangkabau as a whole had reached at a certain time because sources available are too limited to specific areas, notably the Maninjau and Solok regions. The reality was a mixture of various types of nagari. It must be remembered that what we have discussed above concerns the legal relationship within the nagari from the family at the bottom through the suku, and to the nagari at the apex. To outsiders, be they Minangkabaus of other nagaris or non-Minangkabaus, the nagari always appeared as the ultimate holder of the right of disposal, regardless of the stages of internal development (see Chapter IV).

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39. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Kaboen", Korn Collection, no. 328; Couvreur "Nagari's in de Koeantan Districten", op.cit., p.484. A similar situation was also observed in Painan. See, Lapre (controleur of Painan), M.v.O., p.20.
40. "Adat Monographie, Nagari Tikalak", and "Adat Monographie, Nagari Pandjakalan", both in Korn Collection, no. 326; "Adat Monographie, Nagari Solok" in Korn Collection, no. 327; "Adat Monographie, Nagari Boengsoe", Mailr. 953/1931.

The hak ulayat thus can be defined as the communal right of disposal over the cultivated and uncultivated land of the community. When the community refers to the nagari, the nagari stands as the highest executor of the right. Some words are necessary on the subject of uncultivated land. The total territory of the nagari consisted not only of the tanah suku but also included land for communal facilities (village council hall, mosque, paths, and so forth) and forests far away from residential sites. Such land was often included not in the tanah suku but in the nagari land in general.

We will examine the kinds of land rights villagers and outsiders had through land use and the village taxation system. The nagari land was divided into three categories over which both villagers and outsiders had different rights: (1) uncultivated land; (2) land once cultivated but then abandoned; and (3) cultivated land and compound. The following descriptions are of pre-colonial situations, reconstructed from 19th and 20th century sources.

1) Uncultivated land

This type of land was usually forest, whether in the form of tanah suku or nagari reserve. Where the tanah suku existed, suku members had superior rights to non-suku members of the nagari, but the latter could also enjoy the same rights as the former with or sometimes without permission from the penghulus concerned. In any case the difference between the suku members and non-suku members was much smaller than that between the villagers in general and outsiders. For convenience, we will discuss the nagari without the tanah suku.

Villagers had the following rights over the uncultivated land: to pasture cattle, to hunt animals, to collect forest products, and to put the land into cultivation.⁴¹ A villager could collect forest products at will for his own consumption. However, he had to notify the penghulus of his intention and to pay part of the value either in kind or in cash. The villager could freely put the land into cultivation for short term use as ladang, while he had to receive permission from and to pay the adat tax (see below) to the penghulus for long term use of land as sawah and gardens.

41. Kroon, "Rechttoestand", op.cit., p. 380.

It is not clear why in some nagaris these dues were not obligatory, although in the bulk of nagaris they were. Probably land reserves were abundant in the former nagaris.⁴² Outsiders could also open up land provided they paid the adat imposition. However they could not usually become owners of the land but only obtained usufruct right for as long a term as they wanted. The right could even be inherited by their descendants when they died.⁴³

2) Land once cultivated but then abandoned

When cultivated land was abandoned, the general rule was that such land reverted to the village as communal land as soon as all vestiges of previous work disappeared. Then the same rule as for category 1) was applied.⁴⁴ Theoretically, any sort of land followed this rule. The cultivation right was guaranteed as long as land was under the hoe.

3) Cultivated land and compound

Except the above-mentioned and the land for communal facilities, all the land was occupied by the paruik or extended family. The cultivated land comprised rice fields, irrigated and unirrigated, cash crop gardens, and ladang. The compound and rice fields were, as communal property of the family (harta pusaka), under the strong control of all the members concerned. In theory, the sale of the family land was prohibited. Pawning was restricted only to urgent occasions stipulated by the adat, such as marriage of a daughter, funeral expenses, repairing of a long house. In such cases, the agreement of all the family members and the penghulu was indispensable.⁴⁵

42. G.D. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven bij de Minangkabausche Maleiers (Leiden, Brill, 1909), pp. 320-21.

43. "Rapport over afstand van Oelajatgronden", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 10, p.103; Pandecten van het Adat Recht, Deel I (Amsterdam, 1914), p. 40, no. 108.

44. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 657; Resume's van Onderzoek, op.cit., pp. 13-14. This type of land was divided into six categories; land turned into forest, land covered with dense thicket, land with young grasses, land with high grasses, land with short grasses, and mountain meadow or deserted flat land. See, Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., pp. 107-108.

45. C.A. Wieneck, "Gegevens over Familie Recht en Oelajatgrond (1913)", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 11, p. 117.

As the family land was inherited through the maternal line, from mother to daughter, it functioned as a symbol of social unity as well as a source of livelihood of the family.

Land which was newly brought into cultivation could be used by the first cultivator in his life time, but it became family land on his death.⁴⁶ It was very difficult for a person to open up new land by himself. In most cases, assistance from the family members was necessary in labour or in cash. The family as a whole therefore had rights not only over the new land but also over the harvest. When someone established a new field by himself hiring labourers with the money which he earned himself, he could give part of the land to his own children as private property (pancarian), which was called the hiba in Islamic law. This regulation applied to any private property and was a source of quarrels between the kemanakans or sisters' children who were the legitimate heirs and the testator's own children. When the first cultivator did not give the land to his children, it automatically went to his maternal family.

Communal restrictions on cultivated land may have been weaker where the matrilineal adat was relaxed as in the Lowlands, or the monetary economy penetrated, than in areas concentrating on rice cultivation.⁴⁷ Here the land holding and using unit must be clearly distinguished. Even when control over communal family land was strong, the whole of the land was distributed among the constituent family branches, which used their respective plots and enjoyed the harvest exclusively. Pawning among the family branches not only could occur but was very common. However each family branch could not dispose of its plots without the general consent of the extended family as a whole. When a family branch was extinguished for some reason, the family land which the branch had used was taken over by other family branches within the extended family.

46. Josselin de Jong, Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan, op.cit., pp. 56-57.

47. P.J. Kooreman, "Aantekeningen van de Toemaligen Assistent Resident (P.J. Kooreman) Betreffende de Afdeeling PAINAN, in het bijzonder betreffende de Onderafdeeling Indoerapoera", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 11, pp. 139-49.

3. The taxation system of the nagari

If the nagari is to be considered as an autonomous body, what were the financial or economic obligations of the inhabitants? From another point of view, how did the autonomous village community satisfy the financial needs which were imposed by its autonomy?

The nagari impositions came under the general name of the isi adat (lit., fulfilment of customary law), or uang adat (money required by customary law).⁴⁸ The impositions were paid to the penghulus or sometimes to the holders of equivalent titles in the Lowlands. The whole or part of the amount received by them was stored in the nagari treasury (tabun ame, ame basama), a steel box often placed in the mosque, which the Dutch called the nagari-kas. It is not clear what proportion collected was actually deposited in the treasury.⁴⁹ Usually the greater part was appropriated by the penghulus who regarded it as the perquisite of their position. The treasury was to be used for public purposes such as construction of village paths, mosque, village council hall, and so on. The adat dues and nagari treasury existed at least until 1914 as financial bases of nagari autonomy, but they became controlled by the Netherlands Indies government after 1914 (see Chapter III). As the character, form, amount and collection procedure of the impositions were so complicated we will divide them into five groups.

i) Impositions based on the right of disposal over village land (hak ulayat)

Regulations for all impositions based on the hak ulayat are as complex as those for land rights in general mentioned before. Where the tanah suku existed, collections relating to the tanah suku went to the penghulus of the suku, in which case too part of them had to be stored in the treasury. When legal authority of the suku over the tanah suku was in fact negligible, or impositions were related to the nagari reserve, the collections were partly distributed by the collective penghulus and partly

48. The most extensive research of adat taxes was first done by de Rooij, Oeang Adat", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 10, pp. 105-43.

49. ibid; Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., p. 154. It is not clear how the adat taxes paid in kind were disposed of, though it is likely that the penghulus concerned mostly appropriated them. When adat taxes were paid in rice, the rice was placed in the mosque.

stored in the treasury. Here the right of disposal of the nagari included water (river, lake, sea and coast), none of which could be included in the tanah suku.

a. bunga kayu (forest tax)

When a villager collected forest products for sale, or an outsider did so either for sale or his own consumption, 10 per cent of the value was levied in cash or in kind. However, the villagers of such outlying regions as Kwantan and Tapan did not pay even when they collected for sale, as the forest reserve was abundant.⁵⁰

b. bunga tanah (land tax)

This tax was applied both to the surface and the subsoil. When a villager wanted to put land into cultivation for long term use, he had to notify the penghulu of his intention. Once the land had been broken in, the penghulu put sticks or stones around it as a token to show the clearer's land rights.⁵¹ There was a considerable local difference in the amount of this imposition. Sometimes, the amount was fixed at a certain proportion, 1/10 - 1/3, of the value (of pledge?) of the land;⁵² sometimes only the payment of the siri pinang salang kapnya (fig., gift to introduce oneself to the penghulu, usually small) was enough. Only in areas with abundant land reserves could an outsider put land into long term cultivation by making a payment higher than that of the villager.⁵³ The payment by the villager was considered as a due for asking permission and protection of his rights, while that of the outsider was regarded as purchasing the usufruct right.

Another aspect of the bunga tanah was the tax on exploitation of minerals, especially gold, silver and copper. In the case of uncultivated land, the tax given to the penghulus varied from nothing through, the most common, satail lima kupan (approx., 7.8 per cent) to, at the highest, 25 per cent as was the case in Sijunjung. If minerals were in private land, the same amount as the aforementioned was paid to the possessor of the land,

50. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 322.

51. P.J.Kooreman, "De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur ter Sumatra's Westkust", Indisch Gids (I.G.), vol. 20(1900), pp. 288-89.

52. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 320-22.

53. ibid.

an individual or a family.⁵⁴

c. uang ladang (tax on non-irrigated field)

This was levied only on outsiders, varying from f.1 to 2.5 at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when outsiders wanted to use non-irrigated land only for temporary purposes.⁵⁵

d. isi adat orang menaci, memukat, adat pekarongan (fishing tax)

The villagers on the coast paid a certain proportion of fish obtained to the nagari when the fish was intended for sale. Outsiders had no right to fish in the sea.⁵⁶

e. isi adat garam (salt tax)

On the coast, owners of salt pans paid yearly some f.5 to the penghulus. Outsiders had no right to own salt pans. In the Kwantan area, the 'raja' (not a king as such, but equivalent to the nagari head) monopolized the right to deal in salt, and received a percentage from merchants.⁵⁷

f. buruan bintang liar yang empat kaki (tax on hunting of wild quadrupeds).⁵⁸

ii) Impositions on economic activities

This group included the tax on direct trade and all activities relating to commerce. Of various taxes in this group, the market tax (uang pakan, uang pasar) had special significance as a source of nagari income. Anybody who wanted to sell goods at the village market had to pay 5-10 cents per day at the beginning of the 20th century. Additional payment of 10 per cent was levied for the sale of special commodities imported from outside the nagari such as gold, silver, copper, and threads.⁵⁹ Besides this, there were slaughter tax (pajak bantai),⁶⁰ tax on the sale

54. De Rooij, "Oeang Adat", op.cit., pp. 106, 122, 126.

55. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., 149-50.

56. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 327.

57. Kooreman, "De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur", op.cit., p.290; Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p.329.

58. Van Hasselt, Volksbeschrijving van Midden-Sumatra, op.cit., p.414.

59. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., p.150, 158-59.

60. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 329.

of vessels, houses, buffaloes, and cows, harbour tax on the coast, import and export duties, opium trade tax, toll on river navigation,⁶¹ and transit trader's tax.⁶²

iii) Pure adat impositions

These comprised all taxes on social activities other than those relating to Islamic matters. We could regard them as relating to nagari membership or social position: adoption tax to avoid the extinction of a family, fines by the village adat council, tax on a new house, marriage tax, fine on the recovery of the membership of which an individual had been deprived, fine on illegal marriage within the exogamous group.⁶³ Finally, the serayo or occasional labour service to penghulus and family heads was required from the fellow members on such occasions as marriage festivities of a penghulu's family and installation ceremonies of a penghulu.⁶⁴

iv) Islamic impositions

Islamic officials of the mosque also enjoyed payments from the villagers (uang wakaf, uang mesjid), separate from the nagari treasury. The most important due in this category was the zakat. When the rice and other harvest of a household exceeded a fixed quantity, a certain portion, say 10 per cent, was to be set aside to pay this due. In the early 1800s, one-third of the total collected amount went to the nagari treasury, one-third was allocated as payment for the mosque officials, and the rest was stored in the mosque treasury for an urgent use.⁶⁵ Apart from zakat, impositions were levied on every ceremonial act related to birth, marriage, and death.

61. Kooreman, "De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur", op.cit., pp. 292-93.

62. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 329.

63. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., p. 151; Kooreman, "Gouvernements Koffiecultuur", op.cit., p. 290.

64. De Rooij, "Algemeen Rapport van het Onderzoek naar de Persoonlijke Diensten in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 10, p. 150.

65. Couperus, "De Instellingen der Maleiers", op.cit., p.18; Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., p. 313.

v) Dues for public purposes

When the expenditures authorized by the decision of the adat council could not be met by the already stored treasury, the adat council asked for contributions from the villagers (uang iyuran). This tax can be considered as an irregular poll tax.⁶⁶ All the costs of a penghulu's travel for public purposes was covered by the villagers' contributions. However it is not clear how this was levied.⁶⁷ We can see that there were many dues but no income tax. Nevertheless such systematic taxation as an indigenous institution can be found only in Minangkabau and Bali in Indonesia as a whole.⁶⁸

Influence of Supra-Nagari Political Power

The term 'supra-nagari political power' is used here as power which can exert its will upon the villagers by using physical force if necessary. In this sense we will examine the influence of the Minangkabau dynasty and the Dutch.

1. The Minangkabau dynasty

There is no doubt that there existed a Hindu-Javanese political authority, normally referred to as the Minangkabau kingdom, established by Adytiyawarman sometime around the middle of the 14th century, its capital being located in Tanah Datar. The main revenue of the dynasty seems to have come from the right to a small percentage of gold exploited in Tanah Datar out of the one-sixteenth of adat tax levied by the individual nagaris. Gold was by far the most important export commodity of Minangkabau until the depositories of Tanah Datar gold almost dried up in the late 18th century. Despite the small percentage of this right, the revenue seems to have been sufficient to maintain the finance of royal structure, for the total value of gold exploited in Tanah Datar was enormous.⁶⁹

66. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., p. 153.

67. Kooreman, "De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur", op.cit., p. 153.

68. L. Adam, De Autonomie van het Inlandsche Dorp, op. cit., p. 85.

69. Christine Dobbin, "Economic Change in Minangkabau as a Factor in the Rise of the Padri Movement, 1784-1830" (unpublished manuscript, to be published in Indonesia, no.22), 50 pp.

In addition to this income, the members of the dynasty seem to have received nominal tributes from eastern fringe areas, which consisted of one or two boxes of opium every three years.⁷⁰

Apart from the revenues mentioned above, there is no evidence that the dynasty levied regular income tax or labour services upon not only regions other than Tanah Datar but even Tanah Datar itself. Nor could the dynasty control gold exploited outside Tanah Datar such as Rao in the north of the Highlands and Salida on the coast. The Minangkabau village retained its own political system centering on the penghulus. We cannot find evidence to prove that the dynasty exercised political power over the internal affairs of the individual nagaris. It seems that the dynastic authority occasionally functioned as a mediator when inter-nagari conflicts were not solved by the nagaris concerned and the disputing nagaris asked the dynastic authority for arbitration.⁷¹ In any case we can say

70. E.B. Kielstra, "Onze Kennis van Sumatra's Westkust, Omstreeks de Helft der Achteende Eeuwe", B.K.I., vol.36 (1887), p. 501.

71. It is not clear why the Hindu-Javanese power could not change the Minangkabau social and political system of nagari. I consider that when the newcomers entered the Minangkabau land, the nagari was already too strongly rooted for the newcomers to destroy. It is also possible that the Hindu-Javanese represented a tiny enclave of a patrilineal social system and could hardly force their system upon the Minangkabaus, for the kinship system on which the penghulu's authority was based is an institution a political power could not easily change, even when the newcomers had some power. For these arguments, see, William Marsden, The History of Sumatra (London, 1811), pp.282-83; J. Krom, Hindu-Javansche Geschiedenis ('s-Gravenhage), pp.392-94, 413-15; J.F.A. de Rooij, "De Positie der Volkshoofden in een Gedeelte der Padangsche Bovenlanden", I.G., 1890, II, pp.634-81; idem, "Algemeen Rapport van het Onderzoek naar de Persoonlijke Diensten in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", Adatrechtbundels, vol.10, pp.144-209; Batuah, Datuk Maruhum and D.H. Bagindo Taname, Hukum Adat dan Adat Minangkabau: Luhak nan Tiga Laras nan Dua (Djakarta, Poestaka Asli, n.d.), p.30; Batuah and A.Dt. Madjoindo, Tambo Minangkabau dan Adatnja (Djakarta, Balai Poestaka, 1956), p.99; D.S. Sjafiroeddin, "Kubun Tigo Baleh nan Tigo or The Expulsion of Parapatih nan Sabatan", Sumatra Research Bulletin (Sumatra Research Council, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, University of Hull, England), vol.IV, no.2 (1975), pp. 51-61.

that the Minangkabau nagari was effectively autonomous under the Minangkabau kingdom.

Josselin de Jong may be correct when he says that the Minangkabaus could sustain their unity after the collapse of the kingdom at the beginning of the 19th century because of their distinctive language and matrilineal social system.⁷² If the king was the symbol or the core of the unity, the unity must have vanished after the collapse of the kingdom. However the Minangkabau concept of Alam Minangkabau (the Minangkabau World) still survived throughout the Dutch period, and even now.

2. The Dutch influence

When the Dutch came to the west coast of Sumatra at the beginning of the 17th century, little attention was paid to the local community so long as they could trade. Throughout the Company period, the controlled areas were divided into regentschappen or area administrations centering on port towns and chieftainships. Local communities below that level were variously described as dorp (village), negorij (negeri ?), and more vaguely landschap (region).⁷³

The involvement of the Dutch in the local community rapidly advanced after the restoration of the coastal area of Minangkabau from the British in 1819. In the wake of the padri war, the Dutch penetrated into the Highlands and conquered the major part by 1837. During the war the district (laras) and village (penghulu kepalaschap) administration were successively established as soon as an area was conquered. The village administration was intensified after the introduction of the Cultivation System in 1847 to strengthen the supervision of coffee cultivation and its delivery. This system was expanded to fringe areas and was completed

72. Josselin de Jong, Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan, op.cit., p.8.

73. E.B. Kielstra, "Onze Kenis van Sumatra's Westkust Omstreeks de Helft der Achteende Eeuwe", B.K.I., vol.36 (1887), pp.499-559; J. van der Linden, "Het Inlandsch Bestuur in het Gouvernement van Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.G., vol.4 (1855), pp. 257-74; Nahuis, Brieven over Bencoolen, Padang, het Rijk van Menangkabau, Rhiow en Poeloe Pinang (Breda, 1824). These writings give various names for the nagari or 'dorp'.

at the end of the 19th century, by which time the whole of Minangkabau was under Dutch administration.⁷⁴

The penghulu kepalaschap, however, did not necessarily correspond to the nagari as a natural community. When one nagari was too big to be administered by one penghulu kepala it was divided into several penghulu kepalaschappen as administrative bodies. This happened frequently in the coastal area where one natural nagari appeared to the Dutch as large as one district. On the other hand some small nagaris were incorporated into one penghulu kepalaschap. Generally speaking division was much more frequent than incorporation during the Cultivation System period (1847-1908). Thus, it is now impossible to know how many nagaris existed before the Dutch reorganized the institution or how many penghulu kepalaschappen were created as a result of division by the Netherlands Indies government. It is also hard to know how many nagaris might have increased by the natural development of the community, for the process was artificially regulated by the government. The case of the area between Painan and Indrapura, the southern half of the Lowlands, may give some idea of the increase of nagaris owing to the Dutch administration. This area was traditionally called sepuluh bua bandar or 'ten ports' indicating ten 'original' nagaris at river mouths,⁷⁵ which increased from 18 penghulu kepalaschappen around 1860,⁷⁶ to 35 inlandsch gemeenten (lit., indigenous communities, see below) in early 1920,⁷⁷ and 36 inlandsch gemeenten in 1930.⁷⁸

A drastic change of village administration took place in 1914 when the Nagari Ordinance was introduced (see Chapter III). By this ordinance the penghulu kepalaschap was modified into the inlandsch gemeente whose head, with the new title of kepala nagari, came to be paid by each

74. L.C. Westenenk, "De Inlandsche Bestuurshoofden ter Sumatra's Westkust", K.T., 1913, no. 1, pp. 673-93; ibid, K.T., 1913, no.2, pp.282-46.

75. Bruin, M.v.O, Chapter I.

76. Report of Meis, Padang, 29 March 1860, no.1014, in V.7 March 1863, no.26, Appendix.

77. Tables in Mailr. 497/1923, in V.12 March 1925, no. 47.

78. Tables in Mailr. 953/1931.

nagari instead of by the government as before. Between 1914 and 1915, a large scale reorganization was made, mostly incorporation to make the individual nagari able to pay the salary of the head. The total number of nagari administrative bodies changed from 541 in 1911,⁷⁹ to 567 around 1920 decreasing to 531 in 1931.⁸¹ The investigation of 331 nagaris revealed that 74 nagaris or 22.36 per cent were the result of division and incorporation by the government.

TABLE I

The Division and Incorporation of the Nagari (1931)*

total number of investigated nagaris	adat nagaris**	nagaris divided into plural nagaris	incorporated nagaris
331	257	25	49

Source: Letter of Gonggrijp, Padang, 20 May 1931, Bijlage G, in Mailrapport 953/1931.

* The division took place either as a result of natural development or of government administration. However it is not clear what proportion of divided nagaris, 25 in total, should be ascribed to each cause. The incorporation may have taken place exclusively by government intervention.

** 'Adat nagari' means a nagari which was neither divided nor incorporated by the government.

There was a difference in the magnitude of the government intervention in the nagari reorganization. The Pariaman sub-division (onderafdeling) is an example of intensive division, in which 37 adat nagaris were converted into 56 by 1913, which in turn were reduced to 45 administrative bodies by 1931.⁸² The Maninjau sub-divisions case reveals an opposing trend. The 49 adat nagaris were reduced to 47 by 1913 and again incorporated into 27 administrative bodies by 1931.⁸³ For such areas it is extremely difficult

79. L.C. Westenenk, "Nota over de Afschaffing van Penghoeloe Soekoe Rodi en het Plaatsen van der Pengoeloe Kapalo in den Zuiver Positie van Volkshoofden", dd. Padang, 11 November 1911, Mailr. 1177/1912.

80. See, note 76 and 77 above.

81. Bijlage G, in the letter of Gonggrijp, Padang, 20 May 1931, Mailr. 953/1931.

82. Report of Gonggrijp, "De Gemeente Ordinantie van Sumatra's Westkust", in Mailr. 935/1931; Gonggrijp, M.v.O., pp.80-85.

83. *ibid.*

to know exactly what the original nagari was like. However the reorganization of the village community in other areas was small.

Was there any dissatisfaction among the villagers with the artificial modification of autonomous nagari? Although government reports did not mention much, there was of course some difficulty. When the boundary of one nagari was changed too artificially by the Dutch, it sometimes created endless conflict between the nagaris concerned.⁸⁴ This problem may have been somewhat mitigated for the following three reasons. Firstly, incorporation was usually made to put nagaris or their sub-communities together, which were also autonomous to some extent. Secondly, division may not have caused much dissatisfaction because nagari's constituent parts had always the potential to become independent nagaris as we have discussed before. Thirdly, granted that the division of a nagari caused less dissatisfaction among villagers than the incorporation, the proportion of incorporations, which are more conducive to dissatisfaction, was small, being about 15 per cent of the total investigated nagaris (Table I).

Besides the boundary problem there was also an internal and organizational one. In the case of incorporation, the new nagari head was selected from among the major constituent nagari, which may have caused dissatisfaction among minor nagaris. When one nagari was divided into several nagaris, not all the segments were equipped with the complete adat government. In such a case, so called gelar (title) quarrels occurred among villagers who wanted to raise their titles to levels they could not attain in the original nagari. The considerable increase of penghulus in the 19th century might be related to the division of nagari. When disputes were not solved by the villagers themselves, the Dutch intervened.⁸⁵

84. Harsja W. Bachtira, "Negeri Taram: A Minangkabau village community", Koentjaraningrat, ed., Village in Indonesia (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1967), pp. 325-54.

85. Westkust Rapport, op.cit., Deel I, pp. 127-28; De Rooij, "De Positie der Volkshoofden in een gedeelte der Padangsche Bovenlanden", I.G., 1890, no.1, pp. 667-80. For cases, see Letter of Assistant Resident of Solok, dd. Solok, 1 April 1886 in Korn Collection, no. 328; "Kepoetoesan rapat" in ibid; "Melajoe dalam boelan Maart 1866" in ibid; "Adat Monographie, Nagari Pantau Paoe", in Korn Collection, no. 330; Letter of Penghoeloe Soekoe, dd.Solok, 29 July 1919, in Korn Collection, no. 328.

These circumstances show that the authority of penghulus became increasingly dependent on their administrative position under the Dutch colonial government rather than on their ability to protect fellow villagers, and also resulted in confusion about the legitimacy of penghuluship. As we will discuss in Chapter III in more detail, the Cultivation System was largely responsible for the change in the source of the penghulus' authority. Although the relative autonomy of the nagari was declining under the Cultivation System, the decline was much accelerated after the introduction of monetary taxation in 1908.

Finally, we will glance at the impact of Dutch rule upon the Minangkabau economy, which must have affected nagari independence at the same time directly or indirectly. Minangkabau did not maintain a complete autarchic economy before the penetration of Europeans but was connected with various parts of the archipelago and the world. Minangkabau exported mainly gold, pepper and campher in exchange for cotton piece goods and porcelain. There was some specialization of production within Minangkabau, e.g., gold in Salida near Painan and other scattered places in the Highlands, pepper on the coast area. Alongside this broad trade network, there existed indigenous industry such as iron work in Padang Luar and textile production in many places in the Highlands.⁸⁶ Although the Dutch established a monopoly of trade on the west coast in the 1680s, Minangkabau merchants imported raw cotton via the east coast of Sumatra and the textile industry was flourishing in the Highlands. The Dutch subjugation of Minangkabau as a whole through the padri war led the indigenous industry to atrophy because the Dutch increasingly controlled the eastern routes in order to secure their monopoly position. A Dutch official who travelled in the Highlands in the middle 1870s reported: 'The noise of spinning and weaving could be heard everywhere in the Highlands fifty years ago (1820s). But we can seldom hear it now'.⁸⁷ The Dutch domination of the Minangkabau

86. H. Burger, "Aantekeningen gehouden op een reise door eenige districten der Padangsche Bovenlanden", Verhandelingen van het Bataviasch Genootschap voor Kusten en Wetenschappen, Deel 16 (1836), pp. 194-95.

87. A.L. van Hasselt, Volksbeschrijving van Midden-Sumatra (Leiden, Brill, 1882), pp. 386-87. For further information on the decline of the textile industry in West Sumatra, see, for instance, Ch.A.J. Hoek, "De Achteruitgang voor de Weefkunst op Sumatra", De Fakkel, j.g.I (1940), pp. 107-114; H.J. Boeke, Economie van Indonesie (Willink & Zoon N.V. Haarlem, 1951), pp. 342-44; Woudstra, M.v.O.; L. Margadant, "De Silungkangsche Weefnijverheid", K.T. 1941, pp. 689-95.

economy compelled the indigenous industry to decline and the Minangkabaus became more and more dependent on imports through the Dutch.

Cultivation of cash crops such as coffee and gambir began to expand at the end of the 18th century not only on the coast but also in the Highlands, the fringe areas in particular. The virtually subsistence-oriented village economy in the Highlands became involved rapidly in the network of world trade. The commercialization of the Minangkabau economy advanced. However the introduction of the coffee Cultivation System in 1847 checked this trend at least for a few decades. The peasants produced the export crop under this System, but the extremely low prices of coffee and free labour service did not allow them to accumulate capital. It must be noted that the Dutch put much pressure upon the peasants to maintain rice production, as well as to increase coffee production, in order to secure abundant food supplies, which the Dutch regarded as being essential to keep order. As early as 1847 the Dutch arrested those who neglected rice cultivation.⁸⁸ The Cultivation System was a form of colonial exploitation of cheap labour within the framework of subsistence economy so that the colonial power could avoid social and political unrest in the colonized society. Nevertheless this colonial policy affected the existing socio-economic structure. Despite low monopoly prices for coffee, the Cultivation System increased a technological and psychological potential among the peasants as a whole to expand cash crop cultivation in general given favourable conditions. Also the spread of coffee cultivation resulted in the increase of arable land because the peasants put previously unused land into cultivation in the form of individual ownership, which tended to undermine the existing social and economic order based on sawah cultivation. For an effective collection of coffee and administration, the Dutch created new Indonesian officials and assigned them and adat chiefs new functions which were outside the adat order. On the other hand, the Dutch tried to preserve a 'traditional' village community system to some extent for stable administration. When the cultivation of cash crops other than coffee spread rapidly in the last quarter of the 19th century, the conflict

88. P.J. Kooreman, "De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur ter Sumatra's Westkust", I.G. 1920, no.I, pp. 95-111.

between the actual potential of Minangkabau commercial dynamism and the subsistence-oriented colonial policy became acute. This was the situation in which nagari economy and society was placed shortly before the introduction of monetary taxation in 1908.

Conclusion

The nagari was not a sub-unit of higher political authority but a community with a high degree of independence before Dutch rule, which was based on the existence of its own political and judicial organization, taxation, treasury system, territorial right, and subsistence economy. However this independence had already been undermined substantially by the time of the introduction of monetary taxation in 1908 both by Dutch administration and the development of a monetary economy. Although a limited degree of political independence was maintained, in part deliberately by the Dutch, the nagari cannot be called a politically independent unit at the beginning of the 20th century. The nagari economy was also controlled by the Dutch. The decline of the relative independence was to be accelerated after the introduction of monetary taxation.

Besides the question of independence, what sort of community was the nagari in the pre-colonial period? Was it a society of primitive communism, a communal agrarian society, a feudalistic society, or something else? It is difficult to categorize the nagari as one of these types. If one takes the widely spread theory of social evolution, i.e., the direction from matrilineal to patrilineal society, Minangkabau may be described as being a less developed society than most other ethnic groups in Indonesia. However this is not true of the Minangkabaus because they were one of the most intellectual and enterprising people in Indonesia. The term 'primitive communism', used by B. Schrieke to describe the Minangkabau nagari, must be used carefully, since it implies that the villagers work communally and share the output. Even within the extended family the communal land was distributed among the family branches, each of which used the allocated land independently, though they could not dispose of the land without the general consent of the extended family as a whole. Nevertheless the villagers collectively defended their territorial right against outsiders, as the nagari was in practice the highest political and territorial unit in the indigenous institutions of Minangkabau. The term 'primitive communism' could be used for the nagari socio-economic system if it is taken to imply that production was primarily devoted to subsistence, not exchange.

The nagari was not a purely egalitarian and non-class society. Descendants of the original founders of the nagari, from whom distinguished penghulus were elected, enjoyed the highest socio-economic position. In the process of setting up a nagari or the early stage of nagari development, the original founders must have chosen the richest and the largest proportion of arable land, forcing later comers to ask permission from them to use land perhaps less rich and more difficult to put into cultivation. In addition to social and economic stratification based on the time of settling down, there were also groups of villagers with fewer privileges than others, e.g., debt slaves and slaves sold and captured, and used mainly for domestic work.⁸⁹ It is not clear whether the latter type of slave existed as an indigenous institution. It seems that such slaves spread when captures were made during the padri war. In the 1860s all the latter type of slaves were 'emancipated' by the Dutch, although the number is not clear. The descendants of the original founders may be called the ruling class in the nagari: they had more land, the most important means of production in the subsistence economy, than others, and formed the adat council among their representatives, penghulus.

Were the penghulus feudalistic in character?⁹⁰ It is true that they enjoyed the receipt of the adat dues and occasionally material and labour contributions from the villagers. Furthermore they had seats in the adat council. However this power should not be over-estimated. Penghulus or their collective body, the adat council, in practice found it difficult to punish a villager by force when the villager failed to observe the decision of penghulus, and a miscreant was equally subject to moral pressure by his fellow villagers. The penghulus normally consulted their fellow lineage members (anak buahs) prior to a discussion in the adat council. Indeed, 'the penghulus depended on their anak buahs' and 'the anak buahs depended on the penghulus'. The penghulus could not wield

89. For the slave system in West Sumatra, see, for instance, V. Pistorius, Studien, op.cit., pp. 106-21.

90. Wang Jen-shu claims that the position of penghulus was 'feudalistic', see his writing, Yin-ni She Fa Chan Kai Kuan (Shanghai, 1948), p.111.

'despotic' power over their subordinates. In case of difficulty among the subordinates, penghulus were even required to help them in any aspect of life, particularly the economic sphere. For this reason, some degree of wealth was an indispensable qualification for the penghuluship. Perhaps the authority of penghulus can best be called paternalistic and moral in character. In the following chapters we will examine how the nagari both lost and preserved elements of its autonomy, focusing on the aspects delineated in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

Economic Expansion and Change in the Economic Basis

B. Schrieke has already described vividly the rapid growth of the West Sumatran economy until the end of 1926 in Part I of the West Coast Report. He also depicted how smoothly the Minangkabaus responded to the unprecedented export boom in the mid-1920s, but did not explain satisfactorily the crucial question of what made it possible apart from the opening of the Korinci road, the ending of the export ban on rice through eastern routes to the east coast, and the emergence of an 'economic mentality'. We will examine how the Minangkabaus were preparing for economic expansion before the boom started through the abolition of the Cultivation System of coffee, the increase of rice production, the development of credit institutions, and the emergence of new organizational and social elements in addition to the reasons presented by Schrieke. If an economy is to expand, certain pre-requisites must be satisfied and obstacles removed beforehand. The discussion here will reveal that the Minangkabaus had been preparing for economic expansion long before the export boom.

The Abolition of the Coffee Cultivation System

The coffee Cultivation System had been an impediment to the development of free economic activity since its introduction in 1847. The peasants were forced to cultivate coffee and deliver the produce at a very low fixed price. This not only hampered the development of cash crop cultivation in general but also brought insufficient income for the peasants to accumulate capital for new investment. Thus, the abolition of the Cultivation System was vital for economic expansion. From the last quarter of the 19th century the government began to introduce monetary taxation at the expense of the Cultivation System in Java and other regions where the System had been in operation, and its abolition in West Sumatra was also considered at the end of the 19th century. Although this change was general in Indonesia as a whole we must not forget the difference in the substance of the System in West Sumatra from other regions, a difference related to the development of a cash economy which had been taking place in West Sumatra, making the abolition urgent both for the Dutch and the Minangkabaus.

