Good to produce, good to share: Food, hunger, and social values in a contemporary Mentawaian community, Indonesia

Darmanto, D.

Darmanto

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door
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geboren te Lamongan (Indonesië) in 1980

To Nadya and Gerei

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Names of Places and Persons

In the text, I use the real names of places known to people in Muntei, while for persons I employed a teknonym. Muntei people have a Mentawaian name until they get married. The current generation prefers to use Christian names. Yet, when people marry and have children, neither Mentawaian, nor Christian name are used. Adult men and women are eventually called after their first child. The men are called *aman* (father of) while the women are called by *bai* (mother of) after the child. This use of real placenames and teknonyms may raise ethical questions. However, during my last visit, I discussed my analysis and intepretation of ethnographic materials with the residents of Muntei and asked their opinion about how best to use names. The majority of discussants suggested that I should use their teknonym and real placenames. Teknonymy is considered safer to employ as it is not used in any formal or legal documents in the village or in any other administration, but is a recognised practice in the settlement. Specifically, I have adopted the above approach to naming sago gardens, rivers, and the forest shown in the maps. It should be noted, however, that all names in the maps are just a general reference to specific areas. They do not refer to an individual plot of gardens or forest or identify a specific claimant. Some of the gardens, rivers, and forest featured have been, and may still be, the subject of dispute due to many centuries of complicated and overlapping claims, local migration, and occupations. Therefore, all places and names indicated as claimed forest and gardens in the maps are simply a general attestation.

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Abbreviations

Depsos	Departemen Sosial (Ministry of Social Affairs)
DKP	Dewan Ketahanan Pangan (National Food Security Board)
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
ICDS	The Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology
NGO	Non-Govermental Organisation
OPKM	Otorita Pengembangan Kepulauan Mentawai (Mentawai Archpelago Development Authority)
PKMT	Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Terasing (Isolated People's Prosperity Development Project)
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
YCMM	Yayasan Citra Mandiri Mentawai (Citra Mandiri Mentawai Foundation)
RASKIN	Beras untuk Orang Miskin (Rice for Poor People)

Glossary

aggau	a species of crab, it also refers to the season when the crab emerges
alak toga	literally taking the child, a term for the bride price
alei	friend
aman	father of
arat	the Mentawai pronunciation of the word adat, custom
bai	mother of
bajou	the dangerous force or substance emanating from a spirit
bakkat katsaila	the ancestral altar in the longhouse
bakkat seksek	uncleared space, the opposite of barasi
barasi	the cleared space, refering to the government-built village
bat-oinan	rivers
bat-sopak	stream
bat-n-uma	the back room of the longhouse
batra	sago grubs
bebe-t-sapou	literally beside the house, a term for home gardens
bilou	Mentawaian's endemic gibbons
bua	fruits
bulagat	money
camat (BI)	the head of the kecamatan (sub-district)
desa	village
doriat	durian
dusun	hamlet
eneget	an initation ritual for children
gaud	magical charms, most often plants, mediators between humans and spirits, offered to the spirits mainly in communal ceremonies
gettek	taro
gineta	small lakes
goukgouk	chicken
iba	meat, food from animals
iba-t-koat	meat from the sea
iba-t-leleu	meat from the forest
iba-t-laut	meat from the sea, especially fish
iba-t-oinan	meat from freshwater
iba-t-punen	meat for ritual ceremonies
iba-t-sinanelep	meat collected by women
gobbik	cassava
jarik	gill net; fish net
jikjik	female infant

joja	mentawaian langur
kailabba	pied hornbill
kampung	village, settlement
kapurut	bread-stick sago
kecamatan	sub-district
kepala desa	the head of a village
kepala dusun	the head of a hamlet
kepala kampung	the head of a kampung
kasilak	the opposite of the settlement; across the river
kerei	shaman
ketsat	a respectful term for the soul, especially the soul of dead things
koat	the sea
kolik	male infant
laibok	the front room of the longhouse; a veranda of a house
lalep	nuclear family; the residents of a sapou
leuk-leuk	wild ferns
leituak	flying fox
leleu	forest
lia	puliaijat, a part of ritual ceremonies (*punen*) when people are ready to make offerings
lojo	river eels
lulag	wooden platter
maalak	to take something
mabeili	lazy
malagak	sour
malaje	to be hungry
maektek	satisfy, satiate
makelak	hard, tough, strong
malainge	beautiful
magok	banana
majolottubu	creative, independent person
makotkot	dark, black
mamekmek	soft
manai	flower, ornament wear during punen
mananam	sweet, delicious
manau	calamus rattan
mangamang	diligent
marot	healthy
masyarakat terasing	the most isolated and underdeveloped people
masusurak	turtles
mata	literally an eye, a growing area
mone	mature garden, the latest phase of forest cultivation
mone sagu	sago garden
mujarik	sinking gill net
mugalai	making/creating something
mulia	to perform the puliaijat ceremony; to be in a state of lia

mulok	drinking
mukom	eating
mumone	gardening
murorou	hunting
mutobbou	sitting
mutubba	poisoning
nusa	small islets, including beaches and mangrove forest
nemnem kabei	a ritual for new baby born
nilam	patchouli
oiluk	a respiratory disease that attacks chicken and pigs
onaja	swampy areas
orang hulu	upriver people, referring to people who settle around the Rereiket River
otcai	a fair share
paabad	institutionalised peace ritual between previously rival clans
pabetei	curing ritual
pako	institutionalised rivalry between clans
paligaggra	gathering, especially fish and shrimps
panaki	an offering ritual, done, in particular, before people enter or take something from undomesticated spaces (forest, river)
pananduk	harvesting fruits, especially durian
paneuk	cooking
pangabli	fishing
pangurei	marriage ritual
panu	a large fish net
panunggru	mortuary ritual
paroman	fair and equitable exchange
pasiripokat	institutionalised friendship
patuat	thoughts/feelings
posa	solid land, usually in the hilly area
pugettekat	taro gardens
pukebbukanan	marriage institution
pulaggajat	old settlement
puliaijat	part of a communal ceremony when animals are sacrificed and offerings are made
pumonean	a cultivated site, a garden
punen	communal ceremonies
pugogoupat	chicken huts
pusaguat	sago hut for processing sago
pusainakat	pig huts
pusinoso	spiky durian; wild durian
rakrak	a group of clans related by descent
rimata	head of rituals
rura	fruit season
sagu	sago

sainak	pig
sairappit	sago pith
sakokok-koat	dugong
sapo	a single family dwelling, in contrast to the longhouse
sasareu	a non-Mentawaian person, especially Minangkabau
sarereiket	people from Rereiket River
sasabirut	people from the Sabirut Valley
saukkui	ancestral spirits
sautek	leader, elite, the head of a project
sikalabbai	older women
sikaleleu	the spirits of the forest
sikaoinan	the spirit of the water
sikameinan	the spirit of the water who, in particular, punishes people who eat alone or other anti-social behaviour
sikebbukat	older men
sikom	eater
silakkara	smoked meat
simagege	swagger person
simagre	soul or spirit
simakobuk	a kind of primate
simoitek	agarwood
siokbuk	bamboo-roasted sago
siokkok	girls
sipumone	gardeners
sitakiba	those who have no meat
sirimanua	humans being
subba	hand net
subbet	mashed taro balls, rolled in grated coconut and served mainly at ritual meals
suruket	those who must be protected, foetus
telemen	resettlement village, referring to the OPKM project
tenga-n-uma	the middle room of the longhouse
tetekket	yams
tinungglu	the new/fresh garden, the opening cycle of forest cultivation
toitet	coconut
toktuk	red durian
tubbu	body
tudukat	large slit drums
tulo	recompense; compensation
tuik	cat fish
tutuk	shrimps
uma	the exogamous, patrilineal, patrilocal clan; the longhouse, in contrast to the sapou
urep/pangurep	cultivating
uroro	to hunt

Figure 1. ***Indonesia and Mentawai Archipelago***

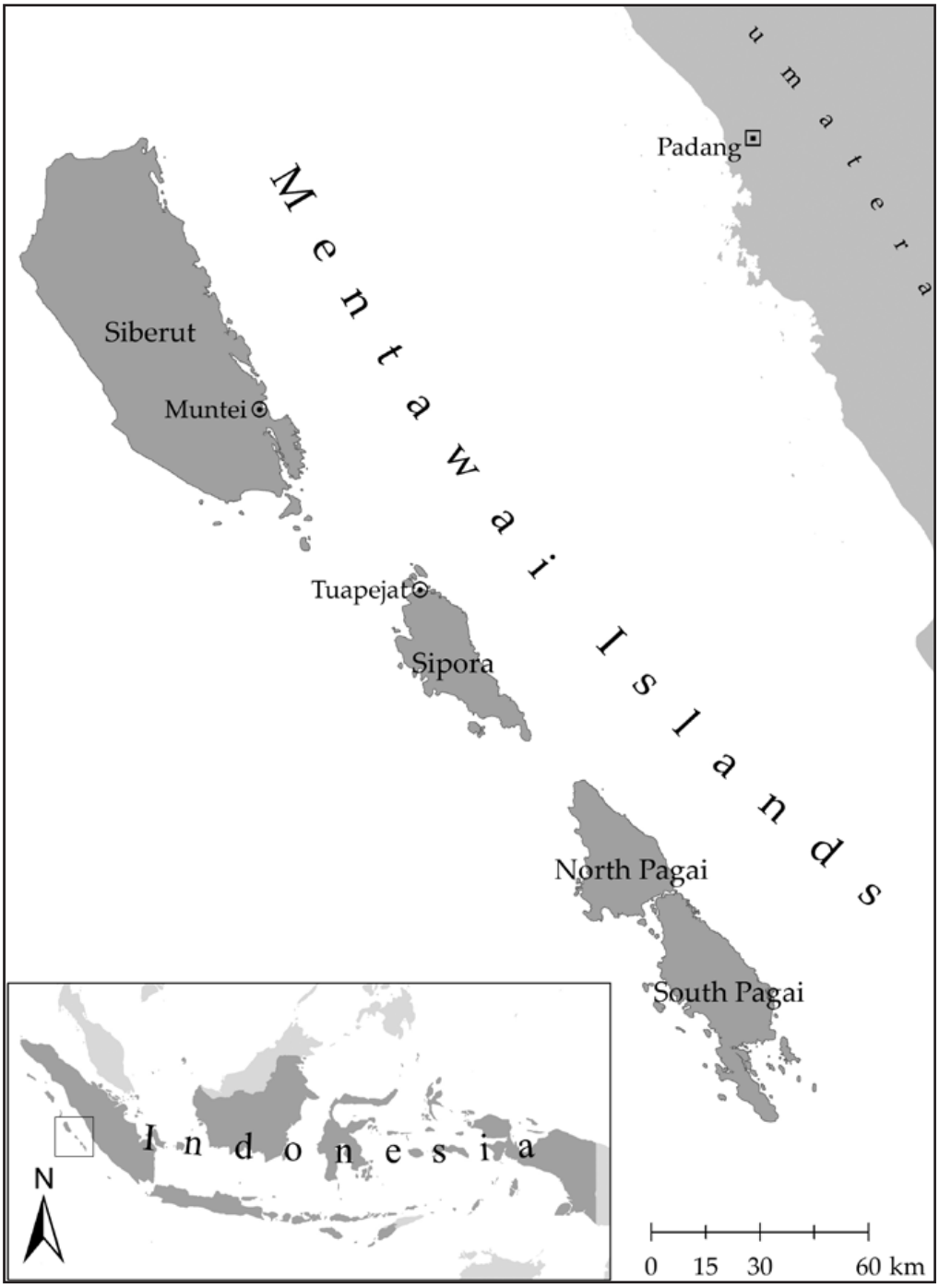
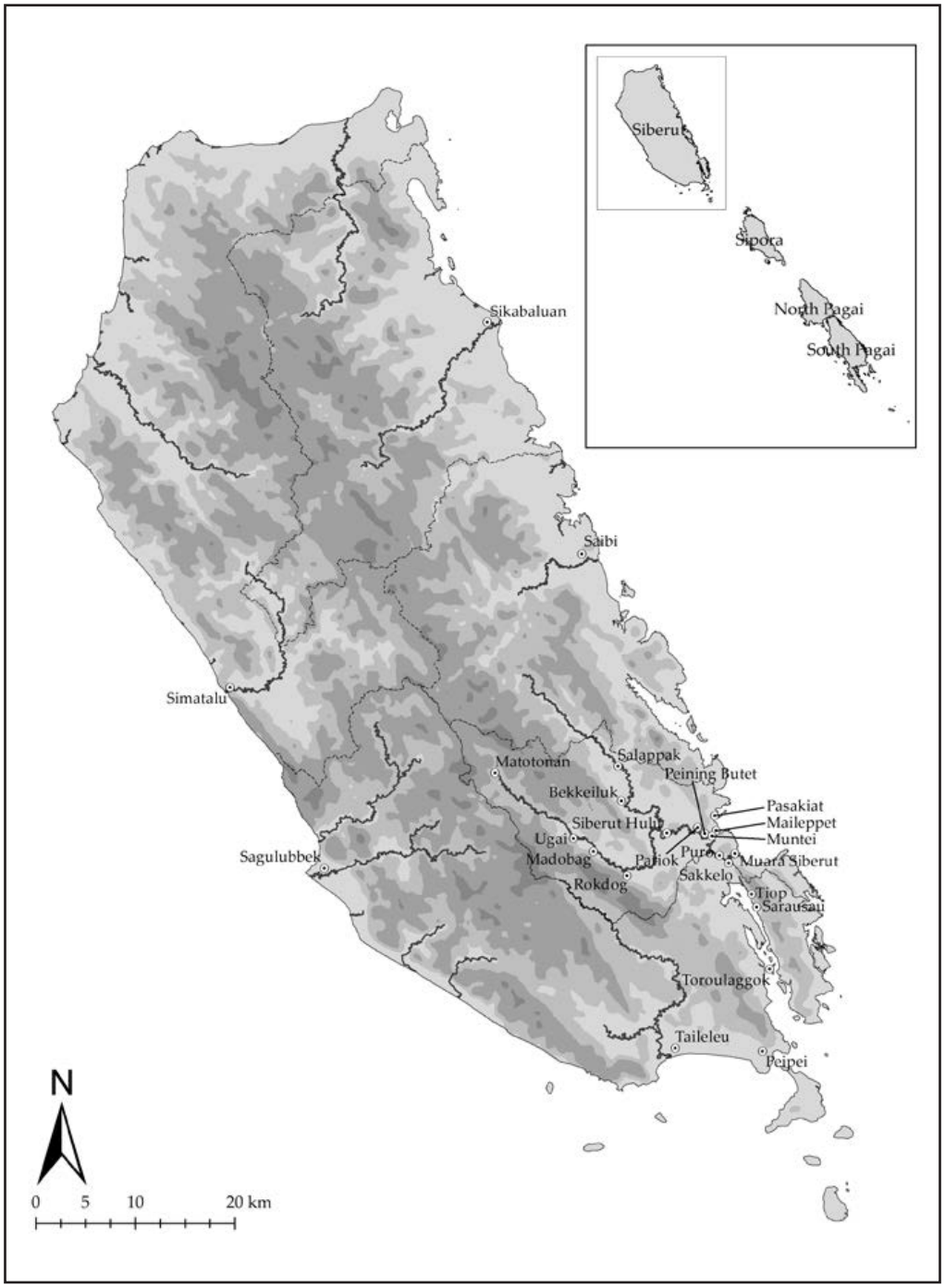


Figure 2. ***Siberut Island***



1
Introduction: The Riddle of Being Hungry and Questions on Food

1.1 The Riddle of *Malaje* (Being Hungry)

This dissertation studies the role of food in contemporary Mentawaian society. It is an independent study within a large research project that examines food security among indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia (the Mentawaians on Siberut Island, the Orang Rimba in Central Sumatra, and the Agta people of the North Philippines). I chose to study the Mentawaians living on Siberut Island as the subject of this dissertation. The main research question of the dissertation is 'How do the Mentawaians, the indigenous people of the Mentawai Islands, experience food insecurity/security?'

I received a most helpful clue about food insecurity in 2012, on the first day of my fieldwork for this PhD dissertation in Muntei, a settlement in the southeastern part of Siberut. The setting was not entirely unfamiliar. I had been to the settlement countless times and have a few close friends there. I had been invited that particular day by an old friend from the Saruruk clan. Having learned of my return to Siberut to undertake PhD research, my friend offered to let me stay in his house. His house was full of people. There were flowers everywhere. The women and children were wearing trinkets and sitting together on the veranda. Men were preparing chickens and two large cooking pots. Older men were drinking their coffee and sweet tea. There was a shaman (*kerei*) preparing his devices. He was there to carry out a healing ritual (*pabetei*) and to purify the house. I was told that my friend's granddaughter had broken her arm a few days before.

After a small performance and invocations, the shaman took a short rest and had his cup of coffee. I approached him and had a brief conversation with him. Whilst the host of the ritual and his oldest son went to fetch pigs from a local merchant as an offering for the ritual, the shaman, Teu Rima the shaman, quietly talked to me:

> It has been a long time since I saw you. Can you see that there have been a lot of changes? When you came here the first time, our village was full of bush (*maseksek*). Now, we get paved roads. We get rice from the government. Many brick houses have been built. Many parabolic antenna and TVs. Motorcycles roar up and down. We have a nice church. Young men and girls go to school on the mainland. Nobody is naked. We drink tea and coffee with sugar. But we are not happy. We are hungry (*malaje*). We rarely eat together. People keep their meat in their room.

The verbatim translation appears to contain an exaggeration. Nobody looks ill or malnourished. Sago, taro, and banana are still planted around the houses and settlement. Apparently, Teu Rima has a reputation for being a shaman who often complains about the meat provided by the hosts of the rituals he performs. Rumour has it that he would make an excuse not to come when he knew that the host sacrificed small pigs. Whether or not the words he said to me alluded to his particular attitude, when I later talked to others about his claim of being hungry, nobody in the village contradicted his analysis. Instead, nearly all the villagers I talked to about Teu Rima's comments admitted that it was true that people were hungry now. The residents of Muntei said they did not eat much meat and did not have as many ritual feasts as in the past.

The first day of my fieldwork was neither the first, nor the last time I encountered people talking about being hungry (*malaje*). Almost daily, Mentawaians invariably and unanimously used *malaje* to explain various situations. If a man is late in getting some food to fill his stomach, he says: "I am hungry (*malaje aku*)". If there is a little food but too many people waiting to eat, some will say: "We are still hungry (*malajeat kai*)". The word is also used to refer to the situation of a widower who does not have a wife, or children who do not have a mother, to cook for them. Furthermore, it is also employed as social commentary, like in the quote above. Hunger is used to describe a situation when people do not eat sufficient meat, or do not share meat.

Are the Mentawaians experiencing food insecurity? From an official perspective, the answer is probably yes. The Food Security and Vulnerability Atlas of Indonesia (Dewan Ketahanan Pangan 2014, 2015) labels the Mentawai Archipelago region as a priority area for improving food-related policies. According to the atlas, the Mentawaians are among the 20 million Indonesians who remain malnourished. This is the only region in the western part of Indonesia with the lowest rank for any indicator of food security. The atlas defines food insecurity as the physical condition occurring when people do not eat, or lack grain to consume. It clearly indicates that the production and consumption grain determine food insecurity. This can be said to be a bias towards grain production. All the regions coloured red in the atlas, mostly Eastern Indonesia and the Mentawai Archipelago, are not grain producers. The key staples in these regions are a variety of tubers, sago, and yams. The document also indicates that food insecurity is linked to access to modern infrastructure (roads, irrigation, electricity, internet access, markets).

The official concern about food insecurity in the Mentawai Islands is not new. Indeed, the lack of proper food is synonymous with Mentawaians. Since the 1970s, the national government, driven by a development ideology, has been preoccupied with the view that the Mentawaians are an isolated people (*masyarakat terasing*), living in a harsh and poor environment, constantly attacked by malaria and malnourished (Persoon 1998, 1994; Department Sosial 1987, 1998). Almost all of the development projects during the New Order regime (1968-1998), initiated by various government agencies, introduced rice and strongly encouraged people to make their own paddy fields (*sawah*). Subsequent regimes have retained the idea that the Mentawaian Islands are an area of food insecurity. Since 2004, the region has been a priority area for the RASKIN – Beras untuk Orang Miskin (Rice for the Poor) – programme, a national agenda run by the Ministry of Agriculture to provide cheap and subsidised rice in regions with higher risk of food insecurity. Over a ten-year period (2005-2015), more than 28.7 million kilograms of rice were transported and distributed among 27,000 households in the archipelago (Puailiggoubat 2013, 2015). In 2015, the central government introduced a programme in the region called 'Thousand Paddy Fields in the Frontiers'. Under the 'Developing from Marginal' agenda of the current regime, the Ministry of Agriculture has established the frontier area as a site of sovereignty, as well as a source of new production, by creating paddy fields (Puailiggoubat 2015).

Have the Mentawaians really experienced food insecurity? At the beginning of my research, I tried to elicit an oral history about past patterns of food access and availability. People in Muntei do not recall that

they have experienced food shortage. Nor they have experienced not having enough food in their life. Apparently, Mentawaian language does not have a term equal to the concept of food security/insecurity. The Mentawaians normally use the word plenty (*maigi*) and not so plenty (*tak maigi*) when they refer to the availability of food. Interestingly, my queries about food availability always found ambiguous answers. The expressions used to describe the amounts of food and patterns of consumption were full of inconsistencies. Not only did individual perceptions differ, but there were often contradicting accounts from the same person. Some people described an abundance of food in the past, lamenting the quality and quantity of food in recent times. The others claimed that food is more opulent in the recent times than in the past.

At the end of 2012, I tried to ask two women from different clans about the availability of food in the past and present. They both were once living on their ancestral land prior to moving to Muntei. Bai Nando, a 60-year-old woman from the Saruruk clan, who nostalgically recalled her days as a small girl living in an old settlement upstream, told me:

> It was a different life. Monkeys and deer were plentiful and close to our houses. Pigs and chickens roamed everywhere. We had frequent communal ceremonies with a pile of pork and chicken. Every time we went down to Muara, there were people from Saibi or Katurei selling turtles. The longhouse could not store the collection of turtle shells we had. So, we scattered them everywhere. In the great fruit (*rura*) season, all the fruit rotted. We did not have enough people to finish the durian and the jackfruit. In the dry season, it was easy to fish in the river and collect snails in the *monga* (estuary). Now, we never eat deer or monkey. People are too lazy to go to the forest. We are busy with cacao or *proyek* (government related infrastructure developments).

By contrast, Bai Mateus, a widow in her late sixties, originating also from a settlement upstream, talked of the lack of food in the past and the abundance of food in recent times.

> My grandparents told me that they were often hungry. They had to move occasionally. They were far from the garden they made because we migrated to other places. There was lot of conflict (*pasaggangan*). They were afraid that they would be attacked by strangers or enemies. We did not live peacefully. Pigs and chickens were always attacked by *oiluk*, a kind of disease. Taro fields were destroyed by other people's pigs. People were afraid to go to the sea. Now, we have a better life. Have you visited the sago and taro gardens? We have plenty. You already know lots of bananas and taro are rotting in the kitchen. We can't finish them all. Too much food. We do not need to go upstream to have pigs. You can ask Beni (a trader) for small or big pigs. Even if you pay later. Now people get fish from cacao money every day. You can even sell bananas and spend the money on pork.

Regardless of their memories, Muntei residents are eager to provide reasons for either the increase or the decrease in the amount of food. Individuals like the first woman quoted above, who recall past abundances, often attribute the present lack of food to the new way of life in the government-style settlement. In this case, she blames the influence of cash-crop production and accuses the government of persuading people to abandon traditional practices, such as tending pigs, hunting, and communal ceremonies and instead to embrace working on road construction or other government projects. Cash-crop production requires round-the-clock labour, which limits the time for hunting and fishing. It is argued that, today, the settlement is dependent on local stores and relies on instant noodles and factory foods, such as biscuits. Some people claim that they no longer produce their own food but are dependent on imported food.

Ironically, those who say that food supplies are increasing give the same reasons as those who say there is a shortage, albeit from a different perspective. In the second case, quoted above, the informant says that cash crops enable them to buy pigs. The new life in the settlement provides more security and opportunities. She can get food from both the market and their gardens. This ambiguity and inconsistency presented an additional riddle in my research.

1.2 Research Problems and Questions on Food

It seems that the claim of being hungry and the ambiguous perspective of Muntei's residents on their own food availability is in line with official concerns about food insecurity among the Mentawaians. This is particularly puzzling since there is no written or oral evidence of the Mentawaians living on Siberut having experienced serious problems with food shortages. The opinion and perception regarded the availability of food in the past and the present might be different but everybody in Muntei agrees that they have not experienced the difficulties of obtaining food. Malnutrition, famine and the shortage of food resources have not been a serious threat. On the contrary, earlier observers (Van Buuren 1932; Loeb 1928; Schefold 1973, 1991; Persoon 1994, 2001) describe the population of the islands having enormous and diverse food resources. My own long-term observations confirm that sago palms, bananas, and tubers are still plentiful, as are fruit trees. The available land is sufficient to feed the existing population. Each family has its own garden; everyone has access to communal land, where they can cultivate a combination of food and cash crops. Food, in the form of either living plants and animals, or ready-to-eat items, is regularly exchanged, either casually or through ritualised events. Kinship, reciprocity, and a sense of collective identity have persisted to ensure the norm of food sharing and ethical access to food resources. Why, then, do people in Muntei frequently describe themselves as being hungry?

Also puzzling is that the definition and the perception of food security assumed by Muntei residents is different to the definition in the aforementioned atlas. While the atlas claims that Mentawaians are insecure because of a lack of access to modern infrastructure and an insufficient consumption of rice, the direct quotes above tell us that they are hungry despite having access to markets, consuming rice, and enjoying the benefits of development. It is generally acknowledged by my informants that they are now better off. Development projects have delivered their promises. They now have access to roads, schools, and other modern infrastructure. Involvement with the market through cultivating cash crops provides an opportunity to add imported food to their nourishment. This is in contrast to the atlas, which claims that they lack modern infrastructure and access to markets, resulting in their food insecurity. Why, despite the abundance of food, do the residents of Muntei seem to support the government's verdict about their food insecurity, albeit for different reasons?

I feel that, for Mentawaians, the notion of being hungry references more than a lack or absence of food and goes beyond the physical condition. Indeed, I do not take the statement of being hungry as a sign of the lack or the absence of food, but rather, as a socio-cultural statement. To reveal the puzzle of *malaje*, this dissertation starts with an examination of a key question about food, the substance to which hunger is bound: As the most basic, concrete, and universal substance, what are the role and the meaning of food for contemporary Muntei people undergoing a social transformation? This key question is followed by four sub-questions:

1. What is the status of the availability and access to food resources in Muntei?
2. Is there any relation between the availability and access to food and the claim of being hungry?
3. What are the material and symbolic roles of food resources (both animals and plants)?

4. What are the social and cultural roles of food-related activities (gardening, exchanging, eating, and sharing, etc.) in Muntei's socio-cultural relations?

These questions strongly imply that food and hunger go beyond a physical and biological problem and are a social and cultural phenomenon. Hence, this dissertation slightly moves away from the initial plan to fully examine the formal status of food security/inscurity among the Mentawaians. Many anthropologists have showed that hunger, being hungry, and food usage are socially and culturally conceived (Richards 1932; Young 1971; Kahn 1986; Harstrup 1993; Yates-Doerr 2015). This dissertation follows the same assumption. Therefore, understanding the role of food among Mentawaian people solely through the quantity of comestibles they consume is inadequate. Applying and testing the formal definition and classification of food security/insecurity would do not do justice to the rich symbolic meaning and social role of food in a Mentawaian community and narrow the attempt to search the answers to those questions. To examine the deeper cultural roles of food, and to orient the direction of this dissertation, guidance from theories understanding the complex relations of food and societies is necessary.

1.3 Food to Society: Good to Eat, Good to Think, or Good to Produce?

The relationship between food and humans has been the subject of intense theoretical debates in anthropology. The relationship has also been deployed to examine large and varied anthropological problems relating key concepts, methodologies, and ethical issues (Mintz and Du Bois 2002, 100). In a long list of anthropological studies, human-food relations fall into two general theoretical endeavours and approaches: the cultural materialist approach, which looks for causal explanations, and a structuralist approach that is mainly symbolic and interpretive (Counihan and Esterik 1997; Mintz and DuBois 2002). Indeed, the recent development of food studies has seen a new approach such as the political economy perspective that has brought and problematized new terms and concepts, including food sovereignty and security (Edelman 2014; Patel 2009; Agarwal 2014) and critical food regime analysis (Friedmann and McMichael 1989; McMichael 2009). While I am fully aware of the importance of the political economy perspective in understanding the food system at a global scale, it is not directly relevant to the analysis of my ethnographic material. The Mentawaians have been, and are still, largely self-sufficient and do not suffer from the impact of the global food regime, at least until the period of my fieldwork. Therefore, I will present a brief summary of the virtues and the limits of perspectives that are directly speaking to my ethnographic material and that are relevant to the main perspectives that I will use to analyse and intepret my data. After explaining the structuralist and the materialist approaches, I will outline my own theoretical programme, which is inspired by the theory of actions and social values (Munns 1986; Fajans 1997; Graeber 2001, 2013).

