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*Erasmus*

**“Whaling-Off Lamalera?”: Environmental Justice, Political Economy  
and Ecology post Ocean Conservation**

in

**Lamalera, Lembata, Indonesia**

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*Thank you for all the life teachers I have met in every sanctuary of life!  
I learned so much and am willing to learn more.*

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## List of Abbreviations

AFES	Agrarian Food and Environmental Studies
APBN	Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Nasional
BAPPENAS	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional
BKKPN	Badan Konservasi Kawasan Perairan Nasional
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CTI	Coral Triangle Initiative
CDV	Catholic Divine World
DKP-RI	Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan-Republik Indonesia
EJ	Environmental Justice
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GMF	Global Maritime Fulcrum
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies
JOKOWI	Joko Widodo
KKLD-Solar	Kawasan Konservasi Laut Daerah Solor-Alor-Lembata
KKP	Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSPL	Marine Spatial Planning
NHM	Nederland Che Handel Maatschappij
PWP3K	Pengelolaan Wilayah Pesisir dan Pulau-Pulau Kecil
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
RJ	Recognition Justice
RP	Research Paper

RZWP3	Rencana Zonasi Wilayah Pesisir dan Pulau-Pulau Kecil
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
WCU	Wildlife Crime Unit
WWF	World Wildlife Funds
YBS	Yayasan Bina Sejahtera



## **Abstract**

This paper tells a story about the local dynamics within an artisanal whaling community in Lamalera, Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, after ‘reclaiming’ their territorial waters in response to the Regional Marine protected Zoning proposal Solor Lembata Alor (KKLD Solor Alor Lembata) by Lembata Regent in 2006. Political Economy and Ecology used to see more deeply the relationship between society-state, society-society, and society with nature through their version of environmental justice post-conservation riots in 2007-2010. Ethnographic and qualitative interview methods were conducted to get insights into their context before and after they experienced victory to reclaim their territorial waters.

## **Keyword**

Environmental Justice, Recognition Justice, Redistributive Justice, Political Economy, Political Ecology, Post-Resistance, Ethnography, Qualitative Interview, Artisanal Whaling Community, Lamalera, Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

Back in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, just before I jumped into the field in Lamalera 2015, my first informant, Mama Tina<sup>1</sup>, opened her story with a restriction:

*"So, let us put it this way, if you do not want to be kicked out or chopped and aim to be accepted by the people in the kampung (village), please avoid the word and topic of 'conservation'"* Tina (July 2015)

Until when I drafted this Research Paper (RP), I still experienced some hesitation and fear in responding to mama<sup>2</sup> Tina's caution. It feels like my memory back in 2015 suddenly transformed me into the bachelor student version of me. It was my first time being restricted with such a horror story to ask about anything as a student. Back the (2015) they recently had a bad fight with their neighbouring village, which goes back to conflicts in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Media NTT, 2017; Barnes, 1996). Meanwhile, the situation regarding conservation was still in its prime, even though the conflict started to cool down in 2010.

Now I know why I was going back and forth in my dubious thoughts while trying to calm myself down, think about all the eye contact with the people in Lamalera and the question, what if the people consider my RP as part of the conservationist agenda or a CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) report?<sup>3</sup> or is against the community narrates about themselves?<sup>4</sup> However, simultaneously, I was curious about why and how Conservation became such a taboo word and topic that I needed to avoid. Meanwhile, dodging the term and issue of (Ocean) conservation was a sign and a momentum, wherein this 'ordinary' community that had been fishing for specific whales and other sea mammals to survive since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century suddenly turned into a savage community one night. The Lamalera problematize and demonize the word of conservation, but at the same time, they are also questioning themselves. Who are they? Moreover, including me, who am I trying to tell narrations about others? Meanwhile, where is the justice?

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<sup>1</sup> 50 years old, Tapoona's clan, housewife, July 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Mother.

<sup>3</sup> Interviewed with Guntur, 40 years, ex Antara Journalist, Sept 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Interviewed with Bre, 48 years, activist, Beding's clan, sept 2023.

## 1.1 Justification and Relevance

Many authors have explored various dimensions related to conservation, starting from how conservation is no longer for nature but a way to expand the commodification of nature (Büscher, et al., 2014; Büscher & Fletcher, 2015); green (land) grabs (Alonso-Fradejas, 2014); The politics and policy followed this to a new mechanism to annex land in third world countries and the politic biodiversity and climate change (Fletcher, et al., 2023; Arsel, 2012). In line with the discourse on land conservation, Ocean conservation was studied as an extension of land capital accumulation to appropriate the sea as a frontier area (Campling & Colás, 2021; Havice & Zalik, 2019; Steinberg, 2018; Silver & Campbell, 2018); A policy area (Cole-King, 1995; Poernomo & Kuswardani, 2019); Climate Change and Ocean Governance (Harris, 2019; Kusumawati, 2014; Kusumawati & Visse, 2016) Blue Economy (Hicks, 2019); Sustainability Growth and Ocean Protection Regimes (Jacques, 2018; Agardy, 1997); Local Conservation Practice and Ecosystem Service (Campbell, 2007; Chan, 2017; McLeod, et al., 2009); Competitive Human Interactions (Basurto, et al., 2017); and Blue carbon trade whose contents are just nonsense to be able to appropriate ocean resources (Smith, 2010).

However, in a small scoop on marine conservation works of literature, Foley & Mather (2019), Bavink Laur (2017), Lau et al (2021) and Ertör (2023) talked about the struggle of coastal communities in regard to ocean frontier making and conservation. While much narration has been made, Foley (2019) wrote about how community rejection is still limited when many people have advanced about global and national mechanisms. Continuing the invitation to look at the dimensions of communities affected by conservation projects, fight and win, Boras & Franco (2013), emphasized the importance of watching political reactions from below, especially after a community has regained its territory. What happened to them? This shows that social movements and communities that fight are also not neutral, exercising their agency and sometimes getting lost in the vortex of their claim towards what must be done.

This research then wants to participate in giving nuances about the social dynamics of production and their relationship to conserved nature based on their claim over tradition, particularly after they won the battle out of the proposed zoning of conservation areas in an artisanal whaling community in Lamalera, Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. I will use Environmental Justice (Redistribution-Recognition and Participation) to see whether the relationship between Resistance and Justice in Lamalera could deliver a fair distribution of natural resources after the state recognized their conservation based on tradition. Meanwhile, political economy and ecology will help to understand natural resources' (re)distributive aspects through whaling before and after the resistance to ocean conservation took place in Lamalera.

## 1.2 Analytical Framework

### Environmental Justice

*Environmental Justice* (EJ) is a theory and a movement that wants to facilitate groups with environmental realities not commensurate with the concept of what, where, how, and by whom the environment should be used, cared for, distributed, and treated for humans and more than human (Di Chiro, 1992; Bullard, 2000; Shrader-Frechette, 2002; Palamar, 2008; Murdock, 2021). 'Justice' as a major element of EJ is also debated, from its definition to how it is measured and performed (Schlosberg, 2007; Murdock, 2021). Again, EJ then departs the context of injustice, focusing on the distributional and later procedural (participation) and corrective aspects of justice (Schlosberg, 2007). However, this is not enough to analyse environmental injustice/harm whose mechanisms and forms are various and contingent in specific context and scale, but still, it is the basis (Murdock, 2021).

For example, racial justice departs from racism and structural injustice that affect people of colour (Pulido, 2000; Murdock, 2021; Bullard, 2000). However, analysts who use racism are very exclusive only to certain groups and contexts (Murdock, 2021). A new analysis of EJ emphasises the importance of the cultural and historical/symbolic an appropriate paradigm of justice in a specific context to cover psychological, physical, and existential dimensions of environmental injustice known as *Recognition Justice* (RJ) (Figuroa, 2011; Murdock, 2021; Fraser, 2003). RJ proposes that access to resources should also be equivalent to how a community has a long cultural history of resource use, which must be recognized (Figuroa, 2011). However, as Fraser argues, this recognition alone is insufficient to see justice (Fraser, 1997). The emergence of many groups that classified themselves as cultural subaltern groups struggling over injustice overshadowed the important aspect of EJ, namely the use or (re)distribution of justice, which she calls (re)distribution-recognition dilemma (Fraser, 2003). Hence, RJ must be combined with the distributional aspect so that the main goal of EJ, namely inequality in the distribution of access to resources, can be married with certain cultural, historical, and symbolic aspects/claims from the community (Redistribution-Recognition-Participation) (Fraser, 2004).

Meanwhile, EJ scholars like Whyte said that EJ, whether distributive, procedural, or corrective justice, cannot be applied to tribal or indigenous communities (Whyte, 2011, p. 200). Especially if RJ does not recognize the unique experiences such as colonialization, governing capacities, and political status (Whyte, 2011, p. 200). Environmental struggles for Indigenous communities then cannot be reduced only to class conflicts, as aspirations of the Indigenous economic life may not be compatible with the economic values of the dominant community (Whyte, 2011, p. 200). Thus, a new stream of EJ /RJ emerged by looking at the dimensions of history, heritage, identity, and communities that experience injustice (Murdock,

2021). The community is involved in creating the concept of environmental justice based on their vision of looking at the environment while stressing aspects of particularities of post-colonial society (Murdock, 2021; Whyte, 2011; Mcgregor, et al., 2020). Whyte may be right that EJ's three-analyse approach based on calculating the economy of dominant societies will be limited or not be commensurate or compatible with the economy of a society with tribal or indigenous forms. In addition, RJ, without recognition of the unique experience of colonialism of indigenous/tribal communities, produces injustice. In this point, Fraser also neglected the importance of colonial history.

However, whether mainstream economy or identity, especially what is called 'Indigenous people', it does not appear out of thin air (Li, 2000). Hence, it is not a neutral term and form. Identity is adopted, created, and imposed based on a certain social force or 'formed' as a 'response' to social pressure from outside (Li, 2000, p. 151). In Indonesia, as Li explains, the 'Indigenous community' identity did not just appear inside the community (2000). It is a concept that flies, then articulates, and even disarticulates (out of class term) to oppose or impose a particular social force and agenda (Li, 2000). The formation and strengthening of customary identity arise from two paths, the Government and the (Non-Governmental Organization) NGOs, which are sometimes not aligned (Li, 2000). The government labels a community as an indigenous community with the connotation that they are poor and underdeveloped to legitimize the development agenda (Li, 2000). On the other hand, NGOs and their international donors use the label to create a coalition of forces (Li, 2000). However, how about the people who were labelled by those two giant forces? Who they are? Who do they think they are? (question of justice) (Fraser, 2007; Frasser, 1997). Therefore, Fraser, to some extent, is right by combining both distributive and recognition and participation to the type of community classified as indigenous/cultural subaltern groups as it is necessary to see where the environmental injustice (maldistribution and misrecognition) takes place more than just identity, the cover (Fraser, 1998). However, we must question whether injustice comes from outside, inside the community or intertwine. Moreover, how does the affinity between the two form a strange embodiment of the appearance of capitalism as a culprit of inequality?

## **Political Economy and Political Ecology of Whaling and Ocean Conservation**

In order to understand Frasser's view of (re)distribution for recognition of natural resources (Fraser, 2003), it is important to check the concept concerning Lamalera's whaling social production affected by the environmental condition of before and post-conservation resistance. Hence, I used the political economy and ecology framework, which will help uncover justice's redistributive aspects.

The political economy and ecology of fisheries capture are affected by the dynamic environmental conditions of fishermen's production, then affect the forms of

fishermen's production relations: production and productivity, a labour regime, and consumption, as well as fishermen's relations with the state that form various kinds of fisheries socio-economic relations (Campling, et al., 2012; Bernstein, 2010). At the same time, the environment is also changing. Thus, fishermen's production relations become more diverse. However, knowing how the environment affects production relations alone is not enough to expose the case of Lamalera. This is because the state captures the environment through marine conservation. The environment is changing not by its biological circulation. It is seized in its natural flow by conservation projects led by the State, NGOs, and international donors. According to Campling (2012), fish is probably the only type of commodity hunted because of its movement. However, what if fishermen who hunt moving fish are banned because marine environmental protection matters?

Fletcher (2023) then enters the discussion of political economy and ecology that collide with the interests of protecting the environment. In his writing, he focuses on the conflict between humans and animals or Human and Wildlife Interaction (HWT) who 'compete' to use natural resources after the designation of conservation areas (Fletcher, et al., 2023). Fletcher (2023) discusses the importance of the relationship between the two political aspects of production and protection. He first clarifies the history of the political economy of human production and its relationship with the state. Then, he connects the results with the economic aspects of production and how conservation affects the antagonistic relationship between humans and animals (political ecological). He called it *the production-protection nexus* (Fletcher, et al., 2023).

He underlined that the country's economic policy in ensuring the protection of human production against market competition in marginalized areas (political economy) affects antagonistic relations between humans and animals. If the farmers' production is guaranteed, the farmer does not expand the land and will not kill the animals. If his production is not guaranteed, the farmer will be poor, and animals will still steal from the land where crops are valuable. Humans then compete with animals. Even though it is different with Lamalera since whales not killed but are the source of food for the community (although still being killed), without disrespecting conservationists, Fletcher situated the political economy-ecology relationships fits with Lamalera's case. For this reason, I will use the political, economic and ecological analysis described by Fletcher and reveal whaling production from the 16<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>th</sup> until after conservation.