In response to an increasing demand for coffee on the European market the Minangkabaus began to expand its cultivation at the end of the 18th century. Coffee cultivation continued expanding throughout the 1820s and 1830s despite the disturbances caused by the padris at the beginning of the 19th century. One major problem for the Dutch was the fact that coffee was mainly grown in the padri-controlled areas in the Highlands, notably Rao, Maninjau, and Solok districts which were suitable for Arabica coffee. Merchants in these areas were entirely Minangkabaus who tended to export coffee to the Malacca Straits via the east coast of Sumatra using river ways rather than to the Dutch in Padang. For the merchants the river ways were more convenient than transport over land, and they could also avoid heavy export duties levied by the Dutch at ports on the west coast.¹

After having pacified the major parts of the Highlands, the Dutch introduced the coffee Cultivation System into West Sumatra in 1847 to secure more coffee. Under this system, the peasants had to set land aside for coffee groves, clear it, and deliver all the coffee produced to the Dutch at a low fixed price. Governor Michiels thought that a reasonable number would be 100 trees per family unit, at least over the first five years or so. The controller was to inspect the progress each September.² However it is unlikely that he really did so in each nagari

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1. For the history of coffee cultivation in West Sumatra, see: H.J.J.L.R. de Stuers, De Vestiging en Uitbreiding der Nederlanders ter Westkust van Sumatra (Amsterdam, 1850), vol.II, Chapter XXI; E.B. Kielstra, "Sumatra's Westkust van 1819-1825", B.K.I. vol. 36 (1887), pp. 7-115; Elizabeth Graves, "The Ever Victorious Buffalo: How the Minangkabau of Indonesia Solved the Colonial Question" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Wisconsin, 1971), Chapter V.
 2. The full text of the regulations concerning the Cultivation System is given in, C.Lufofs, "De Koffiecultuur en Belasting ter Sumatra's Westkust", I.G. 1926, II, pp. 1437-86. See also E.B. Kielstra, "De Koffiecultuur ter Westkust van Sumatra", I.G. 1887, no. 1, pp. 1478-79.

because the area he was in charge of was too large for one person. This supervision must have been in practice carried out by district and nagari heads, and also penghulus, all of whom received some commission for the delivery.

The Cultivation System in West Sumatra was different from that in Java. In the Javanese case, the System was a tax in kind substituted for a land tax and the villagers had to devote one-fifth of all arable land to assigned crops. Although the term 'Cultivation System' is commonly used for the Minangkabau case, it was officially called the 'forced delivery system'. The Minangkabaus had to set up gardens, but their size was not fixed. The Cultivation System in West Sumatra was mainly applied to hilly villages which were more suitable for cultivation than plains villages, while in Java all the villages were burdened, though the crop to be cultivated differed from village to village. In short, taxation equivalent to that in Java had not been introduced into West Sumatra by 1908. The Dutch of course imposed cultivation and delivery with force in West Sumatra. However the pressure was much less than in Java.

The government revenue in West Sumatra came out of the difference between the forced delivery price and the market price. When the Cultivation System was introduced in 1847, the market price at Padang, the major export port of West Sumatra, was about f. 8.7 per pikul (approx. 61.7 K.G.), while the delivery price varied from f.5 to f.7 according to the quality of the coffee. The difference between these two prices rose rapidly as the price of coffee on the world market rose. In 1875, for example, the average market price at Padang was f.64.74 per pikul, while the delivery price was as low as f.14 (see Table I). Coffee cultivation was not only unprofitable for the peasants but also deleterious to their daily life, as they had to sacrifice time and energy needed for rice cultivation and auxiliary businesses. For merchants, coffee trade could in theory no longer form part of their enterprise. Thus, merchants had to deal in other cash crops such as cassia, cinnamon, gutta percha, nutmeg, tobacco, and so forth, which flourished increasingly throughout the 19th century.³ As a result, the amount delivered declined

3. J. van Bosse, Eenige Beschouwingen omtrent de Oorzaken van der Achtergang van Koffiecultuur ter Sumatra's Westkust ('s-Gravenhage, 1895); E.B.Kielstra, "De Koffiecultuur", op.cit., pp.1437-86; De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur voor 1888-1903: Tweede Gedeelte, De Gouvernements Koffiecultuur in de Buitenbezittingen (Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1904), p. 28.

rapidly in the last quarter of the 19th century (see Table I).

The government tried to increase the production of coffee directly or through Dutch and Indonesian officials, particularly the penghulu suku rodi, a government-created position for the Cultivation System, and coffee inspectors (mantris). New cultivation methods and the use of fertilizers were encouraged. On one occasion in the 1860s Dutch officials ordered the conversion of cattle pens to coffee gardens, in the belief that the soil of the pens might be richer because of the cattle dung. It was believed by the peasants that this measure was responsible for the wide-spread epidemic of cattle plague at the end of

TABLE I

Decline of Coffee Delivered to the Government*

year	amount delivered in pikuls	average market prices at Padang per pikul in guilders (f.)	delivery prices in f.
1820	16,500	7.00	export duties a. to Dutch ships: 2.00 b. to foreign " : 4.00
1825	32,500	19.09	"
1830	27,296	13.04	"
1835	78,873	14.85	"
1840	90,961	18.34	"
1845	81,941	9.24	"
1847	58,224	8.70	Cultivation System 5.-6.-7.00 according to quality
1850	71,118	23.83	"
1855	127,541	26.08	6.-7.-8.00
1860	150,057	34.55	10.50
1865	124,057	43.11	12.00
1870	182,869	32.91	13.00
1875	138,200	64.74	14.00
1880	65,650	66.84	14.00
1885	102,825	40.27	14.00
1890	65,050	66.08	15.00
1895	40,895	73.70	15.00
1900	30,377	52.00	15.00
1905	58,053	figures	15.00
1906	14,148	not	15.00
1907	30,057	available	15.00

Source: C.Lulofs, "Koffiecultuur en Belastingen ter Sumatra's Westkust", Indische Gids, 1904, no.2, pp.1658-61; Mededelingen, De Buiten bezittingen 1904 tot 1914 (Encyclopaedisch Bureau, Aflevering X, Deel I) p. 238.

* Until the Cultivation System was introduced, the government revenue came from export duties.

the 1860s, which killed numerous cattle. As cattle were important for the peasants not only for meat but also as draft animals for rice cultivation, the killing of cattle resulted in crop failures of rice at the same time. The Dutch lost the confidence of the peasants.⁴ On another occasion, the Dutch encouraged the setting up of 'nagari coffee gardens' intended to be worked communally by the villagers. In due course they realized that the Minangkabaus were rather individualistic in their economic behaviour. As the peasants were very reluctant to perform communal cultivation, this plan was soon dropped.⁵

The decline in the quantity of coffee delivered was the natural consequence of the expansion of other cash crops, although there is a possibility that some coffee was smuggled out. The Dutch could not control the expansion of cash crops other than coffee both because of their fear of possible resistance from the population in case of too much pressure and because the Cultivation System in West Sumatra rested on weaker legal foundations than in Java. Cash crop cultivation in general stimulated commercial activity at places which had convenient access to transportation. Commercial centres developed in the Highlands as well as on the coast which had long profited from sea trade. For instance, the number of market visitors at a commercial centre in the Highlands, Bukittinggi, increased from 15,000 per ordinary market day in 1879 to 29,000 in 1904. At the same place the number of bendi (a two wheeled carriage) rose from 125 in 1892 to 531 in 1904. At the Payakumbuh market, the number of bendi increased from 33 in 1885 to 969 in 1903 and 1,200 in 1904.⁶ As private trade in coffee was prohibited at that time, the development of commercial centres reflected the expansion of economic activity in general. In such a situation the Cultivation System was an obstacle to the development of a free economy. After a long discussion about the abolition of the Cultivation System, the government decided to replace it by individual monetary taxes, in the form of income and slaughter taxes at the end of the 19th century, and the new policy was actually implemented in 1908.

4. Verkerk Pistorious, Studien over de Inlandsche Huishuiding in de Padangsche Bovenlanden (Zalt-Bommel, 1871), pp.176-77; Koloniaal Verslag 1869, p. 145.

5. E. Kielstra, "Koffiecultuur", op.cit., pp. 478-79.

6. Lulofs, "Koffiecultuur en Belasting", op.cit., p.1633; H.W. Stap, "De Nagari Ordinantie ter Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B.; vol.53 (1915), p.759.

Rice

The significance of the rice supply cannot be over-emphasized. If a region's economy is considerably dependent on cash crop cultivation, its income will easily be reduced by a price fall of cash crops on the one hand and it will suffer serious rice shortage on the other in case of crop failures in other regions from where it purchases rice. Such fluctuations in fact took place. A rice surplus enables an economy to convert labour power and money to economic activities other than food acquisition, whilst the export of rice provides the necessary capital for investment in new business. The West Sumatran rice surplus performed both functions. However it must be noted that within West Sumatra some areas specialized in rice, leaving others free for cash crop cultivation. Thus, the rice surplus should be understood as the total balance of West Sumatra as a whole.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Dutch regarded the Minangkabau region not only as a source of food for the members of the new West Sumatran administration but also as a new source to feed Java. However the Dutch faced a serious financial problem in purchasing rice for their military forces at the initial stage of the padri war because the price of rice was too high compared with that in Java. The higher price may have been caused in part by difficulties in transporting rice to the places where Dutch troops were stationed, since there was no road network in West Sumatra except for narrow paths connecting nagaris, a lack which was in turn related to the lack of a central authority in the past powerful enough to establish such a road system. Minangkabau merchants were able to take advantage of the situation in which the Dutch needed rice to supply their troops engaged in war. Resident de Stuers complained: 'Rice costs from f.10 to f.11 per pikul in this rice land (Minangkabau). This is the reason why we ask Java for rice'.⁷ Around 1825 the Dutch began to restrict the export of rice via ports on the coast in the hope of reducing the price. As they expected the price of rice soon diminished to f.3.5 per pikul for a while.⁸

7. De Stuers, Vestiging en Uitbreiding, op.cit., vol.I, p. 114.

8. ibid.

In the 1840s the Dutch faced a more serious rice shortage for the increased number of Dutch officials, military forces, and merchants and their families who were gathering in towns, especially Padang. The decrease in the price of rice mentioned above did not last long. Rice in the Highlands began to be sent to the east coast of Sumatra. Rice prices in Padang rose again, but the supply of rice to the Dutch did not increase. The devastation of many rice fields by armies during the padri war may have been largely responsible for this. The introduction of the Cultivation System in 1847 also contributed to the decrease of supplies because it forced the peasants to open new coffee gardens for the first years of the System and this to some extent affected rice cultivation, despite Dutch pressure to maintain its production. In the middle of the 19th century, the Dutch banned the export of rice to the east coast expecting that more rice would be obtained at cheaper prices. The measure however discouraged rice cultivation in the eastern parts of the Highlands.⁹

The Dutch occasionally restricted the export of rice via the west coast in the latter half of the 19th century to those Minangkabaus who were authorized by the government through the nagari heads and Chinese who directly contracted with the government. In many cases nagari heads themselves were authorized to participate in the trade.¹⁰ The most important government concern was to stock abundant rice within West Sumatra, reducing the export drive as far as possible in order to obtain cheap rice on the one hand and perhaps more importantly to avoid social unrest among the population, which might be caused by the breakdown of the subsistence economy on the other. Some Dutch officials forced the peasants into hand hulling for this reason.¹¹ These restrictive measures deprived the peasants of their incentive to increase production. Rice exports from West Sumatra shrunk constantly towards the end of the 19th century. The increase in European enterprises and the extensive construction of an economic

9. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, p.94.

10. J. Ballot, Memorie van Overgave (M.v.O.).

11. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, p.94.

infrastructure, in particular roads, ports, and railways in the later 19th century, also reduced exports. By 1883, the export surplus of rice had almost ceased. Around the turn of the century rice was imported.¹²

Disastrous crop failures of rice occurred in 1911/12 throughout Asia. The government immediately began to encourage rice production in Indonesia as a whole. In West Sumatra too, all restrictive measures were dropped during these crop failures. Governor Ballot instructed Dutch officials to ensure that the rice trade was free. In line with this idea, the export ban on rice via eastern routes was also dropped in 1912. Agricultural specialists were sent to the peasants and agricultural education was extended. This new rice policy rapidly increased incentives and reduced the rice shortage of the population.¹³ Import excess turned into export excess after 1912 (see Table II). World War I stimulated rice cultivation in West Sumatra because rice deficit regions of Indonesia could import little rice from foreign countries. Thus, West Sumatran rice could find a market quite easily. On the other hand, difficulties involved in exporting other cash crops favoured rice cultivation.

12. "Nota" over taxation in West Sumatra, Mailr. 1332/1923.

13. J. Ballot, M.v.O.; W. Steinbuch, "Controle op de Inlandsche Rijstcultuur in de Residentie Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B., vol.51 (1917), pp.67-69; M. Joustra, Minangkabau; Overzicht van Land, Geschiedenis en Volk ('s-Gravenhage, 1923), p.180; W. Frijling, "Bestuurscontrole op de Inlandsche Rijstcultuur ter Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B., vol.52 (1917), p. 94.

TABLE II

Import and Export of Rice via Padang (in pikuls)*

	import	export
1910	145,364	20,703
1911	108,826	40,096
1912	12,920	83,535
1913	13,760	74,490
1914	14,006	96,513
1915	218	170,183
1916	246	195,129
1917	1,046	211,276

Source: M.Joustra, Minangkabau; Overzicht van Land, Geschiedenis en Volk ('s-Gravenhage, 1923), p.181.

* The prices were fairly stable during this period varying from f.10 to f.13 per pikul.

The end of the war saw another period of crop failures of rice in the major rice producing countries of Asia, which led to a worldwide rice shortage. Most regions of the archipelago suffered a rice shortage. The government quickly intervened in the rice market by restricting rice imports in rice surplus regions such as West Sumatra, introducing a licensing system in the rice trade, price control and reorganizing distribution arrangements in 1918. The licence system temporarily disturbed the rice market within West Sumatra, Chinese merchants buying up first the licence and next rice itself so that they could reduce the prices. As not only Chinese but also Minangkabau merchants bought up such large quantities of rice on speculation, the stock of rice at local markets became very scarce for a while, and at the same time European planters in neighbouring regions were keen to purchase West Sumatran rice. This stringent rice situation had almost ceased by 1921 when the rice harvest returned to normal and all restrictive measures were withdrawn.¹⁴ West Sumatran peasants and merchants gained a good profit from rice when many other regions were struggling to obtain food. After 1921, the immense stock of rice in Korinci was released by the completion of the Korinci road.

14. Verslag van de Kamer van Koophandel en Nijverheid te Padang 1919 (hereafter V.K.K.N.P., Padang, 1920), p.17.

Korinci Rice

Rice in Korinci had a different significance from that in other parts of West Sumatra. The adat stipulated that newly harvested paddy should be put on the existing pile, and paddy must be consumed from the upper part. Old paddy therefore remained unconsumed for a long time, quite often changing its colour to yellow, which had less market value. Rice was regarded as pusaka or communal and inherited property.¹⁵ In the 1910s, the annual surplus in Korinci was estimated to be about 48,600 pikuls of dry rice (beras).¹⁶ Dutch officials noticed the oldest paddy was as much as 100 years old at the end of the 1910s. As the Bangka tin mines and plantations in East Sumatra developed, the huge stock of rice was gradually sold to these areas: 6,000 pikuls of dry rice in 1914, 9,000 pikuls in 1917, and 12,000 pikuls in 1918. The transportation of rice was carried out in very primitive ways, on men's shoulders and on horse-back. According to an estimate in 1919, a total quantity of 1,336,130 pikuls of paddy, equivalent to 800,000 pikuls of dry rice, still remained in the whole of Korinci.¹⁷

In the post-war rice shortage aforementioned, the government planned to export Korinci rice in order to mitigate the rice shortage in other regions. Planning and investigation commenced from the beginning of 1919. At the outset three possible routes were examined; to East Sumatra, Jambi, and the West Coast. The West Sumatran route was finally chosen.¹⁸ This required the construction of a road from Sungai Penuh, the capital of Korinci, to Tapan, a nagari close to the coast and west of Korinci (about 67 kilometres). All sorts of people were used for the construction of this road, including Batak plantation labourers from East Sumatra, criminals from Java who were originally sent to work in the Ombilin coal mines as forced labourers, and neighbouring villagers who

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15. "Nota" of Agricultural Inspector, dd.Muara Bungo, 5 April 1919, Mailr. 1872/1919.
 16. Report of Van de Stok, "Nota over Kerintji Rijst", Buitenzorg, 9 June 1919, Mailr. 1872/1919.
 17. Letter from Vrieece to Governor General, Weltevreden, 17 July 1919, no.1307/B, Mailr.1882/1919.
 18. Telegram of Resident of Jambi, 4 January 1919 and 20 January 1919, both in Mailr. 123/1919.

worked either in the form of corvee or paid labourers.¹⁹ The road was completed in early 1921. The total government expenditure was estimated to be about f.2.5 million.²⁰

Transportation of rice from Korinci proceeded simultaneously with the construction of the road. At the end of 1919, when the construction had just started, Dutch officials intended to monopolize the rice trade for the government. However this intention encountered popular resentment. The resident of West Sumatra - even though Korinci was included in the Jambi residency until 1922 - suggested to Batavia that monopoly would lead to much trouble.²¹ As the construction advanced, however, the general attitude of Dutch officials including the resident swung more and more in favour of strong government control over the rice trade, if not a total monopoly, considering the enormous expenditure for the road. At a meeting in Padang in March 1920, Dutch officials were generally of the opinion that rice milling, transportation, and distribution should be monopolized by the government except in the case of European planters and the Bangka tin mines. To smooth the deliveries of rice, the officials discussed granting a commission to the village head. To stop all illegal trade, a strong check on the routes to Bengkulu and Jambi was considered necessary. These ideas were gradually implemented.²²

It was quite clear from the beginning that transportation would be easier if paddy was hulled within Korinci, by which 40 per cent of the weight could be reduced. The government set up some rice mills and also controlled all other private mills including indigenous water mills (kincir).²³

19. Letter of Resident of West Sumatra, Padang, 14 January 1920, no. 1/1, Mailr. 148x/1920 ('x' means a secret report); Letter of Engel, Batavia, 12 April 1920, no.7/2/2, Mailr. 457x/1920.

20. "Notulen" of the meeting at Sungai Penuh on 8 April 1921, Mailr. 2775/1921.

21. Letter of Resident of West Sumatra, Padang, 14 January 1920, no. 1/1, Mailr. 148x/1920.

22. "Notulen" of the meeting in Padang on 12 March 1920, Mailr. 390x/1920.

23. "Notulen" at Sungai Penuh, op.cit.

Occasionally, Dutch officials commanded unpaid labour from the villagers to husk and carry the rice which the government had brought up to warehouses.²⁴ As for price, the Dutch fixed the maximum purchasing price at the end of 1921 at f.2.6 per pikul of newly harvested paddy, which was equivalent to f.4.4 of dry rice. In addition to this payment the Dutch gave the village f.1 as a commission on each pikul of dry rice delivered, of which part was to be placed in the village treasury and the rest to be enjoyed by the village head and some other minor chiefs. As the purchase was a government monopoly, this was in fact a sort of forced delivery.²⁵ By government encouragement sawah was considerably expanded between 1919 and 1922. The rice accumulated for 100 years was quickly taken out from Korinci, 1925 being the peak year for export. About half of the rice exported from West Sumatra as a whole in 1923 came from Korinci.²⁶

Government enthusiasm for monopolizing the rice trade of Korinci and increasing its production, however, began to dwindle after 1922 because the post-war rice crisis was ebbing towards the end of that year. An important proportion of the Korinci rice stock had been exported by 1925, and rice production in other parts of West Sumatra was also increasing. It is not clear when the forced delivery and fixed low price of rice in Korinci were dropped, perhaps sometime between 1926 and 1928. By February 1928 these impositions had become nominal and they finally vanished in that month. As far as the Korinci people were concerned, the completion of the Korinci road stimulated the cultivation of crops other than rice, taking advantage of the extensive land reserves suitable for coffee. Rice gave the peasants from f.5 to at most f.8 per pikul with much intensive labour, while coffee gave more than f.50 per pikul. Although we cannot compare the advantage of these crops only by their prices, since the opening of new coffee gardens required investment, it was natural that the peasants favoured coffee cultivation rather than rice after the completion of the road.²⁷

24. Letter of Bossevain, Sungai Penuh, 5 August 1920, no. 1547/8, Mailr. 246/1922.

25. Letter of Resident of West Sumatra, Padang, 5 December 1921, no. 20848/24, Mailr. 3942/1921.

26. Koloniaal Verslag 1924, p. 169; Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië, vol. 8, p.1959.

27. S.G. Nooteboon, M.v.O., pp.16-33.

The years between 1912 and 1924 were a vital period for the expansion of cash crop cultivation. When most regions were struggling with food acquisition, West Sumatra could export rice as a cash crop and accumulate capital as well as feed itself. The first noticeable wave of investment in cash crop cultivation occurred in 1919-20, which coincided with the short-lived post-war export boom, and the second one was in the latter half of 1924. The previous discussion shows that West Sumatra satisfied an important prerequisite for economic upsurge by accumulating the necessary capital before the 1925 boom.

Finally the question must be asked why the Minangkabaus succeeded in increasing rice cultivation so that they were not only able to feed themselves but also to accumulate capital to be invested in cash crops and commerce, while most other regions were merely battling to provide enough rice to feed themselves at a time of crisis in rice production. Java provides an interesting contrast to West Sumatra in this respect. The man-land ratio of West Sumatra was much lower than that of Java, making the expansion of rice cultivation and its export possible. However this was not the only factor which helps to explain the difference between the two regions. The difference in the land holding system was also an obvious factor. In West Sumatra the transfer of sawah was very difficult because it usually belonged to the family as communal property and its pawning and lease were greatly restricted by the adat. When rice supplies were tight in 1919 adat leaders were warning the Minangkabaus not to lease land and to uphold the old adat.²⁸ The Javanese peasants were not necessarily any more willing to lease land than the Minangkabaus but were forced to do so for reasons such as stronger pressure by money lenders, which caused extensive transfer of land in areas such as East Java.²⁹ We must not forget that there was a much larger proportion of landless peasants in Java than in West Sumatra where peasants had land to cultivate as long as they belonged to a Minangkabau family, although there might be a big difference in the size of family land among Minangkabaus. In Java share-croppers could hardly accumulate capital after they had met their living costs.

28. Oetoesan Malajoe, 2 April 1919, no. 65.

29. Karl J. Peltzer, Pioneer Settlement in the Asiatic Tropics (American Geographical Society Special Publication, no.29,1948), pp.165-74.

The Development of Credit Institutions

The guideline of Dutch administration in the last quarter of the 19th century was the Liberal Policy, which accepted the demand of European capitalists to invest in Indonesia more freely. This policy led to the promotion of a capitalistic economy in the archipelago. The results of the Liberal Policy had fully appeared by the beginning of the 20th century: plantations, mines and other major industries were almost completely in the hands of Europeans. The Indonesians had insufficient resources to compete with European capital and their economic conditions deteriorated. In short, the Liberal Policy did not increase Indonesia's monetary income by the advancement of a free economy, as the opportunity was virtually limited to Europeans. On the contrary, the government realized that the bulk of the population were suffering declining real incomes.³⁰

The Ethical Policy initiated at the beginning of the 20th century was intended to promote the welfare of the Indonesian people, which had been undermined by the Liberal Policy. The establishment of the *Volkscredietwezen* (People's Credit System) became one of the most important programs of this new policy. The People's Credit System consisted of various types of credit institutions which were to serve the Indonesian people in particular. In the West Sumatran case, the new credit system and monetary taxation were introduced simultaneously. Although this coincidence was not deliberately arranged by the government, it was a clear sign of a new monetary era in the West Sumatran economy. Once the project had commenced the number of people's credit institutions (*volkscredietbanken*) increased at an extraordinary rate. We will survey this development as one of the prerequisites for the rapid expansion of cash crop cultivation, by the time of the export boom around 1925.

Credit transactions were not a new phenomenon in West Sumatra, as in any other region of Indonesia. For instance, people could obtain credits through pawning and advances on a private basis. However the new institutions should be distinguished from existing ones at least on two important points. Firstly, the people themselves joined in the management.

30. J.H. Boeke, Economie van Nederlandsch-Indië (Haarlem, 1951)p. 376.

Secondly, the interest rates of the new institutions were much lower than private ones. The new credit institutions discussed here include the village credit institutions (dorpscredietinstelling) comprising the village monetary bank (dorpsgeldcredietinstelling), commonly known as the lumbung pitih, and the village rice bank (dorpsrijstcredietinstelling) or the lumbung padi, and the local volksbank in which category only the afdelingbank will be dealt with here. All of these banks were instituted as the result of government programs under the general supervision of the Central People's Credit System which was established in 1904.³¹ For convenience we use the term 'village money bank' for the lumbung pitih and 'village rice bank' for the lumbung padi.

The first village rice banks were set up in some nagaris of the Buo-Lintau district in Tanah Datar in 1908 on the suggestion of a Dutch controleur. They were called zakat lumbung there because some Islamic notables donated the ground capital as zakat for the banks. This area constantly suffered from a rice shortage, especially before harvest. Each household within these nagaris deposited 10 per cent of their rice after harvest and each could borrow rice at an interest of between 30 and 50 per cent per harvest year depending on the time of borrowing. At that time credit for rice on a private basis took the form of purchasing rice on credit from rice merchants. The interest varied according to the time of contract, the average being from 70 to 100 per cent per harvest year. Immediately before harvest when everybody was in want of rice and the price of rice was highest, the actual interest amounted to as high as 200 per cent. The borrower had to buy rice at the most expensive time before harvest and had to sell his rice at the cheapest time after harvest. Compared with this type of credit the advantage of the new institutions was obvious. The management was first supervised by Dutch officials but gradually entrusted to the villagers, consisting of the nagari head, a few staff, and a book-keeper, of whom the last two were selected from among the villagers, and all of them were paid by the nagari. Although the ground capital was somewhat subsidised and management was helped by Dutch officials, the bank was considered to be village

31. Encyclopadie van Nederlandsch-Indië, vol.4 ("Volkscredietwezen") pp. 605-10, gives the general idea of credit institutions.

property. As the rice banks in this district were so popular these examples were soon followed in other places, though the deposit was 4 per cent in other cases.³²

The predecessors of the village money bank were begun slightly later than the rice bank. The first two money banks, not belonging to nagaris but to two districts, were established in Upper Kampar at the end of 1910, and began operations from January 1911. These two banks were established with considerable government financial support as temporary institutions to encourage gambir cultivation in that area, but the successful experiences of these banks stimulated the villagers to set up the village money banks (see below). With the government subsidies and encouragement, and also great enthusiasm among the people, the number of the village money banks increased by leaps and bounds. It is worthwhile comparing the development of village money banks in West Sumatra and Java. Although Java had about 23 times the West Sumatran population, judging from the figures of the 1920 census, in Java only 2,170 of these banks

TABLE III

The Development of the Village Money Bank
in West Sumatra and Java

West Sumatra	no. of banks	Java
January 1912	33	
February 1912	293	
1913	406	
1914	523	
1915	543	
1917		2,170

Source: M. Joustra, Van Medan naar Padang en Terug (Leiden, 1915), p.120; J. Ballot, Memorie van Overgave, p.57; Vereeniging Volksbank Minangkabau 1929, pp.28-29; G. Gonggrijp, Schets Eener Economische Geschiedenis van Indonesie (Haarlem, 1957), p. 143.

32. W.P. Groeneveld, "Het Credietwezen in Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B., vol.45(1913), pp.194-97; O.P. Besseling, "Het Inlandsch Credietwezen en de Rentelooze Voorschotten in Boven Kampar", T.B.B., vol.42 (1912), p.123.

had been established by 1917, that is, about one-sixth of the number in West Sumatra in relation to its population. This suggests that Minangkabaus were more enthusiastic and perhaps were generally wealthier than the average Javanese. It was also possible that in Java, money-lenders had already established credit relationships firmly with the population, and this circumstance reduced the enthusiasm of the people for the setting up of credit institutions.

The initial capital of the village money bank consisted of government loans when these were needed by the nagari, an obligatory deposit of f.1 per man of working age in each nagari, contributions from the nagari treasury which we mentioned in Chapter I, and voluntary deposits. The obligatory deposit was to be refunded once a year at the puasa, the Islamic feast at the end of the fasting month. The maximum loan was f.5 to be redeemed in 100 days at an interest rate of 10 per cent per year.³³ This maximum was raised to f.20 in 1915, at the same interest rate. Each borrower had to receive permission from his family head who was ultimately responsible for the redemption. The bank was managed by the nagari head, a few staff, and a book-keeper, of whom the last two were elected from among the villagers, and all of them were paid by the nagari as in the case of the rice bank. The position of book-keeper was in most cases taken by an Islamic notable such as a mosque official or a haji. In one case an influential Islamic teacher accepted the establishment of a village money bank on the condition that his son be the book-keeper. Although there was a fear among government circles that Islamic leaders might object to the bank in terms of the Islamic prohibition on interest (riba), no controversy occurred over this issue. In fact Islamic leaders were very enthusiastic about participating in the bank.³⁴

From the outset of the establishment of the village bank, Minangkabaus felt the need for other credit institutions for larger loans. In 1911 penghulus of the Bukittinggi district gathered to set up an afdeling bank, an equivalent to the Javanese regentschap bank, for larger loans, and decided to bring some working capital together in order to draw the attention of the inhabitants and to demonstrate their enthusiasm to the

33. M. Joustra, Van Medan naar Padang en Terug (Leiden 1915), p.120.

34. Groeneveld, "Het Credietwezen", op.cit., pp.201-2; Besseling, "Het Indlandsch Credietwezen", op.cit., p.103. I failed to find information of how these bank officials were elected.

government. Two years later, the first afdeling bank in West Sumatra, Bank Luhak Agam, was instituted in Bukittinggi. In addition to the government subsidy and some working capital brought by the penghulus, the capital of this bank consisted of f.5 shares. Afdeling banks were also established in Payakumbuh, Suliki, and Alahan Panjang by the end of 1914.³⁵ Loans from these banks were fixed between f.30 and f.100 at an interest rate of 12 per cent per year. For loans, pledges were required either in movable or immovable goods. The administration was performed by Dutch officials and Indonesian employees, mostly merchants.³⁶

The government administration of these three types of volksbank was changed in 1915 when Volksbank Minangkabau was inaugurated as an intermediary organization between Batavia and the nagari or local bank, to exercise closer supervision over these banks at the residency level. All the existing afdeling banks functioned as branch offices connecting the Volksbank Minangkabau and the village credit institutions. New afdeling banks were also established in Padang, Pariaman, and Solok under the sole leadership of the government but with the same system as the existing ones. The village credit institutions were organized as branch offices of Volksbank Minangkabau at the village level. The government thought it had a right to reorganize the banks, since it planned them and provided the subsidies. However, from the villagers' point of view, at least the village credit institutions were their own property and should be independent of the new systematic control despite the government help. In 1918 the government had to modify the position of the village credit institutions as independent members of Volksbank Minangkabau. As for loans, the interest rate of the afdeling bank was raised from 12 to 18 per cent in 1915 with much opposition from the people.³⁷

35. Ballot, M.v.O.

36. Mededeelingen van het Encyclopaedisch Bureau, De Buitenbezittingen 1904 tot 1914 (Encyclopaedisch Bureau, 1915), pp.607-11; Joustra, Van Medan naar Padang, op.cit., p.120; O.J.A. Collet, Terres et Peuples de Sumatra (Amsterdam 1924), p.94; C. Lekkerkerker, Land en Volk van Sumatra (Leiden, 1916), p. 232.

37. Vereeniging Volksbank Minangkabau 1929 (Padang, 1930), pp.27,49. This official report of the Volksbank Minangkabau for 1929 provides the history of credit institutions in West Sumatra between 1915 and 1929.

The rapid growth of credit institutions in West Sumatra was not without problems. There were people who were reluctant to pay the obligatory deposit of f.1 for the village bank. When obligatory deposits and the purchasing of shares at f.5 or f.10 did not proceed smoothly, nagari heads and penghulus seemed occasionally to coerce those who did not co-operate by refusing to give permission for the pilgrimage to Mecca and for marriage ceremonies. There were cases in which sawah and coconut gardens had to be pawned to purchase the shares. Table IV shows that almost half those liable to corvée (i.e., men of working age) in the Fort van der Capellen area, and one-third in Alahan Panjang bought shares.³⁸ All the purchases took place in a short period.

How was the rapid development of the credit institutions made possible? The enthusiasm of the population or encouragement and subsidies of the government, and also the pressure of penghulus and nagari heads. It seems to be reasonable to presume that the first was the case. For the afdeling bank, it is inconceivable that penghulus and nagari heads would have had sufficient power to force the purchase of the shares which cost f.5 and f.10 against the will of the villagers, in view of the fact that the amount of f.5 was almost equal to the annual rate of income tax for the bulk of the Minangkabaus and they were often in arrears with their tax despite government pressure.³⁹ The village money bank had different elements from the afdeling bank. First of all, the nagari could use the village treasury, making the establishment much easier. The small amount of the obligatory deposit, f.1, may have been acceptable for the villagers. The examination of the process of formation of the first village money banks in Upper Kampar may help to understand the economic circumstances and motivations which led to a demand for credit.

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38. J.H. Lieftrinck, Onderzoek naar de Heffing van Belastingen end de Vordering van Heerendiensten in Eenig Deelen der Buitenbezittingen: Sumatra's Westkust (Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1917), vol. 1 (General Remarks), p. 22, no. 126; idem vol. 3 (Notes Over Corvée), pp 55-56. The vol. 2 of this Lieftrinck report is Notes over Taxes.
39. Letter of LeFevre, Padang 27 August 1917, no.387/G, Mailr. 2477/1917.

TABLE IV

The Number of Shareholders of Afdeling Banks*

	Batusangkar	Bukittinggi	Alahan Panjang
number of those liable to corvée	21,000	figures not available	11,000
number of shareholders	10,000	6,200	3,000

Source: J.H. Liefcrinck, Onderzoek naar de Heffing van Belastingen en de Vordering van Heerendiensten in Eenige Deelen der Buitenbezittingen: Sumatra's Westkust (Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1917), vol.1 (General Remarks), p.22, no.26; vol.3 (Notes over Corvee), pp.55-56.

* The price of the shares was f.5 for Batusangkar and Bukittinggi, but f.10 for Alahan Panjang.

A case: gambir cultivation and credits in Upper Kampar

The main use of gambir was for chewing tobacco. This custom was widely spread all over the archipelago. Gambir cultivation, however, was limited to Sumatra and a few other places like West Borneo, Bangka, and Johor in the Malay peninsula.⁴⁰ In West Sumatra, it flourished in Upper Kampar, Payakumbuh, and northern and eastern parts of the Highlands. Although the history of the cultivation is not fully known, it seems to have been very old. When the padri movement broke out at the beginning of the 19th century, the padris attacked the Minangkabaus' indulgence in this chewing.⁴¹ Besides chewing gambir was used for tanning leather, particularly in America, and for dyeing stuff in European countries and Java where it was an indispensable dyestuff for batik.⁴²

40. Aardrijkskundig en Statistisch Woordenboek van Nederlandsch-Indie (Amsterdam, 1869), vol.2, p.331; H.H. Zeilstra Fzn, "Sirih Pinang en Gambir", in De Landbouw in de Indische Archipel, C.J.J. van Hall and C.van de Koppel ed., ('s-Gravenhage, Van Hoeve, 1946), vol.IIB, pp.609-13; C.Lekkerkerker, Land en Volk van Sumatra (Leiden, Brill, 1916), p.236.

41. B.Schrieke, "Bijdragen tot de Bibliographie van de Huidige Godsdienstige Beweging ter Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.G., vol.59 (1920), pp.250-51.