Good to Eat

Marvin Harris (1979, 1985) famously theorises that eating habits and food usage are universally regulated by utilitarian principles. According to him, human behaviour towards food must be understood in terms of the total system of food production in any given society. People use, manipulate, eat, and share particular types of food in order to maximise benefits and minimise costs in terms of nutritional, ecological, or rational calculations (1985, 17). The selection or rejection of food resources is determined by the cost-benefit calculus of the society's entire constellation of material constraints and opportunities. The choice or avoidance of food, therefore, must be based not only on the direct benefits and cost calculations, but also the residual utility of an edible item or any part of the food that is not consumed. Furthermore, Harris has

devoted his academic life to showing that food availability universally determines human behaviour. All human technology and social practices (art, taboo systems, and religious sanctions) are produced to solve the practical problems faced by societies making the best use of their food resources.

Harris's theory is widely known as cultural materialist (hereafter, materialist). The assumption of the materialist approach is relatively modest and straightforward. Like all organisms, human beings must take energy from an ecosystem in order to live. Food is the essential source of energy provided by a given environment. The amount of food, however, is limited by natural factors, such as the land's fertility, the climate, vegetation and rainfall patterns, and population size. Logically, the availability of food in a given sociocultural system determines human behaviour and forces humans to adapt and to act accordingly. In this sense, the continued availability of food will be both limiting and enabling for human actions, behaviour, motivation, social institutions, and beliefs. In sum, food is important for human beings because it is good to eat (Harris 1985, 1).

The materialist argument is applied to a wide range of food preferences and avoidance. A classic example is the long analysis of the role of the cow in Indian culture. Harris (1985, 11-32; 1987) describes how the sacredness of the cow among poor Indian peasants is due to the importance of cattle as draught animals in the agricultural ecosystem. Indian peasants are forced to use cattle for ploughing and dairy products rather than slaughter them as meat. The beef taboo is a way to prevent the development of a slaughterhouse industry that would threaten the availability of draught animals for the peasants. Another example of this approach is a study on cannibalism among Aztec Indians (Harner 1977). Harner suggests that Aztec human sacrifice existed as a means of distributing protein among the elites in the Valley of Mexico. The lack of protein forced the Aztec elite to practice cannibalism in order to maintain their powers and, more broadly, their cultural system.

The elaboration of the materialist approach has significantly contributed to the anthropological study of food. This approach is seen as using a rigorous but grounded analysis, examining both qualitative and qualitative data rather than relying on interpretation. Some of Harris's work (1979, 1985, 1987) shows that anthropologists can explain certain cultural phenomena, such as cannibalism in Polynesia, the pork taboo in the Middle East, or dog meat avoidance in the United States, without invoking ephemeral causality or the notion of divine intervention commonly found in structuralism interpretations. Studies on the history of sweet potatoes in Papua New Guinea have sparked an ongoing debate about the relationship between food, population expansion, and the creation of specific cultural institutions (Watson 1977). From the materialist approach, anthropologists acquire the concept of human adaptation (Brookfield and Hart 1971) in understanding human-environmental relations. In a more advanced analysis, this approach provides a better explanation for pig-feasting rituals as a cultural mechanism for the distribution of protein and land distribution and a method of controlling population growth (Rappaport 1968). The basic concept of measuring food insecurity and, more generally, the methodology of nutritional anthropology, is developed from the humble materialist assumption.

This approach has its limitations, however. The materialist approach is accused of ignoring the creativity of human behaviour and actions while championing ecological determinism (Vayda 1987). In general, the materialist assumes that human behaviour is determined by what people eat or the amount of protein they distribute. In this theory, humans are not seen as being self-aware, but rather as passive agents driven by an empty stomach and simply adapting to a given environment. The infamous division of infrastructure and superstructure developed by Harris after Marx's concept (Harris 1979; Harris and Ross 1987) implies that the material sphere (the production of food or machine tools) is considered more fundamental than, and precedent to, the abstract sphere (the production of rituals, laws, or taboos). It sweeps aside the idea that food avoidance or taboos may have meaning for a society beyond the biological necessity. According to

Sahlins (1976), this approach sees that human's cultural creativity is determined by its material ability. For the materialist, material things are primal causes, since they answer more fundamental human needs. This is problematic as all material necessity produced by humans requires activities involving thinking, sensing, and other symbolic meditation (Graeber 2001).

Good to Think

The materialist's view is diametrically opposed to the view of the structuralists, who argue that eating patterns and food usage are based not on material necessity and cost-benefit calculations, but mental, symbolic associations, or moral codes (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 1970; Douglas 1972). The structuralist approach examines the human-food relationship by classifying and interpreting cognitive constructs believed to be held by a society. The underlying idea of this approach is that the human brain operates according to deep and unconscious thoughts. Different cultures organise their minds in different ways by using and mapping food in their systems of thought. This approach is directed towards the ways in which food items or activities are classified, prepared, and combined with each other in order to reveal how humans operate and organise their minds.

In his major work, *The Culinary Triangle* (1996), Claude Lévi-Strauss, the most prominent figure of the structuralist school, proposes that food preparation is a reflection of the structure of the human mind in relation to myths, food, and eating. It is claimed that how a meal is prepared and served can be a metaphor for society. Lévi-Strauss (1970, 1978) also identifies that the structures of human thought, the deep structures present in all human societies, are refracted through their food ways. To Lévi-Strauss, meals and their preparation are an organising structure, often arranged in binary oppositions and triads. He suggests that all food can be placed in one corner of the culinary triangle: raw, cooked, or rotten. Each category embodies the transformations brought about by human effort through the mastery of fire, making food edible at the same time as it changes the food's meaning. These fundamental categories were clarified through preparation in the triangle of food processes—roasting, boiling, and smoking. This triangle, therefore, not only explains cooking procedures but reveals the fundamental formal organisation of universal human ideas. Here, food and food processing are a metaphor or symbol for human thinking (Lévi-Strauss 1987). Food is not good to eat but good to think.

The structuralist approach has provided brilliant analyses of the formal principles underlying food in myths or food habits, discovering different hidden patterns of meaning. The structuralist has the ability to reveal the symbolic interpretation of food and to analyse many issues such as gender hierarchy and sexual antagonism (Kahn 1986). In Southeast Asian ethnography, the structuralist approach has revealed the symbolic link between rice/meat and male/female (Janowski 2007a). Another example of excellent analysis emanating from the structuralist approach is deployed by Mary Douglas (1984, 2001). Douglas shows at length how food studies can explain religious sanctions, moral conduct, and the broader definition of the social order. Certain foods are avoided, not because they are poisonous or have harmful elements, but because of the moral or social associations of the items and their context of acquisition. In Mentawai anthropology, Schefold's analysis (1982) of culinary codes in rituals shows that food symbolises the central binary orders of society: bad and good, cooperation and competition.

Like its materialist counterpart, the structuralist approach has often been accused of reductionism. The symbolic approach is seen to reduce all human products and actions into the structure of the mind. The structuralist approach separates cognitive formulas from social practices (Goody 1982, 30). Lévi-Strauss's triangle is, according to Goody, biased towards the French language and cuisine. Lévi-Strauss's binary structures and the culinary triangle schema are meant to be universal and timeless. Other societies require a more complex ordering for analysis through social practices. The structuralist approach sees food not as

an active agent, but as an abstract category that makes up a larger code of meaning. Therefore, any approach that stems from the structuralist theory would be unable to address change, let alone human agency (Gell 1998). By relating food and food related-phenomena to the structure of the mind, Lévi-Strauss and his structuralist followers ignore human behaviour, history and the social actor's actions as related to food. By ascribing human actions and behaviour related to food to the deeper structure of the mind, the structural analysis of food often becomes a thing unto itself, reducing practices and ideas to biological structures, as the mind itself is a biological phenomenon (Kahn 1986, 5).

The Limitations of the Structuralist and the Materialist

While these two approaches use opposing assumptions about food and society, both approaches actually share a basic assumption about what constitutes a human being. First, humans and food are passive agents upon which human actions and intentions have little influence. In the materialist approach, all the actions are responses to a given ecosystem while the structuralist approach ignores the role of food as a life-giving substance that humans use to build, establish, and maintain social relations. The latter approach ignores historical developments and human actions, and discounts the element of social transformation. While both approaches succeed in understanding our passive adaptation and contemplation of the world, they are unable to explain humans as active participants in it. Second, both approaches are unable to see the historical and processual aspect of social reality. Third, they overestimate the unity of sociocultural systems and the universality of cognitive orders.

Food and the human actions attached to it have been marginally connected to both approaches insofar as they focus on identifying a static and abstract 'sociocultural system'. There are several reasons for this interest in a sociocultural system. First, both approaches tend to clearly distinguish between the type of society in which most anthropologists live and the type that they study (Marcus 1986; Graeber 2001). It is always assumed that there are markers in the society under study that clearly differentiate between the society being studied and the society of the anthropologist. To categorise societies as systems implies that there are distinct borders and that they exist in relative isolation. Second, by looking for a certain sociocultural system, both the structuralist and materialist approaches invoke Durkheimian functionalism (Graeber 2001, 2013). Both approaches represent society as a means of social integration, and attribute food-and-human relations to contributing to the stability of the sociocultural system. The materialist approach constrains food-and-human relations to allocating food and other resources and adapting to the material world. The structuralist approach interprets food-and-human relations by categorising each component into an integrated system of meaning. The materialist approach analyses food-and-human relations by showing how social forms are made up of resources and food that determine the suprastructure. The structuralist approach analyses how social forms consist of symbolic elements that coexist as an integrated system of meaning. For all, however, the ultimate point is the same: to delineate a logically coherent and abstract system, which means moving away from the social actions of social actors.

Good to Produce: Food, Actions, and Values

There is a strand in the anthropology of food that tries to move beyond the static materialist and structuralist approaches. This third approach does not merely examine the symbolic aspects and metaphorical qualities of food resources (the colour, the smell, the texture) and the quantitative aspects (the size, the amount, the availability), but focusing more on the ability of food to facilitate humans' social actions and to generate social values. The basic premise of this perspective is that food is neither merely a metaphor for human thinking, nor a material needs-fulfilling biological necessity, but rather an embodiment of the social values that generate and motivate social actors to do particular activities (Munn 1986; Fajans 1988).

The key concept for this approach is human action and its transformative effect. Actions here are defined as any creative human energy that produces a product (object) and social interactions in which humans transform their lives to satisfy their needs (Graeber 2001, 2013; Turner 2004). Actions are necessary, since social actors must exert effort to produce basic necessities such as food and shelter, and fulfil culturally defined needs, including immaterial needs, such as satisfaction. By doing and producing something, social actors produce a system of social relations and organisations (families, clans, moieties, etc.) in which people coordinate productive and creative actions with one another. In cooperating with others, a social actor produces and defines him/herself in a certain way (be it as a peasant, labourer, carpenter, forest cultivator, gardener, hunter-gatherer) (Graeber 2013). In a larger context, the actions of doing and making create a structure or pattern that creates a certain collective identity as well as a general pattern that we often call society: whether Trobrianders, Jews, or Mentawaians.

The main differences of this approach to the structuralist and the materialist ones lie in the idea of social structure and the idea of human capacity. This approach does not focus on discrete orders (social structure, a social norm) but on the processes of actions. This approach interprets an abstract idea such as social organisation and society, as patterns of action or the coordination of activities (Graeber 2001). A social structure or society is seen as a set of transformations, based on a certain invariant principle in which the transformations are possible and reversible (Piaget 1970; Turner 1979, 2004). A pattern of action, whether simple or complicated, is how social actors continually redefine and remake themselves, as it is reproducing and transforming the larger context around them. While the actions of social actors can seem arbitrary and myriad, they are not just done for nothing, but intentionally aimed towards a social goal (Munn 1986; Graeber 2001). The form of the activities may be different and manifested in a different context, but in any society there is always an underlying pattern connecting them. For example, gardening, feeding children, and eating only cooked food at a ritual feast are different activities but they are connected by the importance of transforming natural products (forest, offspring, raw food) into social products (cooked food, a social person, a social event) (Fajans 1997, 1988). These actions constitute the structural frame and deeper layers of a social pattern. The coordination of these different actions becomes the basis of a community's social order. Yet, the order or structure must be understood as a contingent product or outcome of concerted social actions. By focusing on human activities, this approach sees that humans are more than just passive social actors determined by an abstract structure, whether it is a sociocultural system or cognitive structure, but as 'doers, creators and enjoyers of their human attributes' (Mapherson 1973, 4) and as both the producers and transformers of the abstract and determinant structures they have created.

The centrality of human actions is linked to the production of value(s). Value emerges in and from actions (Munn 1986; Graeber 2001, 2013; Lambek 2013). In and through actions, a social actor can transform his/her 'invisible potency into perceptible and tangible outcomes' (Munn 1986, 4), which have value. When a person offers an item of food or provides a curing ritual, it is not the food or a chant that generates value but the act of giving or the act of performing. Any action involving labour (making/producing something) and lying within the sphere of production and performative acts (speech, spreading rumours), which are deemed to lie outside that sphere (Lambek 2013; Otto and Willerslev 2013) generates a perceptible and tangible product. The two general forms of actions cannot always be separated, as value can be produced through both productive labour and acts (Lambek 2013). The measurement of a certain action and the value generated by it require an affirmation within a larger order of acts and persons (Munn 1986; Lambek 2013). This recognition is basic humanity, as a social actor's actions and their valuation never occur in isolation and outside social relations. The recognition and assessment of the acts mean that any social actor's action contributes to and constitutes the social system of objects, collective acts, belief, and

products, which we normally term in an abstract qualification such as 'system', 'habitus', or 'cultural order'. Hence, value is the way people represent the importance of their own actions to themselves and others.

In every society, certain key activities are essential because they are structurally and symbolically significant to others. Hence, the activities can generate social values—values held by the entire society. These activities have greater potential because they can be rendered socially concrete through the integration of the product of the action into wider relations (Munn 1986; Turner 1995; Fajans 1993a). The key activities can generate social values when they are immediately realised and recognised by others in the process of achieving public recognition. The values generated by key activities are essential to the viability of the society, since they create either a positive collective judgement or valuation, which perpetuates the process of communal identification, or a negative collective judgement or valuation that threatens the continuity of the collective's identity. Both 'positive and negative values can be transformed in the opposite direction through specific actions' (Munn 1986, 17-18). The dialectic relations of positive and negative values can be seen as moral-political problems through which a society constructs social values and order (Munn 1986; Graeber 2001). Social values circulate through human actions and they rapidly evaporate in the absence of such actions. Symbolically and materially, social values are represented by qualities embodied in certain socially valuable products (an heirloom, a number of sacrificed pigs, or in the quality of person). However, the heirloom or the animal offerings consist of the amount necessary social activities.

The focus on human activities and social values offers an entirely different lens through which to see the relations of food and society. While the structuralist and the materialist approaches start with a notion of 'society' and a 'sociocultural system', then ask how the availability of food or how a mental map of food hold society together, the actions approach begins by asking how 'society' is continually being transformed through various social actor's actions and the usage of food as a medium of transformation through certain key actions. Furthermore, the actions and value theory can bridge the limitations of the mental mediation of the structuralist approach and the eco-cultural determinism of the materialism approach, as this approach views a social act as a form of dialectical interaction between a subject (agency) and an external phenomenon (structure: society, ecology, availability of food, mental code).

The ability of food to mediate human actions and create value is due to the humble fact that every human is constantly doing something to obtain it. Food is a generic substance that has basic but universal attributes and properties. The importance of food as an ingested substance emerges primarily from human actions to produce it. When a person cultivates food plants or raises domestic animals and then consumes them, he or she is fulfilling his/her biological needs, as the process of cultivating and eating are entirely embedded in certain social relationships (land tenure, for instance). Moreover, this is not a sphere of activity that can be separated from family, kinship, or village relations. While doing something to produce food and then subsequently to eat it, an individual is also constructing him/herself as a person within the social structures that they are part of. In this sense, food enables humans to develop themselves, thus constituting their bodies and identities. Because food is produced through social relations, its attributes and the identity of the person who produces and eats it are always changing. Hence, food is essential to the dynamic of personhood construction (Fajans 1988; Mintz 1994; Hastorf 2017).

Second, the importance of food comes from its ability to mediate social relations between individuals, between an individual and a social group, and between social groups (Fajans 1988, 1993b). This ability means food can construct social values that, in turn, create social relationships, such as feeding, hiding, circulating, exchanging, keeping, sharing, giving, and eating. Take the example of feeding: the act of feeding children not only demonstrates that the parents have spent energy and productive activities in planting and harvesting, but that they also have the positive capacity to nurture and produce other human beings (Munn 1986; Fajans 1997).

The ability of food to create social value and mediate human actions and qualities determined by its attributes. First, food is a product of basic human labour, which gives practical meaning to the food, the activity involved (cooking, feeding, preserving, serving, etc.), and the needs it satisfies (Munn 1986). The whole range of activities involved in food production defines the value of food in general and certain foods in particular, both for the producer who produces it and the consumers who eat it. Second, food is "taken from organisms that have life properties (grow, die, sprout, rot, crawl) and have physical characteristics (wet/dry, hot/cold, smell, colour, appearance) all of which can symbolise salient social relationships, many parts of social life, and social values" (Fajans 1988, 160). Third, food and associated actions, such as feeding and eating, symbolise and embody social relationships, enabling food to constitute the identity of a person through sharing substances (Mintz 1994; Carsten 1995; 2000). Each social actor needs to eat, and while food can be prepared and enjoyed alone, many societies attach great social significance to (the rituals) surrounding preparing and sharing a meal.

Moreover, food can be deployed to delineate social groups and to mark social boundaries (Young 1971; Nihill 2001). Those who eat together create a division based on gender (women/men), social alliance (enemy/alliance), or ethnicity. A specific food can also be used symbolically to manipulate group boundaries. The ability of food to establish or negate social bonds, through transference or denial to an individual or group, is widely manipulated in most societies. For example, food preferences can reveal the status or social class of an individual. Food avoidance can be applied to certain groups or persons or prohibited in certain contexts. There is a myriad of taboos regarding food in every society employed to make cultural and social statements through the construction of distinctions and identities (Meigs 1987; Hastorf 2017). In any society, food is widely used and manipulated to maintain and create changes in its social life. It is also commonly deployed to mark the passage of life, i.e. marriage, procreation, pregnancy, death rituals (Carsten 1995; Tomas 1999; Janowski 2007b; Janowski and Kerlogue 2007; Kaartinen 2007). Food is a substance that fundamentally constitutes, sustains, and nurtures social persons while it simultaneously produces and reflects social categories, symbols, and values. It is an active substance used by social actors to change and construct themselves, orient feelings, motivate behaviour, and mediate social relations.

1.4 Methods and the Research Site

The dissertation is based on an ethnographic research of the Mentawaians living in Muntei, a government settlement in the southeast part of Siberut (Figure 2). The word Muntei has many references and illustrates the complexity and the expansion of a hamlet. In the text, Muntei can be either the village, the hamlet, the settlement, or the stream. Initially, Muntei referred to a government settlement located along the Muntei stream, officially established in 1981. Soon, the settlement became an official village comprising three hamlets (Muntei, Salappak, and Puro) in which Muntei was the centre. Salappak is located upstream, a day's walk from the centre; Puro is located downstream, an hour's walk from the centre. Since the Mentawaian Archipelago became a new district (1999), these hamlets have been expanded. Muntei hamlet has been multiplied into three new hamlets (Peining Butet, Muntei, and Pariok); Salappak has been divided into two hamlets (Salappak and Magosi); Puro became two hamlets (Puro 1 and Puro 2). The expansion of the hamlets reflects at least two things: the ongoing process of government intervention and the growth of the population. To avoid confusion, when the text refers to Muntei settlement, it is with reference to the hamlets of Muntei, Peining Butet, and Pariok and the inhabitants of these hamlets.

A Settlement as a Field Site

The choice of Muntei Settlement as a field site was directed and influenced by the research questions, which generally examine the importance of food for contemporary Mentawaians living in a government settlement. The selection of Muntei provides a window on understanding social transformations and on examining how food and its related actions contribute symbolically and materially to both the resistance to and accommodation of social changes. The settlement is close to Muara Siberut, the most important port and settlement on the island, where migrants, markets, churches, government and education services, and infrastructure are clustered. Being closer to the coastal area and to Muara Siberut, Muntei residents have been increasingly incorporated into a cash-oriented economy, a state-based administration, and multi-ethnic relations. This provides an excellent place to study how a Mentawaian community interacts with the outside world and how that interaction affects their relationship with food.[1]

Muntei is also an excellent example of a contemporary Mentawaian community with a heterogeneous background. The settlement is inhabited by Mentawaians originating from different autonomous social groups (*uma*/clans) from different valleys and sub-cultures and a handful of non-Mentawaians. The population of Muntei has tens of *uma*, who generally identify themselves as belonging to one of two larger groups: *Sasabirut* (people of Sabirut) and *Sarereiket* (people from Rereiket river). The *Sarereiket* are referred to as *orang ulu* (uphill people), and differ culturally from the *Sasabirut*. They originate from the area around the Rereiket River, speak their own dialect, and have developed slightly different customs (shamanic practices, housing) from the *Sasabirut*, a group of people living around the mouth of the Siberut River. In addition, a handful of migrants have been living in Muntei as teachers, traders, and nurses for the last couple of decades. As a multi-*uma* and multi-ethnic settlement, Muntei represents a common pattern for the history of Mentawaian settlements and their residents. Prior to the arrival of colonial rule or missionaries, people lived on their ancestral land, clustered around their kin group. They created collective dwelling places (*pulaggaijat*) during the later stage of a clan's migration, separation, and feuds. Such settlements might be occupied by people from different groups. The majority of *pulaggaijat* were then extended and administered by Dutch colonial officials in an attempt to pacify and bring the scattered population under greater governmental control. Ultimately, almost all *pulaggaijat* have been accommodated and established as an official village or hamlet by Indonesia's state administration.

The selection of Muntei was also encouraged by the scarcity of ethnographic accounts of Mentawaians living in a government settlement. Nearly all major anthropology texts on Siberut have been derived from two types or research: 1) fieldwork on either a single *uma* living on their ancestral land, far away from the government settlements (Schefold 1973, 1991; Hammons 2010); or 2) a general study of Mentawaians as a whole (Eindhoven 2002; Tulius 2012; Darmanto and Setyowati 2012; Rudito 2013). The only exceptions are perhaps Reeves's study of Mentawaians dwelling in a government settlement upstream of Madobak (1999) and Persoon's (1994) research that focuses on Maileppet, a neighbouring village of Muntei. This study aims to fill this gap in the contemporary ethnographic accounts of the Mentawaians and is particularly significant because virtually no *uma* in the Mentawai Islands are now living purely on their ancestral lands, outside the village administration. Ongoing social changes have encouraged certain groups, previously overtly reluctant to be under state administration, to settle in a village or hamlet. For example, the Sakuddei and Sakaliou, two *uma* that famously reject the presence of the state (Schefold 1991; Hammons 2010), have recently moved to a government settlement and are the most active clans demanding development and government interventions (Puailiggoubat 2013, 2015).

Lastly, Muntei was also chosen for a practical reason. I was familiar with the settlement long before I did my PhD research. I got to know Muntei and its residents in 2003, while undertaking research for

my undergraduate thesis. I visited Muntei during a break from my fieldwork in the upstream settlement called Ugai. I spent my Saturday and Sunday evenings playing football in Muntei, as the settlement had the best football pitch in South Siberut. Playing football is an easy way to socialise and be acknowledged by the indigenous population. Eventually, I developed a friendship with a number of the people in Muntei. Soon after, I graduated from Gadjah Mada University and returned to Siberut to work on a UNESCO project. While the project did not target Muntei, a young educated man and woman from *uma* Saruruk and Sakukuret in Muntei were recruited as staff on the project. The young Saruruk man became my close friend; indeed, he remains so and we consider ourselves to be *paalei* (befriended). Subsequently, I have visited Muntei regularly, to play football, enjoy afternoon tea, or attend a ritual feast. I have expanded my network and have established relationships with other families in Muntei, also with a view to improving my mastery of the Mentawai language, by learning the Sabirut dialect spoken by Muntei people.

Mastering the Mentawaian language is methodologically significant as I did not use an interpreter. Generally, older people, who were born in the former settlement and did not attend school, do not have a good command of Bahasa Indonesia. They encourage me to speak Mentawai and praise me whenever I talk to them in their language. They feel that I respect their tradition, want to learn about their culture, and have successfully immersed myself in their lives. I also deploy the Mentawai language during casual conversations with the villagers. It was the main communication device when I conducted a household survey. As Muntei's population is comprised of people from different backgrounds, I also used different languages with different people in various setting. Bahasa Indonesia was mainly used in formal or structured interviews with village officers, Batak or Niasan shopkeepers, a Javanese priest, and a Minangkabau teacher. In formal settings attended by many people, I used Bahasa Indonesia. If there were older people present in the meeting, who did not understand me, I asked a young person to translate. If they wanted me to address their concerns directly, I used the Mentawai language or simply went to his/her house to have an informal conversation. Young people preferred to talk in Bahasa Indonesia. They are more curious and ask questions related to my personal situation (education, living abroad). Occasionally, I employed both Bahasa Indonesia and Minangkabau language (Bahasa Minang) when I interviewed a Minangkabau cleric or a Javanese priest. These different ways of communicating with different people not only illustrates the diversity of people living in Muntei, but also represents a marker of aspiration. Older people feel enormous pride when there is an outsider willing to learn their language and tradition. Younger generations, who were born in the settlement and attend school, are mastering Bahasa Indonesia as a way to show that they are good and modern citizens who speak the national language and learn the national culture. For migrants, especially the Minangkabau and Javanese, speaking their mother tongue is a rare chance to enjoy conversing with emotions and humour, as they have to speak either Bahasa Indonesia or Mentawai with villagers. Nonetheless, these language issues support my methodological choice to research a contemporary Mentawaian community with a heteregeneous identity, diverse aspirations, and internal variations.

I do not claim that Muntei is a settlement that uniquely represents the entire Mentawaian population. The conventional framework of a single settlement-based ethnography has its own limitations. This dissertation does not illustrate the general picture of Mentawaian-food relations. The impact of external stimuli and the dynamic within Mentawaian society as whole have been uneven across the islands (see Persoon 1994; Eindhoven 2019). Each settlement (hamlet/village) in the islands has its own ecological terrain, internal social dynamics, and conjunctures, which produce different ethnographic settings. For example, Muntei does not share features with hamlets or villages in the interior or on the west coast of Siberut, where salt-water animals are a scarce resource, the influence of migrants is more limited, and

important cash crops (clove, coconut) have not grown well. At the same time, I reject the idea that an anthropologist is wrong for making generalisations about an ethnic group after fieldwork at a particular site (Glenn Reeves 1999). While it is correct that the Mentawaians identity has been shaped and constituted by colonial discourse and post-colonial development discourses, the use of the Mentawaians as a collective label for people who share an eponymous ancestor, have genealogical stories, claim a particular plot of land, and speak the Mentawai language cannot be completely abolished. All the indigenous inhabitants in Muntei identify themselves as Mentawaians.

I would claim that people in Muntei demonstrate a common and widespread—if not identical and universal—social identity and processes found throughout the Mentawaian Islands. They still have cultural and social attributes that resemble the general features of other Mentawaian communities in the past and present. Many cultural characteristics and social processes described in this dissertation confirm previous accounts (Loeb 1928; 1929b; Nooy-Palm 1966; Schefold 1973, 1970; Kruyt 1979) as well as more contemporary ones (Persoon 1994; 1995; 2001; Reeves 2001; Reeves 2001; Bakker 1999; Eindhoven 2002; 2019; Hammons 2010; Tulius 2012). In general, Muntei residents continue to interpret the world through a schema that remains similar to accounts described by earlier anthropologists and missionaries. Certainly, recent generations have given up some traditional activities. Any changes may be subsumed into the old ones, while old schemas are incorporated into new activities. Understanding the basic processes of the lives of the residents of Muntei offers insights into the underlying schemas and general patterns of other Mentawaian communities. However, when the reader reads the word 'Mentawaians' in this dissertation, it references and is limited to those in the Muntei settlement and its neighbouring settlements. At the time of my fieldwork, the settlement consisted of around 150 households (650 people). Since they have developed social relations with other people in an adjacent area, this description can also refer to an ethnographic account of about 3,000 Mentawaians living in the southeast of Siberut. Nonetheless, much of the analysis in this thesis will be relevant to a general understanding of Mentawaian-food relations.

Data Collection and Analysis

This dissertation is derived from three main periods of fieldwork comprising a total of 12 months of field research and an additional short visit (six weeks). The initial fieldwork was carried out from mid-May to early November 2012 while the third period of fieldwork was conducted from early October 2014 to early January 2015. In between, I conducted three months of fieldwork (May to July) in 2013. An additional visit was undertaken from early December 2018 to mid-January 2019, after I finished the data analysis and had the first draft of the monograph ready. My fieldwork was conditioned by the trajectory of my uncommon postgraduate training and scholarship, which did not lend itself to a single extensive field research. I had secured a PhD scholarship and had collected data on food before I did a master's degree. I used my master's thesis research as preliminary research for my dissertation. I carried out the second period of PhD fieldwork during field research on customary land arrangements in Muntei for this master's thesis (Darmanto 2016).