## 1.4 Background of the study

This Study is conducted in Lamalera, District of Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara Province<sup>5</sup>, consists of two villages, namely Lamalera A and B (see maps 1,2,3,4 and 5), with a population of < 1000 people each or a

**Map 1**

Lamalera, Lembata within Indonesia



**Map 2**

Lamalera within East Nusa Tenggara Islands



**Map 3**

Lamalera, Lembata and surrounding Islands



Source: Google Earth (2023)

**Map 4**

Lamalera within Nusa Tenggara Islands



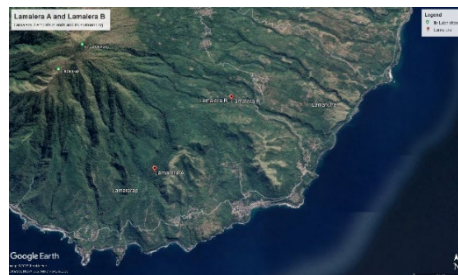
Source: Google Earth (2023)

Source: Google Earth (2023)

Source: Google Earth (2023)

**Map 5**

Lamalera "A" and Lamalera "B"



Source: Google Earth (2023)

<2000 people in two villages (Barnes, 1996, p. 341; Blikololo, 2010, p. 87; BPS-Statistics of Lembata Regency, 2022). Geomorphologically, the place is a dry, rocky, and craggy area whose shoreline directly faces the Savu Sea. It was an old port to inner Lembata Island before the Dutch moved it to Lewoleba because the waters were less calm and craggy (Barnes, 1996). Moreover, there are no coastal

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<sup>5</sup> 2015

communities whose majority of the population lives and carries out production activities based on the sea other than Lamalera along the southern part of Lembata (Barnes, 1996).

Many local and international tourists have visited the island since the 1970s. Homestays and facilities to accommodate tourists who travel to the village are also widely opened using local houses. Lamalera people who previously only knew how to use Peledang<sup>6</sup> have been more advanced in using motorboats and mopeds since the 70s (Barnes, 1984). There is a tower to emit signals so Lamalera inhabitants can send news outside the island. After the conflict with Lewotala, water still seems to be the issue<sup>7</sup>. However, efforts to further launch water sources to the village continue to be pursued by the village government. The tradition of whale hunting and barter markets for one village has also been widely known to people, although there are many changes. That is why every *Lefa mas*<sup>8</sup> always crowded with visitors, not only locals who enjoy the panoramic beauty of Lefa in the Savu Sea but also international tourists. However, many do not know enough about the story of the fishing community and, at the same time, become tour guides. For that reason, this paper will tell the story.

## 1.4 Research Questions

### Main Question

How does an ocean conservation policy like KKLD-Solar and Law No. 27 2007 Law interact with environmental Justice in Lamalera? Are both compatible, or are there tensions between Conservation and Justice?

### Sub-Questions

- a. How was the history of whaling social-production in Lamalera over time until conservation came in Lamalera?
- b. What was the state's role in mediating ocean conservation, capital accumulation (in the form of tourism) and local interests when many groups in Lamalera opposed the Conservation?
- c. How did the ocean conservation policy KKLD-Solar and Law No. 27 2007 spark resistance from the people in Lamalera? How did the different social groups and communities in Lamalera react to implementing the Ocean Conservation Policy KKLD-Solar and Law no 27 2007?
- d. What dynamics and contradictions exist among diverse groups in Lamalera around access to natural resources (specifically whaling) after the conservation policy?
- e. What are the main factors shaping the relationship between communities in Lamalera and their environment after the conservation policy?

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<sup>6</sup> The traditional boat

<sup>7</sup> Interviewed with Mule, village head, Sept 2023

<sup>8</sup> the ceremony of the opening of the sea to start the whale hunting season.

- f. To what extent is the current organization of production (in whaling) in Lamalera allowing a.) socially fair distribution of the benefits derived from whaling and b.) to what extent is the production sustainable in terms of not harming the environment?

## 1.5 Methodology

### Ethnography & Qualitative Interview

An ethnographic study, qualitative interview, and analysis will answer the research question. The research based on the interviews I conducted in 2015 in Lamalera in a one-month field research (August-September 2015). I wrote a field diary containing daily interactions: formal and informal, semi-structured interviews and the experience regarding my observation and participation in the *kampung* (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007)<sup>9</sup>. The field diary, photos, and video are the primary data that guide me in talking about Conservation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The data in 2015 helped to investigate the context of ocean conservation resistance and the socio-economic organisations, local inhabitants, and related life in Lamalera today.

I started the ethnographic study using semi-structured interviews and participation observation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Semi-structured interviews guided by some questions regarding tourism and how that affects the social and economic organisation of the people. Therefore, I interviewed the customary leaders, known as *lika telo* (three pillars of Lamalera), who run the customary administrator of the *kampung*. It consists of three big clans: Bataona, Blikololo/Tufaona, and Lelaona. Moreover, I also interviewed the customary landlord, the Langofujon clan, the whaling people such as lama fa, matros, shamans, the shipcraft men, *and* the ship master. The whaling equipment master, the people who left the whaling industry and became regular employees in the government, teachers, priests, the homestay owners, the men and women vary from their status as being elder, married, widow, and single to people with disabilities due to whaling, and the people who ‘coincidental’ being interviewed as part of the conservation dynamics with World Wildlife Funds (WWF) back in 2007. Moreover, I also interviewed government officials such as the National Ocean Conservancy Bureau – Kupang (BKKPN Kupang) and the Tourism Department in Kupang.

Meanwhile, for this research paper, I specifically conducted online semi-structured qualitative interviewes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) (August-September 2023) with NGO representatives such as Thrive Foundation, Misol Foundation, and CTC (Coral Triangle Centre), both based in Bali; Koalisi Rakyat untuk Keadilan Perikanan (KIARA) (Jakarta); Government official from Culture and Education of Lembata, local activists; Journalist; the village head of Lamalera (2017-2018); and fellow researchers from Madura University, a Lamalera scholar who wrote about resistance in Lamalera; Binus University, Jakarta who is currently conducting research regarding community conservation based in Lembata. These informants provided me with

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<sup>9</sup> Village

deeper insights into the current situation regarding ocean conservation, tourism activities, and the livelihoods of the communities in Lamalera. Moreover, the interviews also gave me insights regarding the relationship between Lamalera-NGOs and the government, from local to national. The study has two aims: (1) to explore the impact of livelihoods tourism in Lamalera on the Indonesian State policy towards ocean conservation, specifically KKLD-Solar and No 27 of 2007 (Later being amended as 14 of 2014,) how local people are affected by the dynamic regarding their relationship with nature; (2) to specify the context of ocean conservation from the related actors such as the conservationist, the scholar-activist, the people who are continuously involved in the attempt to study ocean conservation, and the movement in Lamalera.

## Chapter 2. A Brief of Political Economy and Ecology History of Artisanal Whaling and Ocean Conservation in Lamalera

### 2.1 A Tale of Origin: The Making of Artisanal Whaling Community in Lamalera

#### History of Migration, Whaling, and Clan Establishment

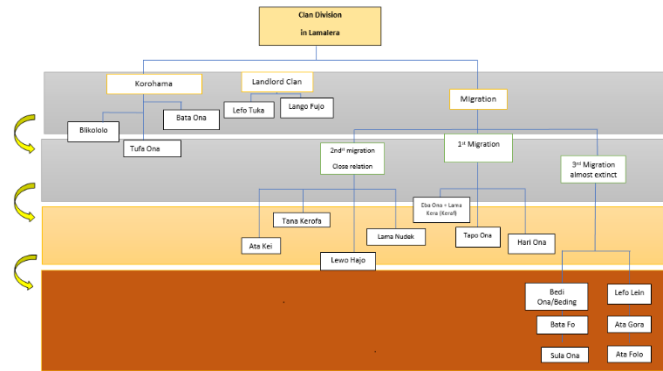
It is a long yet unfortunate and important story to understand the political ecology and economy of the Artisanal Whaling community in Lamalera, especially the post-conservation period (2010-2023), and how Lamalera exercise their polity concerning their claim towards whaling tradition. The community formed due to migrations caused by the threat of enslavement from small kingdoms surrounding islands and pirate activity since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century (Barnes, 1996). The agriculture transformed into a seafaring community from Luwuk, South Sulawesi called Korohama and his descendants brought by Gadjah Mada troops (an ancient kingdom in Java Island, during Hayamwuruk reign, 1334-1389) (Oleona & Bataona, 2001, pp. 1-15). Thus, Korohama landed, firstly, on Kei Island and then on Seram Island in Maluku, where they learnt how to catch whales with the harpoon and build a *kora-kora* in the northeastern part of Lembata. The community then learnt how to barter with mountain people, but due to intra-ethnic conflicts, Korohama and his allies moved again to the southern of Lembata (Oleona & Bataona, 2001, pp. 1-15; Barnes, 1996). With the permission and consensus from the landlord clan, now known as the Langofujon clan<sup>10</sup> and funds from the Lelaona clan (the clan who brought gold to the establishment of the tribe), Korohama descendants then landed and lived in the southern of Lembata Island now called Lamalera (Barnes, 1996).

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the owner of the land, an original mountain people who stay on the hillside of the Lamalera coast (Barnes, 1996)

Figure 1

Division of Clan in Lamalera



Source: Summarized from Barnes, 1996

The stay was not for free but an exchange of ‘protection’ from the threats of pirates (Bugis-Makassar traders) as well as the surrounding kingdom (Timor []). The kingdom often kidnaps and enslaved people among themselves or to the pirates, including China merchants, and later to the colonizers (Hägerdal, 2010). Many clans with similar runaway stories then landed in the Lamalera to gain protection from Korohama, and that was how they, as the coastal guard community, emerged as a community and expanded (See figure 1. Division of Clan in Lamalera).

The descendants of Korohama became central to the organization of society, both hunting and ritual (Barnes, 1996, p. 65). At the same time, early marital relationships were still endogamous or marriages of the same offspring. For this reason, Korohama divided his wealth (ships and territory) and duties among his three sons: 1.) Ata Kelake Muda Ama or Lefo Hajo (the Beliko Lolo clan) is the oldest child. He must guard the place of worship (lord of the land, maintain internal, religious, and superior) and or live in the big house of the Korohama descendants (Barnes, 1996, p. 65). Beliko Lolo and his descendants lived in the upper Lamamanu or Lamalera, surrounded by stone walls or fences (the meaning of Beliko Lolo) (Barnes, 1996, p. 65). Meanwhile, the second child is named 2.) Ata Kelake (developed into the Bata Ona clan) was charged with guarding the coast and escorting people who passed by the seabed (Barnes, 1996, p. 65). While the youngest third child is named 3.) Kelake Dasi (later, the clan developed into the Lefo Tuka clan) was obliged to maintain the order of the people between the clans and was given territory in the middle of the village (Barnes, 1996, p. 65). Furthermore, the Lefo Tuka clan assumed the task of leadership or government to govern citizens and deal with outsiders (the village head maintains the external, secular, and subordinate) (Barnes, 1996, pp. 65-66).

When Lamalera entered the *suzerainty* of the Larantuka Kingdom (The centrum of Lamaholot speakers) (1515-1904), the *kekang/demon*<sup>11</sup> or Larantuka administrator was then appointed by the Lefo Tuka clan (Barnes, 1996, p. 66). According to the

<sup>11</sup> administrator

history before the migration to Lamalera, the descendants of Korohama brought people from (7.) Ata Kei (from Kei Maluku), (8.) Tana Kerofa (Lepanbatan), (9.) Lewo Hajo (near Labala or Wulandoni), (10.) Lama Nudek (*below the fort*), who became a craftsman or shipbuilder, and (11.) Lela Ona (from Nualela and Kelodo Ona dai Soge Paga, Flores) joined due to migration and accompanied Korohama to Lamalera; Lela Ona was a wealthy clan (carrying gold when moving with Korohama) and exchanged her gold to “fund” the clans living in Lamalera (Barnes, 1996, pp. 62-107). After settling down, clans from other islands began to arrive and increase the Lamalera population.

### **Clan Administration (>16<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The claim to the territory of the two kingdoms of Larantuka (1515-1904) and Adonara () divided the Lembata region into the control of the two great kingdoms (Barnes, 1996, pp. 47-53). Meanwhile, Lamalera belongs to the territory of *suzerainty* – tributary, the kingdom of Larantuka. King Larantuka put the demon, or administrative head for the kingdom, appointed was not from the landlord clan but the Lefo Tuka/Bataona tribe, which was the top 5 clan groups considered to be the early inhabitants (Korohama clan) who came to Lamalera (Barnes, 1996, pp. 47-53). The appointment of the clan as a representative was because the Lefotuka and Bataona clans, in the consensus of the Lamalera clan, had a high position in their social system, namely the coast guard as hunting and affairs in the village. However, the Demon’s function during the Larantuka period did not regulate whaling production (Barnes, 1996, pp. 47-53). Demon tasked with taking the required tribute in return for the protection and supervision given by King Larantuka (Barnes, 1996, pp. 47-53). In addition, customarily, Demon is tasked with resolving conflicts between clans (Barnes, 1996, pp. 47-53).