42. C. Lekkerkerker, Land en Volk van Sumatra (Leiden, Brill, 1916), p.236.

The produce was partly consumed within West Sumatra and the rest was sold mainly to Java, Aceh and Singapore. At the beginning of the 20th century the price of gambir rose considerably from f.10 in 1906 to f.30 per pikul in 1910. This rise in price stimulated the cultivation in Upper Kampar and a part of Payakumbuh.⁴³ Gambir cultivation in Upper Kampar was organized in a capitalistic way. It took about 250-270 days to open a gambir ladang from clearing forests to planting involving several stages of work: cutting trees, clearing shrubs, burning, and planting. This work was normally done by paid labourers. Processing was also done by hired labourers, a specialist and two helpers.⁴⁴ As Upper Kampar was unsuitable for rice cultivation the people tended to look for labour opportunities. The recruitment of labourers for opening the gambir ladang was very easy.⁴⁵ Employers paid wages in food and

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43. Bijlage 2, Nota van Eerst Deel van Reisverslag Sumatra's Westkust, in Mailr. 1843/1910.
44. A convenient text concerning the methods of gambir cultivation in West Sumatra can be found in, "Rechtsverhouding bij de Gambir-cultuur", Adatrechtbundels, vol.12, pp.50-57.
45. The rates of pawned sawah were extraordinarily high in Upper Kampar: 1/8 in the nagari Durian; 1/4 in Koto Tuo, Koto Tengah and Tanjung Bunga. See, O.P. Besseling, "Het Inlandsche Credietwezen en de Rentelooze Voorschotten in Boven Kampar", T.B.B., vol.42 (1912), p.112. Penghulus of these areas were always complaining about too many inhabitants having gone out for searching jobs. See, Letter of O.P. Besseling, Bangkinang, 20 December 1909, no.1066/1/1, Mailr. 1843/1910. These conditions being combined, the price of rice was very high especially before harvest. See, Letter of Driessche, Payakumbuh, 12 February 1907, no.251/26, Mailr. 1363/1907. This region was involved in cash crop cultivation and trade rather than rice even before the introduction of the Cultivation System. In 1832, a Dutch official noted commercial activity there vividly. See, S.Muller, Berigten over Sumatra (G.J.A. Berijerink, Amsterdam, 1837), pp. 27 ff.

clothes as advances as well as some cash. Once a ladang was established, harvesting was possible for eight years or so. Initial capital for opening new gardens and processing facilities was a vital factor in enlarging cultivation.⁴⁶

A Dutch controleur opened an experimental gambir ladang in 1906 when the price of gambir was rising. Although the demonstration was successful, the peasants were unable to expand the cultivation due to lack of capital. In the following year, a notable in this area, who claimed to be Yang di Pertuan di Kampar (a descendant of the most distinguished family in this area?) and some other penghulus requested a loan of f.4,000 without interest from the government. They promised the government that they would take the ultimate responsibility for the redemption. The government decided to grant as a loan the total sum of f.20,000, five times the original request, in the same year. The first loan was given in 1909, being half of the total loan, f.10,000, distributed among 300 persons in 33 nagaris. Certain conditions were set for the borrowers: the ultimate responsibility of the family head and a prohibition against accepting any private credits. At first the inhabitants suspected that a new cultivation system of gambir might be introduced, but the suspicion proved unfounded.⁴⁷ With the smooth redemption of the loans, the government gave the second loan of f.10,000 to those who did not receive the first grant.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, penghulus in this area again asked the government for a loan to establish a bank when the second half of the previous loan was given in 1910. By this time they had been collecting money in shares, f.10 each, from the inhabitants.⁴⁸ The government gave the f.7,500 loan at an interest rate of 4 per cent per year.⁴⁹ The inhabitants' shares and the government loan enabled the setting up of two banks at the end of that year. These two banks loaned f.10,185 in 10 months at a 4 per cent interest rate.

46. Besseling, "Het Inlandsch Credietwezen", op.cit., pp. 106-7.

47. Letter of Besseling, Bangkinang 20 December 1909, no.1066/1, Mailr. 1843/1910.

48. Request Letter of Adat Chiefs of Upper Kampar, dd. SiAlang 29 July 1910, in Bijlage of Letter of Gouvernor of West Sumatra, Padang 25 October 1910, no.530a, Mailr. 128/1911. These chiefs belonged to laras Kampar nan Sembilan, Pangkalang Kota Baru. They had already collected f.2,500, from 250 persons.

49. Decision of Governor General, 11 January 1911, no. 43.

TABLE V
Bank Advances of Kampar nan IX
and Pangkalang VII Kota
 (from 1 January to 1 November 1911 in f.)

	number of loans	value of loans	value of the redeemed
Kampar nan IX	111	5,150	535.50
Pangkalang VII Kota	80	5,035	232.50
Total	191	10,185	790.00

Source: O.P. Besseling, "Het Inlandsch Credietwezen en de Rentelooze Voorschotten", Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur, vol.42 (1912), p.120.

Of the total value loaned, about 80 per cent or f.8,045 was used for gambir cultivation, the setting up of ladang and processing facilities, purchasing carriages and horses, and so on.⁵⁰ About this time nagaris in Upper Kampar began to establish village money banks, for these two banks were based on government loans which had to be ultimately refunded.

In a few years after the first loan, rapid expansion of gambir cultivation was noticed. People opened new ladangs and bought processing facilities such as a hut, and installed a large iron pot to boil gambir leaves, a place for chemical treatment, and also coagulants. Deforestation also took place because of the opening of ladangs and cutting of firewood for processing.⁵¹ It was unfortunate for the peasants that the recession of World War I struck just when production was beginning to expand. However it must be remembered that the desire for credit was fully established, the people were experienced in using and managing public credit institutions, and economic expansion was already taking place before

50. Besseling, "Het Inlandsch Credietwezen", op.cit., pp.120-21.

51. Eerst Deel Reisverslag, Sumatra's Westkust, in Mailr. 1843/1910; Besseling, "Het Inlandsch Credietwezen", op.cit., pp. 109-10.

the war. Probably a similar situation was occurring in other parts of West Sumatra at that time.⁵²

When Volksbank Minangkabau was instituted in 1915 the total value of the loans of government-subsidised banks in West Sumatra was only f.152,000 which increased to an average of f.300,000 a year between 1916 and 1919.⁵³ A remarkable upsurge of loans occurred in 1920. Of the total value of loans, f.1,435,616, in that year, about 90 per cent was used for economic activities such as agriculture, commerce, and industry.⁵⁴ This corresponds to the big wave of expansion in cash crop cultivation around that year, stimulated by the short-lived boom. The economy began to decline in the following years. In spite of the post-war recession between 1921 and 1924, the average value of loans during this period was f.0.9 million a year. Although the level of loans was about one million guilders after 1925, the proportion of loans for economic purposes rapidly diminished while those for other purposes such as house building and marriage increased to more than 50 per cent of the total.⁵⁵ This may indicate that the major investments and preparation for the development of cash crop cultivation and other businesses had been mostly completed by the time of the export boom of 1925.

The Entrepreneurship of the Minangkabaus: the example of Sarikat Keboen Sikat

We can see the distinctively enterprising character of the Minangkabaus in one of the well-known folk stories when a mother teaches her son:-

52. The Advisor for Credit System commented that demands for credits in West Sumatra were very strong even beyond the capacity, and this situation could not be found in other regions of the Outer Islands. See, Letter of Advisor for the Credit System, Weltevreden 16 June 1917, no.1106/35, Mailr. 1526/17.

53. Table (Bijlage IX) of Vereeniging Volksbank Minangkabau 1919.

54. Table (Bijlage IX) of Vereeniging Volksbank Minangkabau 1920 and p.45 of the text.

55. See Tables (Bijlage IX) of Vereeniging Volksbank Minangkabau for the years from 1925 to 1929.

Your father knew what was right:
 he could live according to his income
 he could irrigate rice-fields⁵⁶
 and earn his cloth by trading.

The development of rice cultivation and credit institutions before the export boom were obvious signs of this character. The Sarikat Keboen Sikat's case is one of the most outstanding examples of how the Minangkabaus organized their production and was without parallel in that it evolved from a producers' co-operative to a limited liability company through the 1910s and 1920s.⁵⁷

A Minangkabau entrepreneur, Datuk Raja Nando, lived long in Malaya and managed a rubber plantation there. He came back to his home village, Pandai Sikat near Padang Panjang, around 1915, to persuade the villagers to enter the business explaining how prosperous it was in Malaya. Four villagers joined him. After searching for suitable land, they obtained three pieces of land in the nagari Lubuk Basung (Maninjau) with only f.1.5 per 'surat' (certificate for permission?). Each member brought f.30 as ground capital.

In 1916 rubber trees were first brought from Malaya and planted. For working capital, each contributed f.12 per month. At this stage all the work was done by the five members. As capital requirements expanded, co-entrepreneurs were invited in 1918. The total membership increased from 5 to 36 in 1919 and 50 in 1920. Almost all of the new members originated from the same nagari as the founders. The new members also contributed f.30 per month each.

The first profit of f.1,940 came in 1920 from bananas and nuts which were planted between rubber trees. In 1921 the total value of the gardens was evaluated by Dutch officials at f.10,000, which soon rose to f.15,000. Although it is not clear at what stage this producers' co-operative or its individual members began to transact with volksbanks, they had received loans from the banks by 1921. With the increased value of the gardens, the members stopped contributing the working capital and

56. Anthony Johns, Lantjak DiLabueh: A Minangkabau Kaba (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1958), p.16.

57. The following description is based on "Cooperatie op Sumatra's Westkust", I.G., 1928, no.2, pp.636-40.

decided to call in further members in 1921. Rubber was first tapped in 1922, worth f.411.68, and a gross profit of f.41.61 came from other crops. These incomes were not distributed but invested in tapping implements and maintaining the gardens. Rubber tapping was stopped after June that year because the price of rubber dropped.

A fundamental change in organization took place when hundreds of trees were burnt by a fire. The bulk of the members lost confidence in the business and left the gardens. The co-operative decided to issue shares so that the members who left the gardens would not lose their rights over previous investments. The members were given shares worth f.50 each which had the market value of f.150 at that time, the number of shares perhaps depending on previous contributions. When a shareholder tapped, he was to receive wages. After the fire only three shareholders remained at the gardens. In 1925 the price of rubber suddenly rose from f.91 to f.225 per pikul. The golden time of rubber started. The managing board of the enterprise was organized in that year and the nagari head of Pandai Sikat became the president. From this time onwards, the enterprise came to have its own employees such as labourers for garden works, a secretary, clerks, and so forth. The first dividend was paid in 1925, f.125 per share, i.e. 243 per cent for original shareholders and 81 per cent for shareholders who bought shares at the market price of f.150. Here the enterprise changed into a limited liability company.

As the price of rubber kept rising, the market value of the shares rapidly rose to as high as f.400 per share in 1926. A new regulation on the distribution of net profit was made in that year; 25 per cent to be reserved for future investment, 3 per cent to be paid to the managing board as a reward, and 72 per cent for dividend. The sale of the shares became limited to members of the enterprise alone. In the following year the upper-limit of shareholding per one person was fixed at seven. In that year 21 regular labourers apart from the shareholders were working in the enterprise and the total wages paid amounted to f.6,262.56. The gardens were so well looked after that the rubber enjoyed a reputation for high quality. The product was directly carried and sold by employees of the enterprise, so that no middlemen were involved. The Sarikat Keboen Sikat's example was copied in several other places. Almost all of these new enterprises were also run by people from the nagari Pandai Sikat.

Three points about Sarikat Keboen Sikat require special attention. Firstly, the sentiment of village solidarity was very strong even outside the home village, as can be seen in the fact that the nagari head of Pandai Sikat was made the present of the enterprise and the original founders recruited the members from their home village. It is possible that the initiator persuaded the first four members to join through kin groups or his suku members, taking advantage of his position as penghulu, which can be seen from his title, 'datuk'. Secondly, it took seven years for the enterprise to get any profit from rubber and original founders were only able to withstand this period because, presumably, they had a reasonable amount of capital beforehand, though they were also able to use volksbanks at some stage. Even though they could borrow money from the banks, monthly contributions of f.30 and their living costs must have been quite a large amount, since the bulk of Minangkabau men of working age earned between f.120 and f.125 per year at that time. It may be assumed that the members used communally accumulated family property as well as their own. Furthermore the business was undertaken soon after World War I, when export was difficult. This suggests the original founders and also later members were willing to risk a large amount of money in an entirely new field. In short, capital and psychological prerequisites had already been satisfied by the time rubber exporting became an extremely profitable venture in 1925. Thirdly, how was it that the enterprise came to be managed in such a modern way? Although we have no decisive information on this point, it can be guessed that the initiator learnt rubber cultivation and management in Malaya. Indeed, it was common at the early stage of rubber cultivation in Indonesia for people to learn the skills from well established European plantations in Malaya and East Sumatra. However we can find few cases in which Indonesians actually adopted such an elaborate management system as the one delineated above. The most prevalent system of hiring labourers in indigenous gardens was the bagi dua in which a garden owner and tappers divided the produce equally. In this sense the management of Sarikat Keboen Sikat surpassed any other forms of Indonesian rubber production in its methods of production. However Sarikat Keboen Sikat was not a typical limited liability company such as is familiar in Western capitalistic countries. This Minangkabau enterprise had a close tie with the

home village, and mutual reliance among the villagers and perhaps also kin group members. One can say that the enterprise copied the form of European management but added Minangkabau elements so that it could work smoothly in the Minangkabau social setting.

We have examined how the economic basis was prepared in West Sumatra before the export boom around 1925. This examination proved the remarkable flexibility and enterprise of the Minangkabaus in adjusting themselves to a new economic environment: when demand for tropical products was small they increased rice production; when export crops became more profitable, their production was immediately augmented. Next we will briefly discuss the export boom itself.

The Economic Boom

As mentioned before, Schrieke has drawn a vivid picture of the economic situation during the export boom of the mid-1920s.⁵⁸ In Korinci, the completion of the Korinci road in 1921 stimulated not only rice cultivation but also coffee. In 1913, only 190 tons of coffee was exported from Korinci, which increased to 1,280 tons in 1925 and to 2,986 tons in 1926. Land which had so far been worth little was cultivated. As a result boundary quarrels occurred frequently. In the Indrapura region on the coast west of Korinci, the inhabitants were busy clearing forests to establish coffee gardens in response to the export boom in 1925. In Tapan near Indurapura, coffee was not prosperous until 1923. Towards 1925, coffee gardens were opened so quickly that labour shortage became the most serious problem. Rice cultivation was pushed aside in favour of cash crops such as coffee, coconuts, and rubber.

In the Highlands, Muara Labuh experienced the most rapid expansion of cash crop cultivation. In 1910, coffee export had little significance in the income of the inhabitants. By 1925 the region exported about 6,000 pikuls. In schools, absenteeism increased considerably because many pupils went to work in cash crop gardens. Where land reserves were scarce or unsuitable for cultivation such as Alahan Panjang and

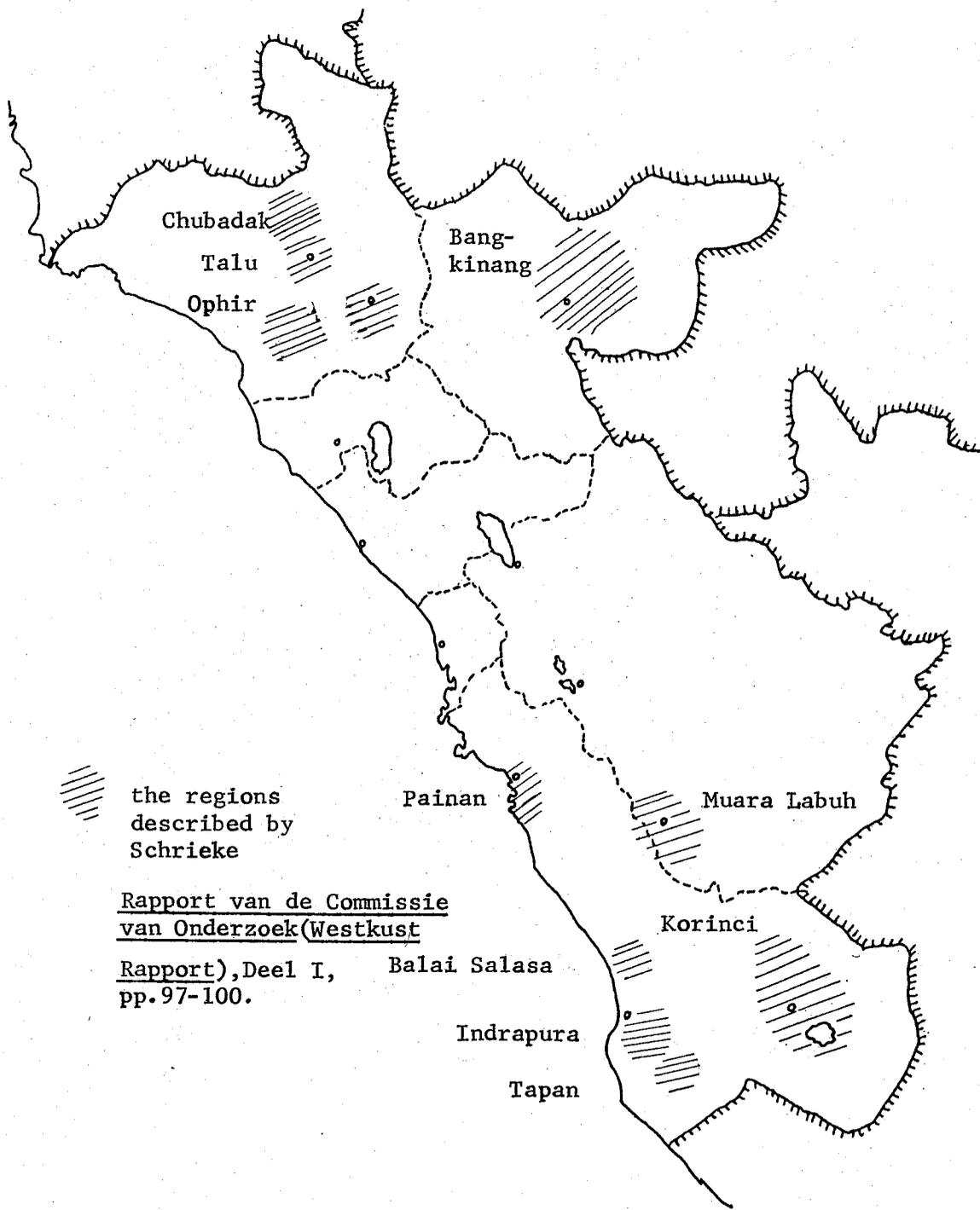
58. The following description is based on, Westkust Rapport, Deel I, pp. 93-102.

villages around Lake Singkarak, a large number of inhabitants left their home villages to work in cash crop gardens, not only in West Sumatra but also in other regions of Sumatra.

The Pariaman sub-division experienced a rapid development of copra production after the middle of the 1910s. As was the case in other regions, credit institutions contributed to this development greatly. Accompanying the expansion of coconut cultivation and the copra processing industry commercial activity in general also advanced, taking advantage of its location close to Padang. A remarkable characteristic of the development of cash crop cultivation in the 1910s and 1920s was observed in regions which had so far been isolated and poor. In outlying regions of the Highlands rubber cultivation brought a new life as well as the enlargement of existing coffee and other cash crop cultivation. In these regions also, labour shortage was a bottleneck in the expansion of cash crop gardens. Labourers in the nagari Kadjai (Ophir) could earn 75 cents plus a free meal for work only until 10 o'clock in the morning. In the Bangkinang sub-division, rubber cultivation began about 1910. In 1925, the total population of 4,000 earned two million guilders, or f.50 per head. A similar situation occurred in the Lubuk Sikaping area, particularly Mapat Tunggal and Rao.

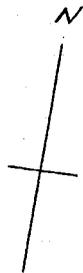
Schrieke showed the economic dynamism of the Minangkabaus in the export boom of 1925. His description is misleading, however. Schrieke, consciously or unconsciously, took evidence for the rapid economic growth from a very specific type of outlying region either rice cultivation had little significance or where abundant land reserves were available to expand cash crop cultivation, often sparsely populated (see Map 1). However these areas were not representative of the West Sumatran economy as a whole. Schrieke ignored the development of commerce and the importance of rice cultivation in the nucleus of the Highlands which were densely populated and where rice cultivation had a great significance, but where there were some cash crop gardens. The rice produced in the nucleus of the Highlands enabled the outlying regions to concentrate on cash crop cultivation. One of the most remarkable features of Minangkabau economic expansion in the 1920s was that Minangkabau merchants connected cash crop cultivating with sawah regions centering on big commercial towns such as Payakumbuh, Batusangkar, Bukittinggi, Padang Panjang (all in the nucleus of the Highlands), and Padang. It is not

Major Cash Crop Cultivation Areas: 1900-1926



the regions described by Schrieke

Rapport van de Commissie van Onderzoek (Westkust Rapport), Deel I, pp. 97-100. Balai Salasa



surprising that most regions with a high income per head (above f.114 a year) in 1926 were not located in the outlying regions Schrieke described (except for the Muara Labuh sub-division and the surroundings of the town Pariaman) but in the commercial centres in the nucleus of the Highlands and their surrounding regions which had income sources from substantial sawah and also from commerce, and to some extent cash crop cultivation.⁵⁹ From the above it should be clear that Clifford Geertz was also incorrect when he characterized the Minangkabau agricultural structure as 'swidden', cultivation on dry land or 'shifting', cultivation, ignoring the significance of rice in West Sumatra as a whole, and in the core uplands in particular (see Chapter VI).^{59a}

The total population of about 1.54 millions (excluding Europeans and non-Indonesian Asians) earned f.136.8 million in 1926, thus about f.89 per head or f.445 per household (one household had an average of about 5 members in West Sumatra). At that time, only a small proportion of households in Java earned more than f.300 or f.50 per head.⁶⁰ As far as average income was concerned, West Sumatra was wealthier than Java at the height of the export boom in the mid-1920s. In the wake of commercialization of the economy, monetization also advanced. In 1926, about 80 per cent of total income was cash in West Sumatra in general, though there was considerable regional difference.⁶¹

The development of the economy did not benefit all the Minangkabaus evenly. In 1908, 98.44 per cent of able-bodied men (347,935) earned below f.300, while only 1.56 per cent earned between f.300 and f.1,000. By the end of 1926, the distribution of income earning groups had diverged: 72 per cent of the men of working age (363,532) earned below f.300 a year; 25 per cent, between f.300 and f.1,000; 1.41 per cent, between f.1,000 and f.2,400; and 0.18 per cent above f.2,400. Economic stratification also developed.⁶²

59. Westkust Rapport, Deel II, pp.151-171.

59a. Clifford Geertz, Agricultural Involution: the process of ecological change in Indonesia (University of Carifornia Press, 6th printing, 1974), pp.120-21.

60. J.S. Furnival, Netherlands India (Cambridge University Press, 1944), p. 400.

61. Westkust Rapport, Deel II, pp.12, 17.

62. ibid, p. 39, Table.

Conclusion

Economic development requires long preparation both in the material and psychological sphere. For West Sumatra the abolition of the coffee Cultivation System in 1908 opened the way to a free economy. The Minangkabau peasants were legally released from the forced cultivation of coffee, though the effectiveness of the System was declining in the last quarter of the 19th century, and they could cultivate whatever crop they wanted. From this time on, the Minangkabaus began to prepare quickly for the increasing penetration of a monetary economy centering on cash crop cultivation. This preparation was partly a result of the new cash taxation system but was largely a spontaneous response of the population to the increasing demand for tropical products.

West Sumatra was fortunate in relation to food supplies. The increase in rice production made it possible for the peasants to feed themselves and accumulate capital at the same time. Rice was one of a few crops which could always find a market even when the export of other crops was difficult. In fact rice was an important cash crop for West Sumatra between the early 1910s and the export boom around 1925. This was difficult in most other regions. Capital investment was much facilitated by the rapid growth of the village and local credit institutions. This development reflected the existence of a strong desire by the Minangkabaus for credit to invest in new businesses and for enlarging existing ones. The development took place between 1912 and 1915, thus including the recession period during World War I. Perhaps the nagari treasury, a distinctive Minangkabau village system, contributed to that development as well as the villagers' enthusiasm.

In addition to the material prerequisites described above, significant advancement appeared in the social and organizational fields. Some wealthy people adopted modern methods of management resulting in the birth of limited liability companies. The people involved in the new form of management were prepared to risk a large amount of money. This attitude can be called enterprising. However, the enterprise of the Minangkabaus may have been rewarded with success because of West Sumatran well-balanced economic structure consisting of regions with extensive spare land for expanding cash crop cultivation, rice growing regions, and advanced commercial centres. The combination of these different types of economy made the economy as a whole flexible and stable.

The accumulation of capital may have been facilitated by the communal land system. As the Sarikat Keboen Sikat's case suggests, those who borrowed a large amount of money must have pledged something to volksbanks, in most cases sawah. In the Minangkabau case sawah holdings were not too fragmented, making them easier to use as a pledge. Apart from loans it is likely that many Minangkabaus used family property to launch new businesses. However such advantages of the communal system could become an impediment for development beyond a certain point. Once capital was accumulated by making use of family property, the profits had to be shared by all the family members. Thus, individualistic economic development was difficult.

The economic upsurge towards the export boom in the mid-1920s certainly increased the income of the population. However, about 75 per cent of total men of working age earned less than f.300 per year.

CHAPTER III

The Invasion of Nagari Autonomy

Minangkabau was in turmoil from 1908 to the end of the 1920s. The turmoil was caused both by internal social and economic change, and by the penetration of Dutch intervention into the existing adat-based nagari system. Since the late 19th century, instability had been generated by two factors both of which threatened nagari autonomy: the social reform movement by orthodox-oriented Islamic reformists and the Dutch intention of introducing monetary taxation. The anti-tax rebellion in 1908 was led by traditional leaders such as penghulus and teachers of the old tarekats who reacted against the further erosion of their influence in the nagari. The attempt of these traditional leaders to revive their influence was however suppressed by Dutch forces. The role of penghulus as village leaders and custodians of adat was considerably damaged. The introduction of monetary taxation upset the financial basis of nagari autonomy.

The development of a monetary economy, which accelerated after the introduction of monetary taxation, promoted individualization and the weakening of communal ties, one important basis of social cohesion in the nagari. The reorganization of nagari administration, started in 1914, caused a division of leadership in the nagari, creating the nagari council in which only authorized penghulus were able to obtain seats at the expense of other penghulus. In addition, new ideologies and the continuing challenge of the Islamic reformists gradually stimulated the disintegration of the old nagari system. The problem here is that on the one hand the decline of nagari autonomy and the influence of adat authorities was proceeding as an irrevocable trend, but on the other hand the challenges against adat authorities and social reform movement either by secular or Islamic groups were constantly suppressed by the Dutch who wanted to preserve some elements of the adat system for stable administration. Both the adat authorities and challengers were frustrated. A government plan in 1922 to introduce a land tax brought a new source of unrest among the Minangkabaus as a whole. This unrest was further intensified by the spread of communist influence during the anti-land tax movement. The communist influence in turn created another tension in the society. Conservative penghulus felt their authority threatened.

Anti-Tax Rebellion

The anti-tax rebellion had two elements: opposition to the introduction of new monetary taxation and the adat revival movement led by penghulus and tarekat leaders, both of whom had been challenged by Islamic reformists. In the first place we will examine the historical background of the anti-tax rebellion and will then discuss the reasons why the rebellion was led by the traditional leadership groups of Minangkabau, and why a popular uprising took place at all.

The west coast of Minangkabau had been occupied by the Acehese since the latter half of the 16th century, and they had collected import and export duties at the ports. In 1667 the Dutch expelled the Acehese from the coast. In the following year, envoys, who claimed to be sent by the Minangkabau kings in Pagarruyung, visited the Company's factory in Padang to bestow upon the Company the position of panglima, a deputy of the dynasty, in charge of Padang and the surrounding area, in return for having expelled the Acehese. At the same time the Company was given a right to levy import and export duties. This levying of duties did not invite resentment from the population at first because they owed their liberation from Acehese domination. However resentment against the Dutch grew as the Dutch introduced monopolies of salt, opium, cotton and so on towards the end of the Company period.¹

The Dutch strengthened their right to levy taxes in 1821 when the resident of West Sumatra concluded a 'formal cession and unlimited transfer of land belonging to the kings of Sungai Tarab, Pagarruyung, and Suruaso' with 'some chiefs (enige hoofden)' from the Highlands. The Dutch were suspicious of the legitimacy of these 'chiefs' to represent the kingdom and moreover of the kings to have the right to conclude a 'formal cession' of Minangkabau land. In any case this agreement provided at least a legal ground for Dutch territorial rights over Minangkabau, however ambiguous and nominal they may have been.²

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1. Casteel Bataviasche Dagh-Register 1680 ('s-Gravenhage, 1912), pp.128, 716, 721-23; De Stuers, De Vestiging en Uitbreiding, vol.I, op.cit., p.9; E.B. Kielstra, "Onze Kennis van Sumatra's Westkust Omstreeks de Helft der Achteende Eeuwe", B.K.I., vol.36(1887), p.580.
 2. J. Ballot, Ontwerp Agrarische Regeling voor Sumatra's Westkust (De Volhardiging, Padang, 1911), pp.4-5.

In 1825 Governor de Stuers tried to collect a market tax in those areas of the Highlands already occupied by the Dutch (some parts of Agam and Tanah Datar), in order to supplement administrative costs. The collection right was auctioned to private individuals, most of whom were Chinese. Only a total of f.400 was collected from 40 markets in the Highlands in eight months that year. In 1836, f.800 was collected in three months with much more pressure. However the highland Minangkabaus resisted the collection strongly by chasing out and sometimes killing the collectors.³ The actual collection seems to have been stopped soon after, though the regulation of the market tax was maintained until 1833. In that year the Dutch promulgated the Long Declaration (Plakaat Panjang) which declared that the Dutch would not levy direct monetary taxes upon the Minangkabaus.⁴ This was a compromise devised by the Dutch to avoid alienating the population in general at a time when they were fighting the padris.

The Cultivation System introduced a new form of taxation, in addition to the continuing system of import and export duties. Corvée was imposed upon the Minangkabaus to carry coffee and construct roads for coffee transportation. Corvée was demanded very unsystematically without stipulating the maximum duration per year until the late 19th century. There was a great difference in the performance of corvée, depending on the area. Inhabitants of coffee producing areas and those who happened

3. Report of de Stuers on the general situation of West Sumatra, dd.17 May 1826, V. 23 October 1826, no.48; E.B. Kielstra, "Sumatra's Westkust van 1818-1825", in B.K.I., vol.36(1887), pp.124-27; L.C. Westenik, "De Inlandsche Bestuurshoofden ter Sumatra's Westkust", K.T., 1913, no.1, p.683.

4. Full text of this declaration is found in, Kielstra, "Sumatra's Westkust van 1833-1835", in B.K.I., vol.38 (1889), pp.230-34.

to live along the roads to be constructed were burdened more heavily than others.⁵ Why did the Minangkabaus not oppose the imposition of corvée when it was introduced almost simultaneously with the Cultivation System? Perhaps military pressure intimidated the population. The Dutch continued military expeditions even after the fall of Bonjol, the last stronghold of the padris, in 1837, because scattered uprisings by remaining padris were still taking place, notably in Batipuh in 1841 and near Padang in 1844.⁶ In addition, Dutch forces were expanding control over the non-occupied fringe areas of the Highlands around 1847. It is also possible that resistance did not occur because penghulus were exempt from corvée and enjoyed some commission for coffee delivery, removing any incentive they might have had to become popular leaders in a resistance movement. Besides the taxation issue various sorts of unrest had developed by the 1890s. The authority of penghulus was declining considerably throughout the 19th century. One reason was the increase in the number of penghulus, stimulated by the fact that penghulus were exempt from corvée. Wealthy people could pay off the ceremony for the penghuluship even though not legitimate candidates in terms of the adat. The division of nagari accelerated this increase. The government tried to stop this tendency by introducing the penghulu registration system in 1880, but was not successful. The popularity of penghulus declined when they put pressure upon the villagers to collect coffee, as the latter regarded them as agents of the government.⁷

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5. E. Graves, "The Ever Victorious Buffalo" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1971), pp.224-230. The Long Declaration in 1833 also stipulated that the Dutch would not impose free labour service. However they began to use it after the padri war, in 1841, for the first time. See, Stuers, De Vestiging, vol.2, op.cit., p.151. Details of corvée performance in West Sumatra in the late 19th century are found in Koloniaal Verslag 1881, p. 76.
 6. A.V. Michiels, De Toestand van Sumatra's Westkust in 1848 ('s Hertogenbosch, Muller, 1851), pp. 13-14.
 7. B.Schrieke, "Het Probleem der Bestuursorganisatie ter Sumatra's Westkust", K.T. 1927, no.1, pp.57-86; Westkust Rapport, Deel I, pp.127-28; Taufik Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World; West Sumatra in the early Decades of the Twentieth Century", Culture and Politics in Indonesia, C.Holt ed., (Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 203-10.

When the government began to consider the introduction of monetary taxation in place of the Cultivation System in the last quarter of the 19th century it feared that the population would regard this as a betrayal of the promise made in the 1833 Long Declaration that the Dutch would not levy direct monetary taxation. Extensive meetings were organized by government authorities in West Sumatra throughout Minangkabau in 1894-95 to persuade the Minangkabaus. The final report on these meetings concluded that all areas except for Painan, Air Bangis and Padang Panjang opposed the new taxation. In Padang the inhabitants and their chiefs protested in violent ways. In all other areas inhabitants complained that they were too poor to pay taxes.⁸

At the same time as changes were made in the taxation system, the adat order of Minangkabau was being challenged by Islamic reformists. A Minangkabau living in Mecca, Syech Achmad Chatib, began to criticise the tarekats which were assimilated in the Minangkabau matrilineal social order, and he attacked the matrilineal inheritance law: these criticisms were similar to those which had been made by the padri movement and had been supported by merchants.⁹

Thus, as well as having to deal with government taxation plans, penghulus had to fight against Islamic reformists at the same time. The anti-tax feeling of the population provided a favourable soil for the reformists to sow dissatisfaction. As was the case in the padri war, the threatening of the adat order inevitably invited government intervention because it regarded the reformists as elements harmful to a stable Minangkabau social order, and the government policy was therefore to contain their influence.¹⁰ At the beginning of 1897, reformist teachers

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8. Gouvernementskoffiecultuur van 1888-1903, Tweede Gedelte De GouvernementsKoffiecultuur in de Buitenbezittingen (Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1904), pp. 63-64.
 9. ibid, p.63; M.Joustra, Minangkabau: Land, Volk, en Geschiedenis (Amsterdam, 1923), p.71. The relationship between Islamic reformism and the desires of merchants has been admirably described by Christine Dobbin, "Tuanku Imam Bondjol (1772-1864)", Indonesia, no.13 (April 1972), pp. 5-36.
 10. One government reaction against the influence of Islamic reformism was the proposal of Snouck Hurgronje to codify the Minangkabau adat in order to prevent its change. See, Snouck Hurgronje, "Adviese", in Adatrechtbundels, vol.I, pp. 21-44.

were preparing armed resistance for the following year. The hostility of the population also reached a peak about that time because the government decided to introduce monetary taxation, if possible, in 1898.¹¹ The Islamic reformist movement spread rapidly in the Lowlands, encouraging people to resist the Dutch. Acehnese were also moving to Painan, south of Padang, to help the Minangkabau reformists, though the number is not clear. The participation of Acehnese Muslims was made possible by the personal relationship between the reformists in the two regions, who exchanged teachers and pupils with each other. Both Minangkabau and Acehnese reformists called for a holy war to annihilate Dutch authority. The reformists proceeded to the Highlands and held numerous meetings. At this stage the reformist movement clearly began to have an anti-government character as well as one of opposition to the matrilineal adat system and the tarekats.¹² In the Highlands, Padang Panjang and Bukittinggi were the centres. However, the reformist leaders managed to keep secret their intention to launch armed insurgency in 1898.¹³

The movement had almost succeeded in arousing the population around the middle of 1897. At the end of July that year reformist leaders were visiting scattered places in the Highlands to attain support from their teachers. One of the rebel leaders visited his teacher in the Highlands and disclosed the plan for revolt in 1898. The teacher discouraged the plan and immediately went to Bukittinggi to inform a friend, an Indonesian jaksa or prosecutor, of a planned uprising. On his way home he met another friend who was also an Indonesian official. Thus the plan came to be known by the government. Arrests of leaders started from the

11. See note 8 above; "Nota betreffende de Invoering van de Hoofdelijke Belastingen ter Sumatra's Westkust", in V.22 November 1897, no.73; Indischen Brieven, 30 December 1897, no.135/G.