Fieldwork

The advantage of knowing and being known by people in Muntei, however, does not automatically make Muntei the easiest place to do field research. I started the first period of fieldwork in May 2012 by organising a formal meeting with the residents of Muntei in the Catholic Church after a Sunday Mass. I was advised by the head of village to use this occasion to inform the villagers about my presence and research. Village officers, schools, and other non-Catholic institutions have always used the Church to inform villagers about public issues. The Church is the most important public space in the village and the Sunday Mass is

the only occasion when the majority of Muntei people gather regularly. All *Uma* in Muntei have a member who attends the Church. Non-Catholic villagers would soon get the information regarding my research and presence from their Catholic families and friends.

The purpose of the meeting was to inform people of the aim, objective, and duration of my research, providing them with the permits I obtained from government authorities in the West Sumatra Provincial Office and from the Mentawai Archipelago's district officials. I also employed the meeting to ask for their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FIPC) (UN 2008; Persoon and Minter 2011). I explained what I expected from their participation and involvement in my research. I described the way I would obtain data (interviews, observation, etc.), the scope my research, and the possible benefits of the study for participants. I also promised to discuss and share the results of my research before submitting the final dissertation to the university. I also emphasised that all *uma* and families had the right to make their own decisions about whether to participate in my research or not. I then invited them to ask questions and express their thoughts on their expectations about my research.

Generally, all adult persons present in the church agreed to participate. However, there were some issues. Some prominent men questioned the difference between their consent and the formal permits I had obtained from the government. A man asked me why government staff in Padang, the capital of West Sumatra, or district officials in Tuapeijat, who have not set foot in the settlement and know nothing about the people there, have the authority to permit to me to study them. Others teased me about how much money I had spent to obtain these letters and questioned me seriously about why I would give money to the already-rich government officials, rather than give it to Muntei people themselves. Another man asked why I gave them the FPIC form for them to complete and sign. He was suspicious because this was the first time I had organised this kind of meeting and requested formal consent. Another man asked whether he would be given money and a free lunch after he signed the FPIC, as this was a standard procedure when participating in an NGO or development project meeting. Another man refused to fill in the FPIC as he thought that I would 'sell' him and the data I gathered from his family to the university. The main issue raised at the meeting related to why I needed a formal permit to study the villagers given that I already knew many of them and had been part of their lives for such a long time.

The formal nature of the meeting affected my conduct and the people's response to my inquiry. By bringing the paperwork, including the FPIC and asking for a formal meeting, a number of people felt that I had become a different person to the one they knew prior to me becoming a PhD student. Certain families also expected compensation from me for participating in my research. In response, I explained that I had a small amount of research funds. I could give it to the owner of the host family that I lived with or buy a box of cigarettes, drinks, or meal when I ask a person to be interviewed, or a family to be surveyed, or I could spend it on buying a healthy boar for the entire settlement during the New Year festivities. I also explained the limits of my scholarship. The research fund could help the village get a better soccer ball or a new volleyball net, but it was not enough to pay all the families in the settlement an equal amount of money. I explained my position as a student, which is both privileged and limited, like their own children who study at the universities on the mainland.

Their understanding of my position as a student gave me significant advantages. It was easier to talk and question people as a student, rather than as a government official or NGO worker. Villagers believed my research was done out of genuine curiosity and without any specific agenda, such as 'having a programme to deliver' or 'selling the information' for a proposal to a funding organisation. I started to work with certain *uma* and waited to see whether any person or family would decide to reject my research. After I abandoned all the formal procedures of 'standard' university research, most of the Muntei residents became relaxed and put their trust and consent in me unofficially. Observing and talking to people, selecting a household

to stay with, recruiting research assistants, paying certain families for recording their food intake, taking photos, recording the spells and invocations in a ritual, contributing and offering a gift for special events were all conducted in unofficial ways. Eventually, the majority of Muntei people saw no harm in sharing information, correcting me where necessary, and always welcomed me for a talk or a visit. They were keen to help me get the necessary data and always reminded me to finish my education on time. Moreover, some families used my presence to encourage their own children to take their studies seriously. They often asked me to give their children information about higher education in Java and abroad, as they wish that, one day, their children will follow my path and have the opportunity to study abroad.

Data Collection

I combined qualitative and quantitative methods in all three periods of fieldwork. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and rather informal small group discussions were the main methods used to gather qualitative data. Secondary sources (local newspapers, government documents, NGO papers) provided additional qualitative data. Household surveys and food intake records are the two main methods for gathering quantitative data on property and possessions, kinship, family size, and the amount of food families have and consume.

Qualitative Method: Participant Observation and Semi-Structured Interview

Participant observation is the main method of collecting ethnographic data (Powdermarker 1966). This method enables me to develop social relations with the subjects of my research but to simultaneously maintain the necessary distance from them. It allows me to closely observe, grasp, and experience people's daily activities but, at the same time, to analytically understand the pattern and ideas behind those activities. For most of my participatory observation, I stayed with a family of Saruruk for the first fieldwork and lived with a family of Samemek for the later fieldwork. The two *umas* are big groups consisting of tens of households. The clans also represent two basic social identities in Muntei. The Saruruk are considered to be *Sasabirut*, who have land around Muntei and are split into two factions; the Samekmek are referred to as *Sarereiket*, who initially had no land in the settlement and have not separated as the other large clans have done. Eleven out of the 16 Saruruk families have embraced Islam, while all the Samekmek families are devoted Catholics. By living with these two families from two different clans, I was able to closely observe the diversity of the families and their various activities regarding food production and consumption. For example, I was able to compare the differences and similarities in their livelihood strategies, eating habits, and the pattern of their communal feasts.

Even though I was staying with families from *uma* Samekmek and Saruruk, the settlement is small and I was able to extend my social network and observations beyond the two *uma*. In the settlement my presence was strongly felt as I had spent my days walking around, observing people's daily activities, participating in the activities, and talking to them. Despite the fact I did not have the same close relations in the settlement that I had with the *uma* of Samekmek and Saruruk, I did not feel that others were likely to behave differently when I was around. Stumbling across people's activities provides an opportunity to gather information and to observe social patterns in the most unconstrained way. More importantly, participating in the daily life of people in an informal manner allowed me to closely observe and participate in a wide range of activities and practices related to food in the nuclear family (*lalep*) as well as the whole *uma* and hamlet. This enabled me to discover patterns of activities that pervaded the relations of food and people. I discovered the importance of certain activities (gardening, feeding and sharing, eating together) that are vital to the development of people, families, and *uma*. These activities are not only important to ensure the availability of food, but also for the expression of ideals and ideas. Through understanding the daily activities related

to food, I could sense the deeper cultural schema and was able to generate a systematic description of the role of food in this community.

Participant observation allowed me to involve myself in community problems and issues. People saw me as a resourceful person who could help them with certain tasks. For example, I was perceived as having some computer skills and as being impartial in public issues. I was invited to be part of an ad hoc village committee arranging and managing the distribution of RASKIN and government hands-out during the flood disaster in 2012 and 2013. I had an opportunity to attend and observe a series of meetings held by Muntei and its neighbouring hamlets to discuss the problem of pigs destroying cacao gardens (analysed in Chapter 7). During the third fieldwork, I was appointed to a local church committee to manage the annual event of the slaughter and distribution of pigs. This level of participation allowed me to grasp the communal aspects of people's relationships beyond family and kinship.

Alongside my participant observations, I also kept a daily journal of generated reflections and questions. Those reflections and questions were explored through interviews, both informal and semi-structured. The latter method was selected and refined in context. Most of the time, an interview was not deliberately arranged. I waited for the right moment to interrupt a family meal or gardening activities with a question about a particular food, certain activities related to food, and the meaning attached to them. I did not lead the interview, only triggered a discussion with a short question and let the informant say what they knew. Often, it was not the right moment to ask a question. Some questions could trigger a lively discussion and lift the mood of surrounding people. In other cases, my questions or presence discouraged them and led them to abandon their conversations. In some cases, a list of questions was prepared on a particular topic for certain informants. The list focused on specific information but allowed open answers that may direct the interview towards other relevant information. This type of interview offered the participant in the research the chance to respond openly. For instance, a question, e.g. on the role of chickens and pigs in a certain ritual feast, could turn into a discussion about rivalry and the world of spirits. In most cases, the semi-structured interviews took place at night or at the weekend, when the interviewees returned from their gardens and stayed for Sunday Mass and to socialise in their settlement. When an interview started with a formal request, it always ended in an informal chat stretching late into the night or even until the early hours of the morning.

Quantitative Method: Food Intake Record and Analysis

A particular method of data gathering was also applied for quantitative data regarding the consumption of food (presented as the core of the food analysis in Chapter 4). The specific method deployed for measuring food consumption, namely, a food intake frequency survey (Ulijaszek 2004; Henry and Macbeth 2004) suits my ethnographic research. The frequency survey is 'designed to obtain qualitative, descriptive data on usual intakes of foods or classes of food over a long time period' (Ulijaszek 2004, 122). The data obtained is not about nutritional precision, but rather is a general overview of the food consumption that usefully accompanies the qualitative ethnographic and anthropological research. The frequency survey deploys a comprehensive list of food items familiar to the subjects of the research, to record their intake over a given period. This method is highly appropriate and useful to compare the food patterns of two or more groups within a population. In particular, the food consumption data are collected at the family level. The choice of analysing food intakes and a survey at the household level is based on the social fact that the core unit of the production and consumption of food in Muntei is the family (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2).

I selected three representative families to record their own daily meals for one year (1 January to 31 December 2013). All the items of food served at each meal were recorded by note takers who were members of each family. The recorded data can be obtained from a self-administered questionnaire and recorded

in the diaries of the subjects of the research, and revalidated through interviews. This method, without estimates of the portions' size, takes much less time and is therefore likely to be considerably cheaper. A detailed description of the method and the process of data collection is presented in Appendix 1.

The food intake data are then analysed. All the data are broken down into several common categories familiar to the people under study (staple foods, meat, fruit, vegetables, etc.). The data are analysed using the food frequency approach (Henry and Macbeth 2004). This type of analysis does not allow for the examination of the foods' detailed nutritional status and a precise analysis of energy expenditure, but it does enable one to understand the general pattern of food consumption in a certain period. This analysis is simple but adequate given that Mentawaians eat a variety of food at each meal, each item of which would need to be measured separately. The quantity analysis was not very detailed due to time constraints and because detailed measurements would contribute little to the general ethnographic analysis.

Household Survey

The other quantitative method is a household survey, which I carried out during the third fieldwork period. The survey is a modest endeavour to collect data on the possession of gardens, edible and non-edible resources, and household property in general. The survey was conducted among 45 households (one third of the total households). The survey was carried out during the later stage of the third fieldwork period, due to the availability of field assistants. For one to two hours, I and an assistant researcher sat on the veranda of the selected households, questioning the genealogy of the household, the income and expenditure, its gardens and possessions, and the location of the gardens. Genealogy and kinship data provided a better picture of how each household is linked to others, both socially and biologically. The distribution and lineage lines of the households are important as analytical tools to determine access to food. Details of income and expenditure provided information on economic relations, with specific reference to the cash economy, including subsistence or semi-subsistence activities (hunting, fishing, and gathering) and certain activities where people engaged in alternative uses of their labour.

The household survey data provide a direct indicator of variations in income-generating activities and provide insight into (potential) opportunities for socio-economic development. Data on gardens included the number of forest gardens, productive assets (including the number of traditional plants, such as durian and fruit trees and sago gardens), standing crops (the number of commercial crops per household—whether in fruit or not), and livestock. The data are useful for comparing the level of availability and access to self-procured food and food from the market. It also provides a broader picture of the availability and access to edible items, both wild and semi-domesticated animals and plants. I followed-up the survey with random, open-ended, and opportunistic interviews about people's knowledge of edible items, their function, and symbolism.

Secondary Resources

Written documents are important sources of information regarding the broader picture of development in the Mentawai Archipelago. Such documents include government reports, NGO's press releases and proposals, and news items in the local media. Their contents varied and gave broad perspectives on local practices and social dynamics. I obtained the data on the resettlement project in Muntei and its neighbouring settlement in the form of a microchip from Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) when I conducted archival research in 2013. Some history of the settlement had already been published in a sociological analysis of an ICDP (Integrated Conservation and Development Project) report and the dissertation of my supervisor (Persoon 1994, 1995). A handful of news related to Muntei was published in newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the NGOs' proposals, policy papers, and press releases were obtained through old friends and the network that I have

established through years of working with UNESCO. The recent written documents about the government project for settlements are collected from village offices and the South Siberut sub-district Offices. All those documents provided historical accounts and allowed me to track down individuals who had been involved in various government and non-government development projects—ranging from the Otorita Pengembangan Kepulauan Mentawai (OPKM) to the distribution of RASKIN. The combination of written documents and interviews provide a more detailed perspective of the history of the settlement.

Another important written source is the local newspaper *Puailiggoubat*, published by the oldest and largest Mentawaian NGO, Yayasan Citra Mandiri Mentawai (YCMM). Through *Puailiggoubat*, I can trace all the news related to Muntei since 2005 and to check and validate all the information and data I gather during my fieldwork. For example, *Pualiggoubbat* gives the amount of RASKIN received by Muntei residents, or a rough calculation of the bananas sold on the market every week from 2006 to date. Sadly, the printed version of *Puailiggoubat* is no longer published. Instead, the editors and YCMM are focusing on an online platform through the portal MentawaiKita.com. The website is my staple if I am starving to know wahat is happening in the island.

Group Discussion during the Final Fieldwork

Finally, I paid a short visit between early December 2018 and the end of January 2019. I did not undertake participant observation or other forms of data collection during this time, but rather organised a series of small forum discussions with groups of women, young men, and adult men from various *uma* to revalidate my data, verify my analysis, and to obtain feedback from the general findings and arguments of my dissertation. This is part of the FPIC procedure explained and promised to the Muntei people at the beginning of my research. In the discussions, I also asked their opinion regarding the best use of their names and place names. Beyond Muntei, I conducted several rounds of limited group discussions with Catholic priests, NGO workers, district government officials, and other Mentawaian intellectuals, who provided a broader perspective on the Mentawaians relationship with food. These types of interviews and discussions provided me with regional understanding and a broader perspective on the social changes happening in Muntei and beyond in the last few decades.

1.5 The Organisation of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 provides an ethnographic overview of Muntei. It includes a description of the social history of the settlement, basic social relations, autochthonous and introduced sociocultural institutions, and the social transformations that have occurred over the last four decades after people moved from the old settlement to Muntei.

Chapter 3 qualifies the elements of food availability and accessibility. It describes how people have used and transformed the environment surrounding their settlement and established various productive zones for various food resources. This chapter provides a general account of the availability of animal, plant, and imported food, the changes to and the continuation of existing food production.

Chapter 4 examines a full year of daily meals among selected families. The analysis of food consumption gives a concrete picture of the status of food consumption at the household level. This chapter provides the variations in the edible matter consumed by families from different social groups, which have different strategies for their livelihoods.

Chapter 5 describes the value of food beyond its material substance. This chapter describes the role of food-related activities and the positive construction of personhood and the communal value. It outlines how food-related activities, especially gardening, are paramount to the definition of the people's humanity, to their gender differentiation, the valuation of a person, to the self-identification of being Mentawaians and to the construction of others. It also examines the importance of sharing and eating food together. This chapter describes how sharing and eating food together are strongly associated with solidarity and equality and a way to generate the most important social values.

Chapter 6 tries to make a deeper analysis between the availability of food, the statement of being hungry, and the production of social values amid ongoing social changes in Muntei, especially the emergence of social inequality. This chapter also provides an interpretative answer to the riddle of being hungry which starts the dissertation.

Chapter 7 draws a general analysis of the role of food in Muntei. It sums up the social and cultural meaning of being hungry and the importance of food-related activities in the production of social values. This chapter also provides remarks and reflections on food research on the island and beyond.

2
Muntei: The Ethnographic Setting of a Contemporary Mentawaian Community

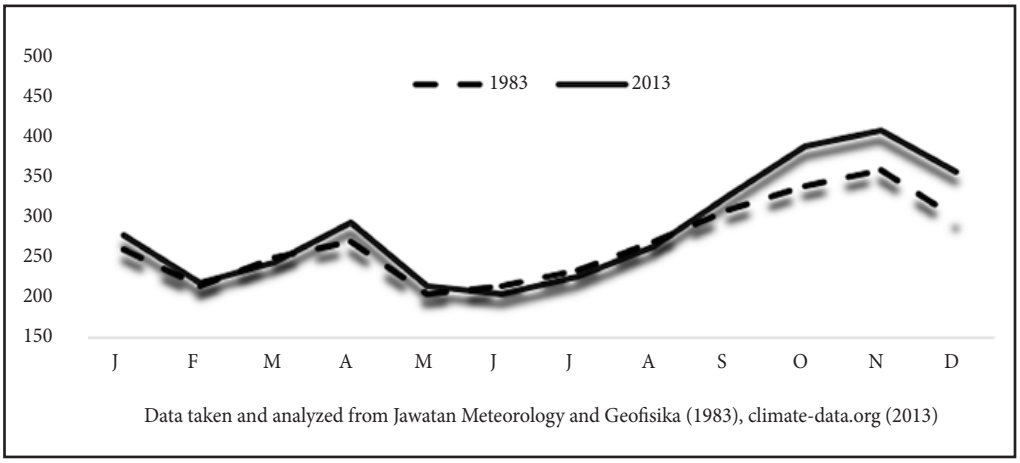
This chapter describes the ethnographic background of Muntei and is divided into seven parts. The first part provides the geographical and historical setting of the settlement. The second section reports on the population, its social organisation, and the physical layout of the settlement. It will be followed by a description of the basic principles of social relationships. This part also examines the modification of the principle amid social change. The fourth section explores the backbone of local economic relations, which is basically a combination of subsistence gardening and production of cash crops. The description on the indigenous religion and its relations with world religions will be the focus of the fifth section. The sixth section will provide a description of social transformation, especially after Muntei was established as an official settlement. This chapter ends with a short description of the rhythm of social life there during a typical day.

2.1 The Geographical, Historical, and Regional Context

Muntei is one of 82 official settlements scattered on Siberut Island (4.030 km^2), the largest of the 170 islands constituting the Mentawai Archipelago (7,000 km^2). The archipelago is considered to be the homeland of the Mentawaians, but only four, including Siberut, are inhabited. The other three occupied islands (Sipora, North Pagai, and South Pagai) lie to the south of Siberut. About 70,500 people inhabit the archipelago with ten per cent of them being categorised as migrants from various ethnic groups (BPS 2015). Siberut has half of the whole Mentawai Archipelago's population (35,725 inhabitants) with 3,320 of them being non-Mentawaians. The population density is nine people/km^2, which is extremely sparse by Indonesian standards. Administratively, Siberut consists of five sub-districts (*kecamatan*). Muntei is located in the southeastern part of Siberut and is part of *kecamatan* Siberut Selatan (Map 2).

Close to the equator, Siberut is ecologically part of the Southeast Asian humid tropical region, with a rainy season that occurs from October to April. The island is fed by a wet equatorial climate. Since the 1980s, the mean annual rainfall has been at least 3,500 mm (Figure 3): on average, rainfall dampens the land on more than half of the days of every month (WWF 1980). The wettest months are April and November, when the sky is cloudy all day and rainfall lasts longer than during the other months. The driest months are January and June, when the rain falls for about a week in total. Physically, Siberut is a sedimentary

Figure 3. *Average Monthly Rainfall in Siberut Island*



Data taken and analyzed from Jawatan Meteorology and Geofisika (1983), climate-data.org (2013)

island dominated by young and non-resistant shale, silts, and marshes. The high rate of rainfall gradually scrapes the surface of the land, resulting in erosion and the formation of a strongly dissected, uneven landscape, with many small rivers, streams, and a few flat-topped hills. The hills are at the centre of the island. In the west part, the hills descend abruptly into the Indian Ocean. Along the rugged hills, mixed forest is accompanied by a few major rivers flowing down to the sea, but this is replaced by beach forests, dominated by the *Barringtonia* species, in the narrow coastal zone. In the east, dipterocarp forest covers the hills but are gradually followed by mixed forests, gardens, swampy forests, sago, and further towards the coastal zone, mangrove forests. In the valleys between the hills and the main rivers are narrow strips of fertile flat land where people live and make gardens.

The landscape of Muntei represents the ecology of the eastern part of the island. Except where the land is cleared for houses and taro gardens, most of it is covered with fruit trees, tree crops, sago forest, and young secondary forest, traversed by many small paths. Moving away from the settlement and cultivated gardens is a mature rainforest. Muntei receives regular floods that occasionally harm the gardens and livestock, yet it is a very fertile area where humus and minerals from the surrounding valley are deposited through the process of siltation.

The settlement's territory measures approximately 1,200 hectares and is located on the southeast coast of Siberut, in the lower reaches of the Siberut River, the most important river in this area (Figure 4). A half-hour walk to the east of the settlement is the village of Maileppet, which is located along the sandy strip between the estuary of the Siberut River and Maileppet Bay. The inhabitants of Maileppet identify as *Sasabirut*, with a population of approximately 1,700; they share their identity and cultural characteristics with Muntei residents. To the south are resettlement hamlets called Puro. The residents of Puro are originally from the area around the Silaoinan River and are slightly different culturally to Muntei people. In between, there is a swampy area consisting of a mix of sago and cacao gardens. To the north is the former settlement (*pulaggaijat*) of Siberut Hulu, now mostly occupied by pig huts, sago, and fruits gardens. Further to the north, along the Silakoinan River, are the settlements of Magosi, Salappak, and Bekkeiluk, which form part of the village of Muntei but recently have been trying to establish an independent village. To the west, beyond a swampy area consisting of sago gardens, pig farms, and secondary forest, is a compound of *orang ulu*'s (upstream people) settlements, situated along the Rereiket River.

Until 50 years ago, the area around Muntei was largely uninhabited. Instead, it was used mainly for keeping pigs and for sago gardens. The residents of Muntei initially settled in Siberut Hulu, presumably created prior to the arrival of colonial Dutch, which is about an hour's walk from the present settlement. Oral history suggests that Siberut Hulu was built as a shelter for different *uma* against an enemy from North Siberut. There, each *uma* built their longhouse some distance away from the others. The short period of the Dutch presence (mid-1910 to 1942) led to the eradication of headhunting and the establishment of new concentrated settlements. Initially, Dutch soldiers prohibited clan feuds and would punish anyone who committed headhunting. This pacification was successfully and quickly achieved and the inhabitants of Siberut Hulu abandoned their headhunting practices. The eradication of headhunting contributed to feelings of safety and encouraged the local population to establish contact with Dutch officers and traders from the mainland. The elders recall that their parents paid a tax of sago flour to Dutch officers posted to Muara Siberut.

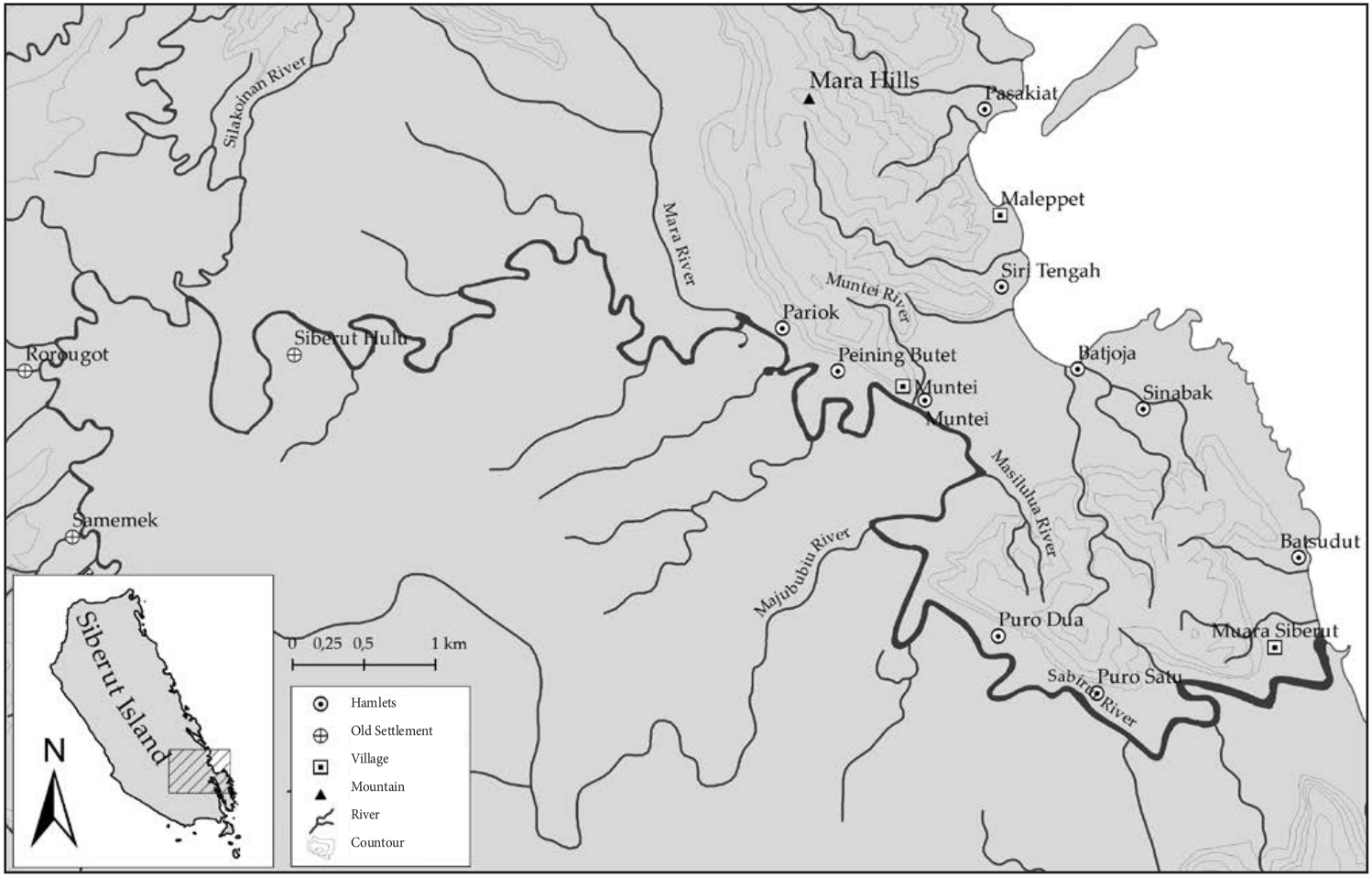
The presence of the Dutch persuaded people to congregate in a larger settlement, while the pacification process allowed the intensification of trade. The settlement was called a *kampung*. Each *kampung* had a local leader (*kepala kampung*), who was appointed by Dutch administrators. The leader was largely ineffective, working only with the support of external authorities (Persoon 1988). Nonetheless, the arrival of the Dutch and the establishment of *kampung* generated a sense of security. Prior to the Dutch administration, the traders and the inhabitants of Siberut were involved in occasional fights as the latter felt they were often cheated. Older people remember the period of the Dutch administration as 'the good old days' (*siburuk simaeruk*) as they felt safe travelling to other settlements or visiting traders on the shore. They also got good prices for their forest products from traders, as the presence of Dutch officials ensured a fair exchange and resolved any conflicts between the people from Siberut Hulu and the traders. With the protection of Dutch soldiers, some of the traders, especially those of Minangkabau origin, eventually stayed for a few months to fill their ships with fresh and dried coconut (copra), rattan, and other forest products before bringing their cargo to Padang (Persoon 1994; Asnan 2007).

These 'good old days' changed soon after the Japanese occupation forces arrived. My informant, the oldest member of the Sabajou clan, told me that when he was eight, he saw Japanese soldiers in Siberut Hulu. He also said that the Japanese were seen as less friendly and did not encourage people to trade. Instead, when his parents and uncle went looking for traders in Muara Siberut, the soldiers forced them to work for them—clearing the grass and bushes around the Japanese military offices. Some young people, he continued, were trained as policemen, with little salary or compensation. His father and other people from Siberut Hulu were afraid to go to Muara Siberut.

While the residents of Muntei have experienced relations with Dutch and Japanese people, and, to a limited extent, missionaries from German and Italy, the most intensive contact with external agency has been with other ethnic groups from mainland Sumatra, especially Minangkabau people. Over many centuries, but more intensively after colonial intervention in the early 20th century, the Minangkabau mediated the trade of forest products from the Mentawaians' homeland, and desirable goods from the mainland, such as clothes and metal tools. In the mid-1930s, a small group of Minangkabau fishermen and traders started to settle in the coastal zone with the help of pacification carried out by colonial officers and missionaries. Eventually, the Minangkabau established themselves as middlemen in the regional economy.

The Mentawaians in Muntei generally have a mixed perception of the Minangkabau, who are viewed as intelligent and very good entrepreneurs. The combination of intelligence and entrepreneurial spirit are also seen as the main reason why Muntei residents feel they are always being cheated and exploited by them. Older generations claimed that they work hard, hiking or paddling canoes to bring heavy rattan, timber, and numerous other forest products to the marketplace. In return, they have to spend all their earnings

Figure 4. The Map of Muntei and Adjacent Settlements



from this labour-intensive work buying essentials from the Minangkabau, such as clothes, salt, metal tools, and a few imported goods. Older people still complain heartily about the asymmetric condition of working hard, producing lots, but earning little. They feel that their relations with the Minangkabau are asymmetrical and unbalanced.