Force major such as colonialism (Portuguese and Dutch), only utilizing regional trade routes (*barter*) and local structures (*kinship*) and a little configuration of functions and roles is ‘considered’ sufficient to obtain surpluses or exotic commodity goods such as *ambergris* and sperm whale *spermaceti* (*sperm whale*) from Lamalera fishermen (Barnes, 1996). Apart from that, the Dutch colonial interest in the Lamalera community after the Portuguese handed over control of Lomblem (Lembata) to the Dutch was not only in the withdrawal of exotic commodities but also its role as an old port, the entrance to territorial control in the south of Lembata. The Dutch made use of hunting systems and local administrative structures configured through the church to round up people and make Lamalera people as war troops and missionaries to control the hinterland (Barnes, 1996)

### **2.2 The Communal Whaling Economy in Lamalera (>17<sup>th</sup> Century)**

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Lamalera has been known to be the only coastal and fisheries community in Southern Lembata Island, where most people relied upon fisheries production. Specifically, traditional fish captures primarily catch a whale and sperm whale and other sea mammals/cetaceans such as orcas, dolphins, and manta rays. The big catches were a mix of intended and unintended consequences of their ecological context adaptation. Lamalera lives in a dry topography – coral mixed with sands, barely any soil or fertile soil. There, barely any plants could live in Lamalera. Even coconut trees were hardly grown in the lower land due to minimum water resources, narrow hills, and limited land acquired by them from the consensus between Langofujon and Korohama and other following clans. Meanwhile, Lamalera were the only tribe that ‘communally’ organized and divided their ‘whaling economy’ through barter and flesh-share system based on their position of hunting of which the structure and relation of production centre upon whaling economy persisted despite colonialism in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century until today (Barnes, 1996; Barnes, 1984).

**Figure 2**

Whaling in Lamalera, The Lamafa from three *peledang* ready to shoot their Harpoon.



Source: Author (2015)

the socioeconomic organization since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century of the Lamalera people lies in the division of whale meat and food share (Barnes, 1996; Butcher, 2004; Nolin, 2010). Whale ‘meat’ is used by the Lamalera people for the fulfilment of food in exchange (protein) for vegetables (fibre) and corn and rice or usually mixed as corn-rice (carbohydrates) through barter with mountain people (Barnes, 1996; Butcher, 2004; Kapalasastra, 1991). The amount of used whale oil for the Lamalera people (Lamakera and Lohayong), although it serves as lighting and lining of ships (Barnes, 1996). Hence, it is often ‘thrown away’ because it is not the community’s main exchange item. Meanwhile, the main goods consumed and exchanged both locally and regionally are still whale meat (protein) and salt (iodine) (Susar, et al., 2003; Salmiyati, et al., 2019; Blikololo, 2010; Barnes & Barnes, 1989; Barnes, 1996; Kapalasastra, 1991).



As a patriarchal community, the division of whale meat and all sea capture depends on the position of a male in whaling formations or other fish captures (especially for large fishes such as manta rays, dolphins, sunfishes, and sharks while small size fishes such as a tuna and flying fish are divided by number). Both take a direct part in the

**Figure 3**

The whalers divide the whale meat



Source: Author (2015)

capture, only having a 'share' through involvement in ship-making and possession of fishing gear such as *tempulin g*<sup>12</sup>, *lekone*<sup>13</sup>, ropes, knives, and spearheads other than *tempuling*, which determines how much meat gained from the roles of a man in the clan takes in *bunting* (Barnes, 1996). Meanwhile, not all men in the clan can do *penetang* (long-distance barter), selling their marine goods, primarily whale and manta ray meat, and whale oil, salt and other dried fish exchanged at certain barter markets outside the island by utilizing *peledang*. This is because one household does not always have a male member (for example, widows, no children, or unmarried women) (Barnes, 1996). Thus, one's mobility to leave the island also tends to be limited because it depends on the decision of the clan, especially the men who operate the ship, as well as the availability of goods exchanged (oil, meat, salt, woven cloth, et ce e.) from the results of the division of hunting or exchange in the village (Barnes & Barnes, 1989). However, a small note from Barnes mentioned that the Lamalera people with the *peledang* named *Kebo Kepuka* (belongs to the Bataona clan) had exchanged meat, whale oil, and other seafood continued in direct trade to Kupang even before the mid-19th Century (before 1893) (1996: p. 329). The point is that inter-island exchange has taken place using clan-owned *peledang* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and far earlier.

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<sup>12</sup> The harpoon.

<sup>13</sup> Bamboo.

A simple exchange of proteins with carbo and fibre between sea and mountain communities forms an important chain of in- and inter-island exchanges for the fulfilment of food within the island and outside the island (Barnes & Barnes, 1989). Relations and exchange networks were then used by traders, primarily Bugis-Makassar traders who had passed by and managed to dwell and even rule on the Lesser Sunda Island (now called Nusa Tenggara) or the islands around Lamalera such as Solor, Alor, Larantuka, and Adonara to obtain and exchange goods such as silk, ivory, cotton, linen, with not only food but ‘exotic goods one of which was the pope (Parimarta, 2002; Barnes, 1996; Barnes, 1996). Whale meat, although traditionally important as a means of subsistence, has also been part of an important trade commodity, both local-regional and inter-regional and international (Europe, America, Japan, and China) since the 15th Century (Schokkenbroek, 2008; Connors, 2019; Barnes, 1996; Howell, 1995; Dick, 1988; Barnes, 1996). Meanwhile, traditional whaling in Lamalera has persisted over time despite their interactions with pre-colonial, colonial and after independence from the colonies (especially the Dutch).

**Figure 4**

The barter markets.



Source: Author (2015)

### **2.3 Whaling during Colonial Period (17-20<sup>th</sup> Century)**

As a commodity, whale parts, including meat, oil, teeth, whale bones, and oral cavity or ambergris, whale oil, and spermaceti are intensively traded and hunted by *whalers* in Europe, America, and East Asia such as Japan, and China (Barnes, 1996). Whale oil is divided into oil and spermaceti, which come from the head of the sperm whale and the body (Connors, 2019). Both were used for lighting (wax), soap, and *lubricants* for the industry in Europe and America before kerosene, electric generators, and other oils were invented before the 18th Century (Connors, 2019; Schokkenbroek, 2008). *Sperm oil* has the highest value because it does not smell pungent and is durable as a lubricant (for the industry). While whale bones were collected and used for

building frames, the clothing industry made corsets (dress frames or *skirt hoops*) and horse transportation, namely *buggy whips*. Ballen whale has flexible keratin-like oral cavity bones and is often referred to as 19th-century 'plastic' (Connors, 2019). In addition, sperm whale *ambergris* has the highest value among all traded parts of whales because it is used for medicine (Chinese) and perfume (European) (Barnes, 1996). Nevertheless, whale oil remains a major commodity due to its importance in sustaining industry and lighting European cities since the 16th Century before they turned to steam power (Schokkenbroek, 2008).

The 'capitalists' of the whale industry in the Netherlands later had the support of King William I (1815-1840) support to maintain the whale industry's glo (Schokkenbroek, 2008). Whaling and sailing companies by the Dutch royal government were subsidized to collaborate (rent, buy, and hire ship crews) with the British and Americans who previously were rivals (Schokkenbroek, 2008). The Dutch then took part with the British and Americans, expanding hunting areas outside Greenland to the Dutch colonies of the Southern Ocean, including the Indies (Indian Ocean) (Schokkenbroek, 2008). Since the 18th Century, American and British whalers who first began exploring whales in the Southern Ocean became part of the Dutch whalers' crew in the 19th Century (Schokkenbroek, 2008; Connors, 2019). At the suggestion of King William I, the plan to build a port and a network of whaling industries in the Dutch East Indies then assisted by the funds through the NHM (Nederlandse Handel-Maatschappij) (Schokkenbroek, 2008). A major port for whalers was originally planned to be built in Tidore, Maluku; however, due to internal problems in the NHM (corruption and bureaucratic problems in Batavia – the name of the Capital City of The Netherlands Indies nowadays during the Dutch Colonial period or Indonesia (Schokkenbroek, 2008). After the London Treaty (leading to the establishment of Singapore by the British Empire), Kupang was opened by the Dutch as an international port by seeing many traders and whalers (Schokkenbroek, 2008).

The arrival of the whalers did not impact or change the Lamalera traditional whaling. Significant changes were absent because the whalers did not need to intervene with the people. They use the existing conventional whaling labour resting on kinship (clan) relations in Lamalera and grab their harvest by exchanging their goods with money, gunpowder, jewellery, and silk. It indicated that contact with European whalers (British, American, and later Dutch) was limited to trade without control over production. However, Barnes said it was possible and alleged that contact with American-British whalers also involved exchanging techniques and tools that are important and effective in hunting for small fishermen such as Lamalera (Barnes, 1996).

Exchanges and trade with people from outside Lamalera or Lembata became the main key to how inter-island or inter-regional exchange interactions with Lamalera people developed into trade networks. However, only Bugis and Makassar traders who understood and had access to create greater value over whale parts such as

*ambergris* and whale oil, especially spermaceti (Barnes, 1996). The Bugis-Makassar traders, then known as the Solorese traders, especially from Lamakera, were the only trading community that made direct trade contact with Chinese merchants who collected ambergris for medicine and high-end perfume from the Chinese traders (Van Eysinga, 1841: 56-7 in Barnes R. H., 1996: p. 328). The Solorese were able to enrich themselves through the trade in whale oil, weaving, and *ambergris* by establishing significant trade relations with Kupang (Rienzi, 1836-7: vol.1: p. 205; Moorish, 1837:10 in Barnes, 1996: p. 328). In this case, the Solor people, Bugis and Makassar traders functioned as intermediaries who took valuable commodities from the Lamalera by benefiting from the exchange relations and trade to create networks between islands. Meanwhile, the Lamalera fisher remained an ordinary fisher who hunted whales for sustenance compared to the Solorese traders until the Indonesian gained independence.

## **2.4 Whaling after Indonesia's Independence (>20<sup>th</sup> Century)**

Later, around the 70s-80s, an attempt to modernize and industrialize whaling came from the church. CDV (Catholic Divine World) asked the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) to organize modern whaling projects to upscale the Lamalera whalers' productivity (Barnes, 1984, p. 2). The background behind this project was that the church saw the area as very poor, with a short food supply and famine (Barnes, 1984). With the permission of the regent, both conducted experiments to integrate modern shipping technology and whaling tools (Barnes, 1984). FAO sent some of its Lamalera fishermen to study at a maritime school in Larantuka and hired whaling instructors from Norway to up-scale the whaling industry by using the mechanical harpoon, gunpowder, machinery boat using *Johnson*, and fish net (Barnes, 1984). Unfortunately, this effort failed due to the ban on the use of gunpowder by the Indonesian government and the excessive cost of shipbuilders (Barnes, 1984). Only one boat, with the addition of *Johnson* engines, was successfully delivered to Lamalera.

Moreover, the ship was no longer in use at the time. One big boat to start the whaler's voyage around the Savu Sea was left unused in Larantuka, while the gunpowder ordered with the fund from FAO stopped and kept in Surabaya, East Java (Barnes, 1984). The boat designation was not as the main ship for catching whales but rather to pull whales caught in the Savu Sea to the shoreline and look for fish whose catch range when close to the coastal area of Lamalera (Barnes, 1984). The regulation and technical issues then made the skilled workforce through maritime education finally look for other work opportunities in the fisheries sector outside Lamalera (Barnes, 1984). The attempt at whale modernization and industrialization might fail, while Lamalera returned to their traditional 'whaling'. However, the event also inserts some modifications to using the motorboat in their traditional whaling.

# **Chapter 3. The Whalers, The State, The NGOs: Victory or Slow Incorporation and the Beginning of Fragmentation?**

## **3.1 The Initial Path of Ocean Conservation in Indonesia**

Territorialization of the ocean as the first step in the formation of the ocean frontier is an important mechanism for states to maintain sovereignty and legitimacy to commodify marine aquatic resources (Raharja & Karim, 2022, p. 1; Campling & Colás, 2021). Through boundaries ranging from zoning, methods, and types of machinery to quotas and types of catches, the state bound its control by producing a bundle of policies derived from cooperation and restriction with neighbourhood countries (Raharja & Karim, 2022, pp. 5-6; Campling, et al., 2012, p. 179).

Before the current president, Joko Widodo (Jokowi), the main economic policy of the government started from President Soekarno (1945-1965) to Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) (2004-2014) was not focused on controlling ocean territory and marine resources, but rather on agriculture as the backbone of the economy (Raharja & Karim, 2022, p. 7). However, the idea to fully utilize the marine potential has at least been echoed after Indonesian independence or the Soekarno administration to reclaim sovereignty over the Dutch government and repeated by the next presidents (Raharja & Karim, 2022, p. 7). However, the attempt was continuous and prepared during SBY's reign and deepened during Jokowi's reign. It is because, in the previous era before SBY and Jokowi administration, the country did not have a sufficient and systematic plan of its jurisdictions, institutions, security, zoning plan, capital, and labour to legitimize the territory for the commodification of both marine natural resources and labour. Raharja Karim called the effort of SBY and Jokowi (re)territorialization of the Indonesian ocean frontier (2022, p. 15).