12. Report of Nieuwman, dd. Painan 11 July 1897, no.7/G, in Mailr. 513/1897, V.22 November 1897, no. 73.

13. Report of Resident of the Padang Highlands (Prins), Fort de Kock, 25 August 1897, no.67/G, Mailr. 513/1897; Report of Governor of West Sumatra, Padang 30 August 1897, no.10 zeer geheim, Mailr. 513/1897.

beginning of August. After this event, the reformists were unable to hold meetings due to government surveillance, and many of the leaders fled to fringe areas of the Highlands to avoid arrest.¹⁴

Faced with this reformist movement and obvious resentment of the population, Dutch officials organized a second round of consultation with penghulus and the villagers. To the government's surprise, of the 115 meetings held, only 3 criticized the taxation on the grounds of the previous Dutch promise not to collect direct monetary taxes. However the general attitude of the people towards the taxation was worse than during the consultations in 1894-95. This suggests that the Long Declaration was not the fundamental reason for the people's opposition to the taxation (see below). Painan, Padang Panjang and Air Bangis as well as Pariaman, Padang, and Bukittinggi were very antagonistic. Penghulus without exception complained of impoverished economic conditions.¹⁵ Although the reformist leaders who fled to remote northern areas such as Ophir were still continuing the movement there, the expected uprising did not take place, as a result of vigilance by police. However Dutch authorities recognized that there was ever-growing antagonism against the government by the Minangkabaus in general.¹⁶ The great potential of popular resistance compelled the government to postpone the introduction of the taxation until 1908. The timing of the actual implementation was decided on not because the government had been able to persuade the Minangkabaus, but because of an aggressive attitude by the Netherlands Indies government to the Outer Provinces at the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁷

The movement by Islamic reformists in 1897 had made it clear that the nagari and district heads could not keep order as the government

14. ibid.

15. Gouvernementskoffiecultuur, op.cit., pp.60-65.

16. Report of Governor of West Sumatra, "Nota", in V.22 November 1897, no. 73.

17. At the beginning of the 20th century the Dutch launched extensive expeditions to unoccupied Outer Provinces. For instance Korinci was pacified in 1905.

expected.¹⁸ Nor could traditional leaders organize any effective counter-movement to the reformists. However the reformists were unable to make any real headway because of the pressure of Dutch forces, and once they were suppressed the traditional authorities were provided with the opportunity of taking the initiative in society. Scattered uprisings occurred, as the government had feared, as soon as tax assessments were started in March 1908. Revolts took place in all parts of West Sumatra, though less severely in Indrapura. Before discussing the characteristics of the rebellion it will be helpful to examine the case of Oud Agam and Padang Panjang-Pariaman where the uprising was most widespread.

Oud Agam

Just before the Dutch started assessment in March, numerous meetings were held under the leadership of penghulus, bringing together family heads, merchants and tarekat teachers. These meetings immediately decided not to pay the income and slaughter taxes. Dutch officials appeared on 21 March with police and soldiers, but could not find in the villages penghulus and family heads, who were obliged to give data for assessments. They had withdrawn to discuss how to resist the assessment and paying of taxes. The government treated non-co-operating chiefs harshly from the outset. In the Empat Kota district, 20 penghulus were arrested on the following day. When these penghulus were taken to Bukittinggi, the villagers followed in the hope that mass resistance there could stop the taxation and obtain release for the imprisoned penghulus.²⁰ A well-known Dutch adat specialist, L.C. Westenenk, was dispatched to Empat Kota to persuade family heads to submit data. This persuasion had some result in the nagari Kota Tua where penghulus and

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18. Dutch officials did not necessarily trust government-paid adat chiefs as well as Islamic reformists. A Dutch official in West Sumatra reported to the Governor of West Sumatra: "I do not trust people who are paid by the government, of course never trust Islamic people, though". See, Letter of Prins, Fort de Kock, 25 August 1897, no. 67/G, in Mailr. 513/1897.
19. "De Hoofdelijke Belasting in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", T.B.B., vol.28 (1905), p.388.
20. Scheltema van der Heere, "De Belasting Invoering op Sumatra's Westkust", I.G. 1923, no.1, p.131; "Gisting ter Sumatra's Westkust", I.G. 1908, no.2, pp. 1113-14.

family heads held a feast of apology according to the adat. The feast involved slaughtering buffaloes, which was preceded by payment of the new slaughter tax. However other nagaris in this area did not give in to the pressure.²¹

In April, penghulus of Padang Luar led hundreds of villagers armed with knives and stones to assault the office of the Assistance Resident in Bukittinggi, but they were repelled by Dutch forces.²² This fight resulted in the arrest of 21 penghulus and family heads altogether, and the arrest were followed by a feast of apology.²³ In recurrent uprisings in Oud Agam, a nagari head and district head in Banu Hampu tried to dissuade penghulus and villagers from resistance. This however did not improve the situation. On the contrary, the resistance of the inhabitants intensified because these heads were in theory representatives of the people as well as government officials. Two penghulu suku rodis, who had been dismissed from their position by the government and who were discontented with the Dutch, stood on the side of the rebels. They accused the nagari and district head of having discouraged the villagers' resistance, and began to contact people from Padang Panjang for a larger uprising.²⁴

From the beginning of May 1908, Islamic leadership came to the fore, as penghulus and family heads were the first victims of arrest and many of them had already been detained. Two Islamic leaders were the first arrested on 5 May on the charge of instigating a holy war.²⁵ Significantly, it was Syatariah-tarekat authorities including teachers and mosque personnel rather than reformists who assumed the leadership in the tax rebellion. As the tarekats had been challenged by the reformists for a long time, the anti-tax rebellion was a good opportunity for the former to revive their declining influence. In Kamang, some Indonesian officials

21. Telegram of Governor of West Sumatra, Padang 28 March 1908, no.25, Mailr. 534/1908; De Heer, "De Belasting", op.cit., p.132, telegram no. 1.

22. Telegram of Heckler, Padang 21 April 1908, Mailr. 656/1908.

23. Telegram of Heckler, Padang 26 April 1908, Mailr.692/1908. See also, de Heere, "De Belasting", op.cit., p.132, for the Lawang case.

24. Report of Griessche, Fort de Kock 3 June 1908, Mailr.725c/1908.

25. De Heere, "De Belasting", op.cit., p.136.

tried to mitigate the resentment but had no success.²⁶ When Dutch officials came to Kamang in June, the refusal of family heads to give data led to bloody fights between the Dutch forces and the inhabitants as a whole. They were confronted by about 500 villagers dressed in white with charms (jimat) for invulnerability against bullets.²⁷ The rebels suffered 90 casualties, while they killed a pensioned nagari head and the district head.²⁸ However within three days of the suppression of the revolt, f.36,000 in taxes had been collected from this district.²⁹ The last attempt at revolt was planned in early July by Islamic leaders, but the attempt was crushed before it was launched. By the end of July the uprising in the Oud Agam area had died out.³⁰

Padang Panjang-Pariaman

At the end of March 1908 the Padang Panjang area faced assessments which were also rejected by penghulus and family heads.³¹ The first clash with Dutch forces took place on 27 March near the nagari Kayu Tanam. Some penghulus and two dismissed penghulu suku rodis were arrested in the clash.³² In April insurgents cut telephone cables

26. De Heere, "De Belasting", op.cit., pp.149-50.

27. ibid, pp. 139-40.

28. ibid; "Gisting", op.cit., p.1114; Telegram of Heckler, Padang 16 June 1908, Mailr. 991a/1908; Telegram of Department of War, Padang 18 June 1908, Mailr. 991/1908.

29. Joustra, Minangkabau, op.cit., p.75.

30. Kort Verslag over de maand Juni 1908, Mailr. 1327a/1908; Telegram of Heckler, Padang 23 June 1908, no.499, Mailr. 1040/1908. See also his telegrams in Mailr. 1245/1908 and letter dd. Padang 26 August 1908, no. 3412 in Mailr. 1475/1908.

31. De Heere, "De Belasting", op.cit., p.134, telegram no.4.

32. ibid, p.132, telegram, no.2.

between Bukittinggi and Padang Panjang. After arresting 24 penghulus the Dutch ordered the inhabitants to hold feasts.³³ However the feasts did not lead to the end of resistance. Fierce uprisings broke out around 12 May in the Sumpur district, as a result of which 40 penghulus were arrested in only two nagaris.³⁴

In June rebels in white clothes murdered the nagari head of Bunga Tanjung and wounded the district head of Enam Kota in the nagari Pandai Sikat near Padang Panjang.³⁵ Although the wearing of white clothes and the participation of some Islamic groups from Pariaman suggest an Islamic element, the leadership was still in the hands of penghulus at this stage and Islamic leadership only came to the fore at the end of June. Islamic leaders stiffened popular resistance with words such as: 'when the Dutch come to collect taxes we will pay in klewang (knife)'.³⁶ At the end of June telephone and telegram cables were again cut between Bukittinggi, Padang Panjang, and Padang,³⁷ while at the pasar of Padang Panjang charms were being sold.³⁸ These areas were in turmoil.³⁹ A series of uprisings culminated on 24 June when 50 rebels were killed by Dutch guns.⁴⁰ Subjugation by Dutch forces was followed by an order to these areas to accept the following six conditions: (1) security of Indonesian officials;

33. ibid, p.135, telegram, no.6.

34. ibid, p.137, telegram, no.10.

35. ibid, p.140, telegram, no.17; Telegram of Heckler, Padang Panjang, 17 June 1908, no.1086, Mailr. 991a/1908.

36. De Heere, "De Belasting", op.cit., p.142, telegram no. 23.

37. Telegram of Heckler, Fort de Kock, 18 June 1908, no.402, Mailr. 991a/01908.

38. De Heere, "De Belasting", op.cit., p.142, telegram no. 22.

39. Telegram of Heckler, Fort Kock, 18 June 1908, no.406, Mailr. 991a/1908.

40. Kort verslag over de maand Juni 1908, Mailr. 1327a/1908.

(2) disclosure of the plans and locations of Islamic leaders who had not been arrested yet; (3) immediate construction of camps for patrol; (4) the giving of a feast of apology, slaughtering buffaloes after paying the tax; (5) the payment of slaughter and income tax; (6) the repair of broken bridges within six months.⁴¹ The inhabitants had to accept these conditions.

As uprisings in other areas followed a pattern similar to that delineated above, we need not go further into their details but rather discuss the causes of this widespread rebellion. One of the most common arguments attributes it to the Dutch neglect of the 1833 Long Declaration which stated that direct monetary taxes should not be levied.⁴² When seeking to introduce taxes the government had taken the Declaration seriously, holding meetings for consultation with penghulus, family heads and the villagers in the late 19th century. However there was no consultation in 1908. Some Dutch officials admitted the government had been unwise in not first obtaining the consent of the penghulus to the new taxes.⁴³ Most Dutch officials regretted the bloody revolt and felt that they should have consulted penghulus in 1908 too even though they might not have gained their consent.⁴⁴

However significant the betrayal of the Long Declaration might seem as the major reason for the rebellion, it should not be over-estimated. Even in 1824, before the Declaration, a Minangkabau penghulu told a Dutch official that Minangkabau chiefs had no right to dispose of people's output, and therefore the Dutch had no right to levy taxes other than duties in trade.⁴⁵ It must also be noted that not all the

41. Telegram of Heckler, Fort de Kock, 29 June 1908, no.678, Mailr. 1082a/1908.

42. For instance, Taufik Abdullah, "Modernization", op.cit., pp.209-10. Lance Castles attributes the reason for the rebellion to the position of laras head, which was not original to Minangkabau, and therefore appeared more oppressive in the eyes of the population than otherwise. Lance Castles, "Political Life of a Sumatran Residency: Tapanuli", (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 1972), pp.51-52.

43. "Gisting", op.cit., pp.1116-17; Kroon, "Invoering van Belasting op Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B., vol.52 (1917), pp.70-79.

44. "Nota" over tax and corvée, Mailr. 1332/1923.

45. Nahuijs, Brieven over Bencoolen, Padang, het Rijk van Menangkabau, Rhiow, Sincapoera en Poeloe Pinang (Breda, 1824), pp.148-49.

Minangkabaus knew the contents of the Declaration; in Alahan Panjang, for instance, few inhabitants were aware of them.⁴⁶ A more relevant factor may have been that new taxation was an extra burden and symbolized further penetration of colonial domination. The opposition was surely intensified by the fact that the Minangkabaus knew only adat taxes levied by the individual nagaris.⁴⁷ A Minangkabau who participated in the rebellion later explained the reason for his resistance, saying that he could not understand why the Minangkabaus had to pay income and slaughter tax to the Dutch.⁴⁸ This sentiment may have been widely shared by the rebels.

Economic conditions were not particularly unfavourable around 1908 except for those living near the new Emma port and near railways under construction, who had had to provide free labour service since the last quarter of the 19th century. The taxation burden, the 2 per cent income tax or f.1 minimum for incomes below f.120 per year, was likewise not especially heavy. It was often much lower than in other regions.⁴⁹ The average income tax in West Sumatra was estimated at about f.2.5 per man of working age, while in Palembang, for instance, about f.6-f.7 was

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46. Report of Michielsen, in V.22 October 1897, no.73. G.Gonggrijp referred to his experience in Alahan Panjang in a conference at Fort de Kock on 23 September 1922 and stated that few inhabitants there knew the contents of the Plakaat Panjang. See, the proceedings of the conference in Mailr. 1332/1923.
47. There were a few Dutch officials who accepted this theory, for instance, Willinck. See, "Gisting", op.cit., p. 1115.
48. Warta Hindia, 3 May 1919, no.55, in Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleische-Chineesche Pers (samengesteld door het Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur en annverwante aangelegenheden, hereafter abbreviated as IPO), 1919, no.19.
49. Letter of Governor of West Sumatra, 13 July 1895, no.3405 and 18 February 1896, no.892, quoted in Gouvernementskoffiecultuur, op.cit., p. 63.

actually collected at the beginning of the 20th century. Considering the fact that cash crop cultivation in general had been developing in West Sumatra since the last quarter of the 19th century, the abolition of the Cultivation System was in theory beneficial to the Minangkabaus.

The anti-tax rebellion involved other causes than those directly related to taxation. To understand this we will examine two outstanding characteristics of the rebellion; i.e., the strong antagonism of the rebels towards Indonesian officials and the leadership provided by penghulus together with tarekat teachers. Besides the Indonesian officials mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, the following officials were killed in various places: the district head of Tarusan (Painan)⁵⁰ and Lubuk Alung (Pariaman);⁵¹ the nagari head of Magek and Salo (Agam),⁵² Palembang (Maninjau)⁵³ and Paningahan (Singkarak).⁵⁴ In addition there were cases in which Indonesian officials were wounded. There may have been other instances not noted in the records. Probably the district and nagari heads, among other Indonesian officials, were attacked because they were the persons who carried out local administration and were thus placed in close contact with the peasants. The district and nagari heads were not necessarily sympathetic to the introduction of monetary taxation, for they were mostly penghulus in their home villages or family heads at the same time. The government order to collect taxes therefore placed them in a dilemma. Faced with the furious rebels, most such Indonesian officials could do nothing but watch passively or flee, as they did in Batusangkar⁵⁵ and Pariaman.⁵⁶ When they tried to appease the villagers resentment was intensified.

The penghulus had reasons for resistance. Firstly, they were protectors of fellow villagers' interests and the adat order, both of which were threatened by the taxation. Secondly, they were not exempt from the

50. Telegram of Department of War, 16 August 1908, no.2,vii/G in Mailr. 692/1908.

51. Telegram of Heckler, Padang 24 June 1908, no.520, Mailr. 1050/1908.

52. Westkust Rapport, Deel III, p.18, no.69.

53. Telegram of Heckler, Padang, 23 June 1908, no.499, Mailr.1040/1908.

54. Kort verslag over de maand Juni 1908, Mailr. 1327a/1908.

55. Telegram of Department of War, 26 April 1908, no.1, vii/G in Mailr. 707/1908.

56. Telegram of Heckler, Padang 24 March 1908, no.395, Mailr.480/1908.

new income tax unless they were nagari heads or held some other government post. Thirdly, they had been seeking a chance to counter the influence of the reformists by taking initiative in the society. The tarekats also shared common interest with penghulus to defend their influence against the reformists. The continuing leadership of these traditional elite groups was related in part to the fact that the reformist movement had been suppressed at the end of the 19th century, and its leaders arrested by the Dutch. For these groups, the anti-tax rebellion was an adat revival movement in which they could act against the reformists and the Dutch at the same time, in trying to preserve their existing privileges.⁵⁷

The suppression of the resistance had two results for the government. On the one hand, it was now able to secure for itself the revenue it desired. On the other hand, the suppression of the penghulus' leadership made it difficult for the government to pursue an elaborate nagari administration afterwards, as this Dutch officialdom had always relied on the penghulus. The anti-tax rebellion marked the decline of adat-based leadership and the rise to prominence of the Islamic reformists and modernists together with the emergence of Western educated leadership. This take-over can be considered as the transition from a nagari-based to a supra-nagari leadership. The anti-tax rebellion was the largest and last event for the Minangkabau penghulus functioning as village leaders. As for the tarekats, their influence at supra-nagari level was consistently undermined by Islamic modernists and reformists towards the end of Dutch rule. At the village level however both penghulus and tarekat authorities either as mosque personnel or teachers of nagari religious schools retained some influence which was attacked in the 1930s (see Chapter V). Unlike these traditional elite groups, the Islamic reformists and modernists had no stronghold in the nagari, particularly in adat-

57. There is a possibility that tarekat leaders were partly motivated by dissatisfaction at not being exempt from taxes and corvée, since they had been asking the government for exemption and were refused. See, Letter of Nieuwman, Padang 5 May 1908, no.40, in V.25 August 1908, no. U15.

oriented nagaris. Instead they organized themselves in towns, recruiting members from all over West Sumatra. The Western-educated also did not base their leadership on the nagari but on West Sumatra or Indonesia as a whole. In this sense the leadership of these anti-traditional groups can be called urban-centred. This transition in leadership was accelerated until the early 1930s.

The Reorganization of Nagari Administration

The Ethical Policy in Netherlands India, which was introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, necessitated numerous reforms, revisions, and adjustment of existing administrative apparatus. Although the Policy was supposedly intended by the Dutch to promote the welfare of Indonesian people, this reorganization served basically to establish more effective colonial administration. West Sumatra also experienced several reorganizations in the 1910s. The position of penghulu suku rodi, created by the Dutch for the Cultivation System, came to have no raison d'etre once the System was abolished. This position still existed after 1908 for general administrative purposes but had ceased to exist by the middle 1920s because the government did not make any new appointments.⁵⁸ The title of penghulu laras or district head was transformed into that of demang. However the demang was no longer necessarily appointed from among local adat chiefs but might be any able man with higher education. Among the reorganizations implemented in West Sumatra, the Nagari Ordinance had by far the most profound impact upon the socio-economic nagari structure, intensifying the disintegration of traditional cohesion and creating unrest among the villagers.

The Nagari Ordinance of 1914 (Staatsblad no.774) was enacted as part of the so-called decentralization program for Indonesia as a whole within the framework of the Ethical Policy, which aimed at the partial transfer of the central administration to local bodies 'in the interest of the people themselves'. The Dutch thought that the village should be

58. Letter of J. Ballot, Padang 10 October 1912, no.923, in W.H. Stap, "De Nagari-Ordinnantie ter Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B., vol.53 (1917), Bijlage II.

vested with legal personality so that it might take legal action to promote village amenities and welfare. There were however special imperatives for Dutch authorities in West Sumatra; the restoration of social and political order which was disturbed by the anti-tax rebellion, the effective collection of new monetary taxes, and the promotion of corvée performance by the Minangkabaus more effectively. Despite many efforts by Dutch officials in West Sumatra they were unable to solve these problems satisfactorily.

The general principle of the Nagari Ordinance was directed towards the re-establishment of an 'autonomous village community' as a legal personality (rechtsgemeenschap), leaving a degree of self-administration concerning village affairs to the nagari. This general principle was embodied in two core stipulations in the Ordinance; the establishment of the village council (nagariraad) as an administrative body but with some legislative power in matters concerning the nagari, and the self-financing of the nagari. The nagari council was to be run by the kepala nagari, a new title for the nagari head in place of that of penghulu kepala, as the chairman, and 'chiefs of the oldest families of the nagari' or 'core penghulus' who were supposed to be descendants of the original founders of the nagari. The clear distinction between 'core penghulus' and 'non-core penghulus' was provocative from the beginning, both among government officials and the villagers, for the Bodi Caniago nagari made little distinction between the two, while the Koto Piliang nagari accorded the higher position to some distinguished penghulus. The nagari head was elected from among the core penghulus, and was to be paid entirely by the nagari itself instead of by the government as had been the case previously. The nagari head was no longer a government official in terms of his salary and pension, but was burdened with more administrative tasks than before.⁵⁹

The major content of the concept of 'autonomy' as designed by the government was self-financing. The government concern over the nagari treasury can be traced back to 1905 when investigations of the adat taxes were first made systematically in the Agam division. In 1911 the general

59. ibid., pp. 699-765.

principles were set up for the Oud Agam sub-division: nagaris were to be obliged to undertake book-keeping, to report to the Assistant Resident, and to deposit the money in the Padang Branch of Java Bank.⁶⁰ At the same time Dutch officials tried to abolish many kinds of adat dues except those imposed upon land and water including the seashore, the hak ulayat, namely the forest dues, the dues on opening uncultivated land, and the sand dues.⁶¹ These principles with some modifications were implemented after 1915 in a far reaching way for Minangkabau as a whole and led to regulations which included: (1) all nagari money, including the mosque treasury, were to be stored in the nagari treasury; (2) the nagari treasury was to be controlled by the nagari head instead of by the penghulus collectively; (3) two nagari impositions were to be collected regularly for communal nagari purposes: the iyuran as a kind of poll tax and the serayo or the commutation of labour service to penghulus. Every adult man was to be responsible for the iyuran but a woman was also obliged to pay if she had private property or income. The serayo was only applied to able bodied men; (4) expenditure from the treasury was to be limited to common interests benefiting the nagari as a whole, such as payment of the salaries of the nagari head, police, teachers of nagari schools, the clerk and watchman of the nagari money and rice bank, the construction and management of the mosque, nagari council hall, Islamic schools, dikes, bridges, and paths, and finally payment of a reward to the core penghulus in the council, who were called the penghulu bersurat or authorized penghulus; (5) the pasar tax was to be separated from the nagari treasury as before, but its use was to be controlled by the government; (6) the treasury books of the nagari money and pasar funds were to be checked by the Dutch local administration every three months and permission was necessary for expenditure. Whether or not the government intended it, these new regulations contributed

60. L.C. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari (Encyclopaedische Bureau, 1915), pp. 156-60.

61. Stap, "De Nagari-Ordinnantie", op.cit., pp.735-36. The Dutch regarded the adat taxes as 'feudalistic' payments, that should be abolished. J.F.Furnival, The Netherlands India (Cambridge University Press, 1944), p. 294.

to transferring part of the government's financial burdens to the villagers.⁶²

Two points must be discussed concerning the Nagari Ordinance. Firstly, the creation of the nagari council represented the Dutch colonial policy towards the 'autonomy' of the indigenous village. For effective administration, the Dutch restricted autonomy by super-imposing an alien authority (the nagari council) on top of the adat council in which not only penghulus but also common villagers could have a voice. On the other hand, they deliberately preserved some indigenous elements in order to make use of the traditional influence of core penghulus and to avoid social disturbances which might stem from sudden change of social and political structure in the village. Secondly, the serayo and iyuran had never been regular impositions in the adat but occasional contributions by the villagers towards such things as marriage ceremonies of their penghulus and towards general nagari expenses incurred when building the council hall, mosque, and so forth. The Minangkabau usage of 'serayo' meant mutual help or to perform something collectively.⁶³ An investigation in 1916 disclosed that both impositions had been institutionalized into regular payments by Dutch pressure since the beginning of the 20th century, although other Dutch officials claimed that these impositions had been regular 'from old time'.⁶⁴ The two adat dues were

62. Besides Staatsblad 1914, no. 744, see Stap, "De Nagari-Ordinnantie", op.cit., pp. 699-718. The reorganization of nagari administration was carried out not only by the Ordinance, but also by many regulations and instructions issued at the residency level.

63. J.H. Lieftrinck, Onderzoek naar de Heffing van Belasting en de Vordering van Heerendiensten in Eenige Deelen der Buitenbezittingen: Sumatra's Westkust, vol. 1 (General Remarks) op cit., p. 3, no. 15 and 16: ibid, vol. 3 (notes over Corvée), pp. 47-49; Witlau, "Nota", in Mailr. 1542/1918: Proceedings of a conference in Fort de Kock on 23 September 1922, Mailr. 479/1923; Letter of Alting, Batavia, 20 April 1918, no. 392/Btg, in Mailr. 1542/1918. It is understandable then that the villagers regarded the uang nagari as government impositions.

64. J.L. van der Toorn, De Minangkabausche, Maleische en Nederlandsch Woordenboek ('s Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1891), 'serayo' p. 206.

utilized by the Dutch to rationalize their introduction as virtual state taxes.

Because the Ordinance involved these problems its implementation inevitably caused difficulties. As soon as the nagari council began to be established, disputes emerged over who were the 'chiefs of the oldest families', especially in the coast area where the adat was less rigid and more intermingled with heterogeneous elements than it was in the core Highlands.⁶⁵ To the government's surprise, the selection of core penghulus turned out to be very difficult in many places.⁶⁶ To settle disputes, Dutch officials gradually intervened in the selection of the council members and sometimes enforced their opinions on the basis of Dutch investigations. However, penghulus who did not receive authorization as members of the new council claimed the investigations to be unfair.⁶⁷ The final arrangement of the membership problem created a variety of forms. Sometimes all the penghulus in a nagari rotated the membership at certain intervals, yearly or every three years. Sometimes all the penghulus could obtain membership when the total number was not large. Generally speaking, however, it was expedient to eliminate some penghulus from the council because the government's aim was to minimize the number in order to be able to handle the council easily as an administrative organ.⁶⁸

Dissatisfaction arose among non-authorized penghulus, particularly in Bodi-Caniago nagaris because such nagaris possessed a more democratic political structure than did Koto-Piliang nagaris. The displeasure of non-authorized penghulus was not only a matter of honour but also of the privileges which only the council members could enjoy, exemption from

65. L. Ballot, M.v.O., p.44.

66. Letter of LeFebvre, Padang, 6 June 1918, Mailr.1664/1918; Letter of H.J.D. Veen, Suliki, 13 March 1918, Mailr. 1664/1918 in V.4 March 1919, no.23.

67. "Dagboek", dd. 24 February 1917, Mailr. 1664/1918.

68. Letter of A.I. Spits, Maninjau, 6 April 1917, no.379/13, Bijlage V, in Mailr. 1664/1918; J. Ballot, M.v.O., pp.109-110; "Adat Monographie, Nagari Loeboek Basoeng", Korn Collection, no.330; Letter of LeFebvre, Padang, 6 July 1918, Mailr. 1664/1918.

income tax after 1915 being the most important.⁶⁹ Dissatisfied penghulus began to protest against the new system as in the nagaris Sulit Air and Padang Panjang.⁷⁰ Such protests sometimes produced additional members authorized by the government.⁷¹

The Nagari Ordinance sowed two seeds of unrest among the penghulus' circle. One was the encroachment upon the penghulus' privilege of enjoying part of adat dues. The other was the growth of antagonism between authorized and non-authorized penghulus. This antagonism continued towards the end of the colonial period and undermined the harmony of the nagari. The new nagari system was also unpopular outside the immediate circle of penghulus. Dutch educated people distrusted the nagari council because its members were not always educated but could acquire seats only by birth. When a nagari head was uneducated or lacking ability, the distrust was intensified, as the management and book-keeping of the nagari treasury were difficult in such a case. Ordinary villagers, the Dutch-educated, and members of various groups such as the Sarekat Islam, Sarekat Oesaha, Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau, and Insulinde began to claim eligibility for membership after the introduction of the new council.⁷² Some people criticized the council as a purely government organ rather than a body for the benefit of villagers.⁷³

Dissatisfaction with the council compelled the government to modify the regulation on membership, which was put into effect in 1918 (Staatsblad no.677). The amended regulation stipulated two types of council members, the A-members, choice of which was limited to the core penghulus, and the B-members, who could be anyone acceptable to all

69. Letter of Pereleer, Solok 26 February 1918, Mailr. 1664/1918.

70. Letter of Breukink, Padang Panjang, 22 January 1917, Mailr.1664/1918.

71. For instance, the nagari Sundatar had only 4 council members in 1914, which increased to 10 in 1915. See, "Adat Monographie, Nagari Soendatar", Korn Collection, no.328.

72. Letter of Lefebvre, Padang 16 July 1918, Mailr. 1664/1918.

73. ibid.

A-members, in most cases rich villagers including non-authorized penghulus and merchants. Although statistical information on the number of B-members in the 1910s and 1920s is not available, some idea can be obtained from data in 1931 covering 331 nagaris: the total number of penghulus including authorized and unauthorized was 13,724 of which 9,231 or 67 per cent were non-authorized and non-council members, and 4,493 or 33 per cent were authorized as A-members. Of the total council members of 4,520 in the 331 nagaris, only 27 or 0.6 per cent were B-members.⁷⁴ The B-members were negligible in number and also in function. A-members looked down on B-members and sometimes did not call the latter for meetings. As B-members were aware of the attitude of A-members, they were often reluctant to attend meetings.⁷⁵

Dutch intervention in nagari affairs was much strengthened by the Ordinance. Dutch officials sometimes recommended persons other than those who had acquired majority votes among core penghulus. Such recommendations were de facto orders.⁷⁶ Dismissal of already elected nagari heads also took place.⁷⁷ As decisions of the nagari council were considerably influenced by the opinions of the nagari, district and assistant district head, and also Dutch officials, ordinary council members were in fact summoned only to approve proposals prepared by these

74. Letter of Gonggrijp, Padang, 20 May 1931, Bijlage L.

75. J. Gouvreur, "Nagari's in de Koeantandistricten (1931)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.35,p.481. Sometimes A-members tried to reduce the number of B-members. Letter of A.I. Luteju, 13 October 1933, no.4587/1926, Korn Collection, no.326.

76. Letter of Veen, Suliki, 13 March 1918, Mailr. 1664/1918.

77. Report of H.J.D. Veen, Suliki, 13 March 1918, no.342, Mailr.1664/1918.

high ranking people beforehand.⁷⁸ Consequently, the nagari council functioned as an intermediary between the government and the villagers. As a result, the villagers felt that nagari administrative autonomy was undermined to an even greater extent than before.⁷⁹

The collection of the serayo and iyuran encountered enormous difficulty. The most serious problem for the government and the nagari head was the large proportion of arrears.⁸⁰ As the serayo was assigned to the salary of the nagari head, collection difficulties immediately curtailed his income. The government introduced some modifications in the use of these two taxes. The distinction between the two was in practice dropped after 1916 and it was made possible to use the iyuran for the salary of the nagari head.⁸¹ The Dutch began to use the general term 'uang nagari' for these impositions.⁸² These procedures did not improve the situation. The nagari heads of the Singkarak sub-division received an average of only f.3.2 per month in 1918 in contrast to f.20 before 1914.⁸³ Most Dutch officials attributed the arrears to the weakened power of penghulus over their fellow villagers and to the lack of coercive measures on the part of the government.⁸⁴ The actual reason

78. Lieftrinck, Bijlage: Nota over de Druk der Heerendiensten, op.cit., pp.50-51.

79. Lieftrinck, Onderzoek, op.cit., p.21, no.118.

80. Figures of assessments and arrears are given in Letter of LeFebvre, Padang, 8 October 1917, no.14370, Mailr. 1542/1918.

81. Whitlau, "Nota", Mailr.1542/1918; Letter of Alting, Batavia, 20 April 1918, no.3926/Bgt., Mailr. 1542/1918.

82. Whitlau, M.v.O., p.44; Letter of Alting, Batavia, 20 April 1918, no. 3926/Bgt., Mailr.1542/1918.

83. Letter of Pereleer, Solok, 15 March 1918, no.426, Mailr.1542/1918.

84. In replying to this letter complaining about too much arrears, Resident LeFebvre answered that "Such situations can be found not only in Solok but all over West Sumatra". Letter of LeFebvre, Padang, 8 October 1917, Mailr. 1542/1918.

may have been that the villagers could not accept the 'uang nagari' as a regular tax.

No group of the Minangkabaus, with the possible exception of Indonesian officials, was satisfied with the new system of the uang nagari and nagari council. Ordinary villagers had still to contribute labour and cash for public purposes like the construction of nagari schools and paths which should in theory have been met by the uang nagari. Not infrequently, Dutch officials advised nagari heads to utilize free labour of villagers for such purposes.⁸⁵ Nagari heads were also dissatisfied, for their income was diminished and they could no longer receive a pension. Nagari heads were inclined to coerce villagers to pay the uang nagari by, for instance, refusing to give permission for marriage ceremonies when the villagers had not paid it.⁸⁶ It was widely alleged that nagari heads appropriated the nagari treasury and the zakat.⁸⁷ Such acts by nagari heads exacerbated their increasingly antagonistic relationships with fellow villagers. Most nagari heads felt that their power had become much smaller than in the government-paid period.⁸⁸ It was a natural consequence for the nagari heads to ask for payment of their salary and pension by the government as before. Some Dutch officials proposed that the position of nagari head should revert to that of a government official, by paying his salary and pension: it was feared that nagari heads would not co-operate with the government without their payments. However this proposal was rejected by most Dutch officials on the grounds that the government could not find sufficient financial resources for it.⁸⁹ Another proposal suggested giving the

85. Lieftrinck, Onderzoek, op.cit., p.20, no.113-116; idem, Bijlage:Nota over Heffing van Heerendiensten, op.cit., pp.48-51.

86. Letter of LeFebvre, Padang, 8 August 1917, Mailr.1542/1918.

87. ibid.; In addition to these, some nagari heads demanded exorbitant labour services of the villagers, in an extreme case about 75 days a year. Lieftrinck, Onderzoek, op.cit., p.19, no.106 and 107.

88. Letter of LeFebvre, Padang, 8 August 1917, Mailr.1542/1918.

89. Hamerster, "Verslag van de Dienstreis", Mailr.479/1923.

nagari a legal right to levy taxes other than the uang nagari, which meant that the Criminal Law of the Netherlands Indies could be applied to non-payment.⁹⁰ This method was introduced in 1929. Apart from the issue of the uang nagari, it must be remembered that the Nagari Ordinance created dissatisfaction by in practice excluding various influential groups from nagari administration, notably wealthy merchants and peasants, members of secular and Islamic organizations, and Dutch educated individuals, all of which groups had been enhancing their influence since the introduction of the monetary taxation system.

Taxation Issue as a Source of Unrest

The new taxation system resulted in dissatisfaction and social unrest. After the imprisonment of many leaders of the anti-tax rebellion, there were few disturbances relating to taxation. Four Islamic leaders, three of whom had been detained and released by 1912, launched an anti-tax revolt in 1914. They selected two nagaris at the foot of Mt. Merapi as their strongholds, the nagari Kota Lawas and Tabat Patah. At the end of July that year, they preached revolt to the surrounding areas saying that the tax would become higher. The majority of penghulus and villagers in the nagari Tabat Patah joined in the movement and other rebels were recruited from various places of the Oud Agam and Batusangkar sub-division. The leaders told the followers to assault Dutch officials and district and nagari heads when the time of revolt came. They instructed those from the Bukittinggi area to attack a prison in that town to release prisoners there. However this plan of revolt was detected by Indonesian officials and the leaders were soon arrested.⁹¹

90. In fact, Dutch officials occasionally punished those who neglected the payment before the introduction of the punishment law in 1929, applying Article 523 of Criminal Law of Netherlands Indies. See, Proceedings of a conference on 23 September in Fort de Kock, in Mailr.479/1923.

91 "Nota: betrekkelijke de samenspanning van Toeankoe Batoeah, Datoe Ampang Basa, Hadji Mohamad Amin en Toeankoe Basa ten doel hebbende het in de wapened brengen der ingezetenen tegen het in Nerderladsch Indië gevestigd gezak", in Mailr. 1050/1914.