This asymmetrical relationship was reinforced when the central and provincial government policies categorised the Mentawaian as isolated people after Indonesia independence. The Mentawaians' homeland is seen an isolated place and Mentawaian cultural and social life as backward, isolated, and in need of development (Persoon 1994, 2002). There was an notion that Mentawaian cultural practices were seen as a handicap to development and that the people must be modernised. The modernisation project effectively touched the lives of Muntei people in the early 1950s. In 1954, they were forced to abandon their religion and then were obliged to embrace one of three official religions during what was popularly known as Rapat Tiga Agama (The Meeting of Three Religions) (Sihombing 1979; Coronese 1986). Soon, Siberut Hulu was established as *kampung* and had a *kepala kampung*. This reinforced the Dutch policy as it had been difficult for the predominantly Minangkabau provincial officials to exert authority.

The modernisation projects have made Muntei a target for development and they give legitimacy to the Minangkabau in terms of implementation. Indeed, the projects placed the Minangkabau at the centre of development and decisively pushed the Mentawaians to the periphery, creating the image of Muntei people as a marginal society. The state marginality is a social process in which the entities of 'margin' and 'centre' are constructed using power relations (Tsing 1993; Li 1999). Like other Mentawaians, Muntei residents have come to see themselves in largely negative terms (backward, undeveloped, primitive, pagan) while the Minangkabau consider themselves culturally superior in all respects (Persoon 2002; Eindhoven 2007). Many aspects of daily social relations – language, food, etiquette, gender, sexuality – are implicated in this asymmetric inter-ethnic dialogue. Together, these factors create a hierarchy of social relations in ethnic discourses at a national level as well as in administrative practices and the regional economy.

Religion is also a factor in the asymmetrical relations between Muntei people and the Minangkabau. The Minangkabau are renowned for their strong Islamic tradition and see religion as an integral part of Minangkabau identity, along with *adat* and Indonesian citizenship. In contrast, state discourse on religion did not recognise Mentawaian beliefs as a religion. As a result, the Minangkabau viewed Muntei people as people without a 'proper' religion. Being unable to show affiliation to a formalised religion is a cause for formal harassment. It was not uncommon for Muntei residents to be denied development and related state services when they resisted embracing formal religion. The conjunction of state policy and ethnic domination of the Minangkabau compels Muntei people to judge their beliefs and practices against Islam. The choice for Catholicism has helped them to maintain their tradition of food production and consumption, an integral part of their self-identification as Mentawaians (the subject of Chapter 5).

Longing for Cash Crops and State Services: The Origin of the Settlement

Apparently, the residents of Muntei have welcomed government authority, the missions, police, and compulsory schooling. Despite resisting any external control, Muntei people embrace the idea of being modernised. In the early 1970s, with the help of funds from logging operations, the provincial government of West Sumatra implemented the OPKM (Otorita Pengembangan Kepulauan Mentawai/Mentawai Islands Development Authority). The OPKM was the first concerted attempt to modernise Mentawaians by providing schools, establishing a larger official settlement, and encouraging people to cultivate rice and commercial crops. As the OPKM was about to be implemented, five *uma* moved to an area by the river that is now called Muntei. The primary reasons for the move was to avoid the annual flooding in Siberut Hulu, to be closer to the church and government services in the town of Muara Siberut, and to find a better place

for the cultivation of cloves and coconuts, popular cash crops at that time. In conjunction with the desire of the people to improve their economic situation, land was available for growing coconuts on the east coast. Later, the OPKM relocated all the people in Siberut Hulu and other families from further upstream to Muntei and provided them with schools and teachers.

When Muntei was officially established as a government village in 1981, the term *kampung* was changed to *desa* (village), following the new 1979 Village Law. The law and the village introduced other new sociopolitical institutions, such as the village head (*kepala desa*), village councils (Lembaga Musyawarah Desa), village secretary, hamlets (Dusun), *Pertahanan Sipil* (civil defence) and others. By the early 1980s, all 11 of the groups originally from Siberut Hulu were settled in Muntei, followed by a number of families and groups from settlements upstream (Ugai, Madobak, Silakoinan, and Rokdok). Officially, Muntei is a government settlement in the OPKM programme (OPKM 1978). Yet, most of the people, especially the elders, insisted they initiated the move. In particular, the pioneer *uma* strongly reject the idea that they were forced by the government to dwell in Muntei. They say that they intended to move to Muntei, even without the OPKM promises of housing and other forms of development services. A key proponent of this movement and the first *kepala kampung* of Muntei, Aman Bruno from *uma* Sagari, said:

> I organised five *uma* to move here two years before *telemen* (the OPKM) began. Long ago, the sub-district Head (pak Camat) sent me twice to Sumatra to learn how to become a proper farmer. I saw a very good settlement. The Minangkabau cultivated cloves and cinnamon. They had decent houses. Some went on pilgrimage to Mecca. I saw advancement. We were sick of floods in Siberut Hulu. Coconuts didn't grow. No hills for cloves. No road and church. No nurse taking care of ill people. Then we decided to move here. Look, we now have clove and coconut. We get closer to *pamerentah* (government services). We are closer to the market. We have health facilities.

Aman Bruno's words represent the general willingness of Muntei residents to be a part of the government's programme. Muntei residents said that moving to Muntei appealed to them as it gave them a school for their children, a church to pray in, electricity, a clean and stable water supply, and a tin roof, among other things, and it is a better place for cash crops. People moved to Muntei because they wanted to be closer to the market and state services. All these are symbols of development and being modern. Despite acknowledging and remembering the violent actions of state officials in the 1950s—the burning of traditional cultural materials and the ban on rituals during the establishment of the government settlement, the compulsion to embrace official religions—nobody in Muntei regretted being a part of the government settlement.

This makes Muntei rather different from other current government settlements on the island. Firstly, it was not previously an ancestral settlement (*pulaggaijat*). It was not the dwelling place of a particular *uma*. It had been, and is still, an area of sago gardens, pig and chicken huts. Only recently did it become a dwelling place. It was created out of the idea of having a place for growing cash crops and because it was closer to the government services. Most people insist that Muntei is a collective project built from scratch. Aman Paulus, an elder of *uma* Salakoppak succinctly pointed out:

> We were not told by the government to be here. We just wanted a better place to live. We left our chickens and pigs in Hulu, all were eaten by snakes or stolen. The first years we were struggling. We lived in a hut. Sometimes we begged for food from people from Maileppet. When *telemen* started out, we already had houses and enough taro and bananas. Had it (the OPKM) not been implemented, we would keep moving here. Do you know saying 'the flow

Table 1. A Brief Timeline of Muntei Settlement

Time	Period	Main Social Events
Prior to 1900s	Pre-colonial period	People living in their ancestral land around Siberut Hulu. Headhunting was still practiced. Clan's feuds occurred occasionally. Production was mainly subsistence. A small amount of forest products (rattan, resins, timber) was extracted and sold to migrant traders in Muara Siberut.
Mid-1910s to 1930s	Dutch administration	Pacification and the ending of headhunting practices. Creation of Siberut Hulu as an agglomerated settlement. Autonomous uma moved closer each other. Protection for traders and eradication of Malay traders-Mentawaian conflict. Trading flourished. People started to cultivate coconuts for copra. Forest and gardens' products were sold occasionally. Missionary post was established in neighbouring settlement of Muara Siberut.
Early 1940s	Japanese occupation	People in Siberut Hulu were afraid of going to Muara Siberut. Japanese soldiers forced people to work for them or be policemen.
1950s	Modernisation project of West Sumatra government	The establishment of Siberut Hulu as kampung and the appointment of kepala kampung. Enforced to embrace official religions (people chose Catholic). The abolishment of traditional practices and rituals. Catholic church and school were built.
1970s	The preparation of the OPKM project	Demand of copra and intensification of coconut cultivation. Clove was introduced and planted in the islets. Some families started to fish in the sea around the coconut gardens. Five Sasabirut uma voluntarily moved to Muntei.
1980s	The OPKM	All the people of Siberut Hulu (with the exception of uma Sagulu and Sakaliou) moved to Muntei. Sareriket joined and moved to Muntei. The OPKM provided houses. Muntei was established as a village. The peak of clove and copra production.
1990s	"Not isolated anymore'	Decline of coconut and clove production; nilam became an important cash crop after the 1997 economic crisis. Few young people were sent to higher education on the mainland. Saltwater fish were available from the market. The OPKM houses were modified and refurbished.
2000s	The expansion of the settlement	The establishment of Mentawai as a district. Muntei Hamlet is expanded into three hamlets (Peining Butet, Muntei, Pariok). Village and hamlets heads were elected through democratic process. Decline in nilam production. Cacao replaced nilam as the main cash crop. RASKIN was distributed. Significant conversion of onaja and sago gardens into cacao gardens. Migrants started to have interests in land and agricultural activities. Women sold food surplus to the local market.
2010s	Intensification of development project	Cacao booming. Intensification of development projects. Regular village funds from various government agencies. The intensive construction of road and other modern infrastructure. Muntei is designed as a model for a village tourist. The prohibition on pig-keeping around the Mara rivers area and Masilulua. The emergence of social differentiation.

> of the river goes to *monga* (estuary)'? We knew the signs at that time. Now, we are closer to *bakkat pembangunan* (sources of development).

Aman Paulus' claim reflects the general perception of people in the settlement. They claim that they were about to move away from Siberut Hulu when the plan for the village establishment was implemented. Indeed, a few clans had already bought land and cultivated cloves prior to the OPKM.

While people insisted the collective move to Muntei was voluntary, I do believe that their decision to move was not separated from the idea of development and modernisation introduced by successive administrations and governments—from the Dutch, the missionaries and the Indonesian government. Labelled as isolated and backward by all those external authorities, Muntei people have been marginalised by development discourses and practices. This situates them as underdeveloped and eventually, they came to see themselves in this light (Persoon 2002; Eindhoven 2007; 2019). Their 'choice' and 'free will' do not stand outside the existing and long-standing relations with the idea of development or modernisation, but are formed within it, and, in turn, are formative.

In sum, the present Muntei settlement has a long history and was largely created by both outside pressure and their internal dynamics. The desire of Muntei's residents to live in Muntei is, therefore, partly a perpetual desire to search for a better place to live and partly a way to escape being labelled backward and isolated by external actors. The residents of Muntei are not isolated people living in a closed community. Now, they are deeply integrated into the regional, or even national, market economy. They regularly trade their cash crops and buy groceries with migrant traders in the market in Muara Siberut. Village officers and young men travel back and forth to the district capital of Sipora to arrange paperwork or manage government projects. Men and women paddle their canoes to upstream settlements to visit families and attend communal ceremonies. A number of young men and women attend universities in mainland Sumatra or Java. Three or four times a year, a few men and some shamans visit Padang, Jakarta, or Bali to promote Mentawaian tourism by performing a ritual dance for national and international audiences. The most frequent contacts, however, are with nearby settlements, for social and ritual exchanges. Visitors come to Muntei for various reasons: attending family events; buying pigs; playing football; or selling cacao beans. Government officials, NGO activists, or missionaries regularly visit the settlement to launch development programmes. Recently, cultural tourists from other parts of Indonesia and from overseas visited Muntei to watch regular tourist exhibitions (Pualiggoubat 2018; Mentawai Kita 2019).

2.2 Population and Settlement Pattern

The settlement began with 48 people in 1979; today it has a population of 632 people in 144 households, including 43 non-Mentawaians, who mostly occupy positions such as local traders, teachers, and Christian priests. The 588 Mentawaians in the settlement belong to several *uma*, small, autonomous, patrilineal, and exogamous groups that are the most important social organisations and land-owning units. *Uma* is a general term in Mentawai that equates to the concept of 'kin-group' or 'clan'. It connects the members of the *uma*, both living and dead, to each other, through bonds of bodily substances, most notably by blood. Traditionally, each *uma* had and lived on its own land, which was associated historically with its traditional place of origin; though during the last six or seven generations, most *uma* have lost any geographical autonomy they once had. Internal feuds and migrations, exogamous marriage, or searching for unclaimed places resulted in each *uma* and its members dispersing and ending up in other clans' territories. All the *uma* and their members now live in government settlements while still retaining considerable ritual and political autonomy.

Table 2. Composition of Muntei Residents (2015)

***Uma*/Clan**	**No. of *Uma*-Factions**	**No. of Families (*Lalep*)**	**No. of Ind (M)**	**No. of Ind (F)**	**Settle (Year)**
***Uma* from Siberut Hulu**					
Sabajou	-	5	13	8	1978
Sabulat	-	3	10	7	1981
Sagari	3	11	17	32	1977
Saguluw	-	1	1	1	1980
Salakoppak	3	16	37	38	1978
Saleleggu	-	1	2	4	1980
Sarorougot	-	3	9	12	1978
Saruruk	3	23	48	42	1978
Satotottake	-	2	4	9	1980
Sauddeinuk	-	1	2	2	1980
***Uma* from *Rereiket* Valley**					
Samekmek*	-	13	22	24	1981
Sailuluni	-	2	4	6	1985
Sakakaddut	-	8	26	18	1985
Sakaliou	-	5	8	11	2012
Sakukuret	3	13	33	16	1981
Salemurat	-	3	8	8	1982
Samapopopou	-	3	8	6	2003
Samatotonan	-	3	6	4	1995
Satoleuru	-	1	2	0	2001
Siritoitet	-	5	10	4	2011
***Uma* from Other Area**					
Sabattilat	-	2	7	1	1985
Sakerebau	-	1	3	5	2009
Salabi	-	2	5	2	2002
Saleilei	-	1	2	1	2003
Samalaibibi	-	1	3	0	-
		129	290	288	
Non-Mentawaians					
Javanese	-	2	4	3	1990s
Minangkabau	-	5	7	6	1990s
Nias	-	5	7	6	2000s
Batak	-	5	5	5	2000s
		17	23	20	
Total		**146**	**319**	**308**	

** Uma Samekmek are genealogically considered as Sarereiket. Their ancestral land is located in Rokdok Hamlet and they share ancestral stories with people now living upstream in Rokdok and Matotonan. Yet, they had lived around Siberut Hulu prior to Indonesia's independence (1945). In this table, I categorised them as people who were originally living in Siberut Hulu but are culturally referred to as Sarereiket.*

Currently, there are 26 *uma* in Muntei; each *uma* consists of anything from one or two to more than ten nuclear families called *lalep*. Within the *uma*, genealogical relations between living members can be traced back between five and seven generations. All the *uma* in Muntei, however, consider themselves as descendants of an eponymous ancestor who once lived in Simatalu, a village on the west coast of Siberut. Each *uma* is separated from the others as a result of temporal formation such as migration from an earlier common location, or the genealogical segmentation of a previous unit. Every version of each *uma's* ancestral stories, however, introduces the idea of differentiation from an original whole. Each *uma* possesses extensive knowledge and stories concerning its own genealogy and traditional territories in the forest and the localities of former settlements are still known. *Uma* can be interpreted as temporal formations of identity and socially independent units. The identity of an *uma* is virtually articulated in its genealogical story, physically represented by its land claim, and reproduced continually through communal rituals. Its land, genealogical account, and ritual feast signify the economic and political self-sufficiency of the *uma* as an autonomous unit.

Among anthropologists such as Schefold (1973) Nooy-Palm, (1966), Reeves, (2001), Tulius (2012), there is an on-going discussion as to whether *uma* or other terms (*suku*, *samuntogat*, or *rak-rak*) should be used to refer to the most relevant social unit. Instead of complicating this issue, I will use *uma* as a term to refer to a collective autonomous group that shares a common ancestor and a tract of land. Moreover, as this dissertation will describe later, *uma*, *suku*, or other terms for collective social organisations are manifestations of an egalitarian value, a pattern of actions for which sharing food and rituals feasts are the principal mediums. In Muntei, a few of the larger *uma*, which consist of members connected through shared common ancestors, no longer consider themselves to be a group that shares communal rituals and feasts. For example, the Sagari, Salakoppak, Saruruk, and Sakukuret divided themselves into several groups that I call *uma*-factions (Table 2; Figure 6).[2] The emergence of an *uma*-faction is the result of past and recent disputes. Consequently, members of *uma*-factions will not eat together if the meal is organised by another *uma*-faction.

Outside of the *uma*, people have another major identification. Of the current *uma*, 11 of them are regarded as Sabirut people (*Sasabirut*), who once dwelled along the Siberut River and speak the *Sabirut* dialect. *Sasabirut* distinguish themselves from *orang ulu*, who arrived at the settlement later. *Orang ulu*, also known as *Sarereiket* (the people of Rereiket) are mostly those who once dwelled along the Rereiket River, and can be identified by their settlement's origins and their language. The cultural differentiation of *Sarereiket-Sasabirut* has persisted and recently become important due to political dynamics at the hamlet level. *Sasabirut* claim that they are pioneers, because the first settlers of the settlement were the members of five *Sasabirut* groups (Sagari, Salakoppak, Saruruk, Sabajou, Sarourougot). Both the *Sarereiket* and *Sasabirut* consider themselves as essentially *si toi* (those who came later), a term that refers to people who settle in another clan's territory. This is true for nearly all the people in Muntei, who are living on what was originally the land of the people now living in Central Siberut.

While the *uma* is certainly the most important unit of social organisation, the basic unit of production and consumption is the family. Generally, each family has its own gardens and house. The Muntei family is, by definition, composed of a man and his wife, and their unmarried sons and daughters living in their own house (*sapou*). It is organised around the relations between men and women from different groups and relations between parents and their children. The core relation of the family is a couple working together to assert their political equality within their *uma* and to produce their own children. The domestic processes in the family have dual functions. The formation and expansion of the family produces not only that family itself, but also the most important products of the family, children, and food, for their *uma*. The family is, therefore, the most elementary social unit that constitutes the Mentawaians as a whole.[3]

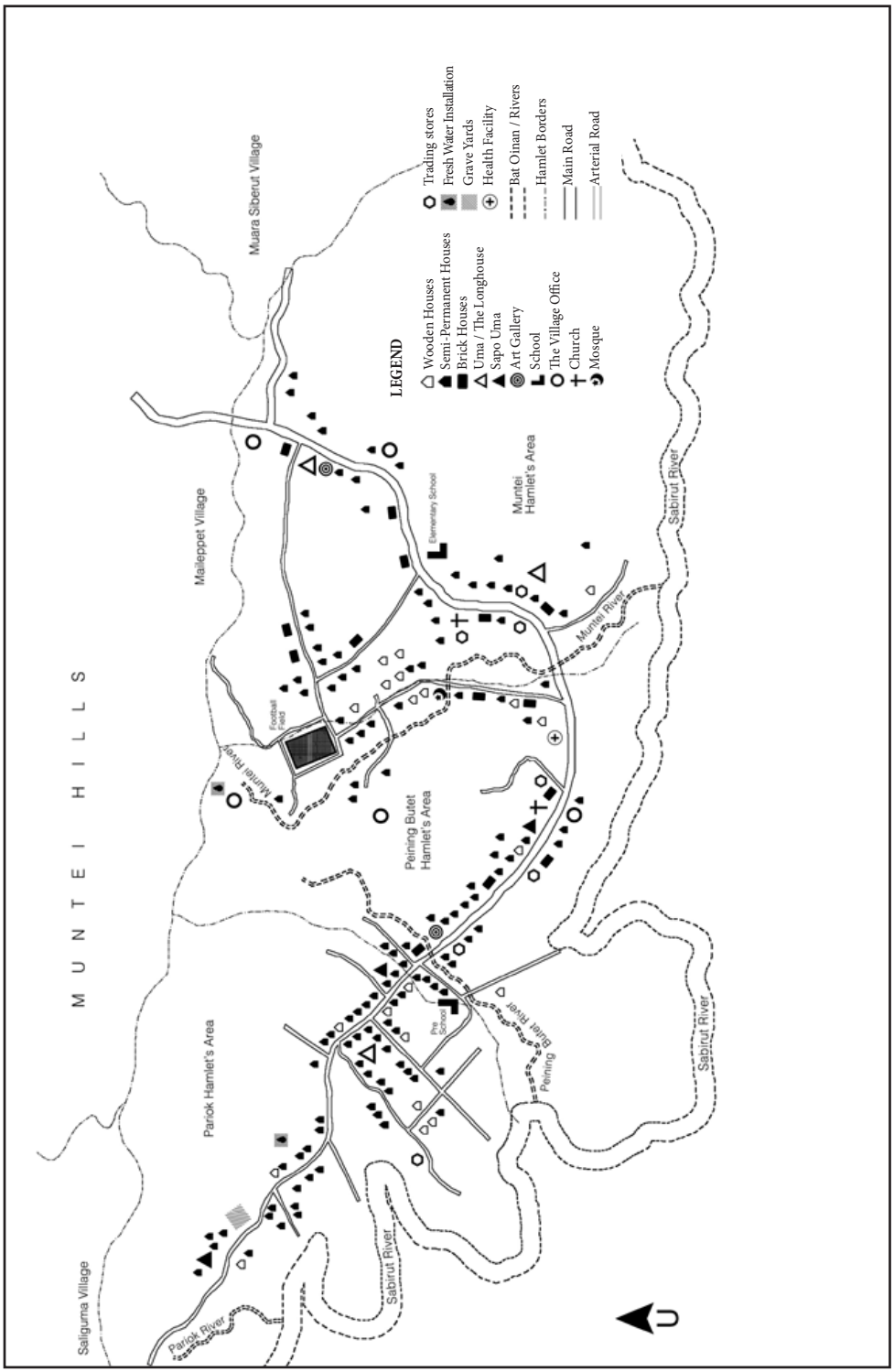
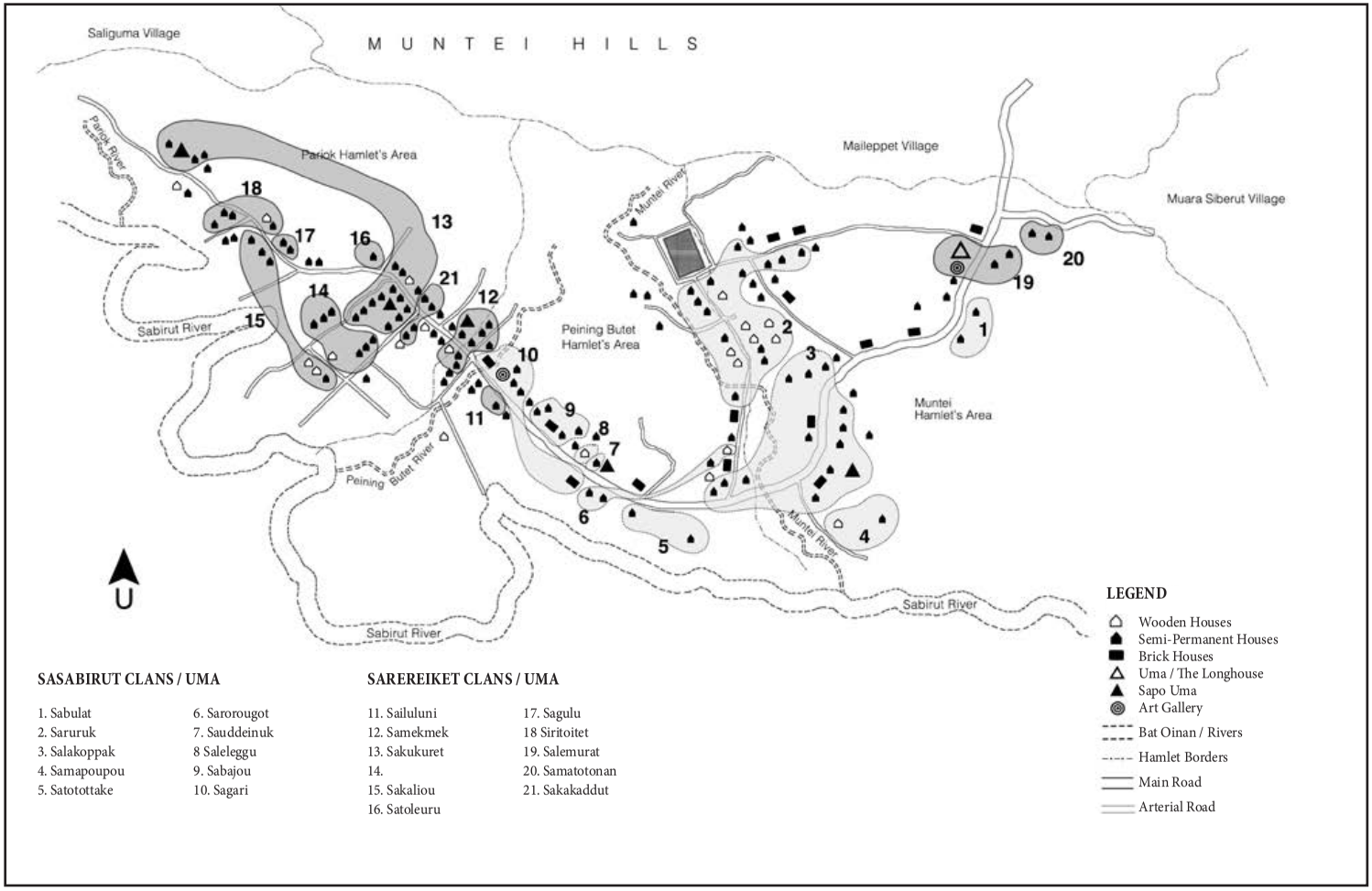


Figure 5. The General Lay Out of Muntei Settlement

Figure 6. *The Map of Clans/Uma in Muntei Settlement*



The Settlement Layout

One of the most fundamental factors affecting the siting of Muntei is the accessibility and availability of sweet water. Muntei is situated on the bank of a major river (Siberut River) and the stream (Muntei) that flows all year round and is named after it. The Siberut River is required for transportation, storing sago, tethering canoes, and has a large swampy area for sago and tuber cultivation, while small streams provide a source of sweet water and recently mark the boundary of hamlets (Figure 5). The availability of a flat, solid area that is free from flooding (*suksuk*) is another consideration. A *suksuk* is a narrow area between the major river and the hills near Muntei. Another major environmental factor in the selection of Muntei as a settlement, indicated above, is the availability of nearby hills for clove cultivation.

The residents of Muntei refer to their settlement as *barasi*. This is not an indigenous term, but comes from a Minangkabau word *barasiah* (clean). *Barasi* means a cleared space where humans build dwellings and keep them clean. The use of the term *barasi* began after the 1970s resettlement project that was implemented by West Sumatra's government. *Barasi* is now commonly used to refer to a social space where people dwell and socialise (a hamlet or village), as opposed to the not-so-clean spaces (*bakkat seksek*), such as forests, sago gardens, and settlements closer to the forest. *Barasi* is, however, just one of the elements that make Muntei a proper settlement. The residents of Muntei have manipulated and classified their surrounding environment into several categories of productive zones, which I will describe at length in the next chapter.

Initially, the layout of the settlement was designed by the OPKM (OPKM 1981). All houses were built in row on a plot according to the project design (Picture 1). However, the people eventually decided to modify and adapt the design to their own particular needs (Picture 2). The settlement's layout is shaped by the limited availability of *suksuk* and the attempt of each *uma* to maintain their distance. The absence of a wide and spacious *suksuk* means that it was physically impossible to create a centralised settlement of the type projected by the OPKM. Socially, the layout represents a visible paradigm of some crucial aspects of the autonomous social relationship between groups and families. The structure of the settlement imitates and maintains the traditional pattern of dwelling places in which each house is clustered around a ritual house. This suggests that the social reference and identification around the *uma* remains strong. The layout of the settlement also reveals the *Sasabirut-Sarereiket* identification (Figure 6). Muntei's south is predominantly populated by *Sasabirut*, who arrived earlier and built their houses downstream for easier access to fresh water from Muntei's stream. To the north are the *Sarereiket*, who came later, and built their houses closer to their gardens and sago stands, upstream from Muntei.

The settlement comprises two types of residences: the communal house (the *uma*) and the family house (*sapou*). Both the *uma* and *sapou* are generally built on piles, so they are off the ground, have the same conspicuous swallow-tailed gable, numerous solid hardwood supporting posts, and roofs of sago-palm thatch. But the two structures differ in several respects. The longhouse is a grand and imposing structure. Not only is it larger, wider, and higher than a *sapou*, but the longhouse has certain areas that are used for communal purposes (Picture 3 and 4). The longhouse is an arena of social space that functions as the locus of life's major transitions for all the members of the group. Lifecycle events such as the initiation of new *uma* members, marriages, and mourning rituals require all members of the *uma* to return to the communal house.

The longhouse has three sequential spaces: an outer room (*laibok*); an inner room (*tenga-n-uma*); and the back room (*bat-n-uma*). The *laibok* is a common area for socialising, where visitors sit and talk with their hosts. It is almost completely open, with benches along both sides and an open entrance with a small gangway and a stepladder. The *tenga-n-uma* is where the men sleep, store their personal belongings, and work on projects such as making rattan. It is also where singing, dancing, and other aspects of communal ceremonies are performed. The inner part of the *uma* is also where the *bakkat katsaila*, the heirloom,

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Picture 1. The layout of Muntei settlement in the early years of the OPKM (1981)

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Picture 2. A bird view of Muntei settlement, showing the different types of houses and development of the settlement over the years (2014)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 3. The new longhouse of a faction of *uma* Sakukuret. The structure is larger and more imposing than a common house (2015)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 4. The outer room (*laibok*) of the *uma* Sakukuret's longhouse used to socialize, to perform a ritual offering or to put all sacrificed animals (*iba-t-punen*) (2015)

consisting of the most important magic herbs (*gaud*) are stored, specifically on the wall adjoining the *tenga-n-uma*. *Bat-n-uma* is where the women sleep, store their belongings, and work. Behind the wall of *bat-n-uma*, there is a fireplace for cooking and a wooden stand for washing dishes. A longhouse, which is under the guardianship of the leader of the group, also differs in certain other aspects from ordinary houses, namely, the presence of *bakkat katsaila*, some slit-drums, the skulls of hunted animals, and its decorative carvings are more ornate. The *uma* is undoubtedly the most salient feature not just of the settlement but its entire social and ritual organisation. The symbolism of the Mentawaians' longhouses and their variations has been described and discussed widely (Loeb 1928; Schefold 1991, 2003; Reeves 2001). This section will only describe the general picture of the transformation and continuation of the longhouse in the settlement.