Indonesia has expressed a commitment to realizing marine conservation areas, conveyed by the Indonesian President at the Conference on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Brazil in 2006. On that occasion, the conservation area was targeted to reach 10 million hectares in 2010 and 20 million hectares (Dasion, 2021, p. 113). Following the plan, a regulation regarding zoning and utilization of marine resources the realized into a Zoning Plan for Coastal Areas and Small Islands (RZWP3K) based on Law No. 27 of 2007 regarding the Management of Coastal Areas and Isles. The law aims to guide the nation's marine resource extraction by spatial zoning, especially for fisheries extraction and conserving the ocean (Raharja & Karim, 2022). Moreover, the law also began a contradictory attempt by the government—their main purpose of conserving the ocean overlaps with ocean resource maximization.

The Ministry of Waters and Marine Affairs (KKP) established a special ministry that handles water and marine resources in 2007. It primarily focuses on the inventory of marine resources and the Marine Spatial Zoning Plan (MSPL), which contains Marine Protected Area (MPA) purposes through the guidance of Law No. 27 of 2007 (Raharja & Karim, 2022). Aside from regulation, SBY signed cooperation through multilateral ocean governance, including the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) in 2005 (Dasion, 2021, p. 6). However, the CTI during SBY was still embryonic. However, until SBY resigned from his position as president, CTI as a coastal and marine conservation project still became embryonic to handle marine resources incentivization for spatial zoning to formulate MPA arrangements across Indonesia (Green, et al., 2011) It was noted that the total achievement of Indonesia's ocean area used as MPA in the SBY era began from 5.5 million ha in 2005 to 17.5 million ha in 2015 (Djumanto, et al., 2022, p. 3).

It was only during Jokowi's period that the 'Blue Economy' agenda to develop the maritime sector as well as enlarge the marine protected areas then realized and intensified at the same time (Raharja & Karim, 2022; Djumanto, et al., 2022, p. 1). In 2020, the total area of MPA in Indonesia reached 23.34 million hectares (Djumanto, et al., 2022). In the first period (2014-2019), he made the ocean and maritime sectors the first development priority in Indonesia with the ambition to make Indonesia The Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) (Raharja & Karim, 2022, p. 7; Radjendra, et al., 2022, p. 8622; Gamage, 2016, p. 6). The rhetoric goals were food sovereignty, sustainable fisheries, and sustainable infrastructure development for maritime connectivity that aims to connect all parts of Indonesia's waters (and lands) as a single productive unit through the construction of sea tolls, deep seaports, logistics system, shipping industry, and maritime tourism that align with Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs) (Radjendra, et al., 2022, p. 8631). The ambition was supported by the issuance of Law No. 1 of 2014 (PWP3K Law)<sup>14</sup>, NAWACITA, and Long Middle-term National Planning (Raharja & Karim, 2022; Nharesworo, 2019, p. 24). This policy bundle also underlines the problem of illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing (IUU) and sinking foreign vessels that pass through Indonesian waters. Jokowi tried to strengthen the Indonesian ability to tackle all manoeuvres against the sea sovereignty of Indonesia. Meanwhile, in 2014, National Marine Conservation Area Agency Kupang (BKKPN Kupang) then moved as a separate body under the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry based in Kupang primarily focusing its project towards the Savu Sea, following CTI Summit in 2005 during SBY's reign. Moreover, based on the PWP3K, a regulation was produced to pressure the provincial government to have its zoning plan and rules to accelerate the Indonesian ocean resources management (Raharja & Karim, 2022).

In the first term of Jokowi's administration, he was more into demonstrating sovereignty over Indonesian waters while slightly expanding his territorial

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<sup>14</sup> an amendment from Law no 27 of 2007.

arrangement over ocean resources through the MPA arrangement (Raharja & Karim, 2022; Djumanto, et al., 2022). Meanwhile, in his second term, Jokowi was more eager to commodify the Indonesian Ocean from west to east (Raharja & Karim, 2022). He established the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment, which oversees the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy; and Ministry of Investment/Investment Coordinating Board. The overall sets of maritime ministry coordination show that structural and systematically preparing the maritime resources extraction. Meanwhile, the Jokowi government targets the total area of MPA Indonesia by 2030 to reach the target area of 32.5 million ha of Indonesia's from 335 million ha of the total Indonesian sea area (Djumanto, et al., 2022, p. 3; Pratama, 2020).

### **3.2 Ocean Conservation The Savu Sea, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia**

2005 President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) endorsed the Savu Sea conservation declaration during the World of Ocean Conference (WOC) side event at the CTI Summit in Manado. As an initiation project, 3.5 million hectares of the Savu Sea will be converted into marine protected areas, targeting 20 million ha and more or almost the eastern part of Indonesia (The Nature Conservancy, 2009; BKKPN, 2009). The Coral Triangle Summit and Initiative became the initial path of 'world' ocean-coral conservation as well as a model of ocean governance that centres on preserving the marine ecosystem, especially the coral ecosystem, in six countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Timor Leste who claimed to have the "largest coral ecosystem reserves" that could be contributed significantly towards climate mitigation which later will be developed into blue carbon market (The Nature Conservancy, 2009).

Savu Marine Conservation in Lembata or Broadly East Nusa Tenggara has been prepared since 2001 (Dasion, 2021). This began with the announcement of the Regional Marine Protected Area of Solor-Lembata-Alor (KKLD-Solar) by the regent at that time, Andreas Duli Manuk (2001-2006 (Dasion, 2021). Under CTI, a study of the identification and inventory of marine resources was then conducted with the establishment of The Area Assessment and Determination Team, which consists of Conservation NGOs such as WWF and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), as well as Conservancy scientists, collaborated with the government, especially Tourism and Creative Economy Office of East Nusa Tenggara Province and Tourism and Maritime of Lembata District Office (Dasion, 2019). However, the KKLD-Solar was ratified in 2006 through the Governor Decree of NTT No. 2006 (Dasion, 2021). Lamalera water was then included in the proposed level II conservation area zone that was conserved (Desrianti, 2011; Dasion, 2021).

Following the plan, the Tourism and Maritime Office of Lembata District conducted 'a whale seminar' in the Lamalera village with the help of a local NGO called Yayasan Bina Sejahtera (YBS) primarily discussing the plan of Conservation while at the same time, proposing the idea of creating the 'whale watching' tourist attraction in Lamalera (Dasion, 2019). However, the seminar was boycotted by the Lamaleran as it had an underlying motive to stop the whale hunting. However, in the same year, 2007, a group of NGO organizations came to the Lamalera village and offered a photography workshop. Meanwhile, people did not know that since it was a completely different agent than from the regional government, the struggle of Lamaleran began.



# Chapter 4. The Whalers Unmasking the Panda<sup>15</sup>

## 4.1 The 2007-2008 Conflict with The WWF

The initial resistance to ocean conservation in Lamalera started around 2007 to 2008. A conservation NGO named WWF came to Lamalera for a project called 'Photo Voice'<sup>16</sup> (Photo Voice International, 2020; Dasion, 2021, p. 104). They gathered some local representatives and documented Lamalera's daily life projects. People are given a photography workshop and a digital camera to document their people, culture, and environment through their perspective. The project participants were the villagers familiar with joining outsider events, whether from the government, church, FAO (Food Agricultural Organisation), or NGOs such as WWF<sup>17</sup>. Becoming a participant in the project was not for everyone. Meanwhile, mama<sup>18</sup> Tina, 46 years old, part of the Tapoona clan member, said,

*"They should have asked the fisherman! Their approach was wrong. They approached a person like the teacher who had nothing to do with whaling. It made sense if the teacher came from a family of sailors or was a sailor and had been at sea. However, he was not part of it at all."* (Tina, July 2015)

The Lamalera chosen and joined the project must have some educational background, be familiar with electronics, and be open to outsiders<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the participants were brought to the capital city of Jakarta as the WWF arranged an exhibition of the project but needed to bring the participants as proof of ethics of their consent. It was the first time for all the participants to be on a plane to the capital city<sup>20</sup>. Jealousy then spreads<sup>21</sup>. An islander like Lamalera would never experience that kind of 'luxury' and 'modernity' unless they live and succeed in the city. Alternatively, joining a program of NGO, digitalizing a traditional village and teaching the villagers how to portray their whaling and sailing culture. Tina said,

*"It was a trap set by WWF as if we are part of the people who agree with conservation. However, we know nothing about their goals. WWF gave those people cash, electronic devices, and flight tickets – which is expensive even for Ade<sup>22</sup>, who lives in Java, right? However, it is what we call a world of temptation. So do not be tempted when a man gives you money or luxury, okay?"*  
"Tina (July 2015)

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<sup>15</sup> The name of the informants is anonymous as the issue is still sensitive in the Lamalera.

<sup>16</sup> Part of the WWF Program

<sup>17</sup> Interviewed with Guntur, Agustus 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Mother.

<sup>19</sup> Interviewed with Bob, 35 years old, Dasion Clan, Researcher, Sept 2023

<sup>20</sup> Interviewed with Feta, 46 years, Lefotuka Clan, Agustus 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Little sisters – referring to me.

A villager called his relative who works in an NGO<sup>23</sup>. He told the Lamaleran that WWF was working with the government and aimed to ‘conserve’ the ocean while conserving the ocean was directly interpreted by the villagers as the Lamaleran can no longer do whaling<sup>24</sup>. The entire village roared upon hearing that their blood, sweat and tears would be banned rampantly due to (ocean) conservation. Using the chopper, they kicked the WWF staff out of the village.<sup>25</sup>.

*“It was painful for the community to see the relationship between soda<sup>26</sup> torn apart. At the end of WWF’s stay in the village, the movie WWF made also turned out strange and absurd. The people in the movie also became involved in the trouble and were labelled traitors by villagers.” Tina (July 2015)*

The entire village started to condemn and be suspicious of one another. The Lamaleran criminated everyone involved, especially those in the WWF program. Moreover, the fishermen who were part of the FAO in the 1980s were also included in seclusion, while some people chose to leave for good from the village<sup>27</sup>. Afterwards, the community was closed off to outsiders. Nobody dared to come to Lamalera since the news of the WWF staff being expelled from the village spread all over the island<sup>28</sup>.

*“The people become sort of ‘allergic’ only by hearing the word or even discussing the topic of Conservation.” Bob (July 2015)*

This was because the Lamaleran had been ‘wounded’ due to the “conservation” drama brought by the WWF<sup>29</sup>. The allergy is a combination of the unpleasant situations within the community towards once-called outsiders, now suspected as conservationists. The distinction between them was no longer about the inside or outside of Lamalera but who was pro or against the conservations. The Lamaleran made a consensus under ‘the Bodi tree’<sup>30</sup> and agreed to forbid each member to talk about conservation<sup>31</sup>. However, after the expulsion of WWF delegates in 2006-2007, the struggle continued<sup>32</sup>.

## **4.2 Mobilisation and Victory: Celebrating Lamalera’s Independent (2009-2014)**

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<sup>23</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Interviewed with Tina, 45 years old, Tapoona Clan, housewife, July 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Siblings or relatives.

<sup>27</sup> Interviewed with Guntur, July 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Interviewed with Tina, July 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Interviewed with Tina, July 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Sacred tree, the Lamaleran usually hold important discussions regarding the clan, whaling, and problems related to the community and village.

<sup>31</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

The shock of the expulsion of WWF people and the emergence of the term 'conservation' opened the eyes of the Lamalera people to state activities.<sup>33</sup> (Dasion, 2019) p.9. In 2010, CTI and Marine and Fisheries Service of the Republic of Indonesia (DKP-RI) issued a National Marine Protected Area Regulation which ratified through the Ministry Decree of Marine Affairs and Fisheries RI No.38/KEPMEN/2009 concerning the Reserve of Savu Sea National Marine Protected Areas and Surrounding Areas in East Nusa Tenggara Province (Dasion, 2019)p 10 where whales are catch for the Lamalera.

Bre<sup>34</sup>, a coastal community activist in the Bedding clan, worked in the NGO and then organized and mobilized the Lamalera community to reject the KKLD-Solar zoning proposal. KKLD-Solar but also Law No. 27 of 2007. Lamalera marched to the constitutional court to dismiss one article (HP3) in law no 27 of 2007<sup>35</sup>. The law utilization procedures are crucial and controversial, especially for coastal areas inhabited by traditional fishers<sup>36</sup>. No article acknowledges the sovereignty of traditional fisher communities who engage in fishing activities or use resources by their methods. Moreover, coastal communities entering conservation areas can be criminalized. Bre and her NGO friends then mobilized the community and staged an action before the Constitutional Court. Article HP3 was then issued, but not with a set of laws. Nevertheless, changing the rule of law is considered a 'victory'. Bre and his friends then made a symbolic action in Lamalera and declared that the momentum was independence for Lamalera<sup>37</sup>. Later, The Zoning Rules were changed, and Lamalera excluded from the proposed conservation zone.