As the leaders of the abortive revolt predicted, income tax rose by 100 per cent, from 2 to 4 per cent in 1915, though the maximum duration of the corvée was reduced from 52 to 35 days per year at the same time (Staatsblad, 1914, no.132; 1915, no.190 and 191). It must be remembered that the serayo and iyuran were made virtual state taxes at that time. The Minangkabaus were stirred up by the rise in the taxation rate because it occurred when the economy was suddenly struck by the recession caused by World War I. In 1922 the sur-tax of 30 per cent was introduced upon incomes above f.630. This regulation was also unfavourable to the population because of the recession after the war. At the end of 1922, the Dutch were considering the introduction of a land tax in West Sumatra in place of the income tax system. The Minangkabaus immediately reacted to the government plan, holding numerous meetings. These meetings were attended by members of all kinds of groups from the adat party to the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia or PKI). It was indicative of the general state of unrest that the first branch of the Communist Party in West Sumatra was set up at the beginning of April 1923 when the opposition to the proposed land tax was strongest. As a result, the government was compelled to give up the plan.⁹²

The Dutch harshly punished those who did not pay taxes. Those convicted had to collect gravel for road construction watched by fellow villagers. Both the punished and the watchers felt the treatment humiliating. Such punishment was especially common in Padang which had a greater proportion of arrears than other areas.⁹³ Punished people became increasingly sympathetic to the communists.⁹⁴ Tax payers felt it an injustice that the nagari head and all Indonesian officials were exempt from income tax and corvée, although most of them were wealthier than the

92. J. Mendelaar, "Bestuur en Besturen in de Minangkabau", I.G., 1940, p.540; Letter of Korn, 30 June 1924, no.F.118/G, Mailr. 522x/1924.

93. Secret report of Hamerster, 1 October 1927, Mailr. 1242/1927.

94. "Militair Memorie van het patrouille gebied Padang" (stored in Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, SWO), pp.36-37.

average tax payers.⁹⁵ The arrogant attitude of the district and nagari head at the time of tax collection aggravated the hostility of the villagers.⁹⁶ The hostility was stronger when a district head knew nothing about the adat of the district of which he was in charge and when the inhabitants regarded him as having no sympathy with them. Indeed the position of the district head was more and more taken by the Dutch educated, not by one of the chiefs of the home district.⁹⁷

One form of resistance by peasants was to dodge taxes as far as possible. As the amount of land possessed by each household was not recorded in West Sumatra, the government had to rely on data submitted by family heads and penghulus. It was natural that these people deliberately underestimated the value of harvest and income for the benefit of their lineage members. In the Oud Agam sub-division, for instance, the reported amount of rice harvest in 1915 was 236,107 pikuls, while rice consumption there was estimated about 774,650 pikuls a year judging from the number of the population. Moreover this area was not only self-sufficient in rice but also sold a large quantity of rice in that year. After the investigation in Oud Agam, the government became more rigid in its assessment.⁹⁸

95. Around 1926, 39 per cent of nagari heads had incomes above f.600, while only 5 per cent of non-penghulus earned more than f.600 a year. See, Westkust Rapport, Deel. II, pp.47,117.

96. Letter of Helden, 25 January 1927, no.Gx/1/1/9, Mailr. 140x/1927.

97. In 1926, of 26 district heads only 7 were penghulus, of 52 sub-district heads, 8 were penghulus. Westkust Rapport, Deel III, pp.19-20, 72-74; Tjaja Soematra, 9 March 1926, in IPO 1926, no.13, p.673.

98. H.W. Stap, "Een statistiek in de Onderafdeeling Oud Agam, Afdeeling Agam, Sumatra's Westkust", T.B.B., vol.52(1917), pp.141-69.

The absolute value of income tax had steadily increased since 1908, though with some fluctuations. As Table I shows, the assessment was not adjusted to economic conditions. Between 1915 and 1916, during

TABLE I

Average Assessment of Income Tax per Adult Man (value in f.)

year	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
value	1.73	2.11	2.65	2.60	3.06	3.24	3.40	2.25	5.60	5.17
year	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	
value	5.30	4.95	4.31	4.36	4.72	4.52	4.71	5.44	6.15	

Source: Rapport van de Commissie van Onderzoek ingestelt by het Governementsbesluit van 13 Februari 1927, no.1a (hereafter referred to as Westkust Rapport), Deel II, Fievez de Malines van Ginkel ed., De Economische Toestand en de Belastingdruk met Betrekking tot de Inlandsche bevolking van Sumatra's Westkust (Landsdrukkerij-Weltevreden, 1928), p.38.

the wartime recession, the average assessment rose suddenly by 100 per cent. The assessment values for 1916 and 1918, both recession years, were larger than those for the short-lived postwar boom of 1919-1920, and even than 1924 when the economy began to recover.

The Communist-led Uprisings

Since the introduction of monetary taxation social instability had grown among almost all Minangkabau groups, and it erupted in the communist-led uprisings at the end of 1926. An attempt to disseminate Marxist ideas was made by the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party) in 1920, the same year as the Party was born. A man, a graduate of a school in Singapore, was sent to West Sumatra to function as a link between Jakarta and West Sumatra.⁹⁹ The influence of the Party was

99. Temenggoeng, "Nota" in Mailr.934x/1926, v. 1 July 1926, ^{no.}10, p.1; Warta Hindia (10 October 1925, IPO, 1925, no.45, p.290) says that Madjid Muhammad Taher Tjanking, a kaum muda teacher living in Singapore, was the first person who introduced communist ideology on behalf of the Indonesian Communist Party.

strengthened by instigating protest meetings against the land tax system at the end of 1922 and early 1923.¹⁰⁰ From this time onwards, the Party succeeded in rapidly establishing branches and other connected organizations such as Sarekat Hitam (Black Association) and Sarekat Rakyat (People's Association). By the beginning of 1925, Suliki, one of the communist centres in West Sumatra, was called a 'small soviet' by communists and sympathizers.¹⁰¹

Reaction to the rapid development of the communist movement came from the government and conservative penghulus. Police arrested communists or supposed communists extensively in proportion to the development of the movement.¹⁰² Some 430 persons had been detained in West Sumatra by September 1925. A Minangkabau newspaper accused the government of arresting people on the basis of information given by those who knew nothing of communism.¹⁰³ Government officials and informants tended to regard as 'red' those who would not pay taxes and perform corvée obligations.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the more the government tried to collect taxes the more the inhabitants became 'red'. In the face of the spread of communist influence, conservative penghulus felt that their authority was threatened by communists. The most common reaction of these penghulus was to denounce the Marxist idea as contradicting both adat and Islamic law. Many penghulus organized meetings to divert the villagers from the communists with some success.¹⁰⁵

At the end of 1925, a rumour of a communist revolt was spreading in West Sumatra. In the following year, the communists and their sympathizers assaulted village heads and Indonesian and Dutch officials, particularly in Padang Panjang, Pariaman, Alahan Panjang, and Sijunjung.

100. See note 92.

101. Api, 4-9 January 1926, IPO, 1926, no.3, pp.105-106.

102. Api, 12-17 October 1925, IPO, 1925, no.43, pp.150-53.

103. Sinar Soematra, 31 May 1926, IPO, 1926, no.25, pp.579-80.

104. ibid; Oetoesan Melajoe, 18 May 1926, IPO, 1926, no. 23, p.424.

105. Radio, 31 May 1926, IPO, 1926, no.25, p.579.

Scattered uprisings broke out in Batavia and the residency of Banten of West Java in December 1926. In West Sumatra, uprisings were attempted only on the eve of New Year's Day, most vehemently in the Sawah Lunto region including Silungkang. However the uprisings were immediately suppressed by Dutch forces. As the political situation and the course of the revolt have been amply described in the government report of B.J.O. Schrieke, "The Cause of the Communist Movement in West Coast of Sumatra, Part I (Political Section)", the following discussion will be focussed on the economic and social background.¹⁰⁶

It is not surprising that the communist-led uprisings occurred at a time of economic upsurge, at the end of 1926. This seeming paradox can partly be explained by the fact that the communist movement began to expand widely at the end of 1922 and early 1923 when the economy was in recession. The lower strata of society such as wage labourers, peasants of poor regions, and petty traders were hit by the recession. The Marxist theory of verelendung (impoverishment) in a capitalistic economy was certainly convincing to these people.¹⁰⁷ It was also the time when the Minangkabaus were generally opposing the government's plan to introduce a land tax, so that the popular grievance against the Dutch was acute. However, the economic recession does not altogether explain the timing and cause of the revolt, as there were some Minangkabaus who were improving their economic position during the recession (see Chapter II), and the communist movement not only continued but intensified in 1925 and 1926 when the economy was booming. Also relevant were the general grievance against the Dutch and unrest caused by social and economic changes in Minangkabau, both of which had built up since well before the recession.

The causes of the communist revolt were complicated. However, some important aspects of this complexity can be seen from a close investigation of regions where the communist movement was particularly

106. Translated as The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents, translated by Harry Benda and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, Cornell Press, 1960).

107. ibid., pp.100-101.

active, namely the Padang, Pariaman, Mununjau, Sawah Lunto, Sijunjung, Alahan Panjang and Suliki regions, and the town of Padang Panjang. One of the keys to understanding the revolt lies in this regional concentration, unlike the anti-tax rebellion in 1908 which occurred everywhere in West Sumatra. These major communist-influenced regions were characterized as being poor in sawah or unsuitable for rice cultivation. Thus, the inhabitants had either to find a livelihood from other pursuits or to suffer poverty with a meagre output from food cultivation.

In the Padang district, there were a large number of wage labourers and a handful of wealthy merchants. The average income per head per year in this district was among the lowest in West Sumatra (about f.47 in 1926), together with Sijunjung, Sawah Lunto, Silungkang, Alahan Panjang, and hilly villages in the Suliki region. Urbanization and socio-economic stratification were most advanced in the Padang district in West Sumatra as a whole, making it easier for Marxist ideas to take root. The town of Pariaman and its immediate surrounding area, north of Padang on the coast, had a similar economic structure to the Padang district, but with a slightly higher average income. In Pariaman, wage labourers were engaged in indigenous coconut gardens, commerce, and indigenous and European copra industry. Coconut growing was the most important agriculture around this town, income from which formed about 45 per cent, while that from food cultivation covered only 9.81 per cent, and the rest came from commerce and indigenous industry in 1926.¹⁰⁸ This low proportion of income from food cultivation stems from ecological conditions unsuitable for rice growing. Commercialization and economic stratification were the most important economic features in this region.

Sijunjung, Sawah Lunto and Maninjau were hilly regions with a scarcity of flat land for sawah, while Alahan Panjang was too cool to grow rice due to its high altitude, even though some plains villages in this region had flat land. Male inhabitants of these regions tended to leave home as traders and wage labourers. The average income per head was very low in 1926. In the Silungkang area near Sawah Lunto, the textile

108. Westkust Rapport, Deel II, op.cit., pp.151-171, particularly for 'Kring V' and 'Kring VI' dealing with poor regions.

industry had some significance and many inhabitants were engaged in this home industry and cloth trading. Comparable to Silungkang was the Suliki region which was another centre of the textile industry in West Sumatra in the 20th century. Both in Silungkang and Suliki, merchants were becoming an important social and economic force.¹⁰⁹

Padang Panjang should be mentioned in a different context from the regions described above. As it was a commercial centre, merchants formed an influential group in the town. The town was, however, more important as a communication centre of West Sumatra with easy access to the major towns, such as Padang, Buikittinggi, and Batusangkar. In view of its strategic location, it was not unreasonable that the PKI headquarters in West Sumatra was established in this town. Padang Panjang was also an intellectual centre, particularly of the Islamic reformist movement. It should be noted that young members of Sumatra Thawalib (an association of Islamic reformist schools, established in 1918 in Padang Panjang) joined the communist movement under the influence of Haji Datuk Batuah.¹¹⁰

The foregoing examination of the communist-influenced regions has made it clear that the majority of the inhabitants of those regions were poor even during the export boom, and that merchants constituted an important social and economic force. The communist slogan of 'free from taxation' and the Marxist theory of 'economic aggravation' must have been convincing particularly to the poor inhabitants. Understandably the Communist Party made intensive propaganda deliberately in poor regions in West Sumatra. There seems to have been some relationship between the relative importance of merchants and the expansion of the communist movement in the communist centres. Petty traders were bitterly hit by the recession in 1921-1924 and became sympathetic to communist allegations against the Dutch and European capitalists. The economic recovery after 1924 increased not only the economic but also the social strength of the merchants. However, they could neither obtain status corresponding to their economic strength in the adat hierarchy nor participate in local

109. See note 87 in Chapter I.

110. Taufik Abdullah, Schools and Politics, op.cit., pp.37-45.

administration, since they were rejected by both the Dutch and penghulus. The merchants in West Sumatra in general had been trying to transform the society from an adat-based and penghulu-dominated to a commerce-oriented one. There was an element of a challenge on the part of 'nouveau riche' against the adat party in the communist movement. Apart from characteristics of economic structure, the major communist-influenced regions shared two common features. Firstly, these regions were located along or not far from the railways, thus they also had very easy access to the major roads. This location suggests that the movement advanced where communication was easy and the society was relatively open to outside influence. Moreover, the railway business had produced the modern-type proletariat which had organized what was then the only trade union in West Sumatra. Members of the trade union formed one of the core groups which joined the communist movement. Secondly, the major communist centres were located outside the rice-growing plains villages in the nucleus of the Highlands (Agam, Tanah Datar, and Lima Puluh Kota). This locational characteristic had sociological implications. Generally speaking, the binding force of adat and the power of penghulus were stronger in the nucleus of the Highlands (darat) than in outlying regions (rantau). It is likely that the communist movement was relatively sluggish in the darat because of the strength of penghulus who tended to rebuff communists.

The distinction between the regions rich in sawah and poor in sawah, and the darat and rantau should, however, not be drawn sharply in relation to the development of the communist movement. The conflict between penghulus on the one hand and merchants and the less-privileged on the other should also be understood in a relative sense. In fact, the communist movement spread to regions other than those discussed above such as in the nagari Padang Luar near Padang Panjang under the influence of one of the most important communist leaders, Haji Datuk Batuah, who was born in that nagari. Penghulus were not always against communism and commercialism. There were some penghulus who were merchants and some who participated in the communist movement. For its own part

the Communist Party tinged its propaganda with Islamic and even adat elements. For example, the communists criticized the Dutch for depriving the population of their customary territorial rights of nagari, hak ulayat, for the Ombilin mines.¹¹¹ The communist slogan of kemerdekaan (freedom, independence) appealed not only to the inhabitants of the communist centres but also to those in other regions. In short, grievances against the Dutch and instability existed everywhere and among every social and economic group. Nevertheless, the regional specification is helpful for analytical purposes, for it focusses the problems clearly. Regional differences are also important in analyzing social change in Minangkabau in general, which formed an unmistakably significant factor in the development of the communist movement. We will discuss the problem of social change below.

B. Schrieke has demonstrated convincingly the degree of social change in West Sumatra before the communist-led uprisings. His argument was that the spread of a monetary economy had promoted the disintegration of the adat-based social order ever since the late 19th century. Private property had been increasingly given to fathers' children instead of to fathers' sisters' children (kemanakan) who were, according to adat, the legitimate heirs of their uncles' legacies. The nuclear family system had become more prevalent than the extended family system. Long adat houses had been giving way to individual houses inhabited by nuclear families. Rigid regulations against the alienation of private and communal land had been relaxing so that even family land (harto pusaka) was sometimes sold, contradicting the adat. These changes can be summarized as individualization. There is no necessity to restate the changes here. Rather we will examine the validity of what Schrieke has asserted, as not all his descriptions were congruent with reality and they were sometimes misleading.¹¹²

There is no doubt that social change in the direction of individualization was an irrevocable trend in West Sumatra, but with substantial regional differences. Schrieke seems to have underestimated

111. Westkust Rapport, op.cit., Deel I, pp.153-55. Tjaja Soematra, 29 April 1926, IPO, 1926, no.20, p.296.

112. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, pp.102-33.

the regional differences, deriving evidence for social change from Alahan Panjang, Silungkang, the nagari Kota Lawas (the Kota Anau sub-district in Maninjau), Pangkalan Kota Baru (north-east of the Highlands), XII Kota Kampar, Batipuh and X Kota (the Padang Panjang sub-district), Sawah Lunto, and Indrapura (further south of the coast area).¹¹³ Most of these regions were deficient in sawah and all of them were outside the core uplands. In other words, Schrieke demonstrated the situation of the rantau where the adat and penghulus were less powerful than the darat. However, his description gives the impression that the adat-based social order had weakened to a large extent in West Sumatra as a whole. On the other hand, Schrieke did not provide sufficient evidence for social change in the darat.

Apart from the regional differences, Schrieke's analysis of individualization was sometimes superficial. For instance, the growing trend towards the one-family house system does not necessarily indicate a remarkable change of communal adat order as a whole unless the matrilineal family relationship between the segmented family branches, the descent system and the right of disposal of communal family property, especially land, were substantially undermined. Of these, the last aspect is vitally significant, and Schrieke paid much attention to it. However, a crucial piece of evidence which Schrieke presented to justify his argument was proved incorrect by later investigation: Schrieke stated that all the family land in the nagari Air Dingin was converted into individual property.¹¹⁴ As the conversion of family land into individual property and the disappearance of family land are so significant in gauging the magnitude of social change, we will discuss this in more detail in Chapter IV.

It is safer to say here that individualization and the weakening of adat were more pronounced in the outlying and sawah-shortage regions than in the heartlands of the Highlands. As long as the West Sumatran economy developed in the wake of the expansion of export of cash crops, individualization was a natural consequence, since cash income was

113. ibid.

114. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, p.105.

obtained mainly from individual property rather than food cultivation on sawah. This resulted in an increase in the relative importance of those who were most involved in a monetary economy, merchants, in relation to the power struggle between the cash-economy and penghulus whose authority was based on controlling power over sawah. However, the fact that family property was still largely in the hands of penghulus suggests that the authority of penghulus might recover when the economy returned to food cultivation, as will be discussed in Chapter VI.

It seems that most scholars have so far underestimated the relationship between the existence of poverty and the communist revolt in West Sumatra. Like Schrieke, Harry J. Benda denied this relationship:

The revolts were certainly not bred in misery among poverty-stricken or exploited peasants and labourers living under the yoke of Western capitalism. Tenancy, population pressure and the proletarianization of coolie labour - generally the most common causes of agrarian unrest in Asia - were absent in both areas (Banten and Minangkabau) that nurtured the insurrections. 115

Taufik Abdullah almost followed Schrieke and Benda asserting that 'the revolt had erupted in spite of, rather than because of, the communist blueprint'.¹¹⁶ Both Benda and Taufik Abdullah failed to realize the regional differences in economic conditions. Moreover, there is no denying that communist slogans and ideologies certainly contributed to rousing the population to a realization of colonial exploitation, though in a peculiarly convincing way, for instance by criticizing the Dutch for having deprived the population of their hak ulayat, an adat concept, for the Ombilin mines. One of the reasons for underestimating the existence of poverty seems to be neglect of the Part II of the West Coast Report (Fievez de Malines van Ginkel, The Economic Situation and the Tax Burden in Relation to the Indigenous People of West Coast of

115. The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia, op.cit., pp. xix-xxi.

116. Taufik Abdullah, Schools and Politics, op.cit., p.42.

Sumatra)¹¹⁷ which clearly shows the regional differences and existence of poverty in some regions which we have discussed above.

Conclusion

There were two sources of unrest in Minangkabau at the end of the 19th century. One was Islamic reformism which had increasingly challenged the adat order and the old tarekats. The other was the effects of the Dutch administration which led to antagonism between a handful of Indonesian (Minangkabau) colonial officials and the rest of the population, resentment amongst Islamic reformists who had been consistently suppressed by the Dutch, and the general dissatisfaction with Dutch colonial rule, particularly with government plans for introducing monetary taxation. The attempt at social reform by Islamic reformists was suppressed by the end of the 19th century, leaving penghulus and tarekat leaders the opportunity of assuming the mantle of leadership in Minangkabau. The anti-tax rebellion was a counter movement by the latter two groups to combat the influence of Islamic reformism as well as to confront Dutch rule and attempt to restore the old adat order which was directly threatened by the new taxation system.

The sources of instability were multiplied after the anti-tax rebellion by widening divergencies in ideology and interest stimulated by a far wider spread of education, and the increase of Western thought. Economically, there were wealthy people who benefited from the spread of a monetary economy, as well as regions and people that were less privileged. Socially, the old adat cohesion in the village had been undermined by Dutch administration and economic expansion since the late 19th century. The nagari treasury came to be controlled by the Dutch and the nagari council was newly established on top of the adat council.

117. The original title is, Rapport van de Commissie van Onderzoek, Deel II: De Economische Toestand en de Belastingdruk met Betrekking tot de Inlandsche Bevolking van Sumatra's Westkust. This report has seldom been used by scholars. W.F. Wertheim seems to be one of the few who used the report, though only a part. Wertheim also discussed the development of poverty and class distinction in West Sumatra. See, W.F. Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition (The Hague and Bandung, van Hoeve, 1956), p.112.

in 1914. There was a general grievance against the Dutch, particularly against the ever-increasing taxes. By the time of the introduction of communist propaganda into West Sumatra, dissatisfaction was prevalent in all social and economic groups. However, it was logical that the communist movement took root in West Sumatra when the Dutch were planning to introduce a land tax and when the economy was in recession, and where the bulk of inhabitants were poor.

CHAPTER IV

The Problem of the Land Tenure System

The land system bridges economic and social life amongst the Minangkabaus. In an agricultural society such as Minangkabau, land was the most important means of production and source of income; it was also the basis of class distinction. The strong territorial right of the nagari, the hak ulayat, was one of the indispensable features of its autonomy as we have seen in Chapter I. Land was also essential for the unique matrilineal extended family, as all the members had rights over their communal family land (harta pusaka) which provided at least food in case of economic hardship and when the members became unable to work. This is an obvious reason why Minangkabaus living outside their home nagaris kept contact with their family and tried to go back there at times of economic hardship and in old age, though not all nagaris could provide sufficient food. The land system and the matrilineal social system were so closely interwoven that if one was to be broken down the other would also collapse.¹ The present survey focuses on how and to what extent the Minangkabau land system changed before the end of Dutch rule.

Despite the state land laws the nagari had been able effectively to retain its hak ulayat with the exception of land required for the Ombilin coal mine, when the government exercised strong state power because of the importance of the coal. However, rigid restrictions against alienation of land were weakened by the development of cash crop cultivation, especially in the case of individual land. Restrictions upon alienation of family land slackened to some extent in the wake of the spread of the nuclear family system, but family land could still not be sold. Generally speaking the hak ulayat and the family communal land holding system remained largely unchanged.

1. I agree with Evers in regarding the land system in West Sumatra as the most important basis of its matrilineal social system. H.D. Evers, "Changing Patterns of Minangkabau Urban Landownership", B.K.I., vol.135(1975), pp.86-111.

State Law and Nagari Rights

The Dutch East India Company overwhelmingly concentrated on commercial activity and showed little territorial interest in Minangkabau, except for the sites of Company offices and storehouses at the mouth of the Padang river. Only briefly did it encourage the expansion of pepper cultivation in the immediate surroundings of the port in 1754.² After Dutch re-occupation of the Minangkabau coast in 1819, the Netherlands Indies government began to expand Padang. In 1826 the resident of West Sumatra allowed anybody to open up the uncultivated land north of the port as far as the nagari Nanggalo, a swampy area, as long as permission was obtained from the Dutch authorities in Padang. In the following year the resident initiated land registration in the port area and its surroundings. This expansion was intended to facilitate commercial trade and to acquire food and cash crops. From this time onwards the uncultivated land was gradually filled up not only by Minangkabaus but also by non-Minangkabaus including Chinese.³

In spite of Dutch encouragement, the opening of the uncultivated land did not at first proceed smoothly. Applicants for new settlements feared they might be asked by some Minangkabaus to pay tribute or half of the product, or, at the worst, to evacuate the newly opened land. To mitigate this fear the resident promulgated a regulation in 1829 which secured the land rights of new settlers.⁴ It must be noted that this resident assumed a kind of domain right of the Dutch over uncultivated land despite the lack of any legal stipulation for it. In 1833, in the middle of the padri war and after the Dutch had entered the Highlands, the Netherlands Indies government declared that the Dutch had land rights only over fort sites and land which was obtained in the Company period. This declaration was in fact a compromise by the Dutch

2. Lulofs, "Nota" (over grondbezit ter Sumatra's Westkust), dd. Weltevreden, 8 April 1908, in V.3 February 1913, no.4, p.84. This is a very extensive report on the land system in West Sumatra and useful to understand government land policy from the beginning of the 19th century to about 1870s.

3. Governor's Resolution, 7 July 1829.

4. ibid.

to avoid Minangkabau hostility. As had been feared, some Minangkabaus living around the port of Padang claimed land rights over uncultivated land. Many new settlers therefore had to conclude a lease contract with them, without stipulating the term. By 1840 numerous land disputes had occurred between new settlers and Minangkabaus who claimed ultimate land rights. The source of the disputes was different interpretations of the concept of lease without term. As will be mentioned below land transaction in Minangkabau often did not stipulate the term, but it was tacitly understood to be for a certain period. However the accused settlers, presumably non-Minangkabaus, understood the period to be as long a term as they wanted.⁵ To solve this problem the government intervened in the disputes in July 1840 by prohibiting lease contracts without term for Europeans, Chinese, and all other non-Indonesians unless they obtained a certificate from a joint committee consisting of the Court of Padang and three Minangkabau representatives in Padang. In September that year the Government Commissioner to Sumatra defined the concept of uncultivated land (woeste grond) as land which had never been used or once used but again neglected. In addition, registration and a certificate from the Court of Padang were required for anybody including Minangkabaus who wanted to claim individual property rights over a plot of land in the Western sense, i.e., with complete freedom of disposal by an individual owner. Finally property rights over all land which had previously been used were given by registration.⁶ As far as the port area and its immediate surroundings were concerned private land ownership was established by the Dutch in 1855 with the Wild Land Ordinance (Staatsblad, no.14a) incorporating previous regulations issued by the Dutch local authorities.

The case of Padang and its surroundings was exceptional because the Dutch had strong power in this area, initially centred their administration on this area, and ownership of land rights over this area had

5. See, Besluit van Raad van Nederlandsch-Indië, 5 September 1840, no.301/534; Gouvernement Commissaris voor Sumatra, 7 September 1840, no.323/583.

6. ibid.

not been clear when the Dutch established a factory in the late 17th century. In other parts of Minangkabau the Dutch could not claim any land rights until 1874 when the Dutch introduced the Domain Declaration (see below). After the introduction of the Cultivation System in 1847, the Dutch intentionally utilized the communal land ownership both by the nagari and the extended family to impose the cultivation and delivery of coffee upon these units.⁷

The 1870s was a watershed for government land policy in Indonesia as a whole. As the Cultivation System was in practice a government monopoly of the Indonesian economy, European capitalists had requested the government to open opportunities for the launching of enterprises by private individuals. The request of the capitalists was for the legal right to obtain cheap and secure land for plantations or mining enterprises. In Java and Madura, the Domain Declaration and Agrarian Law were promulgated in 1870 for this purpose. However they were not applied to Sumatra because the Netherlands Indies government was not familiar with land systems in Sumatra. Thus the government carried out investigations of land systems in 'directly occupied' Sumatran regions, namely West Sumatra, Bengkulu, Lampong, and Palembang, the results of which were reported in 1872.⁸ After this report the government promulgated a Domain Declaration specifically for West Sumatra in 1874 (Staatsblad no.94f) and for all other 'directly occupied' Outer Provinces in the following year. The declaration of 1874 stipulated that all land over which no Minangkabaus had ownership was to be domain land, under the government right to its disposal. Here the term 'ownership' meant the private property right mentioned before. In this sense all Minangkabau land except for private plots in and around Padang was categorized as domain. The domain was further divided into two categories, 'free domain' over which the government could exercise an unlimited

7. For instance, see, J. Ballot, Ontwerp Agrarische Regeling voor Sumatra's Westkust. (De Volharding, Padang, 1911), p.5.

8. The report is, Resume's van het Onderzoek naar de Rechten, welke in de Gouvernementslanden op Sumatra, op de Onbebouwdgronden worden Uitgeoefden (2nd printing, Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1896).

right of disposal and 'unfree domain' over which the Minangkabaus had some sort of communal rights. However the government kept the contents of the Declaration secret from the population.⁹ The reason for this secrecy as far as West Sumatra was concerned was doubtless past experience of these matters with the Minangkabaus and recognition that they would resist it strongly. Furthermore the greatest interest of the Dutch at that time lay in by far the most important region, Java. Thus, the government did not dare to antagonize the Minangkabaus.

Before and after the Domain Declaration there was much debate among Dutch officials over how the hak ulayat of the nagari should be understood in relation to state laws. A Dutch controleur published an important work on Minangkabau economic life in 1871, in which he claimed that there was no land in Minangkabau which did not belong to some nagari, and so the government could not claim domain right.¹⁰ On the other hand some argued that the hak ulayat was only the right of supervision (toezichtrecht) exercised by the nagari and never a property right.¹¹ Exponents of this point of view insisted on the legitimacy of domain right. The report in 1872 concluded that the government could claim domain right, since it had sovereignty over the Minangkabaus, though agreeing that this was greatly restricted by the people's rights. Based on this interpretation of the hak ulayat the report asserted 'the hak ulayat of the State' over uncultivated land.¹²

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9. C.van Vollenhoven, De Indonesier en Zijn Grond (Leiden, Brill,1932), p.54.
 10. Verkerk Pistorius, Studien over de Inlandsche Huishuiding in de Padangsche Bovenlanden (Zalt-Bommel,1871), pp.32-33,129.
 11. G.D. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven bij de Minangkabausche Maleiers (Leiden,Brill,1909), pp.638-39.
 12. Resume's, op.cit., pp.77,82.

The bulk of the Minangkabaus, including village heads, did not know the contents of the Declaration even in the early 20th century. The Declaration was in reality, as governor Ballot commented, a 'judicial fiction' created by the government. He further reported to the governor general that the Declaration might seem incomprehensible or ridiculous if shown to penghulus.¹³ The Declaration was supplemented by other laws which were of a more detailed nature, such as one for long term lease (Staatsblad 1891, no. 4 and 5) in the Outer Provinces and for mines (Staatsblad 1899, no. 214 and 434). In addition, many decisions were issued by local authorities for particular cases and regions. In theory the government and Europeans could acquire free or cheaply leased land by these regulations without being bothered by the complicated indigenous land rights. We will examine the case of Ombilin coal mine which was directly run by the government to see how these regulations were implemented.

The Ombilin coal mine case

Coal deposits were found in 1866 along the Upper Ombilin river near Sawah Lunto, as a result of a series of investigations by the government. Soon after the discovery, the chief engineer of the investigations reported to Batavia that the government should pay f.1,500 as uang adat to the nagari Kubang where the coal had been found, so that the nagari could hold feasts; similar recompense should be paid to other nagaris which might be affected were the mine area to be expanded. The governor of West Sumatra thought this idea preferable to annual payment on the grounds that the notion of annual payment conflicted with the sovereign domain right claimed by the government.¹⁴ Although the Dutch did not need to pay any compensation to the nagari as long as the land concerned was 'free domain' or uncultivated land, payment of the uang adat was still felt necessary.¹⁵

13. Ballot, Ontwerp, op.cit., pp.9-10.

14. Letter of Izerman, 31 December 1886, no.8820, in B.H.F. van Heuven, "Het Ombilin Steenkolenbedrijf door een Bestuursambtenaar bezien", (1931, in Korn Collection, no.368), pp.40-41.

15. Letter of Muunick, 9 March 1891, no.1305; Governor's Decision, 15 March 1892, no.1, both in ibid, p.42.

In 1892 the Dutch paid f.2,000 to the nagari Kubang, of which f.1,500 was meant for the compensation for the hak ulayat and f.500 for feasts. As the mine business expanded not only in terms of mine sites but also in terms of affiliated facilities and timber for firewood and constructing pits, the government paid the same kind of compensation as in the Kubang case to the neighbouring nagaris such as Kolok, Talago, and Gunung by the end of the 19th century.¹⁶

Two points require special attention. Firstly, there was a clear contradiction in the government treatment of the hak ulayat. At the promulgation of the Domain Declaration the government regarded hak ulayat only as the right of supervision and did not consider it to entail the property right of the nagari over uncultivated land. However in practice the government acted as if the compensation for the hak ulayat involved a complete transfer of the nagari territorial right, thus assuming it to be a property right. Secondly, the government obscured the concept of the uang adat or the customary dues. In government correspondence, it was usually referred to as the bunga kayu. However bunga kayu was a village tax on collecting forest products (10 per cent), not on exploiting minerals in the ground, which was called bunga tanah (about 7.5 per cent). In either case regular payment for exploitation of minerals was obligatory. Dutch officials in West Sumatra knew this clearly. In a report to the governor general, a Dutch official requested Batavia to pay more money to the nagaris, pointing out that the so-called uang adat paid by the government was only for the alang-alang field in which the mine was located, not for the actual exploitation of the coal.¹⁷

When the second expansion of the Ombilin coal mine took place between 1900 and 1915, penghulus of nagaris which were newly involved in the coal mine area demanded compensation for their uncultivated land. However all these requests were rejected by the government. During that period compensation was paid only for the sawah which the Ombilin coal mine alienated, and which was of course 'unfree domain'.¹⁸ This lack of

16. ibid., p.43.

17. ibid., p.46.

18. ibid., p.56.

recognition of local rights reflected a change in the government's general attitude towards the Outer Provinces at the beginning of the 20th century when the economic interest of the Dutch in the Outer Provinces became much greater than in the 19th century. A resident's decision in 1903 did not even refer to the future payment of uang adat for the Ombilin mines, and instead used the unclear term, 'the compensation for penghulus' rights'. By this decision, compensation for using uncultivated land was no longer related to a specific percentage of exploited value, which the uang adat stipulated. As a concession to popular feelings, the Minangkabaus were allowed to collect forest products and cut timber for their own consumption in the 'free domain' as 'a token of government favour'.¹⁹

The government's treatment of the nagaris involved in the Ombilin coal mine in the 20th century was much harsher than over any other issue in West Sumatra, because the Ombilin mine was one of the most important depositories of coal in Indonesia. Dissatisfaction spread all over West Sumatra, particularly around Sawah Lunto, the centre of the coal mining business. In the middle 1920s, the Minangkabaus sympathized with communist propaganda which stressed the fact that the government monopolized Ombilin coal, little benefit from the mines being returned to the people. This propaganda was very persuasive, as many Minangkabaus saw trains carrying coal to the Emma port, south of Padang.

Land and Government Policy

With the exception of the Ombilin case, government control over land in West Sumatra was very much limited by indigenous land rights, in spite of the new regulations. In 1877, a regulation for a long term lease (erfpacht) stipulated that an applicant had to pay f.60 to penghulus as the compensation for the bunga kayu, though this was not applied to the Ombilin case. However it is not clear whether the sum differed according to the acreage of land leased. In 1900 the sum of the compensation was fixed at f.1 per bau (approx. 0.7 ha), which was paid to penghulus as

19. Ballot, Ontwerp, op.cit., pp.13-14.

compensation for the damage which forest on the leased land suffered.²⁰ This regulation suggests that the bunga kayu was legally accepted by the government. The hak ulayat on which the bunga kayu was based was a serious obstacle for both the government and Europeans' using 'domain land' freely throughout the colonial period. The inability of the government to exercise effective control over uncultivated land in West Sumatra was a very exceptional case in Indonesia. One important reason is the fact that the Domain Declaration was kept secret from the population for fear of resentment.

The Agrarian Law, which had been operative in Java and Madura since 1870 and most Outer Provinces since 1875, was at last introduced in West Sumatra in 1915 (Staatsblad, no. 98). This law had two major purposes: to protect Indonesians from economic hardship by prohibiting the sale of land to non-Indonesians, especially Chinese; and to strengthen government control over uncultivated land by restricting people's rights far more markedly than did the Domain Declaration. In fact, however, the sale of land to non-Indonesians had never been an issue in West Sumatra, with some exceptions, even before the Agrarian Law, for such sale was strictly prohibited by the adat. The attempt to strengthen government control over uncultivated land gave rise to a clause requiring villagers to obtain permission from the nagari head to put uncultivated land into temporary use; from the district head for less than three years; and from the Dutch local administration (hoofd van plaatselijke bestuur which normally denoted the controleur) for more than three years. These regulations were totally at variance with the hak ulayat.