Among the 20 *uma* in Muntei, only three (the Salakoppak, the Salemurat, and the Sakukuret) have a proper longhouse. Each of those communal houses conserves the principal design of a traditional longhouse and is built off the ground. However, the longhouses in Muntei have a variety of shapes and forms. The largest and newest, owned by *uma* Sakukuret, measures seven metres by 14 metres and stands some seven metres from the ground to the roof-peak. The smallest version, owned by *uma* Salemurat, is only seven metres by ten metres, standing six metres from the ground to the roof. All the longhouses are easily identified as *uma* as they have all the features of a standard longhouse, but they do not quite meet the ideal version, which, it is said, must be an imposing structure and is often referred to as the *uma sabeu* (the great *uma*/the bigger *uma*). In the distant past, the great *uma* is said to have had as many rooms as there were families in the group, while the current *uma* are constructed and occupied by the leader of the group and any unmarried children. Given that the resources and labour required to build great longhouses are limited around the settlement, the communal houses in Muntei are not much bigger than a proper house.

There is another house in the settlement that is similar in size and structure to the longhouse and performs a similar function as a ritual house, but is not always referred to as an *uma*. People often call it the *sapou-uma*. The *sapou-uma* is somehow incomplete, it lacks the features of the *uma*, for example, it lacks a wooden ladder, a veranda, and the main post (*uggla*) is not made from a specific type of wood. The *uma* Samekmek is a very imposing and grand construction, built off the ground on four-metre-high supports (Picture 5). The building has a large and wide *laibok* and a proper *tenga-n-uma*, although without a gangway in front of it. The owner has compartmentalised the middle room into two larger rooms, as in a common house; more importantly, it does not have an *uggla* penetrating into the soil. Furthermore, it is occupied by two families, the family of the leader of the group and his youngest son, indicating that it is used as a *sapou*, i.e. where sexual relations are allowed. Two other *sapou-uma* were built, one by a faction of the Salakkopak and the other, more recently, by a faction of the Sakukuret. Both of these *sapou-uma* have *uggla* penetrating the soil but lack a wooden ladder, a gangway, and a proper *tenga-n-uma*. The Sakukuret's *sapou-uma* has a shiny blue tin roof. The reason why the *sapo-uma* is sometimes called *uma* is because it houses the ancestral heirloom (*bakkat katsaila*) and is used to enact communal ceremonies. Any *sapou-uma* with such objects and having gone through the relevant ritual event is occasionally called an *uma*. Thus, what distinguishes the *uma* from ordinary houses is the store of ancestral heirlooms kept within, in particular the *bakkat katsaila*.

The second type of residence is the *sapou*, best translated as a residential house. A *sapou* is often referred to as *lalep*. A *sapou* is actually the house, a physical entity, where a family lives. It is a confined space within which the most intimate care and protection of a person takes place. The houses both mirror and contrasts with the *uma*. Typically, a house consists of three continuous spaces: a front space (*laibok*) containing a small veranda; a middle room (*tenga-n-sapou*) consisting of a family room or living room and one or more

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Picture 5. The *sapo-uma* of *uma* Samekmek, built during the *nilam* boom in the early 2000s (2013)

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Picture 6. The humble house of a Sabulat family (2013)

compartments (*bilik*) for sleeping and having sexual intercourse (forbidden in the *uma*); and a back space (*bat-n-sapou)* where the kitchen is located. The *laibok* is a platform of varying width and length, used for relaxing on during the day. The essential feature of the house is the kitchen. A house may have two sleeping rooms and no proper veranda, but it must have a hearth. The kitchen is a place for cooking, eating, and participating in innumerable minor domestic tasks. I will discuss this issue later in Chapter 5 to show the importance of food and the presence women in the perpetuation of the family.

Table 3. The Number of Residential Buildings in Muntei

Residential Building	Number
Ritual/Communal Houses	
The *uma* (the communal house)	3
The *Sapou-uma*	3
Residential Houses	
Wooden huts	19
Semi-permanent	123
Brick houses	11
Total	**153**

Initially, houses in Muntei were of a very humble construction. Some of the pioneers remember their first houses literally being a hut, made from bamboo and *ariribuk/nibung* palm (*Oncosperma* sp.), used for sleeping and cooking in and without separate rooms. The OPKM provided a five metre by five metre planned house. A construction contractor was appointed by the project to build the houses and the settlement. The OPKM participants received a very humble house, consisting of a narrow veranda, a sleeping room, and a kitchen. For the most part, the resettlement houses were inhabited for few years. Gradually, people began to expand them as their families grew. As the government took a more relaxed attitude, the resettlement houses were unpacked, moved, or modified. The houses were demolished but their parts were re-used to build new ones. In 2013, the original OPKM houses had entirely disappeared, although some old materials (tin roofs, signs, wood) could still be seen as part of the present houses.

The present houses in Muntei reflect considerable variations in style and design (Figure 6); with three general types recognised in Muntei. The most modest houses are constructed from a mix of bamboo and wood, raised on stilts, with a roof made from sago (Picture 6). This type is built off the ground on supports penetrating the soil. The walls and floor are mainly made from wooden planks, but part of the kitchen floor and walls might use bamboo or *nibung* palm. Most of these houses still feature wooden walls, poles, or flooring and a tin-roof taken from the OPKM houses. The majority of the Saruruk clans and some of the *Sarereiket* in the northern part of the settlement have this type of house. At the other end of the spectrum is a large and more elaborate dwelling, which may be partly built at ground level, with concrete and ceramic floors, brick and wooden walls, a metal roof and glazed windows. In such houses, the visitor's room and veranda usually accommodate a plastic table and chairs and there is a private bathroom inside the house. The family room and kitchen tend to be spacious areas featuring a large table and cabinets for cutlery; the sleeping room is private and contains a large foam mattress and a cupboard for clothes. There are only a few houses like this and generally they are only owned by the wealthiest Mentawaian families and migrants. The largest house of this type has recently been built by a family of senior high school teachers

from *uma* Salakkopak in the western part of the settlement.

Most houses, however, fall between these two extremes and are what I call semi-permanent. The third type is generally built on piles, so it is off the ground, although the supports do not penetrate into the soil but rather are placed upon concrete cornerstones. The floors and the walls are made entirely from wood. The roofs are zinc or asbestos-based materials, although a few houses employ sago-leaves. The veranda is an open room and may have a wooden bench attached to the half-wall. The family room and kitchen are slightly larger than those in the first type, while the kitchen has a combination of a fire pit and a kitchen stove. The basic structure is fundamentally created so it can be improved at a later date and this is the distinguishing feature of this type of house. Most large houses in Muntei departed from the six by ten metres structure expanding into various forms. The flexibility of the semi-permanent house is related to stages in the developmental cycle of the family, their slow but steady economic improvement, and also a combination of the traditional impermanence of the traditional house's structure and the influence of Minangkabau-style housing construction.

Other than residential places, many of the other important features in the settlement are foreign infrastructures: churches, a handful of trading stores, a village office, schools, a football pitch, and a small mosque. The Catholic church is the most important and the largest public building in the settlement, constructed on a large patch of ground in the middle of the settlement (Picture 7). Almost all individuals and families in Muntei have been involved with the church and its activities at one time or another. The church is seen as a collective institution due to its ability to accommodate secular activities. Not only does it host the congregation for Sunday Mass and other special Christian events, but the church is a venue for meetings convened to discuss matters about the hamlets and village. It is also a convenient place for large social gatherings. The youth group uses the church for sporting and recreational activities. The church has the ability to accept traditional activities and practices such as shamanic practices and even supports indigenous beliefs, including the existence of important communal rituals. It is not uncommon on Sundays to see a shaman substituting his daily loin-cloth (*kabit*) for a good pair of trousers, shiny shoes, and his best shirt to attend Mass.

Local shops are another important public venue. Muntei has seven trading shops, all but one owned and run by outsiders. The smallest is owned by a Minangkabau resident who married a local woman. The largest is run by a couple of Niassan and Batak descent. The only Mentawaian who has a store is a member of *uma* Sagari. The number of shops in the settlement is uncommonly high compared to other settlements relative to its population. Muntei is geographically convenient and the shops have made it unnecessary for upstream people to make journeys downriver to Muara Siberut. People can now buy sugar, tobacco, chili, tea, and coffee in Muntei at the same prices as in Muara Siberut, but without paying the extra transportation costs. Recently, the shops have been increasingly important as many government programmes, particularly infrastructure-related projects such as clean water installations, use the stores as a kind of local sub-contractor that provides loans, materials, and credit. The projects help to reinforce the position of shop owners in their capacity as an employer of local people to carry out maintenance and development projects.

Both the elementary and pre-school school buildings are another important focus of daily life in the settlement. Most school-age children (four up to 15 years old) attend classes fairly regularly. The schools are a place for daily formal socialisation among the children, providing learning tools for reading, counting, drawing, colouring, and other basic skills. In particular, the schools introduce the national language and culture under the common Indonesian state elementary school curriculum. Most parents encourage their children to go to school and education is seen as important for the future of the next generation. People see the benefits of a formal education, which provides an awareness of

the wider context in which their lives are lived, as part of the modern Indonesian state, a world beyond the settlement and beyond the Mentawaians' homeland, a world which they perceive as increasingly presenting them with challenges. There is also a prevailing view among the parents that to obtain a better job, or to attain a good life in the future, their children must have as high an education as possible, starting with elementary school.

The village office was built recently (2011), in the middle of the settlement to provide administrative services. It is a small, semi-permanent construction (24 square metres) divided into a room for the officials and a meeting space (Picture 8). Once a week, the village head organises an official meeting with his staff to discuss current government projects and policies. As village funds have significantly increased and the number of government projects has risen after the 2014 Village Law, the village office has become a vibrant place, as people come and go to get official permits, make financial arrangements, or submit complaints. The office is a venue for meetings convened to discuss public affairs, the hamlet's administration, or domestic disputes requiring the mediation of village officials. While there are always one or two village officials in attendance at the office daily, most people prefer to go to the house of the village head or village officials to arrange their paperwork. Most of the time, the office is used as a melting pot for passers-by wanting to have a chat and a cup of sweet coffee with the officials and it offers shelter for people caught in heavy rain or hot sun at midday. Occasionally, it is also deployed as a temporary storage for piles of RASKIN rice or other government hand-outs before distribution.

The mosque is the least important locus for public activities. The number of Muslims in Muntei is small, with only 12 per cent of the 650 people adhering to Islam. This is perhaps because Islam arrived in Muntei later than Catholicism. It arrived via the OPKM. Initially, two or three families from the Salakoppak clan converted during the project. Then, a major shift occurred in the mid-1990s, as two thirds of the members of *uma* Saruruk (nine families) suddenly converted from Catholicism to Islam. The catalyst for this was a bitter dispute between a Saruruk leader and the leader of *uma* Sagari about the position of the head of village and church. The Saruruk men proposed a larger mosque and asked an Islamic organisation in Muara Siberut to rebuild the current one. Initially, at least, the establishment of the mosque provided a focus for the Saruruk clan and other families who did not get along with the Sagari clan. Yet, the mosque is rarely used. Daily evening prayers in the mosque are usually only attended by a Minangkabau cleric posted to Muntei and his family.

The football ground is a minor but regular social space for adult and young men. It is used weekly, on Saturday and Sunday evenings, for playing football and is considered to be an exclusively male arena. The football ground is a lively place around Independence Day, when an inter-village football tournament is organised, and at the end of the year when the settlement has an inter-hamlet football competition. On these days, hundreds of people might stand around the pitch watching a game and socialising with relatives and friends from other settlements enjoying a rare day's entertainment. More recently, the ground is sometimes converted into a big stage for shamans to perform singing, dancing, and ritual offerings.

More than just buildings or sites, the church, local shops, village office, and the football pitch are important loci for socialisation that encourage Muntei residents to engage with their modernisation process, identify their settlement as a collective space, and thus feel a sense of collective belonging. From being initially bound to vertically structured relationships (genealogy) with their *uma*, people have gradually extended to horizontal relations (*Sasabirut-Sarereiket*). Living in Muntei introduces a sense of a community and inserts the distinct principle of locality into genealogy. The principle of locality adds kinship relations and establishes a new and unifying identity as a villager of Muntei and this has expanded residents' self-awareness of being part of a larger regional (part of Mentawai District, West Sumatra

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Picture 7. People attend a Sunday mass in the Catholic Church, the most important public building in Muntei (2018)

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Picture 8. The village office in the centre of the settlement (2019)

Province) or national, identity.

2.3 The Community and Social Relations

The settlement generally lacks any superordinate centre of authority, because traditionally political leadership is non-existent. All decisions related to internal affairs within and between *uma* are made by consensus. Influence and authority accompany age and seniority, but these factors do not necessarily convey greater political powers. For example, the *sikebukkat uma* (leaders of the *uma*) are prominent figures. The leaders coordinate the *uma's* affairs, lead rituals, and vocalise internal decisions. However, every decision is organised through collective processes in which the *sikebbukat* have no final say. Charismatic people and those who are wiser may be given respect and acquire prestige, but no one makes decisions on behalf of the *uma* or represents the *uma* in negotiations with external parties. Political equality is the rule.

The egalitarian principle *within* a social group can only be maintained by unconditional cooperation: all are expected to contribute both their labour and the fruits of their labour (food, money, valuable objects) to the group, particularly during communal ceremonies. The seemingly radical egalitarianism, however, has its loopholes. Some individuals may try to gain social prestige at the expense of the collective interest. This creates ambivalence: cooperation and unconditional solidarity are always accompanied by attempts to seek individual glory. If the two are unbalanced, tension may result. When tension results in a disagreement, communal discussions spanning hours or even days, take place. If the situation cannot be resolved amicably, the group may split. Between *uma*, social relations are similar to those between individuals: dependency and mutual respect are required, and peaceful co-existence is the norm, but there is also a regular attempt to boast one group's prowess and to generate rivalry.

To maintain the balance, people developed non-ritualised and ritualised social relations. Non-ritualised social relations occur daily. Individuals of different *uma* encounter each other to exchange necessities such as chickens, a bunch of taro, or mosquito nets. Such relations are less amicable, more utilitarian, and happen among individuals who consider themselves close in that particular space/time but do not involve *uma* as a whole. Such relations are not passed to subsequent generations. Less frequently, there is also a collective cooperation called *sinuruk*, when a person requests assistance from others to complete a project: erecting a house, transporting canoes from the forest, or enacting healing rituals (*pabetei*). *Sinuruk* is derived from the word *duruk* (together), with a figurative connotation of 'helping each other' or 'working together'. *Sinuruk* always involves the exchange of pork or a communal feast for the assistance. Yet, *sinuruk* does not oblige a reciprocal relation in the future and is not passed onto the next generation.

Ritualised social relations occur between two *umas* and consist of four principal social institutions: marriage (*putalimogat*); on-going alliance (*paabad*); rivalry (*pako*); and brotherhood (*pasiripokat*) (see also Reeves 2001b; Hammons 2010). These relations also demand labour and a labour-products exchange, but all four involve the whole *uma*, require specific rituals, and are inherited by successive generations. The marriage ritual bonds two *uma* in an exogamous setting and, as a result of this bond, the *uma* involved become *saraina* (relatives) and individuals from these clans can cooperate, which prevents rivalry (Schefold 1991; Hammons 2010). People from Muntei tend to marry with others who live within the settlement or in nearby settlements: about 63 per cent of Muntei men and 76 per cent of women married within the settlement, and 57 per cent of men who married outside of the settlement married a woman from the nearest settlement.

Pako (rivalry) occurs when two *uma* each publicly boast about their own abilities, with the explicit aim of humiliating the other. The subject of the boast can be anything from skills, possessions, and knowledge,

to social networks. Such boasts are accompanied by gossip and accusations that devalue the other *uma's* prowess and declare one's own superiority. The most well-known medium of *pako* is a *tuddukat*, which is a set of three slit drums used for a coded form of communication. *Tuddukat* used to be involved in another medium that is now obsolete: a clan involved in *pako* would slaughter many pigs in a religious ceremony (*punen*). After a successful hunt, clan members would hit the *tuddukat* loudly enough to be heard by their rival clans, to communicate the message of their superiority. The *tuddukat*, it is believed, cannot lie because it has spirits that transmit particular messages to rivals.

To end *pako*, the clans involved in the feud must enact a peace ritual (*paabad*), which establishes and perpetuates peaceful co-existence between the two clans. *Paabad* usually occurs after a spontaneous bout of violence that can be triggered by the recent *pako*, but is more commonly triggered by past bloodshed among members of the two clans during a feud involving physical altercation or headhunting raids. Although nearly all the clans in Muntei have a history of rivalry, not all the clans there have alliances (*abad*), mostly because the pacification process during Dutch administration did not promote *paabad*. Many *pako* were also abandoned without *paabad* because of the fear of official punishment, resulting in a sense of resentment about unresolved conflicts and rivalries that leave the existing generation in each *uma* lacking certainty regarding their predecessor's relations with specific *uma*.

I did not encounter a *paabad* in Muntei but participated in the ritual between Samongilailai and Sakalio groups in the neighbouring village of Maileppet. *Paabad* is enacted exclusively by the members of the affected groups (no affines or friends), and consists of two identical rituals, on separate occasions, conducted within each clan's communal house. Each ritual lasts for two days, although in the past, it was said a *paabad* ritual would take a week to several weeks to complete. Despite this change in duration, the *paabad* rituals were one of the largest and most complex rituals I encountered. The structure of the ritual was similar to common communal rituals (*punen*), with the exception of a lavish and enormous communal meal at the end of the process. On the floor, piles of food consisting of pork, chicken, sago, and taro are displayed and consumed animatedly. Luxurious and imported food such as rice, sugar, syrup, biscuits, and bread are subsequently served. While the meal is consumed, men sit facing members of the opposing *uma* and play a game of provocation. If there are no physical repercussions, the ritual is considered successful, and each man establishes a form of ritualised social relationship: friendship (*pasiripokat)* with the former opponent opposite him (*talipok*).

During my fieldwork, the most common ritualised social relationship was marriage. The fierce rivalry and peace ritual were somehow absent. Seven *uma* have a *tuddukat* but I did not see two clans publicly declaring their *pako* and beating their *tuddukat*. It seems that *pako* and *paabad* are no longer practiced, despite some people still remembering unresolved conflicts and rivalries in the distant past. I also detected that certain old rivalries still linger for some clans. This can be sensed through either whispers or indirect competition, such as having a better house or children attending university. People are reluctant to talk about *paabad*, as it touches on sensitive issues such as headhunting and conflicts that involved insults and violence in the distant past. People are also concerned that raising such matters may result in having to pay compensation for their ancestors' mistakes.

While I did not see *pako* and *paabad* directly, I observed the basic principles of both ritualised and non-ritualised social relations. Muntei residents claim that all appropriate relationships involve *paroman*. *Paroman* is a noun used to describe both the act of mutual social relations and the items involved in the relations. The relations are *paroman* when all the parties involved feel that the relations are fair: for example, in a mundane relationship, a coconut tree may be exchanged for a hen and chicks or a mosquito net; time spent clearing a garden may be exchanged for some uncooked pork or boxes of cigarettes. Whether a relationship is *paroman* or not depends on the activity involved, the value of the items exchanged, and

both parties' subjective opinions and the history of the parties' past relations. For infrequent *sinuruk* and ritualised social relations, the items that define the value of the exchange and thus whether the relation is *paroman* or not depend on the item exchanged, particularly fresh pork.

For ritualised social relations, *paroman* always involves valuable objects, mostly in the form of food resources from the gardens (sago, pigs, fruit trees), together with commonly used items such as machetes and mosquito nets. Muntei residents would carefully calculate what a proper item should be in a *paroman* transaction based on the specific moment and the history of the relations between the clans. Hence, every single marriage or peace ritual has its own *paroman*. To achieve *paroman*, all persons and groups require a degree of knowing each other in a particular context. The quality of *paroman* defines and transforms social relations. A proper *paroman* maintains social relations while a poor one generates anger and resentment that can break a relationship and generate conflict. Social relations fail when a person or an *uma* feels that his or their autonomy is disrupted, and this can be described using the term *tulou*, the opposite of *paroman*. *Tulou* describes an unfair or improper social action, and refers to items involved in the payment of compensation after such a social action.

Incorporation into the state administration has complicated ritualised social relations. The introduction of institutions and external authorities beyond family and *uma* has created new hierarchal relations (Persoon 1988; Schefold 1991). The installment of the head of village or hamlets and other form of government officials introduced alien political forces and complicated any provisional equal relations that might have been achieved by a semi-autonomous customary regime. While state intervention intensified during the New Order regime and especially after the establishment of Kepulauan Mentawai district (Eindhoven 2019), the authority of government officials expanded, not only to facilitate development, but also to connect local people with external actors.

2.4 Gardening and Complementary Economy

Forest gardening, fishing, hunting, and collecting semi-domesticated plants and animals are the backbone of the local economy, supplemented by the addition of cash crops. People in Muntei prioritise gardening (*mumone*) over all their other activities. People go daily to the gardens (*pumonean*) for cultivating and harvesting staple food (sago, taro, and bananas), vegetables (cassava leaves, ferns), annual and perennial fruits (pineapple, durian, mango, jackfruit, etc.), and cash crops such as coconuts and cacao. Medicinal plants are also gathered in the garden. A Mentawaian garden is a kind of shifting cultivation system. The Mentawaian's forest gardens have been described elsewhere (Darmanto 2006; Persoon 2001; Darmanto and Persoon 2020), so this section will not provide an exhaustive account but only detail the general features of the garden in relation to food production.

Basically, a garden is cultivated by an individual family. The cultivation cycle of a garden is, for the most part, not seasonally determined. The establishment of a garden consists of two complementary cycles: *tinungglu* and *mone*. *Tinungglu* is the first stage, associated with the cultivation of tubers, vegetables, and spices, while the *mone* is the final stage, associated with the cultivation of fruit trees (Pictures 9 & 10). *Tinungglu-mone* is a cycle that produces a kind of integrated shifting cultivation system (cf. Conklin 1957) within the tropical rainforest of Siberut. The *tinungglu* cycle begins with the clearing of a small patch of forest or an old forest garden. The unique feature characterising the system is the absence of fire during the first stage of cultivation. Fallen trees, weeds, grass, wild vegetation, and other debris are not burnt; instead, people use unwanted vegetation as mulch, releasing its biomass into the land. The inhabitants of Muntei believe that felled trees contain and emanate an enormously dangerous power (*bajou*) that can

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Picture 9. A newly opened garden (*tinungglu*) is filled with banana and tubers (2013)

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Picture 10. The mature garden (*mone*) is full of a combination of fruit trees, staple food (sago, tubers, banana), and spices (lemongrass, ginger, sugarcane) (2012)

harm people, and the 'hot' element from the fire can trigger the release of *bajou* from the slashed plants, which may cause serious illnesses. From the ecological perspective, there is a clear reason why fire is unwanted. People are not seed cultivators and rely on sago, tubers, and bananas. These sources of staple foods compete well with the weeds and grass that grow quickly in the opened areas due to the high rainfall and wet climate and also lack serious natural diseases. Fire is unnecessary to dry and give additional nutrients for the crops.

Once the cleared vegetation has withered somewhat, the forest floor is further cleared to enable the planting of food crops. A low-lying area close to a creek or small flowing stream is fenced and reserved for a *pugettekat*. Various types of edible cassava (*gobik*) and banana (*magok*) are always the first crops to be planted, apparently on account of the fact that these plants can yield a harvest quickly. These are followed by several types of sweet potatoes. A few sago sprouts might also be planted in damp areas. Along with food crops, various useful species of bamboo, rattan, sugar cane, spices, medicinal and ornamental plants, and plants that produce various poisons used in hunting and fishing are also cultivated. The tubers and bananas mature quickly and can be harvested after about four to six months. The first harvest marks the fresh garden (*tinungglu*) phase. A small ritual is commonly enacted as part of the harvest, to mark the cycle of cultivation. In roughly the first two to five years, the *tinungglu* has been partially or wholly cleared and re-cleared. This is a period when productivity is almost negligible. During this time, attention may be paid to the gardens, e.g. cutting back undergrowth, transplanting of trees, and the planting more seedlings. Other rapidly growing species may be added at this stage, such as pineapples, chili, cucumber, squash, eggplant, and others ornamental plants.

The intercropping of a wide variety of food crops and other useful plant species during the *tinungglu* requires simultaneous efforts, though no specific sequence of planting is acknowledged. Ideally, the garden should be visited and tended each day. Since the gardens are scattered and rather far from the settlement (usually several hours by foot or canoe), people usually build a hut on site. The huts, which allow people to reside at their forest gardens semi-permanently, range from simple structures meant only to provide shelter from the frequent bouts of rain, to structures that resemble a humble wooden house. The hut is an important, albeit temporary, shelter since it provides a pivot for others subsistence activities such as fishing, searching for rattan, gathering wild food, making canoes, and other related projects. The hut is also strongly associated with the overall pattern of working during the day, which has been adopted through mission-introduced schema. With the exception of school-age children and young mothers, nearly all adults spend their weekdays in their gardens and return to the settlement at the weekend. Basically, there is no gardening undertaken on a Sunday, which is a special day reserved for church-going and socialising. Nonetheless, a few elders stay fairly permanent in their gardens, especially those who have pigs to tend to.

When production from the tubers and bananas begins to decline, the seeds and seedlings of various fruits are brought to the gardens. The progeny of fruit trees—tangy langsat (Lansium sp), creamy *jackfruit* (*Artocarpos integer*), sweet mangostene (*Garcinia mangostana*), sour *mango* (Mangifera sp), and rambutan (*Nephelium sp*)—are planted at the same time as three species of durian. The cultivation of fruit seeds is, for the most part, neither seasonally determined, nor rigorously planned. When fruits trees are growing, the gardens enter a semi-fallow stage. Certainly, some edibles plants are still being exploited but, in terms of structure, the garden is undergoing regeneration. After a few years, crops like cassava and bananas are gradually replaced by fruit trees. When the fruit trees, particularly durian, dominate the canopy and the vegetation, the cycle of *mone* is completed. This is when the *tinungglu* becomes *pumonean* (a mature garden). When the fruit trees are about to yield, a small hut might be constructed, complete with a pig hut (*pusainakat)* and chicken hut (*pugogoupat*).

Gardening in Muntei does not require the cooperative work that is a common feature of most seed cultivators in the forest ecosystems throughout Southeast Asia and beyond (Dove 1985; Ellen 2012; Cairns 2015). Collective work and the exchange of labour are unknown to people. The essential work in the gardens is done exclusively by the nuclear family. For the most part, there is no fixed labour division. Every woman and man knows all of the basic gardening skills. Both men and women participate in planting, tending, making fences, or collecting fruit—with men performing the heavier or more dangerous tasks, such as cutting big trees and climbing durian trees.

The average garden is no more than 0.5 hectares, yet every family has a number of gardens in various phases of development at any one time. Most families have at least four plots, typically consisting of different plants distributed over a wide geographic area. Garden produce (most commonly sago, banana, and taro), chickens, and pigs make up by far the largest proportion of people's diet. The garden is primarily a place for subsistence needs. Therefore, the people replenish their gardens before their food runs out: once a mature sago palm is felled or a bunch of taro is harvested, people immediately cultivate the sprouts of the sago or the stalks of taro to replace them. Food sufficiency is of the utmost importance, and a lack of food is shameful.

Integration of Cash Crops

Some people have incorporated commercial crops in parts of their garden. Traditionally, coconut was a subsistence crop equal in importance to durian, sago, or jackfruit. The palm is cultivated along with fruits trees around the settlement and used more as a cultural item, exchanged in ritualistic social exchanges and as a daily additional comestible item for livestock and humans. For centuries, coconut has been the most important small-scale cash crop exchanged with traders for imported goods from the mainland. Coconut became a main of cash crop after the demand for dried coconut (*copra*) arose and with the establishment of a Minangkabau traders' settlement during the 1940s. The demand encouraged other people from different clans to cultivate coconuts in the coastal zones in the eastern part of the island. A few families from *uma* Sagari, Sarorougout, and Saudeinuk joined together to establish coconut groves and were already selling copra to traders in the mid-1950s. However, political turmoil during the first two decades of Indonesian independence disrupted the export of copra. During the regional rebellion in West Sumatra (1955-1957), most of the traders were afraid to buy copra and the important ports and harbours were controlled by the central government. Indeed, most of the coconut gardens were abandoned during this time.

In the late 1960s, when regional politics were relatively stable, the demand for copra started to flourish again. This was the time when the Government of West Sumatra had a more coherent policy towards the islands and one symbol of being modern was cultivating and trading cash crops. In 1967, the representatives of the nine *umas* in Siberut Hulu were invited by the Head of the Sub-district (*camat*) of Siberut for a meeting in Muara Siberut. The meeting provided guarantees that land on the Islands of Masilok and Parakbatu could be used by people from Siberut Hulu and Maileppet for cultivating coconuts. The meeting also introduced cloves to them. Cloves were seen as a crop that would encourage stable and permanent cultivation, while being a less destructive alternative to the existing shifting cultivation system. Initially, Muntei people were reluctant to adopt cloves; however, in the mid-1970s, they saw clove growers from Katurei and Taileleu villages and a number of Minangkabau people earning a lot of money from selling them and soon began to adopt and cultivate cloves themselves. People realised that cloves produced good yields when they were exposed to sunlight, a dry wind, and when cultivated closer to the sea. Moreover, as stated above, searching for suitable sites for clove gardens was the main reason why people moved to Muntei.