Nevertheless, KKLD-Solar later affirmed by the Decree of the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia no. 5 / KEPMEN-KP / 2014 (Dasion, 2019). KKP issued the new map and Lamalera included in the community-based coastal management zoning (BKKPN, 2009). Meanwhile, Law No. 27 of 2007 amended into Law No. 14 of 2014, when Jokowi was starting his administration, and the struggle continued.

## **Chapter 5. The Whalers, Whaling and the Whale Post Conservation (2007>)**

### **5.1 Whaling in the Everyday**

#### **Whalers or flexible labourers?**

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<sup>33</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Interviewed in Sept 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Interviewed with Mona, a director of civil society of coastal community NGO, Jakarta, Sept 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Interviewed with Mona, Sept 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Interviewed with Guntur, Journalist, Photographer, Sept 2023.

Barnes (1996; 2005) describes Lamaleras as people with a mixed livelihood. They do not completely depend on whale hunting. Whales may be divided equally among clan rules and roles; however, when there are no whales, fishers must also fend for themselves to survive. Similar to Barnes, the whalers when I conducted this research in 2015, whalers were categorised as fishers by the government (BPS-Statistics of Lembata Regency, 2022). The whalers are not only full-time whaling but also other sea captures such as tuna, manta rays, flying fish, sunfish, dolphins, and sharks. Lamalera (men and women) sometimes collect sea shells, making salt a complete package of their livelihood.

Moreover, Lamalera also becomes a seasonal labourer since the sea during the hard seasons (December-April) sometimes does not provide fish or even whales. Hence, the environmental condition requires them to do a mixlivelihood works that are available in the *kampung*, such as open small businesses like food stalls, carpenters, bricklayers, construction labourers, artisans, such as weavers and crafters, liquor makers, salt makers, tour guide, of whale souvenirs for the 'tourist'. Men were paid Rp30.000-Rp75.000/day or US\$2-5 for a construction worker. However, they do not usually count as a day labourer (depending on the type of work) for the construction but rather per project. For example, one house/room/month costs Rp700.000-Rp1.500.000/person or equals US\$45-97 /month/project. The various labour price in Lamalera is around Rp20.000-Rp80.000 or US\$1.19-4.74<sup>38</sup>.

When tourism entered slowly<sup>39</sup> to the village, there were Lamalera who later became tour guides, opened more homestays, had transportation businesses, and rented their boats for tours around the sea Savu to see dolphins. Some houses have also been used as tourist destinations around the village, where the houses of shipbuilders, stabbers, shamans, *ikat* weaving artisans and whale stones are tourist destinations. For souvenirs, women could sell fabric starting from Rp15.000 -Rp 3.000.000/fabric or US\$1-US\$194<sup>40</sup>. Meanwhile, homestay costs Rp 50.000-80.000/night US\$ 3.24-5.18<sup>41</sup>. Apart from that, small huts have also been built along Lamalera A beach, from the tourism department funds<sup>42</sup>. Although it had experienced interruptions due to the Lamalera community's rejection against huts to watch the Savu Sea from the top of the cliff, its existence can still attract visitors to attend, even if it is just relaxing<sup>43</sup>.

### **Kinship, Education, Remittance: Alternative Livelihood Options**

Kinship is one of the sources social capital of the Lamalera people. Brother and sister generally expected to be able to support financing each other<sup>44</sup>. Meanwhile, school is a way to have alternative livelihood options. Lamalera who can manage at least

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<sup>38</sup> 2015 price.

<sup>39</sup> Started since the <70s by the since Catholic church established, researcher, journalist and slowly institutionalised by the regional (2000>). (Interviewed with Nina, August 2015)

<sup>40</sup> 2015 price.

<sup>41</sup> 2015 price.

<sup>42</sup> Interviewed with Mule and Bre, Sept 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Bre, Sept 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Interview With Joo, 18 years old, Tapoona clan, university student, August 2015.

until high school level or above can access jobs to become a teacher, civil servant, priest or church employee, government employee or other private sectors and usually located in Lewoleba, the current capital city of Lembata regency or Lembata island<sup>45</sup>. Schools from elementary to junior high school in Lamalera are free. However, the cost of uniforms and school supplements such as books, stationery, and the children's living cost still has to be borne by each student. Women are usually responsible for their children's education and 'pay' for the school necessities, so children in Lamalera can go to school as high as possible<sup>46</sup>. This is because women in Lamalera are responsible for the *penetan* (long-distance barter) or barter in the barter market (Barnes & Barnes, 1989; Barnes, 1996). In the barter market and *penetan*, women exchange fish for carbs and money to fund the children<sup>47</sup>.

The children who go to school, such as Lewoleba, Larantuka, Ende in Flores Island, Bali, Solor, Kupang, and Java Island, are expected to find a job outside of Lamalera<sup>48</sup>. Whenever they succeed, they are expected to help their relatives. Lamalera uses remittance from relatives who live in the city to fund the school, boat gasoline for ships, buy fishing gear, or create a business and, in particular, help build a homestay. They operate exclusively based on the family clan and create a kind like patron-client relationship within the clan – Where the client (youngster) will be loyal to the patron (adult and elder). However, there are other cases where inter-clan help each other but are considered 'credits'<sup>49</sup>. Hence, they must give back the money, to the lenders through meat or money and often mix.

However, the Lamalera who go to school outside of Lamalera and return to stay in the village are the people who are still looking for 'job' opportunities outside and inside the village with their degrees<sup>50</sup>. Lamalera young generations (<30)<sup>51</sup> prefer to work outside because they do not have any work opportunities that are suitable with their degree in the *kampung*. It was because the job was already occupied or not paid well<sup>52</sup>. Nevertheless, it shows that education is one way for Lamalera to find other livelihood options outside of fishing and whaling and to fund the whaling/fishing itself<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Interviewed with Rani, Joo, Meti, Guntur, Gento, Tina, July-August 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Interviewed with Gena, 45 years old, Sulaona clan, weaver, August 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Interviewed with Rani, 26 years old, Blikololo clan, housewife, August 2015.

<sup>48</sup> Interviewed with Meta, 20 years old, Lefotuka clan, student, August 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Clara, 50 years, Tapoona clan, housewife, August 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Interviewed with Joo, Sept 2023.

<sup>51</sup> According to Bob who considers as young is below 20 years old or below university. (Interview in Sept 2023)

<sup>52</sup> Interviewed with Meti, Tapoona clan, 22 years old, a graduate university, August 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Interviewed with Tina, July 2015.

## “Investment” in Whaling/Fishing

Apart from that, the rules, division of labour and the number of shares from the captures are still similar to the ethnographic account of Barnes (1996 (Barnes, 2005; Barnes, 1996). However, their ability to be able to ‘finance the ships’, such as ownership of special equipment varying from small wooden boat or sampan, robe, *tempting*, fishing net, motorise auctioneers, and gasoline, affect the number of parts that each clan member then gets in several auctioneers involved in one whaling and other fish capture<sup>54</sup>. Hunting or fishing is also an exclusive for all clans. Now, anyone who is on the beach and wants to trap fish will get a ration. Those who own any part (equipments) of the voyage have the most capital gained from the fisheries. Meanwhile, the boat can be owned by personal or communal boats other than peledang but rather by the clan. The clan head/oldest/the one that takes care of the family in *kampung* is the one who controls the voyage and gains share with the fish<sup>55</sup>.

**Figure 5**

**Whalers were pulled by a motorboat to the hunting ground**



Source: Author (2015)

## Whale Market

Whales might be not only for food and means of barter for food because whales are now more valuable. Whale can be bought with money. The women who task is to obtain cash from their activity in the barter market or *penentan* and then sell the dried meat of whales, manta rays, and salt. Dried meat is divided into two: manta ray and whale meat. Manta ray is cheaper than whale meat. It costs Rp 10.000 or less than US\$1<sup>56</sup>. Meanwhile, whale meat costs Rp 15.000/slab, less than US\$1<sup>57</sup>. Moreover, people often sell whale oil at Rp50.000-100.000/bottle, equal to US\$ 1-3, depending

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<sup>54</sup> Interviewed with Gento, Timus, Joo, Bob, Mule, August 2015 and Sept 2023.

<sup>55</sup> Interviewed with Yoyo, Tapoona Clan, fishers, 2015.

<sup>56</sup> The price in 2015.

<sup>57</sup> The price in 2015.

on the bottle. In addition, regular fish such as tuna or bluefin and other small catches cost US\$10-30.000/fish or US\$1-2, depending on who buys the fish.

*"The conflict over whale vomit was also unique. The villagers fight over who finds and sees first. People have increasingly come to understand that there is more value behind whales." Bob, (2023)*

According to Barnes, in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, Lamaleran did not take whale vomit. Only the Solors took whale vomit because they understood its value better based on its relations with Chinese merchants. However, based on a statement from Bob, Lamaleran is now also fighting over whale vomit (*ambergris*) at sea, whose value today may have reached billions of Rupiah depending on the size. This shows that they understood the value and knew the market where to sell whale parts outside of whale meat itself.

Moreover, Tuti<sup>58</sup> explained that the arrest of one (Tomi<sup>59</sup>) of Lamalera's fishermen, which was said to be a trap from the Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) in 2016, basically shows a syndicate of wildlife market. According to Bre<sup>60</sup>, the field story is that a fisherman wants to sell mantas. Then, the fisherman gave it to Tomi since villagers could entrust it to him if anyone wanted to sell parts of whales, manta rays, or sharks since no one was willing to take a risk. While at the same time, Tomi knows a person willing to buy the fish. Someone called wanting to buy a considerable amount with a foreign number. Tomi finally met and was arrested by the police. On the one hand, it is also true that Tomi framed. On the other hand, there is also some truth in Tuti's story, which says that there is some marine mammal trade syndicate, or if I may say, it is a trade chain. Moreover, it is possible that that Tomi just wanted to help the villagers, as we do not know who is the villager who wanted to sell the fish that is called as a wildlife good today. However, it was not a new thing if we take a look at Barnes's ethnography book. Only this day were those people framed with words like a wildlife crime syndicate. However, indeed, Lamalera mammal capture is highly valued. It was unclear whether the fisherman gets compensation for his act from a villager who sells wildlife goods. However, there must be considerable compensation if there is market, value, and risk.

## **The Widow, Orphan, and UnMarried Women: Whale Share for the Marginal**

Another dimension of traditional social welfare that changes is the whale share for the widow, unmarried woman, and orphan. The three categorisations got less share since they needed to compete with the 'outer traders'. Traditionally given, meat rations now reduced. Some widows complained that they did not get the pope's meat ration during the distribution process. This custom stipulated that the three groups

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<sup>58</sup> A conservation researcher.

<sup>59</sup> A *lamaja*, 40 years old, Krova Clan.

<sup>60</sup> Interviewed in Sept 2023.

are allowed to obtain rations by exchanging food made for whale meat when slaughtering and dividing meat takes place. However, many non-Lamalera food vendors then attended and exchanged their food for whale meat. Since the 'native' Lamalera will only peddle traditional food, the migrants from nearby villages can peddle various more interesting foods than the natives. This is because the individuals who exchange the food are the children of whalers/ fishermen. Widows, unmarried women, and orphans then lost out in the competition of whale-share exchange with traditional food vendors with the new comers.

Risma<sup>61</sup> and Weni, two unmarried women, said that they had never participated in peddling food when the whale captured. The reason is the same, which is not getting commensurate results. Risma and Weni also do not want to be considered 'beggars'. Apart from that, Rima and Weni no longer participated in peddling food when the whale was caught. Risma and Weni prefer to work on corn than have to become food vendors and exchange it for whales.

Nevertheless, Risma and Weni also always get rations from Lamafa or fishermen. However, this is not a mandate but the mercy of the Lamafa. *Bapa Gento*<sup>62</sup> said that in the past, fishermen would always garden orphans, unmarried women and widows to get their share still. He already reminds *lika telo, lamafas* as well as landlords. He thought the agreement to be given a place to exchange fritters with the pope during the whale-cutting process on the beach for widowers is not enough because, at the same time, there was competition with outsiders who came to exchange whales and even for fellow widows. However, *lika telo*, landlords and *lamafas* ignore his advice.

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<sup>61</sup> Interviewed in August 2015, 50 years old, unmarried women, cornflakes maker, daily laborer.

<sup>62</sup> Interviewed in August 2015, 56 years old, unmarried women, cornflakes maker, daily laborer.



# Chapter 6. The Whalers, Who? Group Dynamics Post Conservation Resistance (2015-2023)

## 6.1 Lamaleran: Inside and Outside of Lamalera

*"There is tension between Lamalera people inside and outside Lamalera. They (Lamalera) go to school, work in the big city and succeed. Those people want to modernize the kampung<sup>63</sup> but never think of the consequence of modernity"*  
Bre, Sept 2023

The different opinions after the shock due to conservation (>2010)<sup>64</sup> were classified into two groups, namely 'Lamalera people who live' inside 'Lamalera who live outside Lamalera'. The people inside Lamalera are broadly categorised as those who were born, live, go to school, work, and especially rely upon whales to continue their lives in Lamalera. These people were also categorised as fishers/whalers, daily and skilled labourers (by wage), entrepreneurs, civil servants, artisans, *tukang* or labour, and church employees.