However the government attempts to implement the laws often ran into legal difficulties. A court case in 1931 illustrates the limited validity of government laws. A Dutch company accused two Minangkabaus of having 'illegally' occupied land which the company had leased in a nagari near Padang since 1917. As the company did not use the land for a long time, the two Minangkabaus living in the next nagari converted part of the land into a coconut garden and a dry field for ten years. Furthermore, one of them built a house on the land. The Court of Padang

20. *ibid.*

rejected the complaint of the company in favour of the two Minangkabaus, agreeing that the Agrarian Law and Domain Declaration had not been strictly applied to West Sumatra, but the Minangkabaus had enjoyed almost entirely the right of opening up uncultivated land.²¹ This decision carried important implications. Firstly, the European enterprise could keep its rights over the leased land only as long as the land was used. Secondly, when the land was not used the company's rights were weaker than those of the Minangkabaus who were outsiders to the nagari involved. Thirdly, the government could not protect the company's rights, even though it issued the lease under state laws. This and similar cases indicate that the Minangkabaus were able to preserve a high degree of their land rights against European enterprises.

The problem of long-term lease was not as serious for the Minangkabaus as that of the so-called forest reserve because the number and size of European plantations were relatively small in West Sumatra. However the forest reserve policy had a much greater impact upon the hak ulayat. After the introduction of the Agrarian Law the government began to demarcate forest as government reserves, officially to protect forests from uncontrolled timber cutting in order to preserve water resources. However it cannot be denied that the forest reserve policy was intended to provide cheap timber for public works, European enterprises and all sorts of facilities which needed timber. In addition, the government could make profits from timber sales.

The forest reserve policy was perceived by the population as an infringement of the hak ulayat and exacerbated their feeling against the government in the first half of the 1920s. The commission for investigating the communist-led uprisings realized that this issue had been a factor in the uprisings. As was the case with Ombilin coal, the population could watch trains carrying timber for Sawah Lunto and other places and felt it unfair that the government deprived the people of their rights over forests. The first action in connection with the uprisings in the nagari Tanjung Ampal near Sawah Lunto was the murder of a Minangkabau

21. "Beschikkingsrecht en Domainbeginsel in Sumatra's Westkust", Adatrechtbundels, vol.35, pp.223-30.

contractor who collected timber for the Ombilin mine.²²

In the course of its investigation of the uprisings, the Commission issued the so-called Solok Reglement obliging the government and European enterprises which exploited timber to pay 25 per cent of the timber value to concerned nagaris.²³ The regulation caused wide repercussions both among the Minangkabaus and Dutch officials. Some Dutch officials opposed paying 25 per cent in compensation, as this was too high even considering the indigenous bunga kayu of 10 per cent.²⁴ Moreover the Reglement was issued not as a result of the Commission's consultation with higher governmental bodies, but on its own initiative. However once it was known by the population the government could not ignore the payment in view of the very unstable political situation after the uprisings.

The government had so far profited on average by f.20,000 per year from the sale of timber. Therefore nagaris which provided the timber could in theory receive f.5,000 a year.²⁵ Actually only f.921.59 was paid for the first time in 1930.²⁶ Originally the Reglement was to be applied only to nagaris which provided timber for the Ombilin coal mine, but other nagaris immediately began to claim the compensation because the economic situation was getting worse.²⁷ The government

22. Letter of Gonggrijp, Padang 22 February 1930, no.105/A, Mailr.1910/1930.

23. Westkust Rapport, Deel III, p.63.

24. This attitude can be seen in letters: Director of Forest System, Batavia, 28 March 1930, no.2529/HI, Mailr.1910/1930; Assistant Resident of Agam (Spits), Fort de Kock, 26 November 1931, Mailr.617ax/1932; Burgmeester van Padang, Padang, 8 June 1930, no.1439, Mailr.32/1931.

25. Letter of Director of the Interior Department, Batavia, 21 June 1931, no.Bg/15/1/3, Mailr.391/1931.

26. idem, 22 December 1930, Bg/15/20/4, Mailr.391/1931.

27. Morsink, M.v.O., pp.12-13.

had to comply with these claims. In 1932, 36 nagaris received the money and 5 were to be paid in the following years. The compensation was ordered to be stored in the nagari treasury for general use. Figures in 1935 indicate that about 67 per cent of the total area of West Sumatra was forest, of which about 66 per cent was demarcated as the forest reserve.²⁸ It was quite easy for the villagers to violate the prohibition of cultivating the reserved area or collecting forest products and timber for sale unless such violation became too blatant, for there were only 27 officials to supervise the reserve in West Sumatra as a whole.²⁹ In the 1930s depression nagaris with extensive forests demarcated as forest reserve tended to request the government to release the reserve for them. The nagaris Padang Sibusuk and Pamuatan (both in Solok) recovered 160 ha in this way in 1931.³⁰ Release of the reserve also took place in various places such as on the slopes of Mt. Merapi and in Alahan Panjang.³¹ In some released areas the villagers cut too much timber for sale. The nagari Padang Ganting (Tanah Datar) was ordered not to cut timber for other purposes than building new houses, serious repair of houses and building public facilities including the village council hall, mosque, and nagari offices.³²

The payment of the 25 per cent compensation and partial release of the forest reserve to the population made considerable inroads in the government reserve policy and were concessions to the hak ulayat. Shortly after the Solok Reglement, a Dutch official lamented that the nagari could levy forest tax upon the state. In 1936 the resident of West Sumatra admitted that the Domain Declaration and the Agrarian Law were de facto dead letter in West Sumatra.³³ It is of note that strong

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28. Letter of Assistant Resident of Solok (Korn), Solok, 17 April 1935, no.861/48 in Korn Collection, no.367.
29. Proceedings of a conference, 14-15 June 1929 in Fort de Kock, Mailr.688x/1929.
30. V.K.K.N.P.1931, p.69.
31. Hemsing, M.v.O., p.15.
32. Schauer, M.v.O., pp.15-16.
33. Proceedings of a conference, 14-15 June 1929 in Fort de Kock, op.cit.

land rights of the Minangkabau nagari in relation to state laws was an important factor in economic expansion in West Sumatra during the boom period in the 1910s and 1920s on the one hand, and for mitigating economic hardship during the 1930s depression. Had state land laws been strictly applied to West Sumatra, European plantations may have hindered much more seriously the Minangkabaus from enlarging cash crop gardens on 'free domain'. In the 1930s, the villagers could supplement their income by collecting forest products or sometimes by making handicrafts such as rattan mats in Solok.

Land Transactions

It was economic and social change in Minangkabau rather than government laws which accelerated change in the Minangkabau land tenure system: economically, the advancement of a monetary economy, the increase in the importance of private property, and necessity for cash; socially, the tendency towards individualization and the nuclear family, and the weakening of family ties. The incessant attack on the matrilineal land tenure system and inheritance law by Islamic groups may have also contributed to the relaxation of the system in the long run. Although we can speculate as to the economic factors most crucial in changing the land system, it is hard to generalize on to what extent the change should be attributed to a specific factor. Hence the present survey will focus on a discussion of the rules governing land transactions, and to what extent these rules changed in specific cases.

The investigation of land transactions has special difficulties. The most serious one is the fact that comprehensive data are not available. The government ordered the registration of all land transactions after the introduction of the Agrarian Laws in 1915; initially this was to be done by nagari authorities, and then by Indonesian officials (district and sub-district heads). However the book of registration was almost blank because penghulus and villagers could not accept government intervention in such matters, and dealt with it according to adat.³⁴ Only

34. Lyon, M.v.O., p.89.

a tiny part of the actual land transactions taking place in this period are open to scrutiny, involving land disputes which were taken before certain legal bodies. To make matters more complicated, there were many methods of solving land disputes. The parties concerned could negotiate with each other on a private basis. When a dispute could not be settled by this negotiation, it might be taken to the penghulus (if the dispute concerned communal family land, the penghulu was the first person to be consulted), the suku meeting, the nagari adat council, and finally government courts such as the Local Court (landraad) at the sub-division level, the Court of Padang, and the Highest Court at Batavia. When the disputes were settled by non-governmental bodies, records are seldom available.³⁵ It is also difficult to judge what proportion of land disputes settled by non-governmental bodies were actually observed by disputing parties. It was not rare for judgements made even by the governmental courts to be ignored by the population.

For convenience, land will be divided into three categories, each of which had different regulations for transactions, namely (1) the tanah pancarian or individually acquired land, (2) the tanah pusaka or ancestral property land, (3) uncultivated land under the hak ulayat.

1. Individual land

A man could obtain land either with the collaboration of his wife, with the help of his maternal family members or by his own efforts. In the first case the wife had joint rights over the land. In the second, right over the land depended on the extent of the help of family members. From the family's point of view, even individual land was considered as the bunga pusaka (lit., flower of family property),³⁶ as one's economic

35. As for dispute settlements within the nagari, the following figures may give some idea. According to the 1938 investigation in the Maninjau sub-district, there were 60 cases settled by non-governmental legal procedures, of which 40 were settled by penghulus of the parties concerned; 7 by the suku council; 11 by the nagari adat council; 2 by the nagari council (nagariraad). Of the 60 cases, 21 were related to land disputes: 10 pusaka land; 8 pancarian land; and 3 uncultivated land. See report of Controleur of Maninjau, 14 June 1939, Bijlage A of the report of S.H.Pruis in 1939, in Korn Collection, no.344.

36. "Verslagen van de Vergadering over Herziening van het Adatrecht te Fort de Kock (1911), Adatrechtbundels, vol.6,p.214.

activity involved directly or indirectly support from one's family. In any case the owner could use the land freely during his life time. However there was a considerable difference in regulations on whether one could sell and pawn individual land freely, according to the regions and vocational groups concerned. In the late 19th century some regions allowed the free right of disposal excluding claims from family members,³⁷ while some regions required the approval of the family.³⁸ However it can be said that the more society was penetrated by a monetary economy, the more individuals had opportunities to open up land by themselves by using wage labourers rather than the help of family members with the money they earned personally from wage labour, commerce, and also from credit institutions.

The strengthening of individual rights over newly acquired land was promoted by the increasing tendency towards the nuclear family in place of the extended family living in a big adat house. The census of 1930 enumerated approximately 40 per cent of houses which were owned and inherited by the matrilineal family as a whole, 46 per cent owned

37. Resume's op.cit., pp.12,18-21. Pistorius, Studien, op.cit., pp.130-131; G.D. Stibbe, "Beschrijving der Onderafdeeling Alahan Panjang", T.B.B., vol.21(1901), p.499.

38. G.D. Willinck, Het Rechtsleven, op.cit., pp.225-26.

individually, and the rest not specified.³⁹ Including some percentage of the unspecified houses, the individual houses may have been almost half of the total. It is quite likely that people living in individual houses had greater freedom to dispose of their property than those in communally owned houses.

The individualization of economic activity and the increase of the nuclear family had an impact upon the inheritance of individual land. At a meeting of adat authorities in 1911, some of those authorities from various places agreed that individual land of a father had previously been inherited automatically by his nephews and nieces, the kemanakans, who were the legitimate heirs in the adat, at his death. His children could acquire part or whole of the land only by the hiba (gift under Islamic law) during the father's life time with the consent of all the kemanakans.⁴⁰ Once the land was inherited by the kemanakans it belonged

39. Some examples of local differences are as follows:-

	<u>pusaka</u>	<u>pancarian</u>	<u>other type</u>	<u>not known</u>
Ophir	9.82%	78.52%	9.02%	2.64%
Maninjau	66.07	24.93	3.96	5.04
Suliki	45.91	51.43	0.06	2.00
Batipuh & X Kota	66.85	26.79	3.01	3.35
Sawah Lunto (town)	0.51	14.17	81.91	3.41
Padang (city)	9.78	41.03	37.90	11.29
Korinci & Indrapura	36.96	44.55	14.75	3.74

Volkstelling 1930, Deel IV, p.67.

It is clear from the table above that communal housing was less prevalent in towns and cities. Ophir requires special attention. This area was sparsely populated and absorbed many migrants from other areas. This may be a reason for the low rate of pusaka house. See also Chapter VI, Migration.

40. "Verslagen van de Vergadering over Herziening van het Adatrecht", op.cit., pp.213 ff.

to the communal property of the father's maternal family, although the kemanakans had primary rights to use the land in the extended family.

It was becoming common in the early 20th century to give a greater proportion of private property including land to the father's children rather than his kemanakans not only through hiba but also inheritance. This trend was particularly observable in commercialized areas like big towns and the surrounding areas, coastal nagaris where the old adat was more relaxed than in the Highlands, and among merchants and government officials. The old concept of individual property as bunga pusaka was fading away.⁴¹ Islamic groups, especially reformists who were largely supported by merchants and traders, had attacked the matrilineal inheritance law in Minangkabau since the padri war, demanding patrilineal inheritance under Islamic law. As far as private property was concerned, this demand was ever increasingly accepted by the society. With local variations of course, the conflict between father's children and kemanakans over private property was partly mitigated by reciprocity: the kemanakans also received part of their father's legacy.

It was a long-term general trend that individual landed property was becoming more and more detached from family control. When disputes over inheritance between children and their father's sisters' children were taken to governmental courts, the courts also supported the children. A relatively new trend, which continued to develop throughout the 1930s, was for fathers to buy land with their own money in their children's name when the children were very young. This procedure could avoid possible claims from sisters' children, which might occur in the case of hiba procedure when the children grew older.⁴² This trend may have resulted from an increasingly closer relationship between the father and children.

There was however a movement of reaction on the part of penghulus in the 1930s. Penghulus of the nagari Rokan, north east of the Highlands, decided in 1934 that the passing of individual land from a father to his

41. Stibbe, "Beschrijving", op.cit., p.499.

42. Tijdschrift voor het Recht in Nederlandsch-Indië (hereafter T.R.), vol.151, pp.237-38.

children required the consent of the sisters' children.⁴³ In Solok, adat authorities insisted in 1934 that the disposal of individual land, regardless of whether it was to be passed on to one's children or used personally, required the approval not only of the sisters' children but also of the orang empat jenis or the four kinds of adat authorities and the penghulu suku.⁴⁴ This movement indicates fear of the disintegration of the matrilineal social order on the part of penghulus and perhaps also their intention to relieve economic hardship in a traditional way.

2. Communal family land

The communal land was the core of the property of an extended family. It was regarded as sacral property inherited from generation to generation through the maternal line, more exactly from mother to daughter. It did not belong to special individuals in the family but to the family as a whole. The family members were expected to increase it for forthcoming generations. It is therefore understandable that regulations against its alienation were more rigid than in the case of individual land. The most important communal land was the rice field including irrigated, dependant on rain and dry field. However permanent cash crop gardens were sometimes also included in family land.

Pawning (mengadai) was admitted only for special occasions stipulated by the adat, such as marriage of daughters, building of adat houses, funerals, installation of penghulu, and so on. The duration of pawning was often not stipulated in the contract.⁴⁵ For the contract the approval of all family members and witness of penghulus were necessary. In addition, after the completion of the contract, some token had to be deposited in the house of the pawnee (the person who had provided the money).⁴⁶ In most cases the contract was oral. However, written contracts

43. "Erfgenaamschap-skenking", Adatrechtbundels, vol.41, pp.404-405.

44. T.R., vol.140, pp.127-28.

45. Guyt, Grondverpanding in Minangkabau (Bandung, 1936), pp.34-37; "Grondverpanding (1906-1907)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.33, pp.290-304.

46. J.F.A. de Rooij, "Pandrecht (1902)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.20, p.128.

either on a private basis or at government offices came to be used in the course of the 20th century, partly as a result of government encouragement and partly because of the increased desire for security. In the case of written contracts the duration of pawning was normally stipulated.

Trouble arose from the ambiguous contents of pawn contracts. When duration was not stipulated it was tacitly understood; two harvest years as the minimum for sawah and from eight to ten years for ladang. If the duration was shorter than these the pawnee could not use the land effectively. After the minimum term had elapsed, the original owner of the land could redeem whenever he wanted. The redemption was, however, expected to take place when crops were not on the fields. If there was a crop, both of the parties divided it equally.⁴⁷

As the money provider in practice could not press the redemption the contract could be effective for a long term, and even extended for generations. On the other hand the original land owner could redeem the land even if the term expired.⁴⁸ It was difficult for the money provider to refuse a request for redemption against the customary expectation. Like duration, there was no standard value of pledging, but it depended on the quality of the land, economic conditions at the time of contracts, and the urgency of the need for ready cash on the part of the money borrower. When the economy was booming, and therefore the prices for crops were high, the value of pledging was higher than in depression. Normally, the sum of the pawn was equivalent to the value of a three year harvest of the land. Interest was in theory prohibited by Islamic law.⁴⁹

There were two sorts of share-cropping contracts. Firstly, when land was too large to be worked by family members, the family let part of it to other persons. This would happen when family size decreased by death and emigration. Under this contract the share-cropper received

47. "Grondverpanding (1906-1907)", op.cit., p.290.

48. "Het bezwaren van poesakagoederen met credietverband", Adatrechtbundels, vol.41, p.373.

49. Rooij, "Pandrecht (1902)", op.cit., p.131.

from one-third to half depending on specific conditions.⁵⁰ Secondly, when a family pawned its land it lost part of its income and staple food, so making it difficult for them to redeem. In this case the family could ask the money provider to let them use the land (melalukan), often under the condition of equal division.⁵¹

A family could obtain further money from land which had already been pawned (mendalami). When such a transaction was repeated two or three times it was regarded as de facto 'sale' (jual) in the Minangkabau sense.⁵² However the term 'sale' never implied that the original owner lost his rights completely over the land but held a right to repurchase (tubus) the land at a price slightly higher than the sum he had borrowed.⁵³ Nevertheless the money provider might refer to the land as his 'individual land'.

As far as adat sayings are concerned, they can be interpreted as equally admitting or denying the sale of family land in the sense normally understood nowadays. One of the most definite expressions for the sale of family land says: what is sold (terjual) is gone and never returns again.⁵⁴ However we can find few cases of the sale in the sense above-mentioned. It would be safer to say that the sale of family land was strongly restricted but not impossible in theory. Whenever one wished to pawn or 'sell' family land the partner to the contract should ideally

50. Pandecten van het Adatrecht, vo.IVB,p.972, no.2702; Toorn, "Aantekeningen uit het Familieleven bij den Maleier in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", T.B.G., vol.26 (1881), p.516. There was a big variation in this proportion in various areas. See also, J. Bosse, Eenige Beschouwingen omtrent de Oorzaak van den Achteruitgang van de Koffiecultuur ter Sumatra's Westkust Benevens Eenige Opmerkingen Omtrent de Economische en Politieke Toestanden Aldaar ('s-Gravenhage, 1895), p.98.

51. "Grondverpanding (1806-1807)", op.cit., p.291.

52. "Verslagen van de Vergadering over Herziening van Adatrecht", op.cit., pp.207-19.

53. "Artikelen uit de Oetoesan Malajoe", Adatrechtbundels, vol.6, p.239.

54. ibid.

be found, first among closest kin groups, next in the same suku, then co-villagers, and only finally from among the inhabitants of other nagaris. Transactions relating to family land with non-Minangkabaus were avoided except in big towns under lease contract.

The firmness of communal ownership of family land was relaxed gradually through many ways, perhaps in the later 19th century, but it was accelerated in the early 20th century.⁵⁵ The land was pawned for other purposes than those stipulated by the adat. In the densely populated and commercial centres of Agam, merchants often pawned their family land to provide commercial capital at the beginning of the 20th century. It was easily pawned for ready cash in the Upper Kampar, an area not densely populated but where the inhabitants concentrated on cash crop (gambir) cultivation and migrated temporarily as wage labourers.⁵⁶

The increase in the number of nuclear families caused a division of communal land among family members, around commercial centres in particular. A family living in Padang divided its communal land in 1917 between a mother and three daughters on the death of an important family member. To avoid future trouble, the matter was regulated in a government court.⁵⁷ This case shows the influence of Western institutions. The division of family land could take place also within the framework of the adat. For instance, when the last member of a family died people with the closest kin relationship could take over the land as occurred in Pariaman in 1932.⁵⁸ In the 1930s communal land could be divided by family branches as long as penghulus agreed.⁵⁹

55. Ballot, Ontwerp, op.cit., p.21; O.P.Besseling, "Het Inlandsch Credietwezen in de Renteloose Voorschotten in Boven Kampar", T.B.B., vol.42(1912), pp.127-28.

56. Besseling, ibid, pp.129-29.

57. "Vervorming van het Recht (1913,1917,1921)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.27, pp.256-57; T.R., vol.140, Landraad Fort de Kock, vonnis, 9 October 1933, pp.202-204.

58. "Uitsterven van een Paroet en Vervening van haar Goederen", Adatrechtbundels, vol.41, p.400.

59. "Dorpsacten (1870-1937)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.41, pp.412-13, cases VI, VIII, IX, and X.

Part I of the West Coast Report contains a misleading account of the division of family land into individual property. The Report maintained that all pusaka land in the nagari AirDingin (Alahan Panjang) was converted into private land because of pawning and because the traditional adat regulations were neglected, even though they were still perceived as a legal norm.⁶⁰ In 1934 a Dutch official made an investigation in this nagari and found the facts to be at variance with the Report. In 1910 there had been a big fire in this nagari. To build new adat houses, about half of the sawah pusaka had been pawned, but it had been mostly redeemed by the time of the 1934 investigation. It is not clear why the investigators who concluded the Report misunderstood the situation. Perhaps they took temporarily pawned communal land for individual land, as a person who obtained land from others through pawning tended to refer to the land as his individual land. In reality, however, the land could be termed individual land only until the original owner redeemed it. In this nagari the sale of family land was admitted only on one occasion, a case in which all family members had died.⁶¹ Hence the conversion of all family land of this nagari into individual land was never a possibility and the Report was incorrect on this point.

Rights over family land were closely supervised by family members. A woman marrying a man from another nagari claimed her rights over family land in 1931, but was rejected by the lineage head of the family on the grounds that she married the man against the will of the family members.⁶² Endogamy within the nagari was common in West Sumatra. Sometimes several nagaris formed a kind of endogamy group, such as the nagaris Talam, Kinari, Saningbakar, and Saok Lawas, all in the Solok sub-division. When a woman in this group married a man from a nagari other than these four, she was deprived of her rights over family land in 1931.⁶³ When a husband was a non-Minangkabau, conditions for his Minangkabau wife were worse.

60. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, p.105.

61. "Omzetting van Poesaka-in Pentjarian Grond (1934)", Adatrechtbundels vol.41, pp.392-94.

62. Landraad Solok in principle supported the family head's claim on the grounds that the adat of Solok had not changed. The wife appealed to the High Court Padang but was again rejected. Raad van Justitie Padang, vonnis, 10 September 1931, T.R., vol.135, pp.272-76.

63. Raad van Justitie Padang, vonnis, 24 December 1931, T.R., vol.140, pp.201-202.

A wife marrying a Chinese living in Pariaman could not claim any rights. Rejected by her family, she took the case to the Local Court of Pariaman which also rejected her claim in support of the adat of this area.⁶⁴

In contrast to the weak legal position of people marrying outsiders, those who were regarded as legitimate family members enjoyed strong privileges. A man born in the nagari Alahan Panajang had been away from the village for 30 years and returned in 1930. In his case all his rights over family land had been perfectly preserved.⁶⁵ In the 1930s many Minangkabaus returned home due to the economic depression. In most cases they were at least assured of food in this way.

Disputes over family land could occur by individuals disposing of land without obtaining the consent of the family members. This was particularly easy for the family head because he could represent the family.⁶⁶ People cheated not only family members but also others. A man (suku Caniago, nagari Pau V, Padang) pawned his family land to a man (suku Koto, nagari Pau V) in 1913, who in turn pawned it to another man (suku Caniagom, nagari Pau V) in 1926. The original owner of the land however concluded a pawn contract with a woman (suku Caniago, nagari Pau V) in 1930 on the same land which had already been under the usufruct of the second pawnee. When the woman wanted to use the land, the second pawnee rejected her claim because he had obtained it from the first pawnee. Accused by the woman the original owner admitted his illegal behaviour. Eventually the woman was able to recover the money which she had paid to the owner, but the land remained in the hands of the second pawnee.⁶⁷ It is possible that this case occurred due to the economic hardship of the original owner in 1913, and this type of illegal trans-

64. Landraad Pariaman, vonnis, 13 October 1931, T.R., vol. 135, pp. 232-35.

65. Raad van Justitie Padang, vonnis, 22 December 1938, T.R., vol. 150, pp. 311-12.

66. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, pp. 104-105; "Uitsterven van een Parut", op.cit., pp. 402-403.

67. "Sawahverpanding (1913-1935)", Adatrechtbundels, vol. 41, pp. 420-25.

action may have been common in the depression of the 1930s.⁶⁸

There were occasions on which family land was permanently transferred to others. One of them was public auction, a government institution. When a family could not redeem its family land, the pawnee could in theory bring the case to a public auction office as long as the contract was legal in terms of adat and government law, i.e., that it had been entered into with the unanimous consent of the family which pawned, that the period of the duration of the pawning had been stipulated, and that there had been a condition to sell in case of inability to redeem within the term. However the government discouraged the public auction as far as possible even when a contract was perfectly legal.⁶⁹ We have no data on how much land was actually sold by auction during the Dutch period. As the Dutch were trying to preserve the old adat system in relation to family land in order to stabilize the society, knowing that the family land system was crucial for this, the total size of auctioned land was presumably not large. The alienation of family land through public auction can therefore be considered exceptional.

What can be said of the over-all trend in the family land system during the Dutch period? Land transactions seemed to increase considerably after the abolition of the Cultivation System in 1908, or in other words in the wake of the development of a cash economy either for ready cash, capital for investment in commercial enterprises and cash crop cultivation, or for other purposes. It is understandable that the pawning of family land became frequent in commercialized areas and where cash crop cultivation began to expand at the beginning of the 20th century, as we have discussed before concerning merchants in Agam and peasants in

68. Kebulatan Kerapatan nagari Padang Sibusuk, 18 March 1934, no.12, Korn Collection, no.337. Although it is not clear whether the journal of judicial affairs, Tijdschrift voor het Recht in Nederlandsch Indie, contains all court cases or not, the number of court cases relating to land disputes published in the journal increases considerably in West Sumatra after 1930.

69. Raad van Justitie Padang, vonnis, 13 May 1937, T.R., vol.148, pp.513-17; Landraad Pariaman, vonnis, 10 June 1929, T.R., vol.133, pp.245-59. See also, "Vendutie Nitige Verklarend: Eenige wikkelde adat kwasite", Sumatra Bode, 18 May 1934. Raad van Justitie Padang, vonnis, 23 March 1939, T.R., vol.151, pp.235-37.

Upper Kampar for gambir cultivation. On the other hand regions, which were short of sawah or unsuitable either for rice or cash crop cultivation, seem to have experienced the intensification of pawning in order to obtain ready cash in the 1910s and 1920s, as was the case in the Alahan Panjang area. Shortly before the great economic crisis, the nagari council of Sumanik stipulated a maximum duration of two years for the mendalami transaction, a form of double pawning of the same land to the same person which seemed to be leading in practice to 'sale' in the Minangkabau sense.⁷⁰ This decision reflects an increase in mendalami transactions to the point where the existing land system might be seriously changed. During the depression two opposite trends arose in connection with family land transactions. On the one hand, the Minangkabaus used their sawah more intensively than before and accordingly pawned it less. There were places where inhabitants had no other means of obtaining ready cash than by pawning land. In such areas there was an increase in pawning.⁷¹ Generally speaking however the Minangkabaus became more rigid regarding alienation of family land in the depression. Although this might be a temporary reversal of current trends due to the depression, it is noteworthy that the sale of family land in the commercial sense did not take place during the Dutch period.

3. Uncultivated land

Villagers and outsiders had quite different rights over uncultivated land. The villagers could collect forest products, put the land into cultivation, and graze cattle on it. As far as villagers' rights are concerned, there was no significant change worth mentioning in the period under discussion. Thus we focus on the conflict of rights between villagers and outsiders. This problem is related to validity of the hak ulayat and consequently the autonomy of the nagari, since the increase of outsiders' rights meant the decay of village territorial rights and social integrity.

70. Kebulatan Kerapatan nagari Sumanik, 25 November 1929, Korn Collection, no.355.

71. This happened in such areas as Pariaman, Alahan Panjang and hilly villages in Tanah Datar. See, Lyon, M.v.O., pp.88-89; Schauerer, M.v.O., p.138; Meulen, M.v.O., pp. 4-5.

Outsiders could use uncultivated land temporarily and collect forest products with permission from and the payment of adat tax to the nagari but they could not 'own' the land.⁷² In the early 20th century, an outsider opened up uncultivated land for cash crop cultivation in Sijunjung, a region sparsely populated and unsuitable for rice cultivation, through a formal contract with the nagari. At his death, his kemanakans were offered two options: either to continue using the land or to divide the value of crops on the land equally with the nagari. However they were not allowed to dispose of the land, which was a possibility always open to the villagers.⁷³

There were three circumstances in which outsiders could obtain full land ownership or the nagari could alienate uncultivated land to outsiders: (1) sale, (2) changes in natural conditions, and (3) immigration. Of these the first two were fairly exceptional and the last was becoming harder and harder in the 20th century.

(1) The sale of uncultivated land

We occasionally encounter adat sayings which suggest the possibility of the sale of uncultivated land. For instance, one in Tanah Datar says, 'give (land) in exchange for money'. The nagari Guguk Padang Laweh (Sungai Tarab, Tanah Datar) bought uncultivated land from Kota nan VII at the end of the 19th century. This transaction was not a commercial one but was considered by the villagers as a token of friendship and generosity.⁷⁴ This type of transaction also took place near Lake Maninjau in 1870. The nagari Sungai Batang bought a piece of uncultivated land from Koto Gedang at 6,000 reals, equivalent to about f. 12,000.⁷⁵

The reorganization of nagari administration by the Dutch had some influence over the sale of uncultivated land. When the nagari Pantai in Upper Kampar was separated from Lubuk Lamo at the end of the 19th

72. Lulofs, "Nota", op.cit., p.2.

73. Report of Controleur of Sijunjung, 1 February 1907, Adatrechtbundels, vol.10, p.3.

74. Westenenk, De Minangkabausche Nagari, op.cit., p.100, note 1.

75. Pistorius, Studien, op.cit., p.132.

century as a result of the reorganization, the former purchased uncultivated land which existed within the latter's boundary, presumably because villagers of Pantai had previously used the land for shifting cultivation but the boundary was set artificially by the government. Asked by a Dutch official in 1930, villagers of Lubuk Lamo answered that such transactions conflicted with their adat and did not know how it could have happened.⁷⁶

When the boundary problem was not solved by purchase, the division of nagaris sometimes created a peculiar situation. In the Upper Kampar area the division of nagaris Pangkalang and Ibul produced a de facto no-man's land which the villagers cultivated occasionally but which was exempt from taxation. When divided nagaris could not find any solution, the division of nagaris caused boundary quarrels for a long time.

(2) Changes in natural conditions

The earthquake of 1909 raised the bottom of Lake Korinci and created new land. As the lake was not occupied by particular villages (dusuns) villagers near the new land began to claim land rights. Despite repeated negotiations between the villages concerned, the disputes remained unsettled until 1930 when the Dutch intervened.⁷⁷ It can be assumed that the land disputes became critical in that year because of the depression. Lake Korinci had created another land problem. As the lake was very shallow its fringe areas often developed into swamps. In the course of time the swamps dried up and became valuable land for cultivation. Over this type of land too, no villages could obtain territorial rights. In the early 1930s there were eight boundary quarrels

76. J. Couvreur, "Nagaris in de Koeantandistricten (1931)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.35, pp. 503-505, 525. The nagari division by the government also brought about the situation of villagers of a nagari having land in other nagaris with their present nagari forming one adat nagari before the division. These cases occurred between the nagaris Silungkang and Kubang; Talawi and Padang Ganting. See, Adat Monographie Silungkang and Talawi, Korn Collection, no.327, 328.

77. Morison, M.v.O., pp.7-8.

around the lake. In the case of disputes in 1932 between the dusuns Podok Tinggi and Kumun, inhabitants of both dusuns fought each other with knives and stones, in what came to be called the perang Korinci or Korinci war. This quarrel was settled by government intervention, the government fixing a new boundary at the end of that year, at the same time as settling of other quarrels.⁷⁸

(3) Migration within West Sumatra

Migration within West Sumatra is no recent trend. On the contrary the history of Minangkabau can be characterized by the well-known expansion from the darat (the nucleus of the Highlands) to the rantau (the Lowlands plus fringe areas of the Highlands). Within the darat too, the spread of nagaris was the result of migration (see Chapter I). Probably migration was accelerated throughout the 19th century in the wake of economic expansion, particularly that of cash crop cultivation. In the 20th century the process was again stimulated by the growth of population and the advance of communication. There seem to have been three major destinations for migration; southern coastal areas, Korinci, and Sungai Dareh through the valley from Sawah Lunto.⁷⁹

Some specific cases deserve investigation. At the end of the 19th century, mass migration took place from various parts of Agam to the nagaris Lubuk Basung and Kampong Pinang; and from the nagari Maninjau and Sungai Batang to Kampong Tengah (all these are located around Lake Maninjau). These migrations were arranged by negotiations between the penghulus of both parties. The conditions agreed were: (1) the internal affairs of immigrants were to be entrusted to themselves; (2) immigrants could have their own penghulus in the recipient nagari; (3) immigrants were allowed to exercise the same land rights as the recipients.⁸⁰ These conditions imply a generous attitude on the part of the recipients towards the newcomers. Even at the beginning of the 20th century colonization was not difficult when acceptors had enough

78. Bouwman, M.v.O., pp.28-31.

79. K.H. Jungans, "Economic Development and Social Change in Minangkabau", in West Sumatra Regional Planning Study, H. Kotter and K.H. Jungans ed. (University of Bonn, F.R. Germany, 1973?), p.121; Nootboon, M.v.O., pp.15-16.

80. Resume's, op.cit., p.18.

land reserves. For instance some nagaris in Pasaman (Ophir), north-west of the Highlands, willingly invited immigrants. At that time this region had poor access to communications and was sparsely populated. In the Pasaman case, conditions for immigrants were: (1) new settlers could obtain occupancy rights only on land which was not used by original settlers; (2) in the case of a certain area which had already been encircled by a nagari, newcomers could either purchase usufruct right or clear land by themselves, presumably with permission from the penghulus concerned; (3) new settlers were to be absorbed in their wife's suku in their recipient nagari.⁸¹ These stipulations suggest that conditions for colonization were becoming more rigid than those delineated above for the 19th century example: in the 19th century case internal affairs were entrusted to immigrants, while in the 20th century case immigrants had to be subject to penghulus of the recipient sukus.

Migration became more difficult during the depression of the 1930s when peasants who did not have sufficient land in their home nagaris searched for suitable places to which they could migrate. Extensive migration was tried by Pariaman people after the economic crisis of 1929. One destination was Pasaman, to which individual migration took place. Although migration was not prevented, the people of Pariaman complained much over the unfriendly treatment of the Pasaman people. Conditions presented to new settlers in 1932 in fact discouraged migration: (1) new settlers had to choose someone in the recipient nagari as their mamak (family head); (2) if newcomers wanted to have their own mamak, they were obliged to choose a penghulu among those in the nagari; (3) for this purpose they had to fulfil adat formalities, pay adat dues and give feasts; (4) when all formalities were completed, the penghulus of the recipient nagari were to try to persuade fellow villagers to accept the immigrants willingly. In addition, the original villagers imposed exorbitant burdens upon newcomers such as labour services to the penghulus, which were not rendered by the villagers, and much zakat.⁸² It is obvious that conditions for migrants became much

81. Jungans, "Economic Development and Social Change", op.cit., pp.120-21.

82. "Kolonizatie", Adatrechtbundels, vol.41, pp.372-73.

severer in Pasaman between the beginning of the 20th century and 1932.