The decades of the 1980s and the early 1990s saw the price of cloves and copra remain high and relatively stable. Pioneer families could make a significant fortune from a good harvest of seasonal cloves and perennial coconuts. During the first half of the 1990s, families were able to send their children to high school and universities in Padang and to renovate and expand their OPKM houses. Their success provoked newcomers from Rereiket to find land for clove and coconut gardens. Others followed them to *nusa* and devoted themselves to making coconut and clove gardens. However, when the latter began to cultivate their land, the price of cacao and cloves declined.

When clove prices plummeted during the mid-1990s, patchouli oil (*nilam*) became a new favourite crop. *Nilam* is not an exotic plant; it is used for medicinal purposes. An alkaloid compounds is obtained from its fresh leaves through distillation and it has become a valuable exported item. The plummeting price of cloves and copra encouraged people to cultivate this crop intensively in their existing gardens. Patchouli became popular as it can be harvested within a relatively short period. Especially during the economic crises in 1996 and 1998, and the rise of the US dollar against the Indonesian rupiah (IDR), the price for patchouli rose exponentially and market demand was also high. In a couple of years, nearly all families abandoned their clove gardens and involved themselves in *nilam* cultivation. There was a rush to clear forest areas to plant this during that time. Families could sell a litre of *nilam* oil for 1.5 million IDR per week. This brought a significant fortune. The majority of the people would say that their tin roofs and permanent houses came from selling *nilam*. As with cloves and copra, the boom in *nilam* did not last. In the early 2000s, people abandoned their *nilam* cultivation and started to try cacao.

Cacao is the latest crop to be successfully introduced into Muntei's gardens. Initially, in the late 1990s, a handful of families from Puro bought and planted the crop in the shade of their fruit trees by the Mara River, but did not take care of it. They planted it alongside their existing sago gardens, coconut groves, and fruit trees. A succession of harvests coincided with good prices for cacao on the global market. The collapse of cacao production in Sulawesi and West Africa, due to civil war and disease in the late 1990s and early 2000s, changed the fate of cacao. In 2002, a handful of pioneers from the neighbouring settlement of Puro sold their first harvest, earned decent profits and began to enjoy significantly improved living conditions in the years that followed. Soon, cacao became a favourite crop and it was widely adopted in the mid-2000s. In fact, the impact of cacao was still obvious during my fieldwork and offered a glimpse of how a commercial crop can affect food production and social values. The cultivation of cacao contributed to the changing valuation of sago gardens and the decline in keeping pigs, as I will describe in Chapters 3 and 6.

Beyond gardening, there are few opportunities for earning cash. A small number of people obtain a regular income as government employees (teachers, nurses, or other roles) or work as house builders, carpenters, or drive motorcycles for hire. A few others work outside the village for NGOs, in the tourist industry, and for affluent families on the mainland. Having a salary or regular income is desirable and preferable. This is why most people send their children to school, hoping that, in the future, the children will become civil servants or secure regular paid jobs in the town. However, this preference does not necessarily shake-up people's orientation towards forest gardens. Most of Muntei's residents swing their machetes, harvest cacao, or gather taro and fruits in the garden on a daily basis. There has been a consistency in these gardening activities of gardening. That is not to say that Muntei's economy is unchanged, rather that the basic value of gardening persists.

2.5 Religion and Mission Influences

Statistically, all Muntei residents are either Catholic (82%) or Muslim (12%) (BPS 2015). The remainder

belong to other Christian denominations. In Muntei, Catholicism constitutes the major social identification. The Catholic Church goes beyond religion, performing important economic and social roles. The Church provided schooling and other social services long before the state administration did, sending people to the mainland to learn nursing, carpentry, farming, and teaching. This resulted in people acquiring skills that gave them the opportunity to earn a regular income. The Church itself is a new sociopolitical institution, providing social prestige for those who work with it. Physically, the church offers a venue and new opportunities for social interaction, such as the weekly Sunday service that is attended by most of the community. The other reason why most people chose Catholicism may be because of the persistence of their indigenous beliefs. Under the shade of the Catholic Church, traditional religion has not abruptly diminished and, to some extent, it has even been conserved.

The traditional religion is widely known as *arat sabulungan*. Most Indonesian writers and Italian missionaries call this the religion of leaves (Sihombing 1979; Coronese 1986, 36; Rudito 1999; 2013; Delfi 2012). This is due to the importance of leaves (*bulug*) in all rituals. A bundle of leaves (*gaud*) mediates between the world of humans and the world of spirits. However, most anthropologists argue that the word *sabulungan* is derived from *pasibulu*, a verb meaning to offer or to make an offering (Schefold 1973; Kruyt 1979; Reeves 2001; Hammons 2010; Tulius 2012). *Pasibulu* is aimed exclusively towards the spirits. It involves leaves, tobacco, or other *buluat* (special offerings) that have one or more of these functions: mediators; gifts; sacrificial objects; or offerings. *Arat sabulungan* is the belief in making offerings to the spirits. During my research, I witnessed the latter interpretation: my interlocutors sometimes offered a small piece of meat to ancestor spirits without the need for leaves, while others offered cloth, a pinch of tobacco, or coconut oil to the spirits of the forest. While leaves are an important part of *sabulungan*, they have only a superficial relation to the core concept of *sabulungan*.

The basic principle of *sabulungan* is that every entity has both a body (*tubu*) and a *simagre* (spirit), and emanates power (*bajou*). The spirit constitutes a subject and defines the essence of beings. The spirit defines the natural and invisible quality of a subject, while the body manifests the subject. The spirit indicates the movement of a certain subject that can be seen through the body. The unpredictable nature of a storm or the sea, for example, is because their spirits are moving. Between the body and spirit lie two different worlds: the visible world, the domain of the body and the invisible world, the domain of spirits. The two worlds are neither attached, nor separated but constitute a person, either a human or a non-human person (Schefold 1973). The existence of spirits creates a fundamental problem for humans. In order to live (providing food, garden, or shelter) humans have to confront the spirits. Humans will encounter a spirit when they enter a forest, cut trees, clear bush, or when they are at the sea. This leads to contact with non-human subjects, including their bodies and spirits. As each entity has its own *bajou*, it is dangerous for humans to have direct contact with these other entities. The *bajou* of any being can do harm and cause illness. Hence humans cannot use another's body as a simple object, but they must treat him/her as a complete person. This potentially generates a troubled relation because all spirits have their own perspectives and wishes.

It is, therefore, very important for humans to understand and take into account the wishes of their own spirits. A human spirit could be attracted to the domain of non-human spirits while hunting, fishing, or tending to forest gardens. Without a spirit, the body is in a miserable state. If the spirit drifts too far away from the body and has no appetite for life, it may move to the world of *saukkui* (good spirits) or the world of *sanitu* (bad spirits). When the spirit fails to be called back through a ritual, the person will become sick and eventually die and the body becomes a corpse. Activities and rituals have been developed to keep one's spirit close and fulfil one's spirit's desires, including indulging in good food, expressing creativity through decoration and ornamentation, singing and dancing.

The association of the spirits of ancestors with life and death makes them crucial. Ritual offerings are

required to ensure good relations and perspectives between living humans and ancestral spirits. Arguably the single-most important activity constituting *sabulungan*, rituals can be either an elaborate religious ceremony (*punen)* or a mundane activity. *Punen* and other rituals share the aim of communion between living human spirits and ancestral ones. The entire *punen* process is about achieving the communal communion of the living-human entity, ancestral spirits, and unknown spirits in undomesticated spaces (rivers, the sea, forests). *Punen* is kind of a social renewal, in which the connected entities (humans, ancestors, and wild spirits) re-establish and restore the balance in their relationship (Schefold 1973). Since this subject has been researched in detail (Loeb1928; 1929b; Kruyt 1979; Schefold 1973, 1980; Reeves 2001; Hammons 2010), I will not add anything further here, but I will describe the *punen* procession in Chapter 5 to highlight the importance the role of food in making, establishing, and strengthening that social renewal.

While *punen* is the most important event for making an offering to a spirit, it is not the only event. Everyday meals, especially when there is meat served (pork or chicken), always begin with a discreet ritual: the head of the family quietly places a small piece of meat under his feet and stomps on it until it disintegrates and falls out between the gaps in the floorboards. While he does this, he usually whispers an invitation under his breath '*ngemet*', (welcome) to please the spirits who enter the house. The piece of meat is considered the ancestral spirits' fair share (*otcai*). This practice is common, even for families that nominally and statistically belong to other religions, and even for those who explicitly deny their belief in spirits. Sometimes, people do mix this practice with a rather formal prayer (*panindou*) according to Catholic practice.

2.6 Continuity and Transformation

Forty years ago, the settlement's main road was a muddy footpath cutting across sago gardens and between fruit trees. Today, a two-kilometre-long and four-metre-wide permanent, concrete road spans the village from the south to the last houses in the north, while a two-metre-wide concrete road branches out from the main road and is continuously being lengthened (it is currently 4,000 metres). In addition to the housing developments I have described above, another significant change can be seen in the modes of transportation. Nowadays, it is common to see a number of motorcycles coming to and going from the settlement. At night, a line of parked motorcycles stretches along the main road, as the majority of the owners do not have a proper parking space at their houses. In 2004, there was only one motorcycle in the settlement, but in less than a decade, almost every house has at least one motorcycle (Table 4). Two decades ago, it was not imaginable that some people would have a car or truck. Recently, two public taxis, owned by the village government, a truck, and a private car can be seen on Muntei's roads. Another transportation device that shows the change is the number of outboard motors, either a lighter inboard motor (*pompong*) or outboard engine (*spit*). In the early 2000s, people were still paddling their small canoe to get to the small islets (*nusa*) to tend their cloves, coconuts, and pigs. During my fieldwork, paddling a canoe to the islets was considered to be work for poor people.

The other recognisable change is the number of entertainment devices in the settlement. Almost all the houses in Muntei have access to electricity and two thirds of them (109) have a television, including a CD/DVD player and parabolic antenna. The number is striking as the 2007 government census stated that only six families, including migrants and trading store owners, owned such a device (BPS 2008). A television set is not the only form of entertainment. It is not unusual to see young people walking along the road or going to school with earphones, listening to music from their smartphones. Since

2015, and the decision of the Ministry of Information to provide a free Wi-Fi hotspot in the settlement, a smartphone has been a 'must have' device.

Table 4. Some Indicators of Social and Economic Transformation in Muntei

Indicators	Number		
	1985[1]	2005[2]	2015[3]
Concrete roads	-	300 m	7,300 m
The communal house	-	3	3
Brick house	-	1	11
Motorcycle	-	7	142
Television	-	6	111
Outboard motor	2	13	73
Church	1	1	2
Car/truck	-	-	4
Trading store	-	3	7

[1 & 2] Oral history, [3] Fieldwork

A less visible transformation has occurred in the domain of social relationships. The establishment of Muntei as a government settlement and its incorporation into the global market has introduced new sociopolitical institutions. These installed institutions, such as the village head (*kepala desa*) or hamlet head (*kepala dusun*) have gradually intensified the presence of external power and authorities. Schools, churches, and other new institutions have become the most important places for socialisation, reducing the role of the ritual house. With stronger state intervention, the role of these installed institutions has significantly increased, and will likely increase further, particularly with the intensification of government projects.

The transformation brought by the market is not only represented by the number of shops, the market has also reconfigured the traditional schema of daily activities and social relations. Producing cash crops for the market has transformed Muntei's residents from subsistence farmers, processing sago or keeping pigs, into petty commodity producers. People now expend part of their labour on non-*paroman* social relations, since they have an increasing buy-and-sell relationship with traders. Cash-crop production has stretched existing social relations, because the time now spent producing copra or cacao for the market and conducting exchanges with shopkeepers reduces the time available for producing pigs, fruit trees, or other goods necessary for their ritualised social relations. Cash-crop production has also pressured the traditional mode of pig-keeping and forest gardening, which I will describe in Chapters 3 and 6. At the same time, the presence of the market offers a rare opportunity for women. The demand for vegetables, taro, bananas, and freshwater animal food (food associated with women) has been steadily increasing, encouraging Muntei women to earn an income and to expand their own social networks.

Social Variation and Differentiation

Living in a government settlement has produced internal social variations. *Sarereiket* tend to have an inland-oriented livelihood strategy, combining pig-keeping, traditional forest gardening, and limited

cacao production. In contrast, *Sasabirut* tend to rely on producing cash crops. They focus on coconut and clove production. The women of *Sasabirut* have more connections with the market through their selling of garden produce and by providing the traditional palm-roofs demanded by the surfing industry. In term of politics, *Sarereiket* rarely occupy new political positions and institutions, be it the head of a hamlet or village, a church or other village institutions. Most, if not all, of the positions created by the new sociopolitical institutions are occupied by *Sasabirut*, in particular *uma* Sagari and Salakoppak. Yet, *Sarereiket* take pride in their ability to maintain and practice certain aspects of their traditional culture. Shamans performing healing rituals and providing entertainment with their dancing and singing are from *uma* Sakaliou, Satoleuru, and Siritoited. The shamans are frequently visited and contacted by tourists, researchers, and government officials who want to know about their traditional practices.

Situated between the above two variations, a few families from *Sarereiket* and *Sasabirut* have combined their contrasting livelihood strategies in an attempt to strengthen their cultural and political importance in the village. *Uma* Samekmek have combined coconut production and traditional pig-keeping, but also their skills at making houses. The group has members who occupy positions in the village administration. At the same time, there are a number of *Sasabirut* families who do not follow their counterpart's livelihood strategy. Similarly, a few members of Saruruk and Sabulat are not involved in cash crop-oriented production or traditional gardening, but rely mostly on paid labour and seasonal jobs, such as being a carpenter or tourist guide.

The social transformation of Muntei residents has been accompanied by social differentiation. Among the clearest indicators are the development and the quality of the houses and the ability of families to send their children to mainland universities. The simplest and smallest houses represent the current socioeconomic status of the occupant and their lack of socioeconomic mobility. The newest and grandest homes symbolise the emergence of the new wealth brought by the government and access to the market and are a reflection of the introduction of mainland house designs and the increasing influence of migrants in the settlement. The increasing presence of brick houses is another indicator, demonstrating the socioeconomic status of the occupant.

'Always Those Uma Who Run the Settlement'

Social differentiation is frequently articulated when people talk about the most successful and dominant group in the settlement. The emergence of the Sagari and Salakoppak clans as the dominant *uma* in the settlement is perceived as symbolic of the social inequality in the community. The members of these two clans have dominated the positions created by the new, state-introduced sociopolitical institutions in the settlement, i.e. village officials, the school, and church.

The status of Sagari in the settlement started with the appointment of Aman Bruno Sagari as the Head of Muntei Village after the OPKM (Kawilarang 1976). His father was one of the first people living in the old settlement to accept the missionaries in the 1950s and was a host for Catholic teachers in Siberut Hulu. Aman Bruno was among the first Mentawaians to receive a modern education from the Catholic missionaries. He was a pioneer *guru katekis* (Catholic teacher) and in his youth he travelled around the island, accompanying missionaries proselytising Catholicism. He gained his authority from his ability to read and write the national language as well as having knowledge of the local customs, especially the genealogies and land stories collected during his duties as a teacher. Over time, Aman Bruno gained the skills to deal with various state institutions and acquired knowledge of development. His mediatory position enabled him to gain both support from state officers and credibility from his fellow residents.

Eventually, he was appointed as the village head in 1981, when Muntei was established as an official

village. He held this position for more than two decades (1981-2003). During his tenure, he profited from his relations with various government institutions in West Sumatra. The political authority given to him by the state enabled him to accumulate economic gains from delivering development projects and to expand his own social network and alliances. In the process, he gained experience and built his reputation, increased his public acceptance, and took the opportunity to establish his personal authority. Having gained a degree of power, he appointed his cousin to the post of village secretary and other social allies were appointed to positions in the new village's government. He was salaried, albeit infrequently and in a limited manner, and put in charge of all the development packages from the government. Using his network and influence, he and his extended family were the first to receive development handouts.

When Aman Bruno stepped down from the position of village head, his cousin Aman Paulina replaced him and administered the village for two periods (2003-2011). Other cousins of Aman Bruno were appointed as the head of a hamlet between 1997-2009. Currently, the position of village head (2015-) is held by Aman Bruno's second son. He won the election for village head for a five-year period (2015-2020) after being appointed as the head of a youth group (*ketua pemuda*). Another son who had a university education on the mainland became a teacher in a local senior high school and replaced his older brother as *ketua pemuda*. He quickly became one of the local church's officers. In short, from the football club, heads of hamlets to Mudika (the Catholic Youth organisation), Sagari men have always been candidates.

While the Sagari are prominent in political positions, Salakoppak men are renowned for their positions as teachers and church administrators. The Salakoppak consist of 14 households, divided into three factions. The leading figure is Aman Yan. He was initially a volunteer teacher for teachers who did not understand the Mentawai language. He was later chosen to be a teacher as he was one of only a handful of Muntei residents who could read and write in the national language. After years of dedication, he secured a permanent job and became the first Mentawaian civil servant in the settlement. This position allowed him to acquire knowledge of governance, expand his social network, and assert his local authority on the educational system.

The position of teacher and civil servant generates social status for Aman Iyan. He is also *bajak gereja* (head of a local church), largely responsible for Church's activities. He renovated houses and bought modern devices (motorcycle, outboard motor). Nonetheless, he spent most of his fortune on education and has been extremely successful. Six out of his seven children graduated from universities on the mainland, five of them becaming teachers and securing permanent jobs. Muntei's heads of hamlets and local teachers have always been Salakoppak men. The Salakoppak also have a reputation for frequent and large rituals, supported partly by their prowess in turtle hunting and partly through contributions of wealthy persons such as Aman Yan.

From the Sagari and Salakoppak, fellow residents learn about social stratification and inequality. Stratification is clearly visible from their houses. Prominent Sagari and Salakoppak men live in brick houses with zinc roofs and cement floors; most of their children attend universities on the mainland. Following the importance of kinship, the kinsmen of Sagari and Salakkopak are always the first to be approached by external authorities and to benefit from any development projects. Most non-agricultural jobs in the settlement are held by the Sagari and Salakoppak. The two clans dominate positions in the newly installed sociopolitical institutions and become state employees with high status, desirable positions, and influence among their fellow villagers.

People from a small *uma* and not-so-prominent family always have words for the Sagari and the Salakoppak. On the day of the election of Peining Butet as head of hamlet, Aman Tomas from Sabulat was mumbling:

> This is the settlement of Sagari and Salakoppak. We just have two candidates: one is from Salakoppak and the other is from Sagari. We could not promote our candidate as we would definitely lose the election. Sagari and Salakoppak are bigger clans and have more people to vote. They hold all positions in our village. Sagari are arrogant and want to dictate other people's lives while Salakppak are taking all government jobs in the settlement. They want to run the settlement.

While Aman Tomas complained about the domination of Salakoppak and Sagari clans, he also admired and respected their success and he aspires to be as prominent and important as the Sagari and Salakoppak people. He hoped to send his children away to be educated and, ultimately, to secure government jobs, as the Salakoppak and Sagari have done. Apparently, the domination of Salakoppak and Sagari have been a source of both admiration and envy. The success of these clans are seen both as an indicator of the possibility of becoming prosperous and as the sign of the emergence of social differentiation and inequality. Muntei residents have recognised that certain individuals or families have more power and authority, some have more skills and wealth, while others have less. As Aman Tomas, most of Muntei's residents feel that living in the settlement does not provide equal opportunities. The emergence of social differentiation is a key social element prompting people's claims that they are hungry and no longer eating together, the subject of further analysis in Chapter 7.

Despite significant changes in the physical appearance and social variations and differentiation of their settlement, Muntei residents try to maintain the basic aspects of social life. While the state and the market have brought significant changes, ritualised and non-ritualised social relations have survived in a variety of forms. A significant degree of ritual and political autonomy at clan level is visibly preserved. Pigs and durian trees might not be as frequently exchanged as in the past, but *paroman* and *tulou* have remained basic principles that encompass all social relations. People may no longer have open *pako* by boasting about their pigs and rituals, but they quietly compete in the realms of education, jobs, and positions in the hamlets or Church.

2.7 Daybreak to Darkness[4]

A typical day in Muntei starts before the first light of dawn: people slowly awaken as birds start chirping and roosters begin crowing. The women are the first to begin work: burning firewood, preparing to cook. One woman selects a coconut, cracks open the shell, and grates it on a simple electric machine; the rhythmic grating sound reverberates throughout the settlement. She sets aside some grated coconut for use in the afternoon meal's curry, and gives the rest to the chickens. A group of women transport bunches of taro, bananas, and vegetables to the market on a push-cart—their giggles can be heard from the main road nearby. Men stroll across the river to feed chickens and pigs with grated coconut and sago pith, throwing shadows upon the houses that they pass. As the sun rises and the sky grows pink, men and children languidly settle on floors or benches on their verandas, while reluctant young girls clean the dishes and pots from the last evening's meal.

The sun rises higher and filters through the canopy of durian trees in the hills. By now, inside the houses, women have begun to cook: some put sago flour in sago leaves (*kapurut*) or bamboo (*siokbuk*) and roast it over a fire, others peel and chop taro or cassava to boil or fry, sprinkling them with grated coconut. School-age children and teenagers shower in simple bathrooms behind houses or bathe in a nearby stream. When the tubers and sago are ready, young girls put them on the veranda along with

a pot of sweet tea. One unfortunate family does not have any taro or bananas today, which triggers the children to hurry to a nearby trader for some biscuits or instant noodles. Another family chooses to breakfast on leftover rice from the day before. Men prompt all the family members to sit, and the morning meal is enjoyed together.

The school-age children and teenagers walk towards their schools soon after breakfast. Some adults head toward their gardens: the women bring a small machete, a paddle, and a small rattan basket containing snacks and a bottle of water. The men carry a rattan basket containing roasted sago, rice, and sugar. A group of young men, swinging machetes, go upstream to clear the way for the planned road's construction or to do some work on a government project. Other women go in a group to the rivers or estuaries with small baskets and big nets to fish or gather mollusks in the mangrove forest. Later, some meander through the gardens around the settlement, quietly inspecting their coconut trees and discussing this year's upcoming durian season. An older woman brings her grandchildren to collect sago grubs from an over matured palm. Others, with one or two chickens in a mat, stroll off to the settlement upriver to visit family or friends and attend a communal ceremony. Mothers with young children remain in their house to watch their children. Still others remain at home to dry or guard areca nuts or cacao beans.

The settlement seems deserted during the day. The sound of chainsaws cutting down big trees resounds from *leleu* somewhere beyond the settlement. One or two Minangkabau fishermen can be heard touting their catch around the village. Village officials and their entourage from town inspect a freshwater installation project: they ride their roaring motorcycles up and down the road and make occasional stops to ask adults for feedback about the current development project. The voices of children at the elementary school and the bustle of commerce at the local shops provide the only regular hubbub at this hour of the day. People from upstream bring cacao beans, rattan, low-quality agarwood, and live pigs to trade with the shopkeepers, and keep the shops humming until late afternoon. In Mara River, a number of men check the boundary of disputed land and invite shamans to perform a ritual asking the ancestor to pronounce who the true claimant is.

In the late afternoon, the settlement comes alive again. Women return, their heads bent under the weight of bamboo poles or baskets loaded with food harvested from their gardens. Their husbands accompany them, carrying heavy fruits, dried coconuts, fresh cacao beans, or a sack of cloves. Others transport bunches of bananas, sago leaves, rattan, or heavy timber by canoe to build a new house. As the sun sinks behind the sago trees, an orange dusk settles over the village. Tardy teenagers return home late to avoid the housework. When darkness falls, people light their houses and play pop music on a video player. In the kitchen, women prepare an evening meal. Young girls help their mothers, sweeping the rattan mat that covers the floor, place plates on the mat, and set out roasted sago. Children are dispatched to find or call for missing members of the family. The men soon come into the kitchen, breaking a bamboo pole containing steamed fish and shrimps that were gathered in the river near the garden. Others in the family consume the leftover pork from a communal feast. After dinner, young girls swiftly set aside the plates.

As night falls, men enjoy smoking on the veranda. Children watch television or do homework. Two men walk in the shadow of the banana trees, seeking catfish or hunting bats. Other men separate clove flowers from their leaves or smear their arrows with new poisonous concoctions. The women sit with the men to perform separate tasks: fixing their fishing nets or weaving rattan mats. A supper of chopped pineapple may be served. A group of men and women go to the head of the hamlet's house to attend a meeting. Unmarried girls finish their tasks quickly so that they can ask permission to go to the church and learn a new song. Soon, their giggles are accompanied by the twang of a guitar and

young men singing. The ringing of a bell and the singing of a shaman marks the beginning of a healing ritual in a house near the river, together with the howling of sacrificed pigs. A few friends may gather to sit on the veranda, sipping coffee and chatting animatedly about their canoes or gardens, gossiping about marital infidelity or rumours of corrupt village officials. Elders prefer to exchange stories about their ancestors' land claims, headhunts, or past migrations. Everyone exchanges stories deep into the night, until the late moon slowly climbs up over the hill. As people retire to their houses, the settlement becomes peaceful and still.

3
Plenty of *Kat*, Lack of *Iba*: The Availability of and Access to Edible Resources

This chapter will describe and present a variety of ecological and quantitative data to demonstrate the availability and the access to food resources around the settlement. This chapter starts with the *emic* category of ecosystem. Understanding how people use the natural environment and create specific zones will enable us to examine the complex relations between Muntei residents and the environment, the pattern of resources' exploitation, and in particular, food availability and the access to food resources. The following sections will describe the availability of and the access to a wide range of food resources from plants and animals as well as imported food.

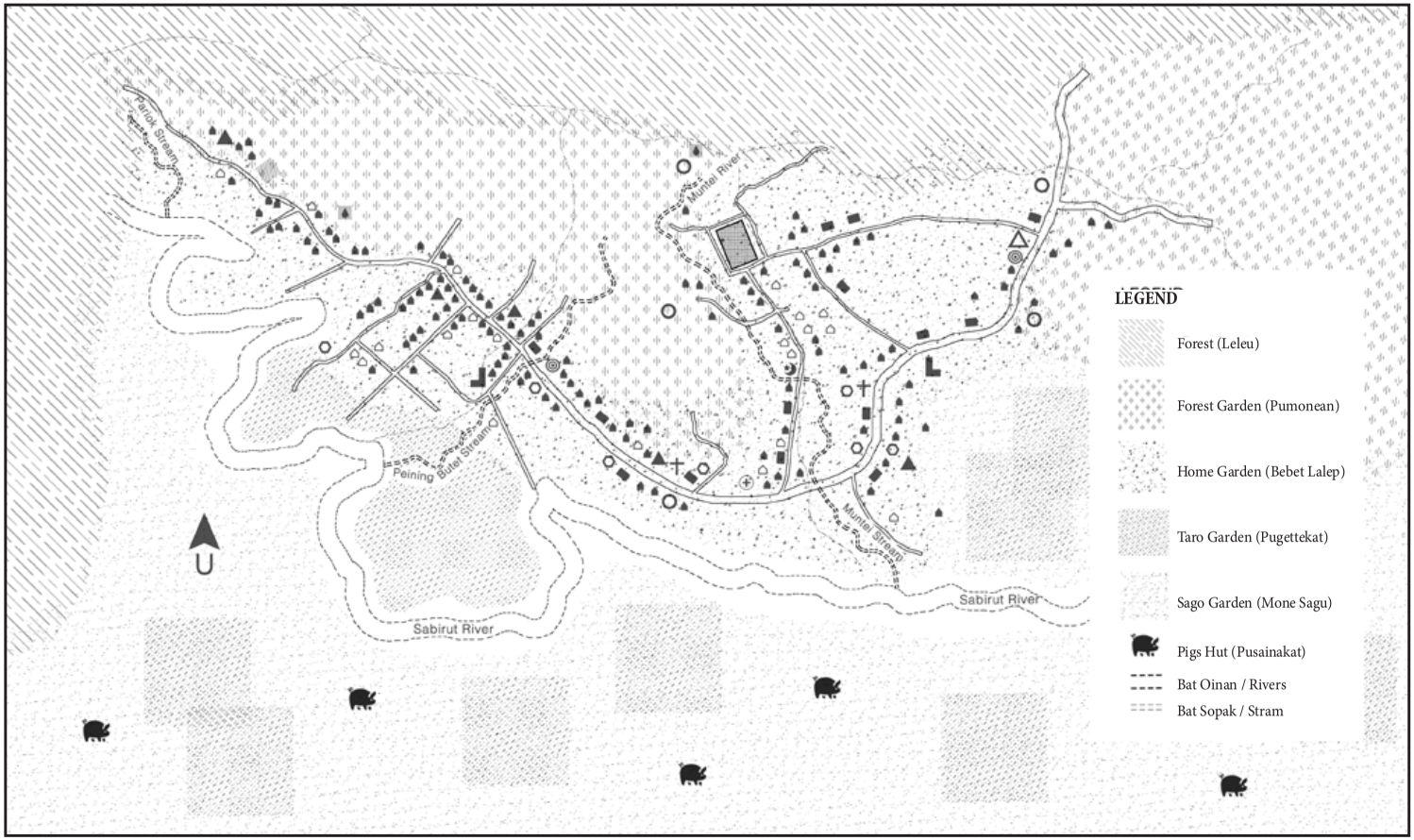
3.1 Manipulated Ecosystem and Productive Zones

People see the environment around their settlement as a vast resource containing edible and non-edible animals and plants, which can be exploited. They have established a tenure arrangement in which empty territory and unclaimed objects on it did not exist. All the land, rivers, caves, waterfalls, small lakes, mangroves, and other specific ecosystems have been occupied, named, claimed, and exploited. Each ecosystem and the resources on it are far from uniform, for reasons of their physical and natural character. The variations within those ecosystems are quite considerable, determining the ways people make use of them and the breadth of choice available in the selection of edible resources. Muntei residents have manipulated those ecosystems and classified them into specific zones, according to the objects or species cultivated or extracted from them, the aims and methods of appropriation and their arrangement. I call those used ecosystems 'productive zones' as each of them produces specific food resources through specific productive activities (Figure 7).