The Lamalera who live outside are the people who work, go to school, live outside of Lamalera, and occasionally come to Lamalera to visit their family. Similar to the Lamalera inside Lamalera. 'Lamalera who live outside Lamalera' have diverse backgrounds. Their occupations vary, from entrepreneurs, academicians/lecturers, teachers, priests, and civil servants to activists and NGOs (conservation and civil society). However, people inside Lamalera generally define them as those who succeed. It refers to money, position, network, experience, and knowledge).

Meanwhile, the people are categorised as 'Lamalera outside of Lamalera' by the people inside Lamalera based on sources of capital, their educational background, clan or family background, and their different experiences seeing the world contributed to the tension inside the Lamalera. First, the 'Lamalera outside of Lamalera' is the source of capital from the remittance they share with their relatives. Lamalerans outside Lamalera also have prominent positions in their workplace, which allows them to give opportunities for Lamalerans who live in the *kampung* to work with them. In addition, when the children need to go outside of Lamalera to pursue higher education (more than Junior high school), they can rely upon the Lamalera who lived outside for protection and financial support. Moreover, as their educational background is often higher, they become the source of references, especially regarding government, tradition and whaling for Lamalera. However, their views vary and often clash among people from 'inside Lamalera' or between 'outside of Lamalera'.

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<sup>63</sup> Village.

<sup>64</sup> The year 2010 is more precisely when this research was carried out, namely 2015 and 2023.

The dispute also occurred from the inside to the outside of Lamaleran. The ‘Lamaleran inside’ thought they should decide more about what should be done inside the village than the ideas or suggestions provided by ‘Lamaleran outside of Lamalera’<sup>65</sup>. This is because the ‘Lamaleran inside’ perceive the ‘outside Lamaleran’ are barely seeing the real situation in Lamalera: living and being involved directly with the kampung daily. Hence, ‘Lamaleran outside Lamalera’ did not understand the difficulties of living and working or continuing to live in the village. Besides the livelihood aspect, the differences in classification of opinion between Lamalera concerning inside and outside Lamaleran, especially regarding conservation, whaling and Lamalera as a community, then also intertwined with the following aspects:

### **Young and Old Generations of Lamalera**

*“I think in 50 years, no one will go to sea. The story of the origin will no longer exist. In the past, every child liked to ask the elders, and at the same time, the elders always shared their stories related to their origins, village, whaling, and family. Now, there are no more willing to do that. No generation is interested in asking their parents and grandparents about their origins. The young people often do parties. In the past, there was never a term for a post-evening party, when life in a day ended with prayer.” Bob, Sept 2023*

Bob explains that today’s youth are much different from the old days. When he was a child, all the children at least asked their parents regarding their origin. Currently, there is no young generation who are curious about their ancestors. In addition, because many young people are busy with school and are not less interested in going to the sea. Only one or two families are indeed curious children and have the initiative to become *Lamafa*<sup>66</sup>. However, these children usually give up on education. Others still pursuing education or had jobs in the cities only went to the sea if the youth were free from their jobs or on school holidays. Meanwhile, the rest are the old generation who still maintain to go to the sea.

Bob continued his story. There used to be cases like this when conservation momentum happened. People promised not to talk about conservation to outsiders and did not publish any photos related to whaling on social media. Meanwhile, initially, people used Facebook to tell each other how the catch was today and how many catches today. However, after the conservation moment, Lamaleran (youth and adult) did not upload any activity to honour the agreement. Now, the young generation proudly uploads themselves on social media with whales. This whale means that it has been like a spectacle for them. The sacredness of the ritual of splitting the flesh of the pope or the procession of *lefa* accompanied by the church seems to have never existed with the attitude of making the pope a spectacle.

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<sup>65</sup> Interviewed with Prima, 28 years old, Tapoona clan, fisher/whaler, driver of the minibus.

<sup>66</sup> Interviewed with Bob, Sept 2023.

*" I also really appreciate people like Mule, who have gone to Java but still want to return to the village and care for their families. While I have the same experience and status<sup>67</sup> as him, I chose to leave for academic reasons." Bob, Sept 2023*

Lamalera youngsters attend schools outside Lamalera. They later worked outside Lamalera, as did Bob, but Mule's case was rare and privileged at the same time. Mule graduated with a bachelor's degree in Java Island but decided to return to Lamalera and care for his sick family. At the same time, he was the son of the Bataona clan, the successor of *Lika Telo*, who took care of customs and a big house simultaneously. Eventually, he enrolled as a teacher in Lamalera while looking after the traditional house and family.

Meanwhile, the Lamalera who relied upon non-whaling and fishing or were classified as non-fishermen sometimes still participated in the whaling 'tradition' – they called it tradition, not a main job. The elder (>65 years old) who fully becomes a whaler still teaches their children how to operate or navigate ships and hunt whales, especially those who have the rights of certain clan *peledang* or clan-owned ships. Even though there are indeed generational changes and aspirations changes in the *kampung*, the knowledge transfer of whaling from the elders to the young generation is still happening. However, the young generation participates when they do not have duties with their primary job or school<sup>68</sup>. The elders who sent their children also did not force them to go to the sea, and that is how whaling became a tradition in terms of monuments of the past for the young generation who are not mainly whaling from a whaling village.

## **Whaling and Lamalera Identity: Modernity versus Tradition**

*"Conservation is a sensitive word derived from the case with WWF. It makes the community divided, especially between brothers and sisters. Bediona and Tanakrofa, for example, badmouthing at each other because there is a perception that people who participate in WWF programs, namely photo voices, can sometimes make a lot of money. The division, ignored by the WWF, brought conservation diction to Lamalera. Finally, the silver lining was to invite people to be aware of their village, culture, tradition, and self. There is a threat, and there is a responsibility with society. 'Indigenous peoples' and the principle of taking many good things but forgetting what is not good for their identity, Lika modernity. Happy with ease but forget what kind of impact modernity brings to the community. Bre, Sept 2023*

On the one hand, the conservation momentum for Bre has divided the family. However, on the other hand, it also brings awareness to their 'identity'. For Bre, Lamalera has forgotten the tradition because of the mechanization of using boats and gasoline. The Lamalera take resources as much as they can but forget the impact of taking them excessively. Therefore, the conservation momentum for Bre is also

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<sup>67</sup> Bob is also a *lika telo*. Moreover, He is a researcher and also a lecturer in Java.

<sup>68</sup> Interviewed with Mule, 38 years old, teacher, homestay owner, tour guide, *lika telo*, Bataona clan in August 2015.

the beginning and revival of the ‘old identity’, which he referred to as ‘indigenous people’. In Bre perception, becoming a ‘modern society’ with modern vessels or leaving the whaling tradition is considered not a Lamalera identity. Bre insisted that modernising the community has never been an option for him.

*“This is not a question of right or wrong and should or should not, but rather, what kind of consequences should the Lamalera community carry when everything later changes into modern life? It might make life look easier at first and glamorous; meanwhile, on the other side, people begin to abandon the tradition and compete with each other in order to gain fame and prosperity Just like Jakarta!” Bre, Sept 2023.*

Bre currently did not live in the village. He lives in Java and goes back and forth to Jakarta and Lamalera. He described how life in Jakarta is full of competition, but he often goes to that city for work.

*“The (Lamalera)community needs have been given by nature and God. The plain fish descend into their home yard – the Savu Sea, so why do ‘we’ need to try to become people who ‘we’ are not?” Bre, Sept 2023.*

In contrast to Bre, Bob gives another view of what happens in the post-conservation Lamalera:

*“Yes, Bre was probably very influenced by anthropologists, then he could argue with that romantic views. However, what subsistence are the Lamalera people? Why is it possible that we say we are subsistence while a Norway instructor came and brought the outboard machine to Lamalera? How can Lamalera be called subsistence? They do not take whales and spend them in one night. In addition, today, if there is no gasoline, whalers do not want to go to Baleo<sup>69</sup>. Moreover, the sail on the ship’s auction is released only during the misa lefa. It means it is just a symbol of the ritual starting the sea season. After that, they dragged the peledang with the machine to the hunting area. Meanwhile, many women also went to the sea to fish. Before, there had never been such a case because the sea was forbidden for women. Plus, the baby whales are also caught in the absence of fish. Hundreds of dolphins were later captured and posted on social media. People easily post things on the internet, while before, we agreed not to post anything. Conservationists who want to conserve some rituals that are considered sacred are then violated, for example, making Lamalera festivals and screening films about Lamalera. What kind of community who claim to have a conservation tradition did such a thing as what the Lamalera do? This is a politicized tradition. Meanwhile, identity not fixed!” Bob, 2023*

Bob explains that resistance related to conservation victory was Bre’s Idea. Bob agrees with the rejection, but he disagrees that ‘tradition’ was later politicized by Bre as a fixed identity of Lamalera.

*“The identity of the Lamalera is not fixed. It is also fluid. Meanwhile, today’s dispute in Lamalera is no longer about the state with society but society with society. Now, it is time for the Lamalera people to rebuild their identity. However, have people ever gathered on the bodi tree to discuss this crucial thing? Everyone knows, but everyone turns a blind eye and blames each other.” Bob, Sept 2023.*

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<sup>69</sup> Hunting whale

Bob was furious at how this Lamalera identity frame became a boomerang for Lamalera people who did not all know about the political strategy to win over conservation turmoil. Lamalerans have criminalized because of the contradictions in the field that indicate the sale of sea mammal parts. Their activities are also limited due to the claim of traditional indigenous knowledge conservation while at the same time, Lamalera also needs to survive. Moreover, Lamalerans do not feel safe and have an inner conflict with whether being a Lamalera society is associated with 'hunting whales', "Not all Lamalerans are whalers. Even Bre himself is not in Lamalera. So what is Lamalera?" Bob explain. The problem was then at the level of society.

The community itself was silent. No one, including Bre, was present and resolved these issues and questions about identity. First, Bre was considered part of the WWF just because he was involved in one of the government seminars regarding whaling in Lamalera. The government invited him to become a moderator, inviting Lamafa from the Tapoona family. Second, he was accused by the Lamalera inside of Lamalera as the people who wanted to modernize the Kampung just because he attended that meeting. Third, he views what Lamalera should have done differently, especially with Bre. He wanted to cherish the tradition but also understand that it is not easy to make a living by whaling. Four, Bre live outside of Lamalera. His opinion and Ideas are regarded as intrusive despite his background, whether as part of a *lika telo*, academician, or live and went to Java. He decided to not to be involved that much, but if someone from the kampung asks for his opinion, he is willing to give a suggestion.

## Lamalera's views towards the Government

*"We, Lamalera, do not live from the APBN<sup>70</sup>. We do not ask anything from the APBN either. The State stopped looking at their people, such as seeing Ancol<sup>71</sup> from Monas<sup>72</sup> view. They need to go down and see Ancol as Ancol, not Ancol, from Monas' perspective. Just like when they see Lamalera from the bird's eye, they will not understand how to treat Lamalera people, especially concerning conservation."* Bre, (Sept 2023).

*"We have everything we need. We can conceptualize our own life. Meanwhile, Act 27, 2007, did not look at how people in Lamalera live. the Lamalera community from ancient times has never depended on the state."* Bre, (Sept 2023).

Bre insisted that Lamalera people can live based on what they can live by the concept they aim to do. Lamalera, in his view, is also apathetic to the power of the government. They do not even consider and do not allow the government to interfere in their customary affairs. They consider the government to take much advantage of Lamalera. According to Bre, the government must learn from the community how to be democratic, just like the democracy exercised in Lamalera by the *musyawarah* (meeting) under the Bodi tree. Bre considers the meeting under the body tree as one example of deliberation for an ideal democracy. However, the government never presented during the community meeting under the Bodi tree.

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<sup>70</sup> State Budget.

<sup>71</sup> Name of a beach in Jakarta.

<sup>72</sup> Name of the National Monument in Jakarta.

Therefore, he emphasized that the Lamalera community already has anything Lamalera want. Lamalera can also conceptualize themselves rather than hearing ‘outsiders’ or the government conceptualize or enact the government program in Lamalera. Meanwhile, in contrast to Bre, Bob explained.

*“In the past, people were very resistant to conservation. Today, people are more fluid but not as fast. For example, this begins with a change in the Regent’s statement. In the past, when the regent of Manu ruled, Lembata strongly supported conservation. That is why there was resistance from the Lamalera people. After the Lamalera people refused and the regent replaced with Yentji<sup>73</sup>, the regent suddenly said that Lembata rejected all forms of international conservation except for its own ‘community-based conservation’. It means that the country there is not one. Everyone has ideas and many interests. Meanwhile, after the regent gave such a statement, Lamalera people became more fluid with conservation. For example, people were no longer afraid to talk about conservation or allergies as they used to feel. Now, they get used to it.”* Bob, 2023

Bob further explained that Lamalera clearly ‘rejected’ conservation in the past, and there was no term like ‘negotiation’. Today, the word ‘negotiation’ is used for tourism-related government programs, especially the performance of traditional dances. In addition, the local government can now enter the village, whereas in the past (<2010), there was no story that the government dared to set foot in Lamalera. In addition, local and village governments have now (>2015) confidence to discuss with residents about tourism and how to manage the sea. Hence, according to Bob, there are only two types of people in Lamalera: those who are still allergic to conservation and those who are accustomed to conservation.