A plan of migration into Indrapura had somewhat different nuances from the Pasaman case. On the Indrapura side, the inhabitants wanted more labour power to expand sawah. This need was stimulated by the advance of irrigation works after the crisis in 1929. About 1932, penghulus of Indrapura openly invited immigrants for four complexes of sawah. The first was located in the nagari Indrapura, where penghulus decided to grant uncultivated land to outsiders. When the decision was made, however, the villagers claimed their rights over the land at issue. The second was in the nagari Luang with 1,000 ha. which could easily be irrigated by water channels. In this case the penghulus decided to grant not only land for sawah but also accommodation to attract new settlers in competition with other complexes. The third was situated in the nagari Tapan suitable for irrigated sawah on a good location. The fourth was located in the nagari Silaut where the inhabitants had only ladang padi or dry rice fields and expected to convert it into irrigated sawah with the help of new settlers. They advertised favourable conditions, for instance the possibility of selling harvested rice to Moko-Moko (Bengkulen), south of Indrapura, which was always suffering from rice shortage. Moreover the accessibility to forest products and their saleability were suggested.⁸³

This propaganda at first attracted people who were looking for such opportunities. In November 1932, 20 penghulus of the Sungai Limau and Pariaman sub-district visited these nagaris. After looking at the land, these penghulus declared that the situation would certainly attract migrants. This rosy prospect soon turned pale in the course of negotiation. The conditions were: new settlers were allowed to choose their own tua kampong or the head of migrants who stood under one of the penghulus in the recipient nagari; uang nagari must be paid after the first harvest of new sawah; land rights which immigrants could acquire should be regarded as those of harta pancarian, and were thus very weak. The last condition was further supplemented by a regulation that if the first

83. Bouwman, M.v.O., appendix "Nota Betreffende het Zelfstandige onderdistrict Indrapoera der Onderafdeeling Kerintji-Indrapoera".

generation of the immigrants died in ten years land could be taken over by their legitimate heirs only if the heirs lived in the recipient nagari. If, therefore, the first generation of immigrants wanted to leave the nagari temporarily or for a long time, they had to give up all land rights contrary to ordinary adat regulations for land which secured the rights as long as the signs of cultivation remained regardless of whether the cultivators stayed in a nagari or not. Eventually all the plans were cancelled by the Pariaman people.⁸⁴

In contrast with the migration from Pariaman to Indrapura, those from the nagaris Tarusan and Bayung (both in Painan on the coast north of Indrapura) to some nagaris around Air Haji (south of Tarusan) ended with some success.⁸⁵ The difference was probably based on factors such as geographical proximity, adat similarity, and historical relationship which made colonization easier in the latter case. Apart from the above-mentioned cases, migration was not planned among Minangkabaus in the 1930s, because the economic situation made villagers more sensitive to their land rights.

It could be assumed that migration did not develop to the extent that it modified the land system in the nagari in general. Even when nagaris invited migrants, the conditions were scarcely acceptable for migrants. If such was the case for Minangkabaus, the conditions for non-Minangkabaus were naturally severer.

In 1905 a group of Javanese (the number is not clear) concluded a contract with the nagari Solok for their migration to the nagari for coffee cultivation. The nagari Solok offered land (forest), called tanah petih (lit., white land), under the following conditions: (1) for the cultivation of perennial crops such as coffee and coconuts, the produce be divided equally between the nagari and the Javanese; (2) if the Javanese converted dry land into sawah, they could enjoy all the produce for ten years; (3) after ten years, the sawah must be equally divided between the two parties; (4) if the Javanese abandoned the sawah

84. Morison, M.v.O., pp.26ff.; Lyon, M.v.O., pp.50-51.

85. Letter of Agricultural Consultant for West Sumatra, Padang, 5 July 1935, no.1269/K35, in Korn Collection, no.367.

in less than ten years to leave the nagari either for a short or long time, they could not pledge or lease it, but had to return it to the nagari. Some of the Javanese migrants appear to have remained at least until 1935.⁸⁶ However conditions for them were extremely harsh despite the fact that the contract was made in 1905 when nagaris with abundant land reserves were still generous to Minangkabau migrants.

Apart from this case, the government drew up plans for Javanese migration to West Sumatra at the end of the 1920s. However these plans were not implemented for 'various reasons'.⁸⁷ In 1932, 63 Javanese labourers and their families were allotted some land within European plantation plots in Korinci, perhaps arranged by the government and the plantation owner. Most of the Javanese however soon returned to their home village in Java, mainly because the plantation did not need labourers as the depression spread.⁸⁸ If the migration of non-Minangkabau people in the form of plantation workers had continued throughout the 1930s and had such migrants settled down for a long time, the land rights of Minangkabaus might have been undermined to some extent. However the majority of European enterprises either closed down or reduced their employees during the depression. Thus, we can assume that this type of migration did not affect the territorial rights of the nagaris.

In the 1930s the government tried to promote the so-called trans-migration from Java to various regions of the Outer Provinces. The response of the Minangkabaus to this policy was very critical. A Minangkabau newspaper complained in 1936: why do the Javanese not go to New Guinea?⁸⁹ When the government announced a trans-migration plan from Java to Ophir, land between Sasak and Air Bangis on the coast north of Padang, the Minangkabaus again strongly opposed the plan, insisting that the land should be reserved for Minangkabaus who returned home from

86. "Ontginningsvergunning door de Soekoebestuurders van Soengai Napa en Nan Balimo van de Nagari Solok betreffende het Bosch (Rimbo) Tanah Poetih aan Javaansche Inwoners van de Laras Solok(1905) en Nagari-Uitspraak in een Geschil over dien Grond(1935)", Adatrechtbundels, vol.41, pp.396-99.

87. V.K.K.N.P.1929, p.46.

88. ibid 1932, pp.73-74.

89. Radio, 31 March 1936, in Politiek Polititioneel Overzicht (hereafter abbreviated as PPO) for March 1936, Mailr. 432x/1936.

various ventures. A Minangkabau writer expressed a common concept concerning land: only gunung yang lereng (high mountains) belong to the raja (implicitly the Dutch government in this case), tanah yang datar (flat lands) belong to the people.⁹⁰ The Minangkabaus were aware that the area of land they had in use was not necessarily adequate for them, considering the concentration of the population in specific areas.⁹¹ The most typically Minangkabau expression of displeasure over the Javanese immigration is found in an article in a Minangkabau magazine:

There are Javanese and Niassers in Minangkabau who have been settling down here, especially in towns. There is no regulation in Minangkabau to shut the door to outsiders provided they accept the Minangkabau adat and Islamic law..... Don't build a house in a house.⁹²

This writer certainly knew that the Javanese would not accept the matrilineal social norm. Thus, this expression was de facto refusal of the migration plan of the government.

The foregoing discussion about migration problems revealed that penghulus took the initiative in negotiation because they were the supervisors not only of family land but also of nagari land as a whole, when an issue involved outsiders. We have seen how Minangkabau villagers were reluctant to accept Minangkabaus from other villages even in areas where there was spare land and labour was needed. The fact that the nagari territorial rights were not undermined by migration among the Minangkabaus suggests that nagari autonomy was still preserved in one crucial respect. The strong opposition to immigration of non-Minangkabaus and the success of this opposition to a large degree would have been a reason why the Minangkabaus have so far maintained their ethnic homogeneity in West Sumatra.

90. Persamaan, 24 January 1939, PPO, January 1939, Mailr.319x/1939.

91. Dt. B(atoeah), "Kolonizatie Orang Djawa ke Minangkabau", Oetoesan Alam Minangkabau, no.5, 1939, pp.70-71.

92. K(asoemaratoe), "Kolonizatie ke Minangkabau", Oetoesan Alam Minangkabau, no. 2, 1932, p.21.

Conclusion

State land laws were designed to satisfy the demands of European capitalists for rights to cheap land. Except for the Ombilin case, however, the government was unable to implement the laws strictly, but had to give in to the hak ulayat of the Minangkabau nagari. The court case in 1932 shows that a Dutch enterprise could not cope with the right of cultivation of Minangkabaus even though it obtained the land through legal measures. Despite the state laws the Minangkabau nagari could preserve the hak ulayat. This fact contributed considerably to making it possible for the villagers to expand cash crop cultivation because in practice they could freely use the tanah ulayat or 'free domain' in the state law. Moreover nagari autonomy was also preserved by this weak position of the government on Minangkabau land. Nevertheless the development of cash crop cultivation weakened the rules concerning rights against alienation of land, especially individual land. Restrictions upon the alienation of family land were also relaxed to some extent, but it could still not be sold. The division of family land among its members resulted from a trend towards individualization. However the division of family land should not be regarded as conversion into individual property. When land was divided by its family members, each portion of the divided land belonged to the individuals not as pure individual land but as semi-communal land for the generation. Once the land was inherited over several generations, it became again purely communal land of each of the segmented family branches. Thus, a temporary or seeming fragmentation of family land almost always resulted in the formation of new family communal land. Of course the area of family land would become smaller. The key factor of this circulation, temporary segmentation and re-establishment of family land, is that there was no change in the principle that inherited land became family communal land.

CHAPTER V

The 1930s World Trade Depression and West Sumatra*The Impact of the Depression*

As we have seen in Chapter II, the West Sumatran economy expanded rapidly after the abolition of the Cultivation System in 1908. This expansion was closely related to an ever-increasing demand for tropical products by the world. This situation made the cash income of the population more and more dependent on the international economy, over which the population had no control. Although a hint of depression was noticeable in the latter half of 1929, the total volume of exports reached a peak in that year. At that time the coming crisis was not foreseen and the cultivation of most crops continued.

The sudden debacle in the world economy at the end of 1929 was immediately followed by tremendous disturbances in the Indonesian economy.¹ Looked at carefully, however, major differences can be observed in the magnitude and form of the effects in different parts of Indonesia. Like social organization, economic structure differed from place to place depending on demographic, ecological and geographical factors, and on the major crops cultivated, and sources of income.

Some comparison may be useful between the economic conditions of the 1914-1918 and 1921-1924 recessions vis-a-vis the depression of the 1930s.² In the earlier recessions, the West Sumatran economy was less well integrated into the world economy and the population was less accustomed to importing goods. By the 1930s the economy had expanded considerably, and was more complicated. Consequently, world movements affecting one sector of the economy inevitably caused repercussions in other sectors because of the better-integrated nature of the economy.

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1. The present survey does not include Indonesian circumstances in general. For this, see: G.Gonggrijp, Schets Eener Economische Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië (Haarlem, 1957), pp.172-99; J.S.Furnival, The Netherlands India (Cambridge University Press, 1944), pp.528-45.
 2. For the comparison of these recessions and the 1930s depression in West Sumatra, see V.K.K.N.P. 1930, p.16, and P. Creutzberg, ed., Het Economische Beleid in Nederlandsch-Indië 1900-1942 (3 vols, Groningen, 1972-1975), especially vol.2 and 3.

For instance, a fall in prices of export crops reduced the cash income of cultivators, which in turn caused regression of business as a whole and a drying up of labour opportunities. Thus, the trade depression of the 1930s inevitably reduced the income of the population in general, and therefore standards of living fell much more severely than during the earlier recessions.

The government attitude also changed. During the earlier recessions, the government maintained the principle of free trade or free economy without intervening to any great extent in the indigenous economy. In the latter depression intervention became broader and more direct, introducing restrictions upon both cash crop cultivation and imports. In other fields, the government tried to increase food production and the capacity for self-sufficiency in manufactured commodities, especially textiles. Taking all these differences into account, we will see how and to what extent the great depression had an impact upon the indigenous economy of West Sumatra through commerce, cash crop cultivation, and income. Here it must be noted that the end of the depression in the world market, often quoted as beginning about 1934, did not mean the end of economic hardship among the population. On the contrary, the hardship continued until the end of Dutch rule.

1. Trade and commerce

The course and magnitude of the depression can to some extent be gauged through the import and export trade with foreign countries centred via Padang, which was an important factor in the cash income and expenditure of the Minangkabaus. The proportion produced by the European sector of the total value of West Sumatran export was not large, only 0.15 per cent in 1930, for instance.³ This proportion further

3. It must be noted that the most important commodities produced by European enterprises, cement and coal, were almost all sold within Indonesia. Thus, we can neglect the value of these two commodities when we discuss foreign trade. However it may be of use to know the proportion of the European sector. In 1937, for instance, the total export value in West Sumatra including domestic and foreign trade is estimated at about f.42 million, of which the European sector may share at most f.2.5 million, thus about 6 per cent. V.K.K.N.P. 1937, pp.35-37.

increased as the depression proceeded because many European enterprises including mines and plantations were closed down.⁴ Thus, we can assume that export figures closely reflect the impact of the world depression upon the population. The same can be said of import figures because the population of Europeans was small in West Sumatra.

As far as value is concerned, both import and export trade reached their lowest level during the 1930s depression in 1935, when both imports and exports declined to one-fourth of what they had been in 1929 (see Table I). Little explanation is necessary of the detrimental effect of the depression. A remarkable point is that the export value per ton reached its lowest level, 20 per cent in 1939, while that for imports dropped only to 46 per cent in 1935. In 1935 the terms of trade deteriorated by 50 per cent. This means that the people had to

TABLE I

Foreign Trade via Padang: 1929-1940 (index, 1929=100, value in f.)

	Import Indices				Export Indices			
	quantity	value	value per ton	index	quantity	value	value per ton	index
1929	100	100	508	100	100	100	444	100
1930	83	67	406	80	85	64	341	77
1931	64	50	391	77	75	36	212	48
1932	51	38	331	65	80	32	180	41
1933	52	29	285	66	79	28	156	35
1934	51	27	270	53	94	27	124	28
1935	54	25	235	46	105	24	100	23
1936	52	25	247	49	128	29	101	23
1937	74	46	318	63	135	51	168	38
1938	56	34	309	61	113	30	119	27
1939	60	35	294	58	150	30	90	20
1940	48	32	335	66	89	27	135	30

Source: Verslag van Kamer van Koophandel en Nijverheid te Padang (V.K.K.N.P.) 1935, p.35; idem 1936, pp.7, 31; idem 1937, p.35; idem 1938, pp.8,33; Statistical Pocket-book of Indonesia 1958 (Biro Pusat Statistik, Jakarta), pp. 108-111.

4. By the end of 1936 European estates decreased only 18 in West Sumatra as a whole. European mines were virtually closed by that year except Ombilin coal. See, Spits, M.v.O., p.12-13. More detailed information is available from Verslag van de Vereeniging voor Landbouw, Mijnbouw, en Industrie in Sumatra's Westkust (annual report of this association, published in Padang), see for 1929-1936.

pay double for imported goods despite their drastically reduced receipts. There was a brief relief in 1937 when the restriction of rubber production on an individual basis was introduced, which caused a price rise (see later). However this favourable situation was soon followed by low prices for export articles as a whole.

2. Local trade

Foreign trade may give too exaggerated a picture of what was happening among the population. To draw a more vivid picture local trade must be examined. What was the general appearance of local trade? At local pasar, the number of sellers with a meagre amount of goods increased tremendously, but their selling was mostly unsuccessful. The number of sellers exceeded that of customers.⁵ This condition gave rise to illegal transactions without paying the pasar-tax.⁶ The decline of local trade was especially severe where cash crops were the main objects of trade. One example shows this clearly. The nagari Muara Labuh was a coffee centre, collecting coffee produced in the nagari and the surroundings. The pasar income of this nagari diminished by 74 per cent during 1929-1935.⁷ Exchange and barter became very common almost everywhere, particularly in remote nagaris and where food cultivation was the major economic activity, as in some nagaris in the Lubuk Sikaping⁸ and Alahan Panjang⁹ areas. There were of course exceptions. In prosperous nagaris around Batusangkar, pasar incomes remained at almost the same level, and transactions in cash were still important.¹⁰ The income of the pasar of the nagari Baso in Oud Agam even increased owing to a greater number of sellers and strong control over the collection of the tax by

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5. Letter of Hamerster, Padang 6 September 1934, no.162, Mailr. 1506/1934; Hemsing, M.v.O., p.10.
 6. Schauerfer, M.v.O., p.160.
 7. Report of the Controleur of Muara Labuh, dd. 22 October 1935, no. 2601, in Korn Collection, no.367.
 8. Ezerman, M.v.O., p.16; Stelma, M.v.O., p.17.
 9. Lapre, (controleur of Alahan Panjang), M.v.O., p.26. When I use more than two memoirs of one person, I distinguish them by referring to his rank and area he was in charge of.
 10. Schauerfer, M.v.O., p.160.

the nagari.¹¹ When rubber prices were improved in 1934 and 1937, rice surplus nagaris were able to sell their produce to rubber growing areas.¹²

3. Transportation problems

High transportation costs were one of the obstacles which the Indonesian economy had to cope with, in order to carry on both foreign and local or inter-regional trade. When the prices of export crops were high enough to cover the costs before the crisis, this problem was not serious. But with the depression and low prices for export crops, high shipping and overland transportation costs made Indonesian trade in general very difficult. Probably, the monopolistic position of shipping by the Royal Shipping Company (KPM) contributed to the high costs.

In the West Sumatran case, the major trade outlets were Padang and Pakan Baru in East Sumatra. As the economy developed, the number of ships visiting Padang had rapidly increased, 1929 being the peak.¹³ Padang enjoyed the 'quick service' of the Royal Shipping Company which connected Padang with Batavia directly in 42 hours. This service was, however, stopped from January 1931 in response to decreased loadings, and replaced by ordinary shipping services which took 80 hours at much longer intervals.¹⁴ In addition, the regular coastal service provided by the Royal Shipping Company for small ports along the coastline of West Sumatra ceased in 1930.¹⁵ The suspension of the quick service and the high shipping costs between Padang and Batavia, which was virtually dominated by Dutch ships, changed the major trade route to some extent from one via Padang to Pakan Baru. The latter route was advantageous to the Minangkabau community. Cheaper shipping services were available between Pakan Baru and Singapore, and also Javanese ports either via

11. Morsink, M.v.O., p.28.

12. Schaufer, M.v.O., pp.161-62.

13. V.K.K.N.P. 1928, pp.28,33, Bijlage vi, ibid 1935, p.55.

14. ibid 1931, p.12.

15. ibid 1930, pp.40-41.

Singapore or directly using non-Dutch boats.¹⁶

The high shipping cost by Dutch ships was partly responsible for the influx of foreign cheap goods and the decline of indigenous industry in Indonesia, particularly textiles. Japanese textiles were flowing into West Sumatra taking advantage of their low prices and cheap shipping costs by Japanese ships via Singapore and also after 1932 directly to Padang.¹⁷ In accordance with a government policy to stimulate indigenous industry, the Dutch authorities began to introduce import restrictions successively after 1934 upon commodities including textiles which had a weak competitive power. This policy slightly revived the textile industry in West Sumatra. However textile producers had to use more expensive materials due to the restriction, and therefore could not produce textiles cheaply enough to compete with foreign ones.¹⁸

4. Cash crop cultivation

Cash crop and especially export crop cultivation is enormously susceptible to economic fluctuations. Individual cultivators had little control over prices, which depended on the demand of the world market. It is therefore natural that this sector was most profoundly affected by the depression. Even though the Minangkabaus had the reputation of changing to more profitable crops more rapidly than other Indonesian

16. For instance, when Payakumbuh people bought sugar from Batavia, the price including transportation costs was more expensive via Padang than via Pakan Baru, in spite of the former's shorter distance. See, Pauw, M.v.O., Bijlage II, p.18.

17. The proportion of Japanese textiles was 13.5 per cent in 1929, 24.5 per cent in 1930 and 33 per cent in 1931. As far as cotton textiles were concerned it was as large as 55.5 per cent in West Sumatra in 1930. V.K.K.N.P. 1930, p.22; ibid 1931, p.5.

18. The textile industry in West Sumatra revived to some extent after import restrictions in 1934 but again declined towards the end of Dutch rule. See, L.Margadant, "De Silungkangsche Weefnijverheid", K.T., 1941, pp.689-95; Woudstra, M.v.O.; Ch.A.J., "De Achteruitgang van de Weefkunst op Sumatra", De Fakkel, jg.1 (1940), pp.107-14.

people, the depression restrained almost all export crop cultivation. We will examine the magnitude of the effect on the major export crops of West Sumatra, namely coffee, rubber and coconuts (copra).

i) Coffee

Coffee had been by far the most important export crop in West Sumatra since the late 18th century. After the abolition of the forced delivery system for coffee in 1908, cultivation expanded rapidly throughout the 1920s. This development was undertaken by indigenous small-holders rather than European estates. In 1929 estate coffee amounted to less than 10 per cent of indigenous production.¹⁹ Before the depression West Sumatran coffee, not only Arabica but also Robusta coffee, enjoyed a reputation for high quality in the world market.²⁰ An American handbook on coffee, used in the 1920s, praised it as the finest grown.²¹ Despite higher prices for Arabica, the peasants cultivated Robusta overwhelmingly because it required less fertile soil and was more profitable. Accordingly, the situation of Robusta coffee acts as an indicator for the general trends in coffee cultivation in West Sumatra. The figures in Table II show that the export value in 1938 had dropped so far that it exported only 6 per cent of the 1929 figure. Robusta coffee had almost no monetary value in that year after transportation costs were deducted.

In addition to the decreasing demands for coffee on the world market, West Sumatran coffee encountered severe competition from Brazilian (Santos) coffee and it was only when there were bad harvests in Brazil that higher prices and a larger demand for West Sumatran coffee was in evidence. When both harvests were normal quality was a vital factor. However the quality of the 'finest grown' West Sumatran coffee deteriorated considerably in the 1930s, despite government intervention in coffee cultivation and trade to improve it. We will examine

19. B.J. Hagereis, "Resultaten van eenige Koffiebereidingsmethoden (proven) in Kerintji", Landbouw, vol. 6 (1930/31), p.492.

20. Spits, M.v.O., p.109.

21. V.K.K.N.P. 1933, pp.53-54.

TABLE II

Export of Robusta Coffee via Padang
(quantity in ton, value in 1,000 guilders)

	quantity	index	value	index	price per ton (f.)	index
1929	18,900	100	13,870	100	774	100
1930	15,600	83	7,081	51	454	59
1931	13,400	70	3,262	24	243	31
1932	14,600	77	3,536	25	242	31
1933	11,700	62	3,515	25	300	39
1934	11,574	61	2,893	21	245	32
1935	11,300	60	2,199	16	195	25
1936	12,660	67	1,454	10	115	15
1937	10,936	58	2,504	18	229	30
1938	6,612	35	803	6	121	16

Source: V.K.K.N.P. 1933, p.51; idem 1936, p.35; idem 1938, p.35.

the reasons for this deterioration.²²

Faced with a sudden fall in price at the end of 1929, the producers quickly retrenched cultivation or sometimes neglected coffee gardens. In any case coffee gardens had grown too large to be managed by family members alone. Minangkabau producers had not infrequently hired labourers from neighbouring areas in the course of the boom, but low prices during the depression made this impossible. One result was less intensive care of gardens.

A rapid decline of coffee production could be noticed in various areas, particularly in the Fort van der Cappelen (Batusangkar) subdivision for the famous Rao Rao coffee.²³ A short revival of coffee took place at the end of 1932 and early 1933 because of crop failures in Brazil, and Minangkabau producers started looking after their gardens again. This favourable condition soon ended, and the gardens were again

22. For instance, the government set up a coffee selection regulation in 1929 to eliminate impurities. In 1932 the regulation was revised with clearer requirements: the proportion of purities should be less than 2 per cent; infected and diseased coffee, less than 8 per cent; the loss of weight during transportation due to too much moisture be less than 3 per cent. See, Javaasch Courant, Extra Bijvoegsel, no.49, 22 September 1933.

23. Kwantas, M.v.O., p.17; Stelma, M.v.O., p.4.

left uncared for, without any comparable boom thereafter.²⁴ Less intensive care for gardens resulted in serious damage to the trees from a variety of diseases in substantial coffee growing areas, and former gardens had turned into wild fields with tall grasses over almost all of West Sumatra by 1938.²⁵ In addition, the peasants often harvested immature fruits to acquire a cash reward as quickly as possible.²⁶ The producers also harvested coffee with high moisture content to increase weight or to minimize the length of the drying process. Immature, moist, and diseased coffee increased because of the depression in order to reduce labour input and to get ready cash.²⁷

Not only did coffee deteriorate in quality due to the producers' lack of incentive, but alternation in the method of coffee trading within West Sumatra added to the difficulties. After the drastic fall in coffee prices in 1929, European exporters in Padang began to use Minangkabau agents to buy coffee, sometimes replacing local merchants. It is possible that the European exporters had used such agents before the depression, but their role had not been significant. It can be guessed that European traders were hoping to have more direct control over the selection of high quality coffee, since buyers had a stronger bargaining power than before. In addition, European exporters may have suspected the financial security of the Minangkabau middlemen to whom they often advanced money to buy up coffee. Contrary to the exporters' expectations, the use of agents did not improve the quality of export coffee. In response to exporters' enquiries, the agents informed them of prices, quantities, and quality by telegram the same day. The agents could avoid the government check on quality by not purchasing coffee at the market but directly from the producers. Penghulus who gathered in Bukittinggi in 1938 decided that all coffee should be sold at the market. However there was no

24. V.K.K.N.P. 1933, p.54.

25. Ezerman, M.v.O., p.10.

26. E.R.P. Neeb, "Samenvattend Rapport betreffende der Handel in bevolkingskoffie in de Gewesten Palembang, Lamongsche Districten, Bengkulen, Sumatra's Westkust en Tapanuli" (mimeography, 1938), p.54.

27. This problem was especially serious in Korinci where the quantity of coffee produce was too large for hand processing. Hegereis, "Resultatent", op.cit., pp.492-93; Bouwman, M.v.O., p.38.

general improvement in the quality of coffee provided for export. The agents often sent false information to exporters in Padang because of the strong competition among them. The Dutch regulation to punish those who dealt in coffee with less quality than a certain standard (first established in 1929 and amended in 1932) did not improve the quality of coffee for export, however. The agents tried to buy coffee as cheaply as possible, even deliberately mixing it with impurities and considering the risk of detection worth taking. On their way to Padang, they skilfully by-passed check points for coffee along the main roads. The payment of a 'tip' to Indonesian inspectors was not uncommon. In this way inferior coffee was brought to Padang.²⁸

There was some effort to improve quality. For instance the villagers in Suliki established a coffee producers' co-operative around 1932, selecting suitable land for permanent gardens. However such efforts could not change the general decline of West Sumatran coffee as a whole. The prolonged depression eventually deprived Minangkabaus of their incentive to cultivate coffee, their historically most significant export crop. This trend was stimulated by the need to obtain food.²⁹

ii. Rubber

Rubber had a different position as an export commodity and in the context of the depression. Firstly, its history in Indonesia had been much shorter than that of coffee. Secondly, rubber is not an article for consumption but a strategic material for the automobile industry and military equipment. The Dutch regulated rubber production more rigorously than that of coffee. Apart from these general characteristics, rubber growing centres in West Sumatra were concentrated around the northern and eastern fringe areas of the Highlands (Bangkinang, Lubuk Sikaping, Ophir, and Sijunjung), while coffee had spread over almost all West Sumatra.

28. Hegereis, ibid.

29. Neeb, Samenvattende Rapport", op.cit., p.37.

Although the history of rubber (heava) cultivation in West Sumatra is not clear, it is likely that it started about 1910; certainly it would not have begun any earlier than 1905, when rubber was introduced into Indonesia.³⁰ The opening of gardens reached its peak with the export boom of 1925, when the highest prices so far were observable. Tapping of existing trees also increased considerably, some 8,000 tons being exported a year.³¹ However the price of rubber began to fall rapidly after 1927, and this was a great misfortune for those producers who initiated or expanded cultivation after 1924, as rubber prices were very low when the trees became tappable at the end of the 1920s.

The rubber trade was more complicated than coffee. Wet rubber produced in West Sumatra was sent either to Singapore, to factories mostly run by Chinese, or to Padang and factories run by Europeans, to be processed into dry rubber sheets.³² There existed a great variety of prices within West Sumatra, depending on the location of the market; prices were much lower in remote areas due to high transportation costs and a risk of uncertainty of sale to buyers at other markets.³³

Next we will glance at the course of rubber production during the depression studying export trends. Although the figures in Table III

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30. In Bangkinang, a Dutch official introduced rubber cultivation in 1910. Deys, *Memorie van Overgave*, p.16. In Lubuk Sikaping, some Minangkabaus took rubber plants from Malayasia about 1910. De Bevolkingsrubbercultuur van Nederlandsch Indie, vol.5 for Tapanuli and West Sumatra (*Weltevreden, Landsdrukkerij*, 1926), p.60. In Ophir, some inhabitants brought it from East Sumatra. *ibid*, p.63.
31. This quantity is estimated from the export quantity via Padang in 1925. The comprehensive figures are not available before 1937, though a rough estimate is possible after 1934. See, V.K.K.N.P. 1926, p.18.
32. Spits, *M.v.O.*, p.99.
33. For instance, when wet rubber sheets were f.45 per pikul at the market of Mapat Tunggal, a significant rubber producing area in Lubuk Sikaping, they were f.70 at the Rao market, a trading centre of Lubuk Sikaping. "De Bevolkingsrubbercultuur", *op.cit.*, pp.60-63.

TABLE III

Export of Smallholders' Rubber from West Sumatra*

(quantity in tons)

	quantity	index	value (f.l.000)	index	value per ton (f.)	index
1927	2282	100	2737	100	1200	100
1928	1928	84	2120	79	1100	91
1929	2499	109	1747	65	699	58
1930	1817	79	1090	40	600	50
1931	1822	79	510	19	280	23
1932	1224	53	159	6	130	11
1933	2350	102	235	9	100	8
1934	6208	270	1179	44	188	16
1935	4576	199	640	24	140	12
1936	2496	109	370	14	148	12
1937	6001	263	3981	145	663	55
1938	4161	182	1659	61	399	33

Source: Spits, *Memorie van Overgave*, pp.18, 99; V.K.K.N.P. 1937, p.45; idem 1938, p.44.

are very incomplete, they reveal the fate of the rubber trade. The export quantity did not decrease markedly during the depression in spite of its low prices. After 1934 it even exceeded that of 1927, the last year of the pre-depression export boom. Income from rubber exports became almost nothing in 1932. The sudden increase of both quantity and value in 1934 and 1937 was a result of rubber restrictions. The restriction in 1934 consisted of a general quota system, the prohibition on planting new trees, and the introduction of a special export duty on rubber. The 1937 regulation was an individual restriction by which the maximum quantity of harvest and export was fixed on an individual basis, though it also included the last two restrictions of 1934. As intended by the government, these measures pushed rubber prices up greatly; in 1934 by 100 per cent and in 1937 by 380 per cent, though they were still much lower than the pre-depression level. A striking feature of the pattern of rubber exports is the tremendous fluctuations in quantity, received value, and price. In the case of coffee both quantity and value declined constantly and suddenly collapsed in 1938. Rubber exports

improved greatly shortly before World War II, owing to world rearmament.

How were these considerable fluctuations in the quantity of rubber exported possible in terms of the production capacity of the producers? It is likely that the producers adjusted either by disposing of previous stock which had been accumulated by the retrenchment of exports, or by more intensive tapping. On the latter point rubber had a greater advantage than coffee because producers could adjust tapping easily in response to prices. Moreover, coffee was more susceptible to disease once its care was neglected. The ability of the producers to make a quick response to the market situation can be seen in the export figures of 1933. The export price was at its lowest, while the quantity for this year was double that for 1932. To understand these circumstances we have to investigate the economic conditions of the population in a broad perspective.

An unprecedented fall of 40 per cent in the rubber price had hit production in February and March 1928. At that stage the producers were not drastically concerned because they had other sources of income such as coffee, cassia, cinnamon, rattan, and so forth.³⁴ It was therefore not necessary for the bulk of producers to tap simply to obtain ready cash. As the price fall continued, owners of rubber gardens rapidly replaced hired labourers by family members. Instead of increasing the quantity of tapping, they endeavoured to improve the gardens. In the following year, some producers even began to convert the gardens for food cultivation. However, producers were generally prepared to increase production given any sign of improvement in the rubber price.³⁵ This was the case with the sudden increase of exports in 1933, when the producers expected the possible introduction of rubber restrictions in the following year. The same occurred in 1936, although the export figure indicated the opposite trend. In the latter case produced rubber was bought up and stocked by merchants to export in 1937.

The introduction of the rubber restrictions in 1934 pushed the price up by 250 per cent in three months; from f.4 in April and May to

34. V.K.K.N.P. 1928, p.29.

35. G.van Zonneveld, "Economische Toestand ter Sumatra's Westkust gedurende het Eerst Half Jaar 1932", Economische Weekblad, 30 September 1932, pp. 507-50.

f.10 per pikul in July and August. However not all of this price rise contributed to producers' income. In the same year the government imposed a new special duty upon rubber exports. At the end of that year, fine rubber was priced between f.30 and f.40 per pikul. It was indeed the 'second golden time' for rubber.³⁶

The introduction of the special duty altered the trade route for West Sumatran rubber for a while from Padang to Pakan Baru, for the duty at the latter was lower than the former by f.1.5 per 100 kg.³⁷ The competition between Padang and Singapore to buy West Sumatran wet rubber was severe enough to shift the destination of the rubber from one to another with a slight difference in price.³⁸ In line with the rubber restrictions the government tried to improve the quality of small-holders' rubber to raise its commodity value and overcome international competition. For this purpose, it encouraged the use of drying machines among the producers. Few, however, were interested.³⁹ First of all the difference in price between wet and dry rubber sheet was too small, from 10 to 20 per cent, to undertake the additional investment and work. Moreover the special duty was levied according to the export value of rubber. Thus, there was no benefit in practice in buying the machines.⁴⁰ In addition, an increase of dry rubber in West Sumatra meant less demand from Singapore, for processing factories in Singapore had so far profited from making wet rubber into dry rubber sheet.⁴¹ These factors helped to ensure that the government desire to improve the quality met with little success.

When Padang merchants began to purchase more rubber on speculation at the end of 1934, the rubber trade route changed again from Singapore

36. Deys, M.v.O., p.18. In 1934, even non-rubber centres began to tap and sell their stock. V.K.K.N.P. 1934, p.50.

37. V.K.K.N.P. 1934, p.49.

38. Spits, M.v.O., p.99.

39. V.K.K.N.P. 1934, p.50.

40. Deys, M.v.O., p.18.

41. Kwantas, M.v.O., p.21.

to Padang.⁴² Middlemen in the Highlands exploited producers in various ways. They bought up rubber from producers at very cheap prices, as the latter did not know current prices, which changed too frequently at major trading places. When telephone communications were not available to the producers, exploitation by the middlemen was rampant.⁴³

To make matters worse for the producers, special duties rose considerably after 1934. The government revenue from special duty in West Sumatra increased from f.112,244 in 1934 through f.430,289 in 1935 to f.887,991 in 1936.⁴⁴ The producers received less as the rate of the special duty rose because the duty was passed on to the producers by merchants.

The expectation of the introduction of individual rubber restrictions from January 1937 stimulated speculation in rubber again. Both producers and merchants began to stock rubber from the end of 1936.⁴⁵ By this regulation, producers had to register the number of trees they had and obtain a harvest licence from the controleur via the nagari head. This procedure gave rise to some difficulties with the distribution of the licence coupons. Owners of big rubber gardens were reluctant to report the true number of rubber trees for fear of a possible increase in taxes.⁴⁶ On the other hand, merchants competed to buy the coupons from producers, since rubber could only be exported with the coupon. Now the object of speculation was not rubber itself but the coupon. When the speculation culminated in early 1938, the total price of rubber at the local market plus coupon payment exceeded the export price.⁴⁷

42. Each rubber growing area had so far used its own routes: Lubuk Sikaping sent to East Sumatra via Rao using the Rokan riverway and Padang; Bangkinang to Pakan Baru, Jambi and Padang; Sijunjung to Jambi and Padang. See, V.K.K.N.P. 1934, p.50.

43. Kwantas, M.v.O., p.10.

44. V.K.K.N.P. 1936, p.10.

45. ibid, p.40.