The major productive zones in Muntei include forests (*leleu*), bodies of water (*bat-oinan*), the sea (*koat*), sago gardens (*mone sago*), forest gardens (*pumonean*), taro gardens (*pugetekkat*), residential places (*barasi*), home-gardens (*bebet-uma*) and small islets and coastal zones (*nusa*). An area for keeping domestic animals has a specific term but it is normally part of the major zones such as the forest or sago gardens. Hence, pig-keeping areas (*pusainakkat*) or a hut for keeping chickens (*pugogoupat*) will be described as a part of the main zones. All these zones are diverse.

Despite the diversity of all those productive zones, there is a general pattern in which each of the zones consists of a series of dual components. First, there is the distinction between a residential environment occupied by humans and an exploited environment containing resources extracted by humans. Secondly,

Figure 7. A schematic view of the manipulated ecosystems and productive zones in the vicinity of Muntei settlement (2015). The sea (**koat**) *and small islets* (**nusa**) *are outside the settlement and not shown on the map.*



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Picture 11. The vast forest (*leleu*) in the north of Muntei, viewed from Muntei hills (2014)

there is the distinction of the intensive human-induced space and the diffuse human-induced spaces, which depend on the amount of human presence and activities. Third, there is the distinction that can be drawn from the nature of their exploitation, between domesticated and non-domesticated zones. These dual components are parallel but not identical. The parallel of the residential, the intensive man-induced environment, and the domesticated, points to the constant presence of humans, the presence of residential places, and the intensive human activities. As do the opposite categories. The exploited, non-domesticated, and diffuse man-induced environments are characterised by the domination of undomesticated and exploited resources, the absence of houses, and by having less time and human activities spent on them. It should be noted, however, that these dualities are just an analytical category. In reality, the divergence of each zone is not so neatly distinguished.

I will present a description of each of the productive zones, their main characteristics, and the edible resources in each of the zones to give a broader picture of the availability of and access to food.

Undomesticated Zones

Forest (Leleu)

In Mentawai terms, *leleu* refers to any extensive uncultivated land covered by uncultivated plants, either on solid ground (*posa*) in the hills or on the black-muddy land (*onaja*) in the lowland. Physically, *leleu* is characterised by the domination of giant trees and densely uncultivated plants and wild animals (Picture 11). External observers, who may be social scientists, foresters, or biologists, have translated the term of *leleu* as forest. Indeed, *leleu* has a certain structure, composed of different types of plants and occupied by various wild animals. Yet, the term *leleu* is neither a simple classification of physical appearances, nor the types of vegetation found there.

As an entity, *leleu* divulges its own peculiarities. The presence of giant trees and dense wild plants and animals has far-reaching ecological implications and cultural associations. *Leleu* is strongly associated with concrete and symbolic danger. There are venomous snakes, ferocious wild pigs, and thorny shrubs. Falling mouldy trees can kill someone at any time. *Leleu* has a powerful but ambiguous ambience. No human voices; no sound of people quarrelling or children crying. Against this background of silence, cicadas, hornbills, and primates, every now and then loud voices would suddenly emanate.

The ambiguous ambience and the danger of *leleu* evoke the world of invisible spirits. *Leleu* has been, and is still believed to be, the home of autochthonous forest spirits (*sikaleleu*). Wild plants and animals in the *leleu*, either giant trees or deer, are owned by these spirits. The ancestor spirits (*saukkui*) and unknown spirits (*sanitu*) are also believed to reside somewhere in and around the forest. *Sikaleleu* are the animals' and plants' masters and have their own 'culture' (Schefold 2002, 442). People must be careful before entering the *leleu* because every corner of it is full of spirits that can emanate *bajou* (power) and cause sickness. Those who become lost in the forest are brought by those spirits to their houses and longhouses. Certain locations in the *leleu* contain numerous natural objects with magical associations, such as waterfalls or small lakes, and these evoke mythical events, stories, and such like. It is viewed as an unsocialised and undomesticated space that is the opposite of a dwelling place (*barasi*) (Reeves 2001).

Conversely, and somewhat paradoxically, *leleu* provides good fortune and materials for human needs. Major game animals (wild pigs, deer, and primates) and *kailaba* (the pied hornbill) for decoration and ritual purposes are available in the *leleu*. It also provides trade items. *Calamus* rattan (*Calamus manan*) and agarwood (*Aqualaria malaccensis*), two of the most valuable products sold to the market, are extracted from the *leleu*. However, the most valuable product from *leleu* is timber for construction and for making canoes. Minor forest resources including bark for bow strings and loincloths, varieties of herbs, climbers and roots for dyes, poisons, and the manufacture and decoration of utensils and other objects have also been taken from the *leleu*. It is also valued as the source of a wide range of edible products. People come to the nearby forest to collect mushrooms, the shoots of wild palms, and wild fruit. The *leleu* is highly valued, primarily due to the fact that it is important for the creation of a new garden. A newly cleared forest has fertile and fresh soil that is suitable for a wide range of tubers and bananas.

Generally, all the activities taking place in the *leleu* require a specific ritual asking for permission from the spirits. People always venture into a patch of *leleu* with diffidence, taking both practical and magical precautions. Cutting giant trees, collecting commercial rattan, and clearing trees for a new garden always start with a small offering (*panaki*). Gathering minor products (rattan, flowers) may not involve giving *panaki* to the spirits but an uttering to ask permission from the master of the wild plants is certainly necessary. In Muntei, the cultural value of *leleu* as 'hidden culture' has changed slightly. Most *leleu* near the settlement, especially in the hill areas, has been cleared and transformed into gardens. The giant trees, calamus rattan, and agarwood have entirely vanished, while minor products such rattan vines and wild fruit are difficult to obtain. However, the association between *leleu* and the world of spirits is not entirely displaced. People still speak of 'going to the forest' or 'returning from the forest' (*ka leleu*') when they visit their gardens.

The distribution of *leleu* in the vicinity of Muntei is illustrated in Figure 7 above. The observable forest is distributed across two areas: (a) the bulk of the hill forest on solid ground (*posa*), stretching from the Muntei's headwaters to the north. This forest tends to be along ridges and around steep knolls, unsuitable for growing staple food. This area was a principal source of timber for construction and converted into a mix of clove and fruit gardens, leading to its gradual thinning and denudation. (b) The lowland forest on swampy ground (*onaja*) stretching from the Mara River to the northwest of the settlement to the Sila Oinan River. *Onaja* forest has only limited plant species and is dominated by sago, *kakaddut* trees

Table 5. The Locations of Leleu Claimed and Owned by Uma Living in Muntei (2015)[5]

***Uma*/Clan**	**No. of Families**	**Locations of *Leleu* and Ancestral Land (Numbers refer to the places circled in Figure 8)**
Sasabirut		
Sabajou	5	Leleu baja (Simatalu), Malagasat (Siberut Hulu) {1}
Sabulat	3	Teitei Muntei {3}, Matotonan{19}
Sagari	11	Mangorut {20}, Laksanan, Silakoinan Hulu {6}
Saguluw	1	Bat Gulu {7}
Salakoppak	16	Sirabai (6), Teitei Girisit {4}, Ligite, Soggunei (Saibi), Bat Lamao (Taileleu) {9}
Saleleggu	1	Leleubaja, Siroijat (Simatalu), Berisigep (Sigapokna), Erat Manyang (Katurei) {14}
Sarorougot	3	Obai {23}, Mabulu (Silaoinan) {16}
Saruruk	23	Bat Mara {12}, Rua Leleu {15}, Masingingit (Katurei) {10}
Satotottake	2	Maliorak {8}, Salaibea-Lupa (Silakoinan) {11}
Sauddeinuk	1	Bat Siuideinuk (Rokdok){17}
Sarereiket		
Samekmek	13	Bat Kokok (Rokdok) {18}, Hulu Matotonan {28}
Sailuluni	2	Bat Mangorut {20}, Bat Lamuri (Saibi)
Sakakaddut	8	Unidentified
Sakaliou	5	Bat Kaliou {21}, Teitei pagujet {25}, Bat Guruk Ojuk (23)
Sakukuret	13	Bat Timiang (Sagulubbek), Hulu Sirisurak (Saibi)
Salemurat	3	Bat Nambaliu (Ugai) {22}, Bat Nipa (Sagulubek)
Samapopopou	3	Bat Katurei {27}, Matotonan {26}
Samatotonan	3	Tirik Matotonan (Matotonan) {19}
Satoleuru	1	Kaleak (Sagulubbek)
Siritoitet	5	Bat Toloulagok (29), Simangkat (Katurei) {31}
***Uma*/Family from Other Area**		
Sabattilat	2	Simangkat {31}
Sakerebau	1	Bat Simaruei {32}, Mailimok (Katurei) {30}
Salabi	2	Tirik Saibi
Samalaibibi	1	Unidentified
Saleilei	1	Unidentified

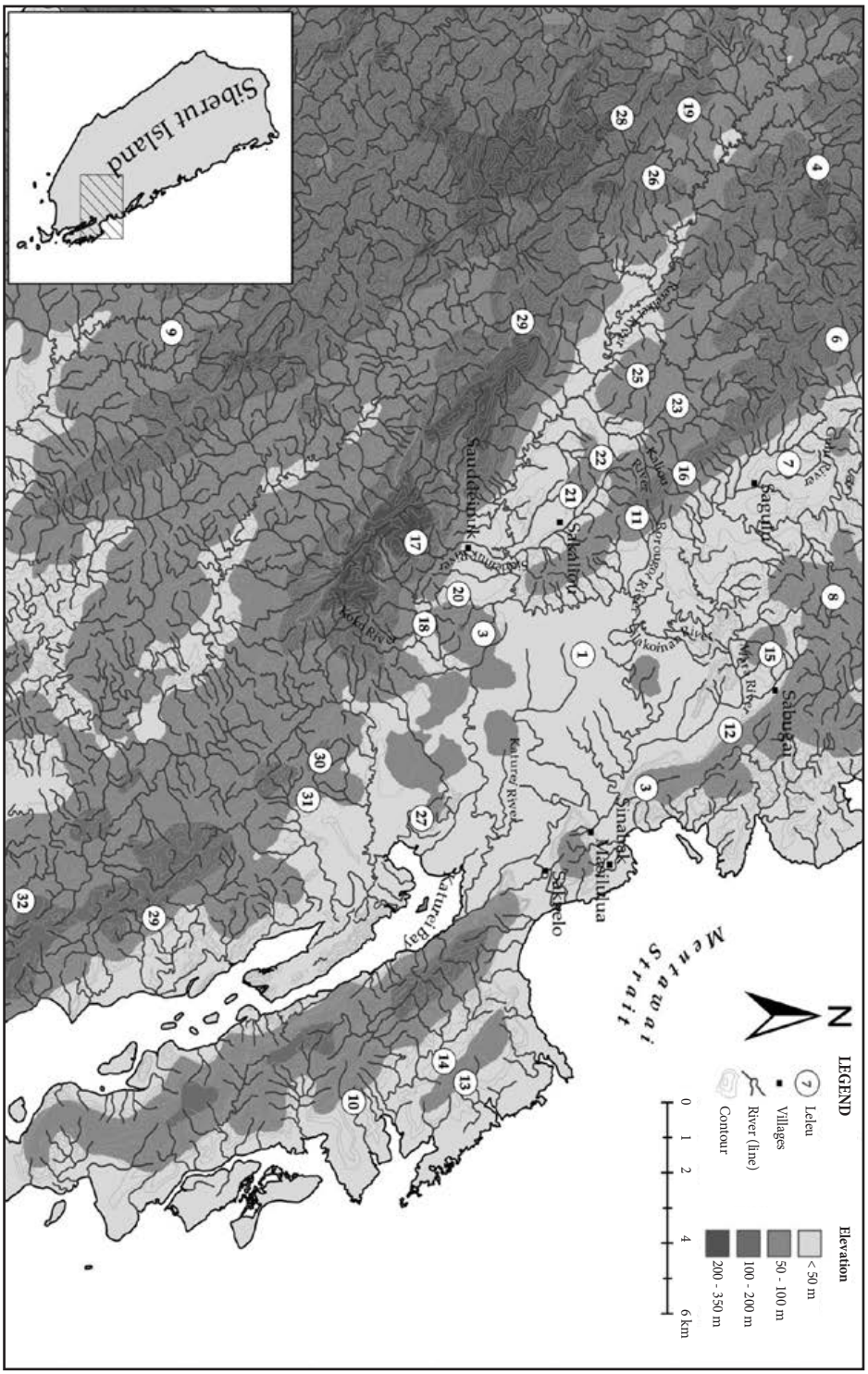

Figure 8. The Locations of Leleu claimed and owned by Muntei residents (2015). Some leleu owned by Muntei people are located far away from the settlement, and are not covered in the map.

(*Alstonia* sp), and rattan vines. In recent times, this swampy forest is gradually being converted to cacao or coconut gardens.

Principally, *leleu* and the land it covers cannot be claimed by individuals but is the property of an *uma*. Each *uma* in Muntei has their own *leleu* but none of them are located around the settlement (Table 5 and Figure 8). For example, *uma* Saruruk possess *leleu* around the rivers of Mapinang and Sitetek in the east part of the Katurei Peninsula; Salakoppak's *leleu* is far away at the headwaters of the Silaoinan River; Samekmek claim an uncultivated area around the Koko River close to Rokdok Hamlet, and so on. Practically, any individual can collect material from the forest without a formal permit from the claimants, especially for subsistence needs and domestic purposes. It is somehow different when someone is going to make a forest garden or extract forest products for commercial purposes. In the latter case, permission must be obtained. Not everyone goes regularly to their own forest, rather they extract the necessary material from *leleu* nearby and visit their own forest occasionally, e.g. if there is a dispute over a boundary or an external development project is taking place on it.

Water Bodies (Bat-oinan)

Bat-oinan refers to bodies of freshwater, including major rivers (*bat oinan*), small rivers or streams (*bat sopak*), and small lakes (*gineta*). *Bat-oinan* are seen as undomesticated spaces as the water, fish, and other animals, stones (*laggai*), soil (*polak*), sand (*ngaik*) found there are not cultivated by humans. It is also believed that each body of water has its own spirits (*sikaoinan*). However, unlike taking something from *leleu*, most activities taking place in any body of water do not require a specific ritual asking for permission from the spirits. Travelling across a major river does not require precautions. The spirits in freshwater are not believed to be particularly malicious. Yet, people are careful with these spirits, who could become irate when someone keeps food for themselves or the community and does not share it. I will describe the relationship between illness and death and the failure to share food in Chapter 6.

There are two major rivers around the settlement, the Siberut River and the Mara River. Both are predominantly used for transportation. The Siberut River is the most important one (Picture 12); not only for Muntei residents, but the entire population of southeast Siberut as it is the only hub for upstream people to go to the coastal settlement and to bring forest products from the hinterland to the market. Once, the Mara River was only used by a handful of families, who had forest gardens and raised pigs. After the cacao fever in mid-2000, it gained in prominence and is now used by numerous light-inboard motors (*pompong*) and people carrying sacks of copra, cacao beans, and bananas. The Katurei River is another important *bat-oinan* located outside the settlement. The river has its headwaters upstream but disembogues into Katurei Bay (see Figure 8). The Katurei River is tidal and has a huge saline estuary.

The two major rivers are not used exclusively for transportation, however. The Siberut River is a large storage area for sago piths. It provides an anaerobic environment to prevent sago pith and sago flour from rotting. Periodically, the Sabirut and Mara rivers supply freshwater animals. After heavy rainfall in the wet months (October-December or March-May), men fish for river eels (*lojo*) and local catfish (*tuik*) in the Siberut River and in the mouth of the Mara River. In the dry months, when the water level drops, both rivers are important fishing grounds. Various types of molluscs such as clams and mussels are taken by hand from the muddy ground. At the edges of the rivers, small fish and shrimps are collected with hand nets (*subba*) after the fishing area is stirred and becomes murky. In the driest month, a group of women may poison the Mara River upstream, using the root of *raggi* (tuba, *Derris elliptica*), in order to gather eels and catfish, but they will go to the mouth of the Katurei River as a group to collect crabs and clams. The combination of low sea-levels and a few weeks of drought make it possible to walk and collect those animals from the mud and from the skin of the mangrove trees (Picture 13).

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Picture 12. The main river Sabirut, along Muntei settlement, is used mainly for transportation and storage of sago piths (2014)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 13. Two women and a young man collect clams and mussels in the mangrove forest near Katurei Bay (2015)

Bat sopak provide sweet water and are used daily for bathing, washing clothes, or cleaning dishes. The settlement has three main *bat sopak* (the Muntei, Peining Butet and, Parioik), which are also used to delineate the hamlets. Muntei's stream is probably the most prominent of the three. It gives the settlement its name and provides the major source of sweet water, but the mouth of the stream is also used for tethering canoes or storing sago pith. The other two are smaller and used only as sources of sweet water. Other than fresh water, all three *bat sopak* provide plenty of animal food. After heavy rain, some men will put sago grubs on a hook made from bamboo to obtain *lojo* or *tuik* there. In the dry season, women go along the riverbed to its headwaters to gather shrimps, frogs, and small fish.

All water bodies are claimed by certain *uma*. Yet, their claims are merely sources of pride and recognition and do not limit everyone's access to them. Practically, everyone, even non-Mentawaians, can have access to and exploit either the major rivers or creeks around them for various purposes. This is perhaps related to the cultural importance of the *sikoinan*, which is associated with food sharing and the prohibition on eating alone, a subject discussed in Chapter 6.

The Sea (Koat)

The sea (*koat*) was once an alien environment to Muntei residents. This can be seen from the way people regulate access to it. The sea is an undomesticated zone; nobody owns it and it has never been claimed by a specific *uma*. Ocean water is inhabited by water spirits. It is associated with danger. Big waves, storms, and deep trenches are frightening.

In the last few decades, the sea has become an important productive zone, and, since the 1970s, some people have started to have a more intensive relationship with the sea as the demand for copra and the introduction of cloves persuaded them to build permanent huts on the small islets (*nusa*). Saruruk, Salelenggu, and Samapopopu have ancestral lands in the islets west of the Katurei Peninsula and have been fishing and hunting turtle around the islets since in the early 20th century. Uma Sabajou, Sagari, Sarorougot, and Salakoppak soon joined Saruruk and Saleleggu in making coconut gardens there. Along the way, people have improved their skills at using dugout canoes (*abak*) on the sea and taught themselves a variety of sea-fishing techniques. They also see the sea around mangroves or islets as a vast resource providing saltwater fish, mussels, clams, and especially important 'meat from the sea' (*iba-t-koat*), three species of turtles (*masururak*) and dugong (*sakkokok koat*).

The coastal areas have become part of the people's social life, especially for the mainly *Sasabirut* coconut growers. Exploiting animals, plants, and other objects in the sea is becoming a new habit. The changing relationship with the sea is reflected in their valuation of saltwater animals and sea fishing activities. Those who have gardens in the islets have regularly fished in the shallow coastal waters and coral reefs around their coconut gardens. However, the sea was, and still is foreign to most, if not all, the *Sarereiket* in Muntei.

Domesticated Zones

Residential Place (Barasi) and Home Garden (Bebet Lalep)

The residential place (*barasi*) is the most domesticated space. It is a place where humans spend most of their time doing major social and cultural activities (marriage, giving birth, mortuary rituals, and communal feasts). The *barasi* is marked by the presence of houses, longhouses, cleared roads, churches, schools, and other places used for social intercourse. In terms of edible resources, it has limited sources. Instead, the *barasi* is defined by the activities of processing and consuming food taken from other zones.

Small spaces between and around the houses in the *barasi* may be cultivated. This space is called *bebet-*

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Picture 14. A home garden (*bebet lalep*) in the margin of the settlement. The garden continues into the forest garden in the hill above (2014)

lalep, which literally means 'beside the house' but is best translated as 'home-garden' (Picture 14). Cassava and bananas are edible resources found in this area, along with sugar cane, limes, and spices such as ginger or lemon grass. Introduced vegetables such as chilies, snake beans, green beans, and eggplants are also added. Decorative plants used for religious ceremonies can also be found. Numerous chickens and ducks roam around. Recently, pigs have also been brought to home gardens and put in small cages.

There are two types of home gardens in Muntei. Home gardens in the centre of the settlement are rather small and clean. The gardens are regularly cleared and planted with various introduced grasses and vegetables. As this garden is seen frequently by passers-by, having a tidy garden generates social prestige and represents the diligent work of the owner. The other type of garden is located at the edge of the settlement. It is more spacious and only sporadically weeded. To some extent, this type of garden is unstructured and has no boundary with the forest gardens or hill forest and is filled with tubers and bananas, a number of coconut, and fruits trees.

Fundamentally, the home garden is a gendered zone. Women are in charge of the cultivation, tending, and harvesting of the home garden, despite their husbands cultivating some herbs or medicinal plants for magical charms (*gaud*). The proximity of the home gardens allows women to have easy access to cultivate or weed them while watching their children or doing other domestic tasks.

Sago Gardens (Mone Sagu)

Sago gardens are seen by people as the most important domesticated zones. People say that all the sago palms around the settlement were planted, as they do not grow wild. The sago gardens require the periodic clearing and weeding of creepers and vines. The constant exploitation of the gardens requires the construction of a

temporary hut for shelter and sago processing platforms called *pusaguat*. Each household used to have its own *pasaguat* that could be shared with their siblings or parents. The *pusaguat* is normally erected either in the middle of dense sago stands, close to the little streams that flow in the centre of the gardens, or on the banks of a river.

Sago gardens are generally located on the swampy part of the forest where a steady supply of water is available to store the sago pith and process the sago flour. Muntei has been a site for sago gardens since it is a low-lying swampy area (*onaja*) located between the major rivers (Picture 15 and 16). By far the greatest proportion of gardens in Muntei is found in two vast areas of *onaja*. The first is in the nutrient rich area opposite the settlement. This area is surrounded by four *main rivers* (Siberut, Silaoinan, Sareriket, and Katurei) and called *kasilak*. Measured orthographically, this area is approximately 2,000 hectares, spread over the low-lying areas between Muntei and the upstream area of the Rokdok River. The second is a perennially damp area, stretched between the banks of the Mara River towards the Sabugai River up to the Sabugai hills in Central Siberut. Both areas receive nutrients and minerals from the surrounding hills and creeks.

The majority of sago gardens in the vicinity of Muntei are cultivated and owned by people from Maileppet, Puro, and families who now live on Sipora Island. Over centuries, the *onaja* around Muntei have been cultivated by hundreds of people for more than seven generations, creating a complex of sago gardens with diverse and overlapping rights. Parts of the sago gardens have been gradually bought, while new gardens were also made by people after the establishment of the settlement. This has led to the expansion and extension of sago stands. It is hard to differentiate which gardens are owned by Muntei and non-Muntei residents. The boundaries of sago ownership are also hard to demarcate because the stands are scattered and expand semi-domestically. Overlapping sago ownership has been acute since people regularly exchange both individual and collective sago stands for bride-wealth, compensation payments (*tulou*), and other social exchanges.

Sago gardens have provided various foodstuffs and non-edible resources for humans. Parts of the sago gardens in Muntei are used for raising pigs and chickens. Each pig owner borrows or buys a small parcel of land to build a small pig hut (*pusainakat*) or chicken hut (*pugogoupat*). The hut is usually a simple construction for storing sago pith (*sairappit*). It is also usually completed with a pen used to feed and catch the animals. Every morning or evening pigs and chickens come to the *pusainakkat* or *pugogoupat* when the owner beats a bamboo slit and lays down *sairappit*. For the rest of the time, the animals roam the secondary forest and the mud of the riverbank nearby. More importantly, the palms supply important proteins: sago grubs. Pith towards the top of the palm often yields a little starch. Their leaves are removed and the trunk is cleaved and placed upright in the mud. This section is sometimes covered with dry sago leaves to incubate the larvae of the *weevil* beetle. Within a few weeks, the inside of the pith is populated by fat, thumb-length grubs (*batra*) that make a welcome dish, especially for women and children. A mature sago stand can yield 12 kilograms of *batra* with very minimal human effort (see also Whitten and Whitten 1985, 35; Persoon 1992).

Furthermore, the ecology of sago gardens offers a suitable habitat for undomesticated animals. The structure of the sago gardens is not so different from the uncultivated forest. The tall and huge fronds of sago palm spill from the top of an 8 to 12 metre trunk. A grove of them scatter the light so that the air itself seems suffused with thick green vegetation of lianas and shrubs. Beneath the palms is a muddy marsh, shrubs, and under-growth tree species, wild vines, and creepers. Especially in the deep part of *mone sago*, where human intervention and presence is minimal, sago gardens are the playground of small mammals, feral pigs, and wild game. Apart from edible products, the leaves of the palm provide materials for roofs. The bark of the palm is skinned and cut into pieces and used for walls. Sometimes, the bark is laid on muddy paths to ease travelling. The bark is also a good source of firewood. It is dried under the sun and

GERARD PERSOON

Picture 15. A sago garden near the main river (1981)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 16. A complex of sago and taro gardens in the vicinity of the settlement (2015)

cut into small pieces. The smooth spathe of the sago palm is made into baskets (*bolobo*) and sleeping mats (*bola*). Shaman in particular use it to make carrying cases (*baklu*).

Taro Gardens (Pugettekat)

Taro gardens produce taro (*gettek*), the second important staple. Most of the *pugettekat* are specifically located on the margins of the settlement. The other taro gardens are located inside the sago and forest gardens, forming part of the first cycle of forest cultivation (*tinungglu*). The latter types of *pugettekat* are normally fenced with living trees to keep the pigs out. Taro gardens are a gendered space and heavily domesticated. In some stages of cultivation, the men may help their wives to prepare a garden by digging the ground or erecting fences, but the whole cycle of planting, weeding, harvesting, and replanting is done by the women.

The greatest proportion of *pugettekat* in Muntei is located in an isolated pocket, created by the meandering of the Siberut River, in the east part of the settlement, between the houses and the river. This pocket receives regular floods that are rich in minerals and nutrients from the muddy rivers and creeks. The flat area on the riverbanks creates longer and more intense taro gardens than other places. The sandy and soft soil (*mangaik*) in the alluvial deposits on the river's banks has certain advantages over the muddy ground *(onaja)* in the forest and sago gardens. *Mangaik* soil, despite being subject to marginal erosion, retains the fertile and workable topsoil. These advantages allow people to have perennial *pugettekat*, producing a constant yield throughout the year.

Taro gardens are not entirely filled with varieties of taro (Pictures 17). The women add bananas, sugar cane, cassava, sweet potatoes, and other ornamental plants to the gardens. Not only do the garden supplant other sources of food, but flowers, bananas, and other ornamental plants make gardens look beautiful (*malainge*) but provide an additional supply of protein. Frogs, eels, and catfish are in abundance in the garden during the rainy season.

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Picture 17. A complex of taro gardens located between the residential place and the Sabirut River, filled with banana, cassava, sugar cane and ornamental plants (2014).

Forest Gardens (Mone)

The forest gardens are usually found at some distance from people's houses, filling the space between the *barasi* and *leleu*. The exuberant-looking forest gardens have attributes of both the domesticated *barasi* (clean, safe, and socialised) and the undomesticated *leleu* (untidy, spontaneous growth, wild, dangerous, and uncleared). This zone is dominated by a combination of fruit trees, wild plants, and semi-cultivated vegetation (bamboo and medicinal plants). The presence of species such as bamboo, sago, coconuts, and fruit trees is a sign of cultivation activities. However, *pumonean* retain the character of the forest—wild trees grow spontaneously and wild game can be found. *Pumonean* can be said to be intermediate spaces where the clear boundaries of the domesticated and non-domesticated resources are difficult to see.

Essentially, the garden is for food resources. The emergence of coconuts and other native species (patchouli and calamus rattan) as commodities sold on the market and the introduction of foreign cash crops, notably cloves and cacao, have complicated the *tinungglu-mone* cycle and altered the importance of gardening for providing food. The introduction of cash crops in the *tinungglu-mone* cycle means the forest gardens have undergone the transformation from a place for growing diverse plants into gardens where certain specific cash crops eventually dominate.