## **Participation in the Village**

There is a change in view from using the political position as a village head in Lamalera. Currently, Lamalera sees the importance of citizen participation from ‘within’ after a long time (before 2017). Previously, Lamalera was led or represented by people outside of Lamalera. The previous vision, mission, and programs were not clear and well-informed due to the village government's absence. First, Lamalera claimed to have a different community government system from the village government system enacted during Soeharto’s reign. Second, the position of a village head for the years (after Indonesia's independence) was considered by the villagers, especially Mule, as an ‘ordered’ position given to the people of the district outside Lamalera. The Lamalera sees the village government as an ordered agent who wants to modernize Lamalera, saying that Lamalera is a poor village with traditional and obsolete whaling and should be replaced/advanced with more marketable catches. After the conservation turmoil in 2008-2010 occurred, the community’s view of the government worsened because the village, sub-district, and especially district governments and the central government supported the conservation against the whaling practice in Lamalera. According to Bob, the previous regent (2000-2006)

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<sup>73</sup> Eliaser Yentji Sunur (2011-2021), The Regent of Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

proudly promoted Lamalera as a unique culture that needs to be preserved. Even the logo of Lembata Island was created with a whaling signature. The event has made Lamalera more closed off and distrust of the village, sub-district, and district government.

People who participate and run for village head election – usually from outside the Lamalera. Meanings residents who are administratively included in the list of Lamalera villagers but are not native Lamalera or part of the Lamalera clan group. I got one story in 2015; the village head was Nabu (<2017). Nabu winning was not based on the people's choice but because no residents voted in the village head election. So, the election can be the result of an empty box. However, this perception has changed, especially when Mule ran for the village head in 2017-2018. Mule took the initiative to become the village chief at the instigation of several family members, primarily from outside Lamalera (especially Bob) but also within Lamalera.

Mule thought he could make a chance after taking the village head position. However, when the interests within the community and the government were revealed, he felt overwhelmed. For example, regarding water problems as a basic need for Lamalera. Mule explains,

*“I try to do it right’. I propose that the new priority of the development when I become a village head is water coming from two springs in Lewotala. However, It is not easy because there are entrustment programs from other governments, such as the tourism office. Meanwhile, rather than tourism, we need water, or before tourism, we need water. For example, water reservoirs when the rainy season is necessary rather than subsidies for the homestay. In 2017, we got funds from the tourism department to make a bathroom in the house. However, it was not enough for all. In 2020-2021, Hamlet number 1 near the beach got funds from the regional government to make guest rooms for tourism needs. However, still, it was not for all as well. Many interests must be accommodated by the village head, especially from superiors such as sub-districts and regents.”* Mule, Sept 2023.

In 2018, Mule resigned as the village head because he was overwhelmed with accommodating the sub-district and district obligation for tourism rather than the basic needs of Lamalera. Moreover, he does not want to be a part of the person who goes against the family's aspirations. Mule then returned to become an English teacher at Lamalera Junior High School. He thought he was perceived as the enemy or opposition of people in the bureaucratic village administrator/sub-district/district/regents. Meanwhile (2023-2028), the Lamalera village head is occupied by one of the *links telo* from the Lefotuka Clan<sup>74</sup>.

### ***The Lika Telo vs the Businessman: The Administrative of Adat***<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Interviewed with Mule, Sept 2023.

<sup>75</sup> Customary administrative.

*“We represent ourselves when needed, such as creating a restoration ceremony. However, respect is not what it used to be (appreciate the customary act and position in the clan). You have to make it because you are in charge. However, the people currently no longer have gratitude towards the *lika telo*. Hence, *telo* only becomes a ritual symbol, but the people are no longer hearing the wisdom and advice. Honestly, I wish I was not born into this complicated family and inherited this position. Today, Lamaleran do not appreciate us (*likatelo*) working for them for the greater good. This position means nothing. *Lika Telo* was there, but nobody listened; everybody just wanted to talk that day, but there were no resolutions. The meeting under the body tree did not really generate certain solutions for us (Lamaleran), whaling, tourism, water, ...” (Mule Sept 2023)*

According to Bob, *Lika telo* is a patron-client relationship based on whales that the community once respected. However, that was then. Now, people do not consider that *telo* is important in its function. This is because the Lamalera community is now diverse. Not everyone relies on whales or requires the same protection from outsiders, such as pirates or the Larantuka Kingdom. Therefore, the community's interests also vary, and *lika telo* cannot accommodate all the wishes of the different communities, let alone outside the whale system.

In the current situation of Lamalera, Whalers and other types of livelihoods are mixed, not only within the Lamalera but people outside the Lamalera who participate in the decision-making through the Lamaleran who are still inside the village on how the village and whaling should be organized. Due to different perceptions, the tension between each clan heightened. Whaling/Fishing then operates independently from the clan, or somehow a group of clans who are closely related to each other (Korohama clan), and the operation of each clan also depends on each agency within the clan. For example, in the Tapoona family, the ones who organize the hunt are the former lamafa elders, Timus and Gento. Gento is assisted by Prima, who takes care of the ship. All three of them also depend on Rama (who lives in Jakarta and has a business) as a person who funds hunting/fishing, whether through money for gasoline or to buy whaling equipment. In exchange, Rama did not get anything; instead, the family became loyal, and if he needed something, the clan was willing to do stuff on behalf of this matter. For example, when Rama wanted to build a house in Kupang, he ordered Gento to execute the plan. Everyone in the clan of Tapoona might be waiting for a commando from Timo, even though his presence is outside of Lamalera. The clan operate exclusively, while there seems to be no resolution as a big group consists of clans except that they are still closely related. This means the Lamaleran is supported by the Lamaleran outside (funds, protection, network/politics) who also have and impose their interest inside the Lamaleran.

Aside from the regular options to seek cash, homestay businesses are also promising. First, the story came from the church. It does not directly provide financial assistance to certain people. However, the church ‘coincidentally’ gave access to people,



especially those close to the church. In one case, the story of Mama Hena<sup>76</sup> and her homestay, her husband, who was close to the church, was offered by a pastor to accommodate guests because the church did not have enough rooms. The church, as an exchange, gave money to facilitate the guests. That was how the homestay business for Mama Hena grew and became the first homestay in Lamalera.

Moreover, Bento was subsidised by the government in the late and early 2000s<sup>77</sup>. The government subsidises buying a ‘minibus’ and makes it a form of transportation for the villagers. One Lamalera used this chance since he was familiar with driving and made it a business. He also made his house a homestay with the capital gained from the transportation business. Moreover, Bento also bought a ship for fishing tourists, helped to drag the *peledang* to the hunting site, and hired fishermen (from any clan willing to participate in his boat for work). Bento docks his boat in the clan’s shiphouse, which is controversial because the *peledang* house is the authority of one clan. Bento is also one of the vocal representations of the Bediona clan. Thus, the *lika telo* exists but transforms into Lamalera outsiders (and inside) with capital.

*“The challenge of Lamalera today is no longer a matter of state with society but between the Lamalera and the Lamalera. People outside of Lamalera assume that this society can maintain the peace of life in harmony, but yes, actually, both the people inside and the community identify themselves as sufficient, but it was all in the past. Now, Lamalera is chaos. See.. I told you, identity is not fixed. The thing about Lamalera is that they need to sit together and think about what they are going to do as a community. However, they are not. No one even started to talk about that matter, but no one was willing to.”* Bob, Sept 2023

## 6.8 Conserve the Ocean or Conservate the Culture?

*“For me, conservation has a good aim, but what is being conserved should not be the sea but the culture. Cultural conservation seems to be more suitable in Lamalera than sea conservation. This conservation makes people into pros and cons with conservation. The pros are because they see the economic value - mere compensation for a small livelihood. The cons generally talk about identity, beliefs, and social structures. So, what should be conserved is not the ocean but its culture.”* Mule, Sept 2023

Mule aspires that Lamalera village should be formed as an “Indigenous/Customary Village’ or ‘*Desa Adat*’ because Lamalera has its structure and rules. Nevertheless, he also wants residents to be ‘open to change’. At the same time, the government must also ‘adjust’ to ‘community aspirations’. However, this never happened. There is no discussion led by the government related to the community aspirations.

## 6.2 Outside of the Lamalera Outsiders

### NGOs: The Conservationist vs Civil Society

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<sup>76</sup> Interviewed with Hena, 50 years old, clan Batafor, homestay owner, teacher, and weavers.

<sup>77</sup> Interviewed with Prima, 28 years old, Tapoona clan, fisher/whaler, driver of the minibus.

*"What is the difference between eating (killing) whale and eating (killing) chicken? Why is Chicken considered normal while whales perceived as problematic? Why can slaughter the cow for the commune while Lamalera cannot do the same way? What is the difference between Muslims and us Lamalera? The conservationists came up with the appendage of saving nature and then arbitrarily forbade the Lamalera people not to hunt whales in exchange for an offer to make whales as a 'spectacle' or entertainment by providing the alternative of whaling into whale watching" Bre, Sept 2023*

Meanwhile, for him, those conservationists – eco-fascists did not reconsider how important whales are for the sustenance of the people in Lamalera but also for their identity, culture, and current social-economic system that exist and made them persist or survive over time.

## **The Ethnographer**

*"You<sup>78</sup> said the whaling tradition has become a practice since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, according to Barnes" claim, right? No, it is way farther than what he claims. Lamalera people have been hunting whales way far before the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Bre, Sept 2023.*

What happened to the different claims of whaling in Lamalera between Barnes and Bre? He insists that Barnes's claim was wrong and how significant the historical claim of Lamalera hunting whales for Bre to explain the current situation of Lamalera living in transition versus those that labelled Bre as an 'environmentalist' and 'conservationist' or CIA who were against the whale hunting in modern times? Moreover, conservation people and an ethnographer who worked in Lamalera since the 70s (R.H Barnes). Barnes, who has been researching Lamalera with the most famous book, 'Sea Hunters of Indonesia', is called by Bre a book full of 'misconceptions' and a 'false truth' about Lamalera.

Bre accused the ethnographer himself as a CIA agent who brought FAO into the *kampung* and brought false prejudice to the community. For him, it was because the diction of 'hunting' the author/ethnographer used raised the problem to him. He explained how the outside world views the practice of catching or taking fish, especially whales in Lamalera, as a category of sadistic, cruel and animalistic people. Moreover, Bre also problematizes Barnes's activity as the FAO consultant. He explained that Barnes's writing was a recommendation material that eventually brought FAO to the village and introduced modern tools to the Lamalera people.

As a result, Lamalera fishers then took whales with the help of motor engines and dependence on gasoline. This undermines the tradition and originality of the tradition. Meanwhile, Barnes wrote in his ethnography book (Barnes, 1984) that the FAO Program was the church, CDV, initiation and asked FAO to help Lamalera escape famine during the hard seasons in the 80s. Who is right or wrong in this matter? Why is it necessary to be right or wrong? Bre explained,

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<sup>78</sup> Refers to the author.

*“People exercised the frame and intellectual monopoly with an eco-fascist view towards the whaling tradition without understanding the context. Those people with a conservationist mindset view Lamalera as a savage community by killing whales and other sea mammals.” Bre, Sept 2023.*

This is perceived by the Bre and old generation of Lamalera as a disgrace and disrespect to the tradition, their sacred ritual, and their history of living and being. Bre was unhappy and problematized the words ‘hunting’ and ‘catching’. He preferred to call whale hunting activities in Lamalera the taking the whales’ and ‘picking up a package’.

# Chapter 7. Locating Justice: Environmental Justice of What and Who?

## 7.1 Locating Justice in Lamalera

In this study, I started with historical tracing, from the beginning of how Lamalera started to whaling. Is the whale tradition or production? Since 16th century, whale hunting is a way for the Lamalera people to survive (social production-reproduction). The people were few, had no land, hitchhiked in the dry land of others (Langofujon) and could only hunt whales to be able to eat communally. When they reached the mainland, it turned out that people were already inhabiting the territory. Finally, the easiest way to survive in a dry region is to barter from marine products that are larger than the land.

Nevertheless, Lamalera are not the ones who then claim or call what they do a culture or tradition. It was their strategy and negotiation with nature and humans based on the migration history until finally landing in a single region referred to as Lamalera (political, economic and ecological). Even in the colonial and post-colonial periods, efforts were made to 'modernize' their fishing methods because of the famine that routinely starved them. However, why is the recognition of tradition and culture a nuance highlighted in their movement when conservation? What are the consequences of politicizing identity without (re)distribution in Lamalera in the context of opposing the proposed designation of conservation areas after the proposal was repealed and the struggle for recognition with the claim of 'indigenous peoples'; 'Customary-based conservation' then they used?