46. Spits, M.v.O., pp.96-101.

47. V.K.K.N.P. 1938, pp.42-43.

The strict control over rubber export provoked illegal trade through river ways to the east coast, which the government could not easily control.⁴⁸ This was especially active in Batang Hari and the areas bordering Jambi. As may easily be understood, the coupon became more valuable than rubber because merchants could find unlicensed rubber stock everywhere. This situation again diverted trade from Padang to the east coast. Chinese merchants from Jambi began to appear in West Sumatran rubber areas, particularly Batang Hari, to buy licensed rubber.⁴⁹ In 1938 about 400 tons of Batang Hari rubber was sent to Jambi from a total produce of about 800 tons.⁵⁰ For the producers these transactions were more convenient than attempting to export via Pakan Baru or Padang, which necessitated high transportation costs. In 1933 this phenomenon developed to the extent that not only Batang Hari but also Bangkinang, Sijunjung, and places as far away as Ophir came to send rubber directly to the east coast by this route. In the three months March to May 1939, 131, 263 and 171 tons of rubber was sent to Jambi, and the figure rose to 400 tons in October and 600 tons in November.⁵¹

The activity of Chinese merchants from Jambi had a twofold result. On the one hand, their purchases in West Sumatra brought disadvantages to Jambi producers because West Sumatran rubber was included in the Jambi quota once it was carried there. On the other hand, the Chinese sometimes bought only coupons in West Sumatra to clear their unlicensed rubber stock. In this case unlicensed rubber may have been accumulated in West Sumatra. In either case Chinese merchants from Jambi greatly profited by beating down the price of unlicensed rubber both in West Sumatra and Jambi.⁵²

48. Letter of Scholten, Batavia-c, 10 November 1939, no. RB 10c/2/10, Mailr. 1362/1939.

49. Telegram of G.A. Bosselar, Padang, 30 October 1939, no. 754/rubb., Mailr. 1362/1939.

50. Letter of Besselar, Padang, 28 November 1939, no. 833/rubb., Mailr. 1362/1939.

51. Letter of Drossaers, Batavia, 4 December 1939, no. BR 10c/12/20, Mailr. 1362/1939.

52. See note 49.

Despite some good years for rubber prices, rubber cultivation in general declined from the late 1920s until 1938. As far as acreage under cultivation was concerned, this decreased. In addition to some conversion of rubber gardens into land for food cultivation, the prohibition on planting new rubber trees enacted in 1934 was maintained until 1938 when the regulation was mitigated: producers were allowed to plant new trees with permission from the government. As for the production, it had to remain within the framework of quotas set in 1934 and 1937. Although the quota for Indonesia and also West Sumatra was gradually rising in the late 1930s, it was still much less than actual production capacity. For West Sumatra, a minor rubber growing region in Indonesia, the restriction rates varied from 10 to 55 per cent of production capacity.⁵³ The highest export figure between 1929 and 1938, 6,200 tons in 1934, was about 2,000 tons less than 1925 exports in spite of the fact that the number of tappable trees certainly increased after the rubber boom. The impact of the quota system clearly can be seen in the decrease in the proportion of tapped trees to the overall total of tappable trees. According to the 1937 figures, perhaps the first and the last registration for the number of trees and garden owners, there were 18,448,131 trees in West Sumatra, of which about 75 per cent were tappable and 25 per cent untappable, probably because the producers had neglected the care of their gardens. Of the total tappable, 42 per cent were actually tapped in 1937.⁵⁴ Considering that 1937 was a good year for rubber prices,⁵⁵ the general proportion of tapped trees in the total

53. As a minor rubber growing region, West Sumatra was much disadvantaged with a disproportionately small allocation of quotas. In 1939, the quotas for 1939-43 were decided: West Sumatra was allotted only 2.89 per cent of the first 150,000 tons of the basic quota for the Outer Provinces as a whole, though the area of rubber gardens in West Sumatra shared about 3.5 per cent of the total of the Outer Provinces. Moreover, West Sumatra was assigned only 3.49 per cent of the extra quotas over 150,000 tons, while other Sumatran rubber regions enjoyed more than 10 per cent. See, A. van Gelden, "Bevolkingsrubbercultuur", De Landbouw in de Indische Archipel, C.J.J. van Hall and C. van de Koppel ed., (Van Hoeve, 's-Gravenhage, 1950), vol. III, p. 462.

54. Spits, M.v.O., p. 97, see table.

55. J.G.J.A. Maas, "Rubber der Onderneming", in ibid, p. 414.

tappable may have been less than 42 per cent during 1930 and 1938. Rubber production seems to have begun to expand after 1939 very slowly. The total area of rubber gardens increased by about 6 per cent in West Sumatra as a whole during 1939 and 1940 because the prohibition on planting new trees was dropped in 1939 and the demand for rubber increased thanks to the rearmament movement in the world.⁵⁶ Holders of rubber gardens may have considerably profited from its export until the Japanese invasion, although the proportion of garden-owning households may have been at most only 1.25 per cent of the total households in West Sumatra.⁵⁷

iii) Coconut

Coconuts and the processed copra were also an important cash crop for West Sumatra, being second largest in value after coffee before the depression. However the cultivation of coconuts had a different significance from that of coffee and rubber. The coconut trees, as an indigenous plant, are to be found everywhere in West Sumatra. The cultivation does not necessarily require a special plot, but can be carried on any small parcel of ground beside the house, in the sawah, and so on. Moreover, coconuts and copra could be either exported or consumed by the people as food or fuel, and also as a material for the soap industry, which emerged during the depression.⁵⁸ These character-

56. Gelden, "Bevolkingsrubbercultuur", op.cit., p.463. As far as prices are concerned, 1937 was the highest year during 1930-41 for Indonesia; 34 cents per 500 grams. Figures for rubber prices are available from

57. In 1938, a total of 38,600 garden owners were registered in West Sumatra as a whole, of which 21,434 were concentrated in the rubber centres in the outlying regions. Considering the fact that about 25 per cent of total rubber trees were already untappable, either because the trees were too old or the gardens had become jungle as a result of lack of care for a long time the effective and maximum number of garden owners who were actually growing and tapping rubber may have been at most 25,000. It is likely that the number was smaller, as garden owners in non-rubber centres may have concentrated largely on food cultivation. See, Spits, M.v.O., p.97.

58. Soap industry was flourishing in Solok with 9 factories run by Minangkabaus using Pariaman copra. Letter of Korn, Solok, 27 June 1935, in Korn Collection, no.367; Cator, M.v.O., p.14.

istics of coconuts make it very difficult to assess the accurate magnitude of the impact of the depression.

West Sumatran copra was faced with export difficulties after the end of the 1920s due to increasing supplies of substitutes on the world market such as whale oil, soya bean oil, and peanut oil for margarine and the soap industry. In the depression the competition of copra with these substitutes became severer because of a sharp decline in consumption. In addition, the supply of butter increased at much cheaper prices than before.⁵⁹ As a result, copra exports in West Sumatra diminished by two thirds in quantity and by four-fifths in received value between 1929 and 1938.⁶⁰ The price per ton dropped much more sharply so that the price by 1938 was only 6 per cent of what it had been in 1929. In Pariaman, by far the most important coconut producing area in West Sumatra, the income of the inhabitants decreased by about 85 per cent during that period.⁶¹ The Dutch discouraged the expansion of production, advising better care for gardens and in processing instead.⁶² When West Sumatra was hit by crop failures of rice in 1938/39, the inhabitants of the area endeavoured to increase their production of rice and other auxiliary secondary foodstuffs rather than that of copra. At local markets, this bulky commodity had little monetary value, 0.6 cents per piece of this fruit in 1933.⁶³ Thus, we can safely say that coconuts or copra production declined in the depression.

5. Income and Taxes

The foregoing passages might give the impression that income had been reduced to poverty level. If we understand 'income' in cash terms

59. V.K.K.N.P. 1929, p.26; ibid 1933, p.54.

60. ibid 1931, p.43; ibid 1935, p.41; ibid 1936, pp.31, 37; ibid 1937, p.41; ibid 1939, p.37.

61. Cator, M.v.O., p.7.

62. Lyon, M.v.O., p.65; Schaufer, M.v.O., p.145.

63. V.K.K.N.P. 1931, p.44.

this may be true. It must be remembered, however, that the West Sumatran economy as a whole was still largely self-sufficient. The question of how much the income of the population declined must take account of commodities produced for domestic consumption. Data on income tax include all sorts of income, though two major difficulties are involved in using such data. Firstly, government assessments were based on information from the population, and there was often deliberate underestimating of actual income. Secondly, non-cash income was translated into cash value on the basis of assessment lists for each article. As it appears unlikely that the lists were changed frequently enough to reflect price falls such conversion could overestimate the actual commodity value of agricultural products. A more serious difficulty is the fact that these products were in most cases not saleable. If we understand these difficulties, Table IV may help us to judge the magnitude of decrease in income. The table indicates that the income of the Minangkabaus started dropping rapidly from 1931 (1932 in the

TABLE IV
Income Tax Collected in West Sumatra (f.)

	value	indices
1927	2,574,660	100
1928	2,862,275	111
1929	2,784,781	108
1930	2,369,095	92
1931	2,347,165	91
1932	1,899,522	74
1933	1,409,969	55
1934	1,562,706	61
1935	1,038,184	40
1936	1,139,900	44
1937	1,346,622	52
1938	1,640,221	64

Source: V.K.K.N.P. 1929, p.10; idem 1931, p.19; idem 1934, p.15; idem 1937, p.14; idem 1938, p.14.

table, as the assessment was based on income of previous year), 1934 and 1936 being the years of lowest income. Roughly speaking, private income

decreased by 50 per cent in the depression. However it is quite certain that the living standard of the population was not proportionately reduced, since prices for daily necessities also dropped.

A sample survey of a household in the nagari Guguk (Suliki), supposedly representing an average situation, also shows that the income of this household measured by cash terms diminished from f.72.12 per head in 1926, about average at that time, to f.30.18 in 1931, that is, to slightly less than half. However the rate of income tax rose from about 7 per cent in 1926 to 11 per cent in 1931. Probably the actual pressure of the tax rise for this household was much heavier than 4 per cent, the rise in percentage obtained by a simple deduction of the two years.⁶⁴ This contradictory phenomenon was caused by the delay in adjusting assessment rates for income tax to the actual income level. Apart from income tax, the rates of indirect taxes, *corvée* burden, and the village tax were not reduced during the depression. By the import restrictions after 1934, import duties for some commodities were even raised after 1934, and a new special duty upon rubber exports was levied in 1934, which again increased in the course of time.

The economizing policy of the government not only reduced government expenditure for the people but also transferred burdens hitherto met by the government to the people, aggravating the latter's economic hardship. It is quite clear from Table V that expenditure went down much more quickly than revenue. The budget surplus during the depression averaged f.7 million per year between 1930 and 1938. At that time Dutch officials repeatedly complained about the arrears of income tax.⁶⁵ This is an indication of Dutch colonial policy to squeeze a financial surplus from the Netherlands East Indies.

64. The 1926 survey is in Westkust Rapport, Deel II, pp.171-76, and the 1931 survey is in Pauw, M.v.O., Bijlage VIII, pp.4-8.

65. Erends, M.v.O., p.7; Stelma, M.v.O., p.22.

TABLE V

Revenue and Expenditure of West Sumatra*

(in f.1000)

	total revenue	total expenditure	balance
1928	17,070	15,116	+ 1,934
1929	20,506	17,772	+ 2,734
1930	21,669	14,556	+ 7,113
1931	23,661	11,984	+ 11,677
1932	19,450	7,855	+ 11,594
1933	14,618	7,270	+ 7,348
1934	11,302	5,662	+ 5,640
1935	10,074	4,875	+ 5,199
1936	14,292	9,851	+ 4,441
1937	11,893	4,552	+ 7,341
1938	12,066	9,396	+ 2,670

Source: V.K.K.N.P. 1930, p.15; idem 1932, p.19; idem 1935, p.14, idem 1938, pp.12-13.

* Figures are rounded off at f.1,000.

*Response to the Depression*1. The rice problem

If the term 'enterprising' is to be applied to the Minangkabaus, this should be as true in an economic depression as in a boom. Clifford Geertz, after arguing the appearance of a revolution in spirit among the Minangkabaus, similar to that described for the early capitalist in Europe by Max Weber and Sombart, concluded:

Where around 1922 a significant (within Indonesia) rice export was still flowing from the west coast residency as a whole, most of it evidently from the heartland, by 1930 "the cultivation of coconuts, coffee and rubber pushed rice into the background to the point where the region was importing nearly 700 tons a year; by 1938, 3,300. Thus..... the Minangkabau swidden peasant became what the Javanese sawah peasant, struggling to keep his head above

the water for more than a century, never did:
 an acquisitive businessman fully enmeshed in a
 pecuniary nexus.

66

In the source Geertz used,⁶⁷ the figure 700 tons applied in reality to the average import surplus a year in 1922-1930, and 3,300 to that in 1931-1938. Comparing these two average figures, he concluded that cash crop cultivation continued to grow, as an over-all trend, in 1931-1938 more extensively than in 1922-1930, since the average import figure of rice in 1931-1938 is larger than that in the previous period. This is not really true.

Firstly, it is true that West Sumatra was exporting a large amount of rice around 1922. However most of this rice did not come from the heartland but from Korinci which had accumulated rice over 100 years and which rice began to be exported extensively after 1921 with the completion of the Korinci road in that year. In 1923 about half of West Sumatran export rice came from Korinci.⁶⁸ This tendency continued until 1925.⁶⁹ The heartland was also producing export rice between 1922 and 1924 because rice was one of the few crops which could find a market in the post-war recession. Thus, when the vast stock of Korinci rice ran out and cash crops other than rice became lucrative about 1925, West Sumatra turned into a rice import region.

Secondly, Geertz took it for granted that the increase in rice imports indicates the expansion of cash crop cultivation. However there is not always a causal relationship between the two. The increase in

66. Clifford Geertz, Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia (University of California Press, 6th printing, 1974), pp.120-21.

67. Geertz quoted from Koppel, "Eenige Statistisch Gegevens over de Landbouw in Oost Nederlandsch-Indië", in De Landbouw in de Indischen Archipel, op.cit., vol.I, p.375.

68. See Chapter II, the section on Korinci rice.

69. G.J. Missen, after criticizing Geertz for relying too much on the West Sumatran case to explain economic conditions in the Outer Provinces by using secondary sources, again quoted Geertz's conclusion without examining actualities from primary sources. G.J.Missen, Viewpoint on Indonesia: A Geographical Study (Nelson, Melbourne, 1972), pp.9, 219-22.

rice imports also occurred due to crop failures. There were no crop failures worth mentioning in 1922-1930, while there were disastrous ones in 1934/35 and 1938/39. As Table VI shows, West Sumatra imported a large quantity of rice in 1935 and 1938. It would be necessary to

TABLE VI

Rice Trade in West Sumatra via Padang (in tons)*

Year	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
Import	7276	8681	6718	3175	4200	880
Export	1480	1919	1770	1173	773	275
Balance	- 5787	- 6762	- 4948	- 2002	- 3427	- 605
Year	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Import	242*	455	5043	244	3192	14603
Export	137	76	114	159	344	167
Balance	- 105	- 374	- 4929	- 45	- 2848	-14436

Source: Koloniale Verslag 1928, pp.177-178; idem 1929, pp.167-68; idem 1930, pp.139-40; V.K.K.N.P. 1931, p.50; idem 1932, p.55; idem 1933, p.67; idem 1934, p.54; idem 1935, p.51; idem 1936, p.45; idem 1937, p.50; idem 1938, p.43.

* For this year the figure is estimated from the quantity for the first half of 1933.

provide evidence other than the increase of rice imports to prove the expansion of export crop cultivation in 1931-1938. Cash crop cultivation actually declined in that period, as we have seen before. On the other hand there is ample evidence that rice production increased in 1931-1938.

Thirdly, there was a large import excess in 1926-1930, an average 4,000 tons a year. Compared with this, the average import excess figure in 1931-1938, about 3,500, is very low. If we omit figures for

abnormal years (1935 and 1938), rice imports in 1931-1938 were much smaller than in the late 1920s. Geertz seems to have neglected or not known about crop failures in 1935 and 1938. For the discussion of such a crop as rice which is very susceptible to natural disaster like droughts, we cannot establish any over-all trend unless we know the realities. In short, it could be said that the 'enterprise' of the Minangkabaus appeared in their quick and flexible response to outside changes by, for instance, increasing rice production in the depression.

One characteristic of the Minangkabau economy in the depression was the endeavour of the population to increase rice production. The expansion of irrigation was undertaken enthusiastically by the peasants themselves. Although the government tried to improve irrigation,⁷⁰ its economizing policy made the implementation very limited. As a result, irrigation work was in practice entrusted to the people, though with the technical help of specialists sent by the government.⁷¹ It was a remarkable feature of the depression years that penghulus took the initiative in organizing irrigation works and encouraging rice cultivation. In response to requests from penghulus, the villagers of the Payakumbuh division willingly offered labour for irrigation. When needed, nagari reserve funds were used to pay for materials and Indonesian artisans, as in the nagari Kota nan IV, Kota nan Gedang, and Taram, for instance.⁷² In some nagaris pasar funds were used for this purpose. In the Batusangkar area, penghulus contributed their own money to improve irrigation.⁷³ The penghulus' leadership in rice cultivation is under-

70. After the communist-led uprisings in 1926/27, the government began to draw up plans for irrigation work, perhaps motivated by political reasons, i.e., sufficient food might result in a more stable political atmosphere. Westkust Rapport, Deel I, p.153, Deel IV, p.27.

71. By a decision in 1928, the Irrigation Committee was set up for West Sumatra, consisting of Agricultural Council staff, irrigation specialists and Minangkabau district and sub-district heads for each sub-division, the Assistant Resident being Chairman. Letter of Gonggrijp, Padang 31 October 1928, no.1432/1928. Despite this decision, Dutch officials in West Sumatra were not sympathetic to this for fear of additional government expenditure. See, Letter of Gonggrijp, Padang, 18 October 1928, no.1739x/, Mailr.3142/1928; Letter of Assistant Resident of Agam, Fort de Kock, 11 October 1928, in Mailr.3142/1928.

72. Meulen, M.v.O., pp.4-45.

73. Schauer, M.v.O., p.104.

standable because, as guardians of communal family property, they had much influence upon sawah cultivation, and they were the persons who organized the communal labour service of the villagers in the general interest.

The expansion of sawah area was discernible after 1931.⁷⁴ Where suitable land was available from forests or uncultivated land, the peasants created rice fields in the form of dry fields or rain sawah, and, where possible, irrigated sawah.⁷⁵ Export crop gardens were converted into rice fields, sometimes returning in this way to their original use. The last type of rice field did not always bring good harvests because cash crop cultivation had already exhausted the land.⁷⁶ Hitherto neglected rice fields were now used again. The depression stimulated rice cultivation so much in the Lubuk Sikaping area that even places with a surplus of rice expanded their rice fields earnestly.⁷⁷ A notable advance was the planting of special grasses which prevented land turning into wild fields after the harvest of dry rice. This method shortened the interval of rice cultivation on one plot from 7 or 8 to 3 or 4 years.⁷⁸ Despite an apparent increase in sawah area and production, which was noticed by Dutch officials, the increase did not appear in tax assessments because the peasants naturally did not report increased area and production to avoid additional tax assessment. Although export figures do not show it, there is a possibility that some West Sumatra rice was exported to neighbouring regions as happened in 1937 to rubber growing regions on the east coast.⁷⁹

2. Upsurge of vegetable and second crop cultivation

An outstanding characteristic in the Minangkabau response to the depression was the rapid spread of vegetable and second crop cultivation

74. V.K.K.N.P. 1933, p.67 says the expansion of sawah was clearly accelerated after 1931.

75. V.K.K.N.P. 1931, p.16.

76. This refers mainly to Bangkinang where some farmers converted rubber gardens into dry rice fields. Deys, M.v.O., p.3.

77. Stelma, M.v.O., p.6.

78. Ezelman, M.v.O., pp.8-9.

79. See the section of Local trade in this chapter.

Cabbages and potatoes flourished in the Highlands, taking advantage of the cool climate. The quick development of ladang cultivation for new or previously not intensively cultivated crops required the enlargement of the ladang area. Fallow land near residential areas was so quickly put into cultivation in Alahan Panjang, for instance, that land for these crops became scarce after 1932.⁸⁰ In many parts of West Sumatra there was a demand that the government release land allotted to forest reserve for agricultural use.⁸¹

The vegetable production listed in Table VII had risen from a negligible amount before the depression. In the case of cabbage the

TABLE VII

Spread of Vegetable Production : 1936

	area (H.A.)	product (tons)	value (f.)
cabbage	2,484	260,000	780,000
potatoes	2,500	10,000	440,000
green mustard	1,000	6,500	61,000
shallot	650	3,000	362,000
total	6,634	279,500	1,643,000

Source: V.K.K.N.P. 1936, p.66.

Dutch encouraged the cultivation of this crop as a second crop after the harvest of rice. When the demonstration proved the possibility of a lucrative future as a cash crop, it immediately spread to Batipuh and X Kota, Ophir, Lubuk Sikaping, and Alahan Panjang.⁸² By the end of

80. "Economische Memorie van Alahan Panjang", dd. Alahan Panjang 18 September 1935, in Korn Collection, no. 367, p.1.

81. V.K.K.N.P. 1932, p.76.

82. ibid 1930, pp.56-57; Morison, M.v.O., p.20; Pauwel, M.v.O., p.7.

1930, 1.1 million and in 1931,⁸³ 4 million cabbages appeared at the market in West Sumatra.⁸⁴ In a few years, 50 per cent of the production was exported, in the first place to Singapore, and also to Tapanuli, Bengkalis, and neighbouring regions. This percentage was increased to about 65 per cent in 1936, with a value of f.500,000.⁸⁵ Although the average net profit from cabbage was small, 5 cents a piece, it became an important source of income for some places.⁸⁶

Potato production followed almost the same course. The production increased from 80 tons in 1933⁸⁷ to 10,000 tons in 1936 (see Table VII). This production developed also in high and cool places like the slopes around Batusangkar and Alahan Panjang. As the cultivation became so important in Alahan Panjang, some districts hired agricultural supervisors for potatoes from the pasar funds.⁸⁸ Potatoes were profitable to the extent that one bau (approx. 0.7 ha.) could yield f.120 (60 pikuls at f.2) compared with about f.125 for sawah (average 25 pikuls of dry rice at f.5).⁸⁹ Considering the less intensive work for potatoes, this was a good crop for those who could find suitable conditions. Moreover it was a great advantage for such an area as Alahan Panjang which was too cool for rice cultivation.

Finally it is worth noting how the people of Pariaman solved the problem of serious famine in the 1938-1939 harvest year. Although an extreme case in Minangkabau history, this illustrates the efforts of both people and the government to increase rice, second crops, and ladang crops. Well before the crop failures, the inhabitants were aware of a coming shortage of rice. A slogan 'go back to rice' began to be heard

83. V.K.K.N.P. 1930, pp.56-57.

84. V.K.K.N.P. 1931, p.70.

85. ibid 1936, p.66.

86. Groeneveldt, M.v.O., p.9.

87. V.K.K.N.P. 1933, p.93.

88. Lapre, (Controleur of Alahan Panjang), M.v.O., p.7.

89. Schauer, M.v.O., p.140.

from 1933 when copra export drastically declined.⁹⁰ The inhabitants voluntarily began to construct water leads, as elsewhere. It was notable that Islamic teachers and leaders in Pariaman, presumably tarekat members, willingly took part in the work and women played an important role in collecting stones and sand. Rice was planted between coconut trees in old gardens.⁹¹ However all these efforts were not fruitful because of the unfavourable conditions for rice cultivation in the Pariaman region.

The threat of famine in 1938/39 provoked a more systematic response to the shortage of rice. In March 1939, all the penghulus of Lubuk Alung, the worst affected district in Pariaman, gathered at a meeting. The meeting decided three points: (1) adat chiefs should take responsibility for their fellow villagers; (2) whenever the situation became worse it must be immediately reported to the district head; and (3) sweet potatoes should be planted under the guidance of the Agricultural Extension Service.⁹² Furthermore the penghulus organized a meeting with the resident of West Sumatra asking for government help.⁹³

The Dutch attitude towards the famine at first seemed rather cool. Instead of promising any help, the resident advised against all unnecessary amusements such as horse races. In addition he told the penghulus about much more poverty stricken people in Padang, who lived on incomes from 30 to 50 cents a day.⁹⁴ Nevertheless the resident was in fact negotiating with the central government in Batavia about government aid at the same time. Batavia first suggested making use of nagari reserves including pasar funds and contributions by villagers.⁹⁵ This suggestion was refused by the resident who argued that it would not be

90. V.K.K.N.P. 1933, p.93.

91. Zanen, M.v.O., pp.9-10.

92. Letter of Straten, Pariaman, 8 March 1938, no.4/gk, Mailr.423x/1939.

93. St.E.K.(asoemaratoe), "Loeboek Aloeng", in Oetoesan Alam Minangkabau, 1939, no.5, p.72.

94. ibid.

95. Letter of F.H.V.Middleaar, Medan, 31 March 1939, no.721A/2/105/Geh., in Mailr.423x/1939.

fair to utilize the money which was already allocated for specific purposes in nagari budgets. The proposals of the resident were government grants and loans from the Volksbank, both finally approved by Batavia.⁹⁶

On the Minangkabau side there were several suggestions. At a meeting in the nagari Pauh Kampar the villagers criticized lazy people and discussed whether penghulus who would not co-operate with the villagers should be dismissed. In the course of time, sweet potatoes, bananas, maize, and sugar cane were quickly planted and increased auxiliary food gradually mitigated the hardship.^{97.}

Two points must be discussed. Firstly, the inhabitants were prepared to adopt new ladang cultivation where they could financially afford to do so. The reason why they did not cultivate such crops from the beginning of the depression was probably because they could not at first appreciate the magnitude of the unprecedented depression. Secondly, penghulus took the initiative in looking after their fellow villagers in such a critical situation. It is also of note that the penghulus of the Lubuk Alung district co-operated with each other in order to solve the difficulties at the supra-village level knowing that the problems could not be solved by individual nagaris alone. This is a not insignificant indication that adat authorities had become oriented towards a broader community than their own nagaris. On the other hand, the rapat adat or adat council, in which common villagers had some voice, also openly discussed the dismissal of penghulus who would not co-operate. This situation suggests that penghulus felt themselves to be protectors and leaders, though they were not always so regarded by the common villagers. Administratively, the penghulus' position was surely undermined by Indonesian officials, the district and sub-district heads. Prior to investigations by Dutch officials, the Indonesian officials visited nagaris and ordered the penghulus and villagers to just 'bow'

96. ibid.

97. See note 92.

to Dutch officials when they came to the nagaris. Although this was not a recent trend the events described above amply illustrate the relationship between the three parties.⁹⁸

In the agricultural field the Minangkabaus showed their enterprise in expanding rice cultivation where it was possible and expanding vegetables where rice cultivation was not suitable. Vegetable and second crop cultivation was accelerated after the first crop failures of rice in the 1930s, i.e., 1934-35. It was further encouraged by the government until the end of the colonial period. When the famine of Lubuk Alung was almost over, the Minangkabau Council (Minangkabau-raad, see Chapter VI), set up in 1938, decided to make second crop cultivation obligatory from January 1940.⁹⁹ Of all these factors, it must be remembered that the willingness and endeavour of the population were the most important ones which enabled the miraculous development, overcoming the economic hardship of the depression years.

3. Minangkabau merchants

Minangkabau merchants can be divided into two groups on the basis of their mode of financing their operation. The first were the self-financing merchants and the second were those largely dependent on loans from European importers and exporters or from credit institutions. Local merchants trading at small markets by and large belonged to the first category and wholesale merchants and middlemen often belonged to the second. Before the crisis of 1929 the relationship between creditors and debtors was satisfactory.¹⁰⁰

With the great crisis, most independent merchants had to minimize the scale of their businesses. The dependent merchants had much more difficulty. When business declined at the level of the retailers, those who bought goods on credit from wholesale merchants, the effect immediately hit the wholesale merchants as the latter were often indebted to European importers and had to redeem the debt. The time lag between

98. St.E.K (asoemaratoe), "Loeboek Aloeng", op.cit., p.71.

99. See Chapter V, the section, The Participation into Supra-Nagari Administration.

100. V.K.K.N.P. 1930, pp.6-7.

the sale and receipt of the money from retailers aggravated the financial position of wholesalers, since this time lag was undoubtedly lengthened by the depression. From the European creditors' point of view, further loans to the wholesalers were enormously risky. Usually creditors asked for some security from the wholesalers, which was mostly family land. When bankruptcy occurred frequently in the depression, however, European creditors realized that it was in practice impossible to confiscate the land because of the system of adat regulations, even if they took the case to court.¹⁰¹ This circumstance inevitably made them very reluctant to lend again. Banks adopted the same policy as European creditors. Banks granted credit generously to Minangkabau merchants before the crisis, but they became very cautious in the depression. The dependent merchants were left no solution but bankruptcy.¹⁰²

There were two exceptional situations. Some newly established European traders were relatively generous with loans in order to acquire customers. Loans were also easier for big merchants if their existing debts were large enough to threaten the creditors with a tremendous unredeemed credit, in practice all loss, should the wholesaler go bankrupt.¹⁰³

The financial difficulty of Minangkabau merchants in general strengthened the position of European creditors, importers and exporters. When the economy was booming and demand for tropical products was large on the world market, the middlemen had a strong bargaining position even when they bought these products with loans from European exporters. In the depression the bargaining position shifted to the European exporters. The exporters began to hire their own agents to buy coffee more cheaply and directly, eliminating Minangkabau middlemen, since loans to the middlemen became insecure.¹⁰⁴ In this way Minangkabau merchants were somewhat pushed aside by European traders. However they were not always content to be at the mercy of the depression and Europeans.

101. V.K.K.N.P. 1930, p.20; ibid 1931, p.25

102. V.K.K.N.P. 1930, pp.6-7.

103. ibid.

104. Neeb, "Samenbattende Rapport", op.cit., p.53.

One effort made by Minangkabau merchants was directed at overcoming Chinese competition. Minangkabau merchants in Halaban (Payakumbuh) gradually took over from Chinese merchants in the trade in gambir.¹⁰⁵ In Padang the competition was much severer than anywhere else in West Sumatra, as the town was the biggest stronghold of Chinese merchants. In 1934 some Minangkabau merchants in Padang called for the unity of all Minangkabau merchants to cope with the Chinese and this endeavour seems to have been successful.¹⁰⁶ About this time, a Japanese inspector of economic conditions reported that in West Sumatra Minangkabau merchants controlled almost all cotton and staple fibre textile distribution, squeezing out the Chinese.¹⁰⁷ Further, enterprising merchants sent a mission to Singapore to purchase cheap goods directly. In 1938 the Padang branch of Himpunan Saudagar Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Merchants) concluded an agreement with a Minangkabau import company that all goods imported by the company should be sold to the association and never to Chinese middlemen.¹⁰⁸ Since competition with Chinese must have existed even before the depression, it is interesting to consider why Minangkabau merchants deliberately and collectively tried to overcome Chinese competition in these years in particular. It was not only in the commercial field and over the question of Chinese competition that the Minangkabaus became very sensitive to the defence of their own interests. For instance, Minangkabaus generally opposed the transmigration of Javanese arranged by the government into West Sumatra on the grounds that it would undermine the economic advantages of the Minangkabaus at the end of the 1930s (see Chapter IV). This suggests that the challenge to the Chinese by Minangkabau merchants was part of a general response to deteriorating economic circumstances. The challenge to European traders was much less aggressive than to the Chinese perhaps because Minangkabau merchants were often dependent on

105. PPO for May 1937, Mailr.490x/1937.

106. Persamaan, 8 October 1935, in PPO for October 1935, Mailr.1316x/1935.

107. Kiyonobu Suehiro, Hoko Sumatora (Kyoto, 1942), p.206.

108. PPO for January 1938, Mailr.187x/1938.

European traders for their finance, and the Chinese were the most serious competitors in daily business for them. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned direct purchase of goods from Singapore by Minangkabau merchants can be regarded as an effort to bypass European traders.

4. Response in the social sphere

Finally we will discuss the response of Minangkabaus who were not necessarily engaged in commercial activity. As early as 1931 the Pariaman people loudly spoke of 'Suwadesi' referring to the Swadeshi movement which had originated in India. The slogan rapidly spread all over West Sumatra, the term 'Suwadesi' being used to mean the consumption of Indonesian-made commodities, as exemplified by a slogan 'rokok Indonesia' or 'smoke Indonesian cigarettes'.¹⁰⁹ Consumption of locally-made goods was at that period an aspect of the Indonesian nationalist movement. The economic bitterness among the population produced criticism of the government: the Department of Economic Affairs looked after only big European capitalists at the expense of the Indonesians.¹¹⁰ Ironically, the government policy of import restrictions on foreign commodities, especially clothes and other materials, in order to protect indigenous industry, caused dissatisfaction among Minangkabaus because the restrictions resulted in higher prices for consumers and indigenous industry which used the imported materials.¹¹¹ The policy of industrialization was translated as nothing more than support for European capitalists, since it was they who in practice played the dominant role, and to whom profits and dividends flowed. In connection with this, a Minangkabau writer denounced this policy, alleging that too much concentration of capital among Europeans would contribute nothing towards the capital formation of the Indonesian people, and that only coolie wages would remain in Indonesia.¹¹²

109. PPO for April 1932, Mailr.236x/1932.

110. Persamaan, 2 November 1935, in PPO for November 1935, Mailr.1355x/1935.

111. Radio, 13 March 1937, in PPO for March 1937, Mailr.423x/1937.

112. Sinar Soematra, 24 May 1939, in PPO for May 1939, Mailr.535x/1939.

Complaints about taxation, a sensitive issue at all times, became acute in the late 1930s. Adat-oriented groups as well as politicized secular and Islamic organizations threatened the government, stating that too much collection of taxes and commutation money for corvée would undermine a good relationship between the government and the Minangkabaus.¹¹³

More positive calls were also heard. An adat leader encouraged efforts towards economic improvement on the grounds that the economy was the most important basis of the prosperity of the Minangkabau world.¹¹⁴ Generally speaking, penghulus were of the opinion that they were the people who should take the initiative in economic matters.¹¹⁵ As repeatedly mentioned, such increasing awareness of leadership among penghulus was a remarkable characteristic in Minangkabau during the depression. Concerned people were always advocating the significance of education, especially agricultural and commercial, to overcome economic difficulties.¹¹⁶ Enthusiasm for education in this context materialized in the establishment of agricultural schools by the Minangkabaus themselves, that in Kayu Tanam being an outstanding example,¹¹⁷ as well as in the spread of participation in agricultural courses prepared by the government and Indonesian schools.

Conclusion

The depression in the 1930s affected the West Sumatran economy much longer and more deeply than any other recession the Minangkabaus exper-

113. Oetoesan Alam Minangkabau, 27 March 1939, no.5 in PPO for May 1939, Mailr. 535x/1939.

114. Batoeah, "Economie dan Masjarakat" in Oetoesan Alam Minangkabau, 1939, no.4, pp.53-54.

115. St.E.K (asoemaratoe), "Kemadjoean dan Kekajan", Oetoesan Alam Minangkabau, 1939, no.4.

116. Berita Koerai, 1939, no.9.

117. S.M. Latif dan M. Ilias, Perospectoes, Sekolah Economie Kayoe Tanam (Padang, 1936).

perienced. They could not foresee the magnitude of the depression at its beginning, around 1929 and 1930. As the depression spread and prices for export crops kept falling the highest priority was given to the acquisition of foodstuffs. The major export crops of West Sumatra, coffee and coconuts, had to decline rapidly. The potential for rubber production increased in the depression because rubber trees planted before the depression had grown tappable. However, more than half of tappable trees had to remain untapped because of rubber restriction. The impact of the depression in West Sumatra may have been relatively small compared with that in such a densely populated area as Java. Despite local differences in the subsistence potential within West Sumatra, the bulk of the Minangkabaus had land to return to for food cultivation owing to the strict restrictions against the alienation of family land. In this sense the Minangkabau family land holding system served as a breakwater against economic hardship during the depression.

During the depression the influence of penghulus revived. The increased importance of sawah contributed to the revival of their leadership, again taking advantage of their guardianship over lineage sawah. Furthermore those who returned from outside their home villages during the depression had to follow the penghulus' leadership, resulting in the strengthening of family ties. Penghulus were clearly aware of their increasing importance, and tried to draw the villagers' attention to food acquisition. The warning of an adat leader, quoted in this chapter, indicates the general sentiment of penghulus: retain the adat, you will not go hungry.