The identity of the Lamalera people as an Indigenous people and the tradition of whaling is used as a counterpoint to the whaling condemnation that also arises not based on their own making. Instead, it is a political strategy designed by some organic intellectuals from the community, both from inside and outside Lamalera and social justice NGOs (who help and have other interests) who are faced with the threat of proposed marine protected areas established by the state, conservation NGOs and the international colleagues. Lamalera's story was blown out for themselves and by a law that threatened traditional fishing practices for various regions in Indonesia through Law 27 of 2007. The strategy was used when the most socio-production resources that had kept them afloat as communities centuries were banned by the government for conservation.

The problem is that the identity politics used actors contradicts the historical distribution record and their participation in production post conservation. Lamalera society is not a subsistence and harmonious society. Because, as seen from historical records, the commodification of whales has been running around Lembata, Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia since the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, It was not the Lamalera who benefited or changed by the method of arrest but the Solor intermediaries who had relations international traders. In addition, attempts to 'modernize' and

industrialize whaling were also attempted in the 70s-80s by the church. However, unfortunately, it did not work because of national political affairs regarding restrictions on fishing gear. They seem traditional, but some parts of the way they hunt have changed, though not as much as the Japanese, American, or Dutch whale industry.

State and proposed conservation designations on the grounds of saving nature from biodiversity crises and climate change may seem good for the citizens of the earth, but not for the Lamalera people, who since the 16th century have also never been glimpsed and cared about by the state. They were asked to survive hunting and gathering whales, almost sold to attract people to Lembata in the 2000s, then suddenly, the state fenced off their territory to hunt whales for conservation reasons. It is understood that they are angry and as if there is no way to extract and mobilize their political power from another onslaught other than by playing up claims to tradition. The state agreed to the claim and supported it. They can win the fight for whaling territory but, at the same time, fall into a trap for their claims.

The claim to tradition is not the end of the Lamalera people's struggle to fish (?) and live because, at the same time, the released territory was also restricted. Fish are difficult to catch because conservation areas demarcate their territory. Finally, they caught anything that could be caught, including baby whales that they were not allowed to catch under traditional rules. Fish are getting harder, and any marine animals that are profitable to survive will be sold to children's schools, buy motorcycles and handphones.

Lamalera confusion, many contradictions not only in production activities at sea but also in the customary system itself, which is no longer able to accommodate the aspirations of the Lamalera people who turned out, not only whale hunting but also some became activists and academics, some became entrepreneurs. Bre insisted that Lamalera society is an 'indigenous community' (?). He condemned everyone with historical, conservationist and intellectual monopoly claims. Meanwhile, claims to tradition have become new norms and values of indigenous people and their traditions. In fact, the terms dictated and adjusted by certain actors ultimately make them suffer from the contradictions of their false consciousness (Li, 2000, p. 150). Meanwhile, aspects of their redistribution and participation after the victory over the zoning proposal were not checked, rearranged, or rediscussed under the bodi tree. Finally, Lamalera experienced a crisis over their own identity. Everyone blamed each other. There was no solution because they were confused about who to blame now. The people? State? The NGOs? the International Donor? They entered infiltrate when people were confused about what to do to survive the demands of the times. Tourism enters a situation where they cannot let go of customs but cannot return to the sea. I think this is what Fraser meant by the redistribution-recognition dilemma. Then, where is Justice for the Lamalera and the Nature? Furthermore, the struggle continued.

## **7.2 Possible Research Recommendation**

Possible research recommendations based on this thesis: first, expand research on the ocean and coastal communities, especially in the archipelagic context, such as Indonesia. For example, research can be done on developing carbon trading by selling coral, especially in eastern Indonesia, related to tourism and capitalism (commodifying identity). In addition, because Indonesia is currently building a new capital and is aiming to integrate its ocean and land (important production centres from the west to the east there might be much social unrest that this country cannot handle, but if so, how? However, compared to all the lists above, the most important thing is how the political reaction from below should be traced, but not forgetting to check the (re)distributional aspect.

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# Annexe

## Access to the Field and Recruitment of The Participants

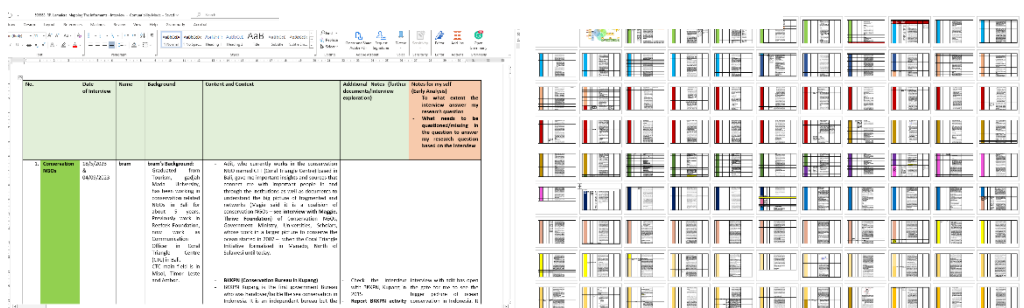
When on the field in 2015, I followed a clan-based social-production structure referring to Barnes' book (1996). With the help of fellow researchers, I traced each of their courses. Modern governments such as village chiefs, village secretaries, and *kadus* (hamlet chief) also visited by me. In addition, I also focused on new tourism actors. The rest of the snowball method ranges from neighbours to meeting people at village events such as baleo, barter markets, churches, funerals, weddings, birthdays, or Lewotala reconciliations. Snowball sampling led me to people who also had dark histories during conservation. From here, I then called for deeper data mining through qualitative interviews in 2023.

In 2023, because people who understand how resistance to conservation in Lamalera is outside Lamalera. So, it was natural that I couldn't meet in 2015. Finally 2023, I can contact them one-on-one via an online interview. In addition to local people, there are also four representative institutions, as I explained in the method session, that I have not had time to interview, such as conservation NGOs or NGOs that are contrary to conservation NGOs. I got their contacts from friends of the NGO alliance and my own who happened to work in the government, NGOs, researchers, and Lamalera.

## Coding and analysis of the data

The data I collected consisted of two from interviews I conducted in 2015 and 2023. The 2015 data contains field data as well as transects or daily observations, especially on certain occasions such as the reconciliation of Lewotala water, the death of people, hunting, and participating in customary discussions under the body tree. Meanwhile, the 2023 data only contains the results of interview transcripts, which I classify based on important notes during the interview. I collected both data on the same worksheet and separated them by actor group in conservation. I created a table based on the interview questions I asked and what I could learn more deeply or could put in a draft to be able to answer my research questions.

### 5 Mapping the Informants



## Positionality and Reflexivity

Here in 2023, the challenge continued. I thought I had mastered the emotion. However, I rather doubted what kind of story I wanted to write. Even though my idea, data, and analysis regarding the contradiction in the village were clear since the first seminar. I was going back and forth in circles, which confused my supervisor equally. Who am I, dare write about them and their family break up?! Like Bre told me during the interview, let them do whatever the narrative about themselves, that Lamalera can make the version about themselves. Of course, they can, but they do not live in this world by themselves. There is the state, the “globalised state”, the neighbourhood community, and whales and conservationists.

However, it is not just about romanticising these people as an indigenous community – I used to have that mindset back then. I think every anthropology student or person involved in ethnography will do the same (Tsing, 2005). However, “Come on, you have read pages of Anna Tsing (2005) and Tania M. Li (2000) articles, even Jun Borrás & Franco inspire and encourage you to be more critical of the local dynamic on the ground (Borás & Franco, 2013), which is very important to understand why social movement is not necessarily neutral. “Why does it become such a sacred, untouchable arena just because it is sensitive for the Lamalera? You should have understood that being in the community is everyday life politics. Just turn the sacred into the profane, and all the barriers will go!” I told myself.

The country is very cruel, but so is Lamalera. They kicked out a random government representative who visited the village because they came from the WWF or Tourism Department. Moreover, they bad-mouthed each other and framed everyone, including their people, who were suspected as conservationists but did not necessarily do conservation. Meanwhile, a conservationist’s staff<sup>79</sup> who is part of the community could not hide her identity and became anxious just because she did not want to be suspected as a person who wanted to stop the whaling tradition of her people. As my supervisor told me in response to my fear, I just need to write my RP and finish this master’s. I do not need to save Lamalera or Indonesia. She knocked down my sacredness into the profane.

This is the thing about autoethnography and self-conscious ethnography meanings. Researching your community is the hardest. It is like evaluating yourself and trying to solve the problem within you since you see the ugly truth about yourself from “the others” perspective. You see how diverse human beings could be and their polity. Even though Lamalera is not part of my community, I am Javanese, and they are Lamaholot<sup>80</sup>. However, they become part of my people when I go outside of Indonesia. My national identity sparked quite hard within me who study abroad,

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<sup>79</sup> Interviewed with Belinda, part of Bataona clan, in Sept 2023.

<sup>80</sup> A community who speaks Lamaholot language and become the tribe’s identity.

specifically in the Netherlands, where all the misery in the current post-colonial or decolonial spirit revived again.

Furthermore, when I immersed myself deeply into the 'every day' of the people I observed, I kind of belonged and empathized with them, but not necessarily their polity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 1). You see yourself as part of the community, although you are not, at least administratively. But why do we consider ourselves as not the same entity despite the culture or administration? We are human beings, after all. Wait, but how about the whale? They are cute, and they deserve to live as well. Hence, rather than showing the academic side of me, I feel like I want to solve the problems in Lamalera. However, the problem was in me, not there. So, I continued this research paper and returned to my initial aim by beating my chest so hard every day because I was sad. I don't know why. I was curious: what makes the people outside of Lamalera think that Lamalera people are scary, unapproachable, and difficult community to deal with, even among their neighbours who live nearby or on the same island, especially after the conservation? Now, I understand. I guess I was trapped in Mama Tina's spell.

The ethnographic study in Lamalera is also the same. I am also an ethnographer, like making this Lamalera person. Hence, my aquarium just watches me, but yes, how do I have to write the last RP chapter while moving like the book Kautsky Agrarian Question Part 2, yes, if you don't get caught by the police or beheaded by fellow activists, then I need to be patient. For example, in Lamalera, it's tourism. The dog of this tourism is the coolest, most delicious, and least visible because what is accumulated is not goods, and you are your fashion, image, self, order of existence or commodified identity. It is natural for Lamalera to have inner conflicts. Who are they? They want to do something while they are busy learning justification for which claims are true, like Bre's story. Nature? Either conservation or the Sea as god

The story of the Lamalera people reminds me of a classic ethnographic account of 'tribal' wars (horizontal conflict) in the Highlanders Papuan people. The 'Tribes' war often occurred due to territorial affairs between 'tribal' communities that were 'deliberately maintained' from the Dutch era. Wars, vertical or horizontal conflicts or conditions where society is unstable (social unrest) become the entrance to political control to extract resources for the colonial government or the classical language of post-colonial study in Indonesia is commonly referred to as politics *divided et empera* - divisive politics. But not to limit this study to a post-colonial discussion. However, the mechanism of such polity indeed still works.

The reason why they have not transformed into capitalist society or whatever it is after several attempts (or looks like it did not change in the outskirts) I would say penetration of capitalism or are still in the form of classical study of anthropology, the tribal community is no less interesting, namely not because they don't want or they can't wait, who are they? What agency do they have and can do? Do they even know what modernity looks like and how? It's just me and my Marxist agenda. But

because the resources are abundant, the people are too little and complex in their social-cultural aspects entangled within their economic and political life and, of course, in relation to their environment (). Meanwhile, the government cannot finance war and or transform these people because they are deficit, poor, and have no budget (corrupt, whatever). They can only finance extraction (for another corruption) but not organise the people just like the Dutch after taking the contract from the British colony.

The government in question is the central government, the Netherlands, regional governments, village governments, and the clan. Politik divides et empera are cheaper than having to expand territory or change the structure and relation of production to capitalism. The point is that skiing is not in the name of justice but as a mechanism to facilitate control over society and its resources (). Meanwhile, the funny thing is, not only control over territory and resources (which is the most important aspect, for what else can it be done anyway?), war is also used as a spectacle. It is even referred to as art or war, or now referred to as the war dance of the Papuans (). This continued until, finally, Indonesia became independent, and perhaps the scale today is no bigger or more varied.

In contemporary Indonesian studies, Tsing watches the conditions similar to Papuans via her study of the people of the Meratus era of Suharto after the golden boom by calling the conditions strange, paradoxical, unstable, as friction. How come such a country is so evil? This outsider also wants to do something for Indonesia because of the gold rush (accumulation by speculation). Because we don't know who's wrong here anymore, the government? NGO, is it? The big giant company? The transnational government? And what is usually mistaken because the most obvious is the society (boras & Franco, Boras et al.). Thus, Tsing called it the pathway or the entrance to neoliberal capital most effectively enacted when people are in unrest. Because all are confused about Who is to blame? And what is to blame, and where to fix this broken landscape? Is it identity, wealth, reputation, status, or human being (?) complex? Yes, no?! (Frasser, 2007, 1992, 1995)