There are at least three types of forest gardens owned by Muntei residents: first is the traditional type of *pumonean*, described in Chapter 2. This type has conserved the whole cycle of *tinungglu-mone*. The cultivation of tubers and bananas in the *tinungglu* cycle remains intact and the domination of fruit trees in the *mone* cycle persists. Patchouli may be planted in *tinungglu*. Yet, as the second yield has little result, the insertion of the plant does not fundamentally alter the cultivation cycle. Despite many of the cultivated plants being for subsistence purposes, this type of garden also provides a huge opportunity to generate cash, especially for those who have introduced animals to the gardens. The local and regional demand for pigs, around and beyond Muntei, is steadily increasing, as is the price. This opens an opportunity for pig farmers to occupy a niche in the emerging market as suppliers of living pigs and pork. The majority of *Sarereiket*, especially *uma* Sakukuret, Sakaliou, and Sailuluni maintain this type of forest cultivation. Satototake and Samekmek families also maintain this type of garden in the old settlement of Siberut Hulu. This type of garden is generally located around an old settlement and closer to the forest in the hinterland.

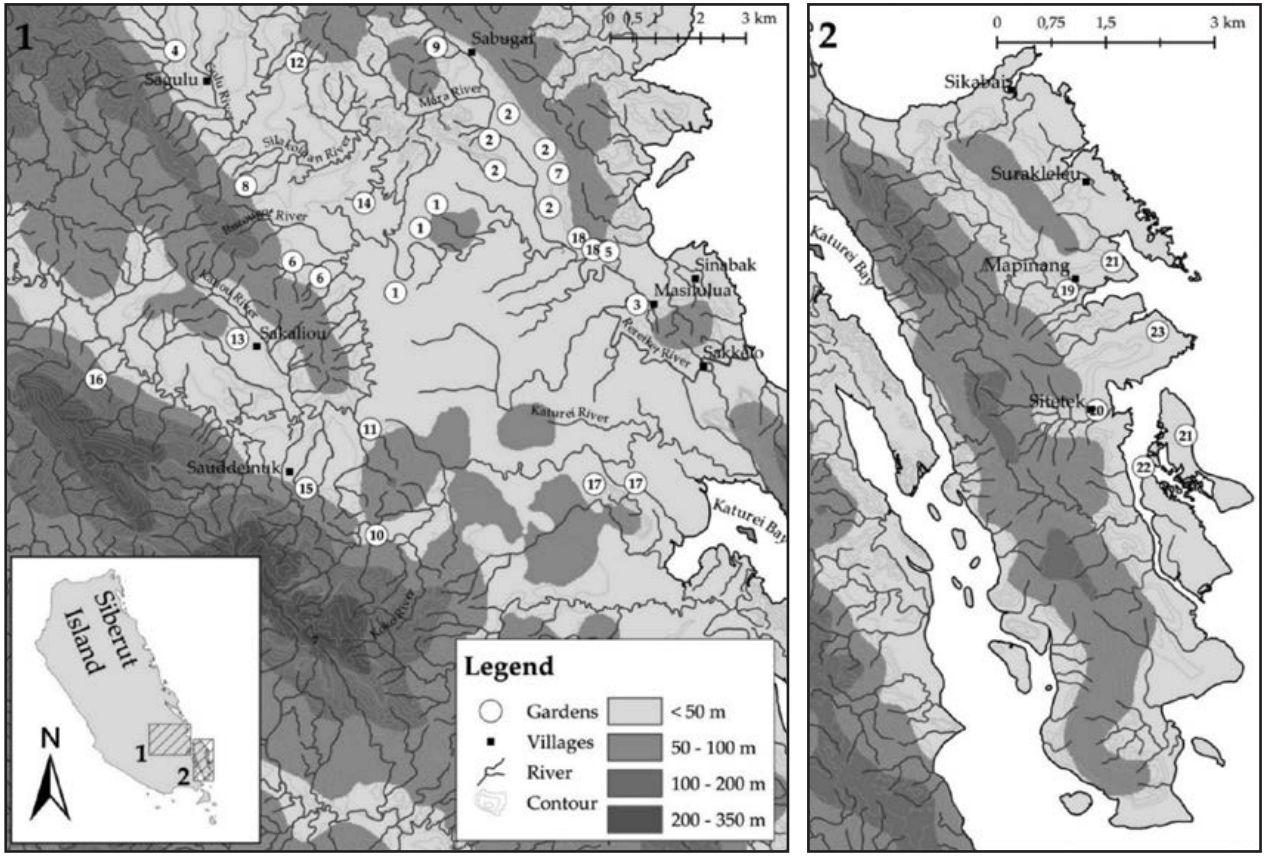
The second type of garden consists of a combination of fruit trees and clove trees. This type exclusively occupies a narrow but long hill at the headwaters of the Muntei's stream. This type was opened after people moved to the settlement. These gardens were not started using the *tinunggulu* cycle as the hills around Muntei were sparsely cultivated. Durian trees and jackfruit were already there. People just cleared the undergrowth there and cut down the brush. Tubers and sago were not cultivated as they are not suited to solid ground (*posa*). Bananas and cassava were sparsely planted to loosen the solid soil, alongside clove seeds. When the clove trees reach about the height of a human and are believed to be strong enough to survive, jackfruit, durian, *siamung*, and *bairabit* are sparsely planted. These fruits trees are rarely planted in equal proportions, even if they were originally planted as such. The best fruits trees are tended while the others are left to fend for themselves. In a relatively short time, these gardens become dominated by cloves and people call them *kebun cengkeh* or *cangkihku* (my clove).

The third type of forest garden is exclusively created on the small islets (*nusa*) of the Katurei Peninsula. Initially, this type of garden followed the *tinungglu-mone* cycle. Yet, the *tinungglu* is shorter and few food plants are cultivated, while the *mone* stage is dominated by monocrop commercial plants, either coconuts or cloves. Sandy, dry soils and the lack of humidity make it impossible for taro and sago to propagate. Bananas, sugar cane, and some vegetables might be planted in moist soil near the small creeks inside the islets at the same time as coconuts and cloves are cultivated. A permanent hut is constructed. In less than two years, the coconut and clove trees become dominant and provide shade that prevents food plants

Table 6. The Locations of Forest Gardens (Pumonean) Cultivated and Owned by Muntei Residents (2015)

***Uma*/Clan**	**Families**	**Locations, Localities (Number of Gardens) in *Mata***			**Total**
		Traditional Type	**Hill Garden (Number)**	**Coconut Garden (Number)**	
Sasabirut					
Sabajou	5	Sabirut Hulu (3), Bat Mara (2)	Muntei (4), Mapinang (1)	Masilok (2), Sitetek (3)	15
Sabulat	3	Siberut Hulu (2), Bat Mara (2)	Muntei (1)	-	5
Sagari	11	Siberut Hulu(7), Bat Mara (4), Masilulua (2)	Muntei (13), Sitetek (4)	Masilok (2), Mapinang (1)	33
Saguluw	1	Bat Gulu (1)	-	Parakbatu (1)	2
Salakoppak	16	Siberut Hulu (11), Masilulua (3)	Muntei (11), Bubu (3)	Masilok (5), Parakbatu 3)	36
Saleleggu	1	Bat Mara (1)	Muntei (1)	Parakbatu (1) Masilok(1)	4
Sarorougot	3	Bat Mara (3), Rorougot (1)	Muntei (3),	Mapinang(1)	8
Saruruk	23	Bat Mara (3), Tingoik-ngoik (7)	Muntei (13), Surakleleu (6), Mapinang (3)	Erat Manyang (5) Parakbatu (9)	43
Satotottake	2	Maliorak (1), Lupa (1) Simabugei (2)	Muntei (2)	Mapinang (1)	7
Sauddeinuk	1	Siberut Hulu (1); Sauddeinuk (1)	Muntei (1)	Sitetek (1)	3
Sarereiket					
Samekmek	13	Bat Kokok (15), Sabirut Hulu (7); Bat Mara (4)	Muntei (9)	Masilok (4)	33
Sailuluni	2	Bat Mangorut (4) Bat Mara (2)	Muntei (5)	-	11
Sakakaddut	8	Siberut Hulu (2) Silakoinan (9)	Muntei (5)	-	16
Sakaliou	5	Bat Kaliou (15) Bat Mara (2), Silakoinan (4)	-	-	21
Sakukuret	13	Bat Mara (7) Siberut Hulu (9)	Muntei (15)	-	31
Salemurat	3	Bat Muntei (2), Masilulua (1)	Muntei (1)	Mapinang (1)	5
Samapopopou	3	Siberut Hulu (3)	Muntei (2)	Sitetek (2)	7
Samatotonan	3	Matotonan (4), Masilulua (1)	-		5
Satoleuru	1	Bat Mara (1), Matotonan 1)		-	2
Siritoitet	5	Madobak (4) Bat Mara (3)	Bubu (3)	-	10
***Uma*/Families from Other Area**					
Sabattilat	2	-	-	-	
Sakerebau	1	Katurei (2)	Malilimok (1)	Malilimok (1)	4
Salabi	2	Bat Mara (2)	Saibi (2)		4
Samalaibibi	1	Ugai (!)	-	-	1
	128				**306**

Figure 9. The Locations of Mature Gardens (mone) Consisting of Fruit Trees and Commercial Crops Owned by Muntei Residents (2015).



Numbers in circles refer to the specific localities in which the gardens are established: (1) Sabirut Hul; (2) Bat Mara; (3) Masilulua; (4) Bat Gulu; (5) Bat Muntei; (6) Rorougot; (7) Tingoik-ngoik; (8) Lupa; (9) Simabugei; (10) Bat Koko; (11) Bat Mangorut; (12) Maliorak; (13) Bat Kaliou; (14) Silakoinan; (15) Saudeniuk; (16) Madobak; (17) Katurei; (18) Muntei; (19) Mapinang; (20) Sitetek; (21); Masilok; Parak Batu (22); (23) Erat Manyang.

from growing. In the next few years, pigs and chickens are brought to the garden. The matured coconut gardens, especially in larger areas, are strikingly effective for keeping pigs and chickens, despite the owner having to transport sago pith for the animals. Lexically, the term of *mone* or *pumonean* is still applied to the collection of coconut and clove trees, even if no fruit trees are found there. The presence of pigs generates a sense that a garden has retained the character of *pumonean*. While it is still seen as a forest garden, it is one that has been associated with specific crops and consequently, lost the character of the forest. The Indonesian term *kebun* (grove) has gradually been incorporated into the lexicon.

The actual distribution and the locations of different types of gardens owned by Muntei residents are shown in Table 6 and Figure 9. The table indicates that a family in each of *uma* has more than one garden. Roughly, each family has three different gardens in different locations. The locations of various type of gardens in Figure 9 indicate the approximate location of old gardens created by past generations and also point to the influence of cash crops. Most coconut gardens are located in the small islets while traditional gardens are mainly in the old settlement in Siberut Hulu or around Mara River and ancestral land. In general, the table and the figure show that people, regardless of their Sasabirut-Sarereiket origin, and their status as the pioneer and latecomers, have various type of gardens for their livelihood.

Small Islets (Nusa, Pulau)

The term *nusa* is specifically associated with the small islets scattered off the east coast of Siberut. Despite it referring mainly to the islets that have been domesticated and converted into coconut and clove groves, the term *nusa* also encompasses mangrove forests, coral reefs, beaches, and tidal flats. Prior to the demand for copra around 1940, the residents of Muntei did not really pay attention to the *nusa* and their surrounding ecosystem. Beaches and dry land in the islets were initially used only for temporary shelter when people were in the coastal areas fishing and hunting turtles (*masusurak*) and sea cows (*sakokok koat)*. It is only with the incentive to obtain trade goods and acquire cash after selling cash crops that *nusa* have begun to gain importance. This has undoubtedly been accompanied by the demand for and the increasing valuation of cultivation sites around them.

Today, *nusa* are mainly used for coconut (Picture 18) and clove gardens. The beaches and islets have been targeted and bought by foreign investors for surfing camps, resorts, and other infrastructure for the surfing industry. For Muntei's residents, the growing importance of *nusa* corresponds to their changing perceptions of and relations with the sea and the food resources in it. Having gardens in *nusa* allowed the people to learn various fishing skills. This also added variety to their diets.

The *nusa* cultivated and exploited by the residents of Muntei are not administratively part of Muntei's territory, but fall under the control of Katurei Village. Saruruk and Samapoupou *uma* have long claimed ancestral land in the east part of the Katurei Peninsula. Other groups, such as the Salelenggu, Sagari, Sarorougot, and Salakoppak, have either bought or inherited a few plots of land from their ancestors. A few of the *Sarereiket*, such as members of the Samekmek, recently joined *Sasabirut* to obtain the rights to cultivate the islets and adjacent areas after purchasing them from the claimant of the land. Members of those *uma* have cultivated *nusa* for coconut gardens in the islands of Masilok, Berekei, and Parakbatu and a number of hills opposite these islands (Sitektek, Mapinang) are used for clove gardens (Figure 9).

Unlike the sea, access and rights to the *nusa* have customarily been regulated. Except for land permanently inundated by salt water, all parts of the *nusa* belong to certain *uma* or individuals. Mangrove trees, sandy beaches, muddy tidal land, and small streams running inside the islets have been assigned, owned, and, to some extent, semi-cultivated. However, most of the uncultivated areas on and in the *nusa* are basically seen as 'open resources'. Taking giant mangrove trees or sand for commercial purposes may require formal permission and a compensation payment (*pulajuk*) for the claimants, but this is not necessary for taking edible resources, mainly crabs, clams, and mussels.

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 18. A family from *uma* Salakkopak processes coconut into dried copra on a small islet (*nusa*) in Majene, Katurei (2018)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 19. A man processes sago on a platform (*pusaguat*) (2012)

3.2 The Availability of and Access to Plant Food (*Kat*)[6]

People consume animal flesh or parts of plants collected from both the domesticated and non-domesticated zones described above. They divide all types of food into two general categories: *kat* and *iba*. The first refers to all the edible items obtained from plants, including roots, flowers, their starch, leaves, and fruit. It includes domesticated and non-domesticated plants. The second refers to all the edible items obtained from animals, including their fat.

Sago

Sago is culturally the most important staple and ecologically the most abundantly available and reliable staple. Sago flour is eaten almost daily. The most common method of cooking sago is by putting sago flour in bamboo and then roasting the bamboo on a fire. This is called sago *siokbuk*. Another method is by wrapping sago flour in sago leaves and roasting it directly on the fire. Once the starch is cooked, the sago looks like a bread stick (*kapurut)*. Another popular method is to cook sago flour on a hot pan with grated coconut or sugar (*sigajak)*. Leftover *kapurut* or *siokbuk* can also be recooked by soaking it overnight. It is then mashed and stuffed into bamboo stems and roasted on a fire.

All the sago flour in Muntei is extracted from two species of sago: *Metroxylon sagu* and *Metroxylon Rumphii*. Typically, *Metroxylon sagu* is found in places where the soil is moist while *Metroxylon Rumphii* is found closer to uncultivated areas, such as forests and usually occupies a relatively higher altitude. Despite the flour of *Metrxylon rumphii* being sweeter and crunchier when it is roasted, processing sago in the hills requires more energy and is more time consuming as a flow of water is not always reliable. Both types of sago can be found in any of the sago gardens along major rivers and any wet areas closer to the settlements.

Sago palms take many years to mature. Sago cultivation, however, is not really labour intensive, compared to the cultivation of grains especially rice (Flach 1985, Persoon 1992). Young trees produce permanent suckers, and thus a mature sago stand is always ready to reproduce naturally. Suckers are selected from healthy palms and the root stocks are transferred to new fields, typically on riverbanks. Once the plant matures, it can flourish on the riverbank without human interference. At about ten years old, the palm accumulates starch in the trunk and starts to redirect nutrients to the flowers and fruit. Before this process starts, or has proceeded too far, people cut the palm and take the starch.

A fully grown sago tree produces about a ten metres length of processable pith. After a palm has been felled, it is cleaned of its spines and divided up into pieces of 1 to 1.5 metre length. The processed piths are shaved away and brought to *pusaguat* (Picture 19). The tough outer rind (the bark) is stripped with a long, lever-like palm wood tool to expose the pith. To free the starch, a machete might be used for pulverising the material and breaking it into small pieces, but an L-shaped wooden sago hammer (*kukuilu*) is preferred, as it provides a forward blow as the tool is struck down upon the pith. As pounding proceeds, the trunk is hollowed out, and people sit within it as the work continues. These tasks are usually done by men and youths. Crumbled pith from the trunk is then washed, rinsed, and filtered several times in *pusaguat*. Grated starch is placed on the sago sieve (*karuk*), a plank frame around a floor made of fibre from the bottom leaves of sugar palms or coconut palms. Water from the stream below *pusaguat* is poured into the *karuk*. Normally, people use their feet to rinse out the starch. The thick white liquid drips through the sieve and is channelled through two wooden gutters, usually made from unused canoes. The fine sago starch settles in the lower gutter. Starch-sediment is then collected and stored in small 20 kilograms' bucket-sized containers (*tappri*) made out of sago leaves.

Sago is a very efficient source of food. One sago pith produces roughly one or two *tappri,* depending on the quality of the tree. One mature sago tree produces 15 to 20 *tappri* of sago flour, which is about 300 to 400

uma also had more opportunities to involve themselves in social exchanges with others around Muntei who had sago on their land. Only three Mentawaian families have no sago garden. These are families and other members of their *uma* living outside the settlement: Samalaibibi (1 *lelep*); Saleilei (1 family); and Sakakaddut (2 families).

There has been a decreasing commitment to processing sago in the traditional way. Among the 128 Mentawaian families belonging to 26 *uma* in Muntei, only nine of them have *pusaguat* and regularly process their own sago. Three out of the nine are families who do not have sago gardens around the settlement. The families have been granted permits, either by an owner of sago who happens to be a brother-in-law, or close friend (*siripok*), to exploit and extract sago in *Kasilak*. In return, the owners receive half of the sago flour produced. The decline in the traditional processing of sago is likewise based on the time spent on cash crops and the availability of sago flour in the market. The involvement in cash crops has encouraged people to stop their sago processing and use the cash from selling more valuable crops to buy both sago and rice from the local market.

The availability of sago in the market is caused by a minor technological innovation. Since the mid 2000s, new grater machines have been introduced to Muntei and its surrounds, making the process of extracting sago pith easier and quicker. The grater machines have only replaced *kukuilu* and *tegle* and the human labour spent on these actions, as cutting and cleaning the sago trunks, pulverising and then rinsing the sago flour are still carried out in the traditional way. The introduction of the new machines and the abundance of good quality sago palms have created opportunities for a number of people to start new ventures processing and selling sago flour. All the grating-machines owners in and around Muntei process sago from other people's trees; they are fully dependent on the willingness of the trees owners to sell their trees to them. With the surplus, the owners of the sago are more than happy to let the owners of the machines cut and collect sago from their gardens and transport the pith to their sago processing platforms. The sago providers now provide a constant supply of sago flour in Muntei and the adjacent settlements. Each kilogram of sago is sold in the local market for IDR 2,000.[7] While the grating machines make sago processing more effective, they also shifted sago processing from the labour domain of men to the labour domain of women. With the machine, sago processing is now not always processed in *pusaguat*. Women mash the sago starch with their hands in their home gardens. The modification in the gender related labour division has placed an extra burden on some women.

The decline in the desire to process sago has been exacerbated by the arrival of cacao. When the price of cacao was at its peak in 2006-2007 (about IDR 28,000/kilogram),[8] there was a rush to replace sago with cacao. By late 2009, most of the sago gardens around the settlement and on the sides of the road were replaced by cacao. For maximum yields, cacao requires an open space, larger than is usual for a forest garden. The conversion of swampy areas to cacao is done by clearing all the vegetation and draining. Cacao has ecologically converted diverse sago gardens; during the early stages of cultivation, cacao might be integrated with banana, taro, or pineapple. However, for most of its lifecycle, cacao requires monoculture. People do not seem particularly concerned about the depletion of sago, as apparently there has always been a surplus of sago palms. The abundance of the palms gives a great sense of food security, despite them having little economic value. They say that they can buy sago with cash from other crops. It seems that they prefer to cultivate cacao and spend the money to obtain food (rice) from selling it.

The majority of people now have little interest in processing their own sago and have tried to convert their gardens into cacao, but it is too soon to say that they have entirely abandoned the production and consumption of sago. The decline of traditional sago processing cannot be seen as a significant indication of a disruptive transformation in the importance of sago. Muntei's residents, especially the elders, still bring and transport young sago sprouts whenever they leave the settlement and plant them in any empty

Table 7. The Location and Number of Sago Gardens (Mone Sagu) Owned and Claimed by Muntei Residents (2015)

No. of Clan	*Uma*/Clan	No. of Factions*	No. of Families	Locations, Localities/Hamlet (Number of Gardens)	Total (in *Mata*)
	Sasabirut				
1	Sabajou	-	5	Kasilak (11) Malagasat (Siberut Hulu) 13 Bat Mara (5)	29
2	Sabulat	-	3	Bat Pariok (1), Siberut Hulu (3) Kasilak (5);	9
3	Sagari	3	11	Katurei (4), Malilimok (3) Mangorut (7) Siberut Hulu (7) Bat Mara (4) Kasilak (5) Puro (2)	32
4	Saguluw	-	1	Gulu River (3) Bat Mara (1) Kasilak (3)	7
5	Salakoppak	2	16	Kasilak (17) Siberut Hulu (21) Masilulua (5) Bat Mara (7) Silakoinan (5)	52
6	Saleleggu	-	1	Siberut Hulu (2) Katurei (2) Puro (2) Kasilak (1)	7
7	Sarorougot	-	3	Rorougot (5) Bat Mara (3) Kasilak (3) Mabulu (Silaoinan) (3)	14
8	Saruruk	2	23	Tingoik-ngoik (7) Bat Mara (7) Siberut Hulu (11) Kasilak (4) Mapinang (8)	37
9	Satotottake	-	2	Maliorak (4) Lupa (4) Siberut hulu (5) Kasilak (3)	16
10	Sauddeinuk	-	1	Kasilak (2) Rokdok (3)	2
	Sarereiket				
11	Samekmek	-	13	Bat Kokok (11) Kasilak (5) Siberut Hulu (16) Bat Mara (4) Samekmek (12)	48
12	Sailuluni	-	2	Bat Mangorut (7) Kasilak (5)	12
13	Sakakaddut	-	8	Kasilak (3) Siberut Hulu (2)	5
14	Sakaliou	-	5	Bat Kaliou (Rokdok) (15) Bat Mara (2) Silakoinan (7)	24
15	Sakukuret	3	13	Bat Mara (7) Bat Sirikdik (5): Madobak (7) Kasilak (7) Siberut Hulu (12)	38
16	Salemurat	2	3	Bat Nambaliu (Ugai) (1) Bat Mara (1)	2
17	Samapopopou	-	3	Bat Katurei (3) Kasilak (5) Siberut Hulu (3)	8
18	Samatotonan	-	3	Matotonan (7) Puro (2)	9
19	Satoleuru	-	1	Matotonan (4) Bat Mara (1) Kasilak (1)	6
20	Siritoitet	2	5	Madobak (6) Kasilak (1) Bat Mara (1)	9
	***Uma*/Families from Other Area**				
21	Sabattilat		2	Simangkat (3)	3
22	Sakerebau		1	Katurei (6)	6
23	Salabi		2	Bat Mara (1) Kasilak (1)	2
24	Samalaibibi		1		-
25	Saleilei		1		-
			128		377

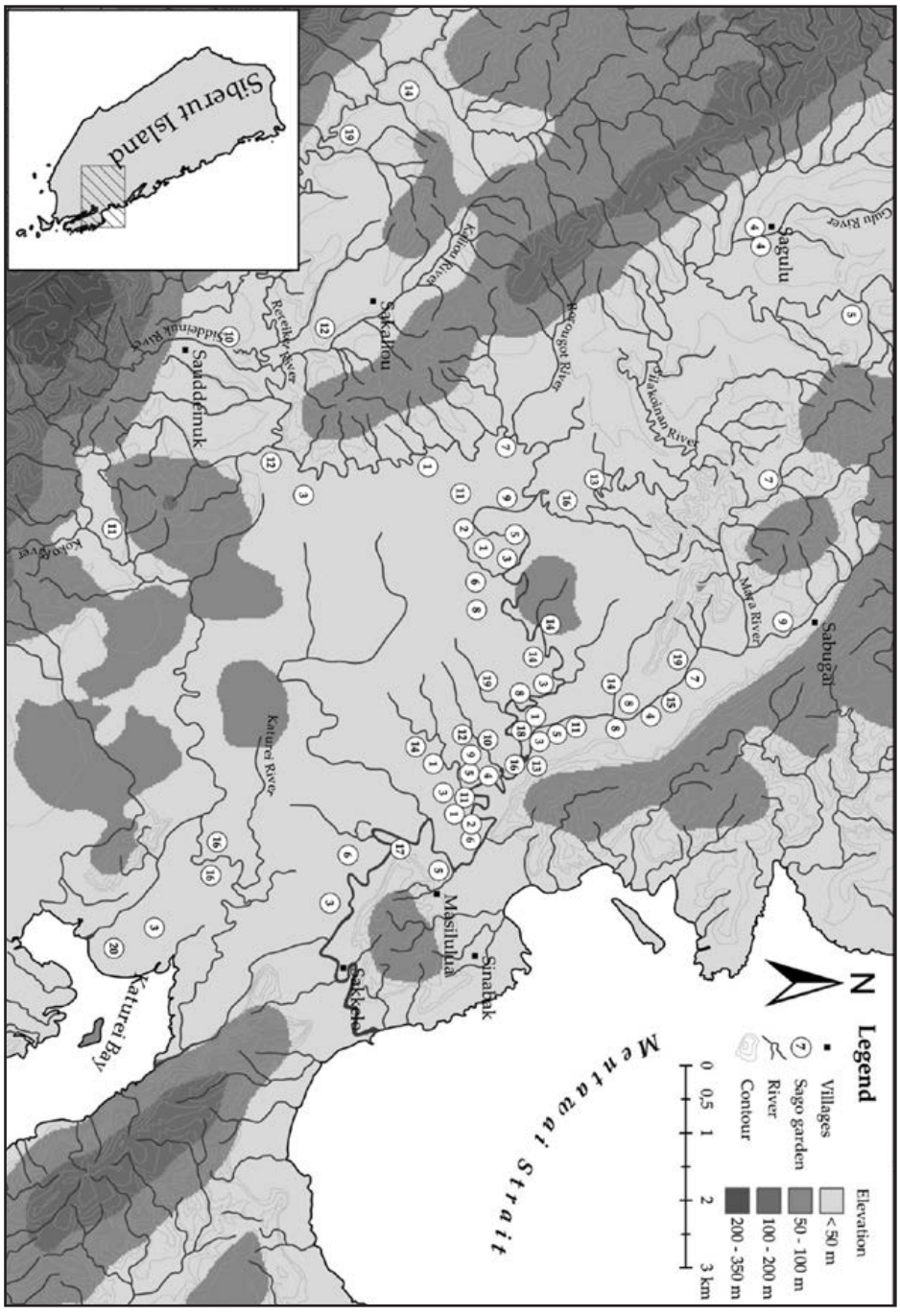


Figure 10. The Locations of Sago Gardens Owned and Claimed by Muntei Residents (2015).

The numbers in circles refer to locations of the uma/clan's garden stated in the first column of Table 7.

kilograms of sago starch. This number is lower than the calculations made by Whitten and Whitten (1985, 34-35), who pointed out that a mature sago in Central Siberut produces 400 to 600 kilograms. In Muntei, one *tappri* can last a family consisting of two adults and four children for roughly three weeks. Converting the whole tree to flour requires nine days (23.6 hours) worth of work from one person (Whitten and Whitten 1985, 33-34; see also Persoon 1992). Thus, just nine days of work translates into enough starch to feed a family for four months. In general, sago gardens are enormously abundant. A *mata* sagu can feed a family for about 19 years. Therefore, there has always been an abundance of sago palms.

Muntei residents count their living sago in *mata*. This literally means 'eyes', but is best translated as 'growing area' (see Schefold 2017, 54). A *mata* is between approximately a quarter of a hectare to a half of a hectare in size and consists of about 25 to 50 mature trees and several hundred young sprouts. A sago *mata* belongs to the family who planted or bought it. The individual rights to sago gardens might also be obtained through a purchase, a gift, a compensation, or part of the payment of bride-price. This individualisation of sago gardens-holding is, however, a virtual claim. Although these are regarded as a perfectly legitimate and separate form of ownership, the passage of time, particularly since it takes more than ten years for a sago palm to fully mature and be ready for harvesting, tends to transform individual rights into the undifferentiated rights of various people.

Flexibility in people's access to sago is associated with, firstly, the nature of sago as the main staple. Sago is consumed at both daily meals and ritual feasts and is planted in communal land and processed by different members of the *uma*. There is a belief that sago must be accessible to all members of the group. The other reason corresponds with the flexibility of the social relations within an *uma*. The group's social relations have a pattern of generalised reciprocity associated with a domestic mode of production and subsistence ethos. While sago gardens are always individually claimed, the stand is also part of the collective interests, borrowed, exchanged, and consumed as needed by any member of the *uma*. It is hard to distinguish family sago gardens and *uma* sago gardens. While a single sago palm was initially planted by a single ancestor, over centuries the stand has grown and expanded and might be claimed by two or three different descendants. In general, sago gardens are usually referred to with reference to the specific group to whom they belong: regardless of whoever the specific person that planted it was.

The actual distribution and ownership patterns of sago—either owned by a family, or *uma*—are shown in Table 7 and Figure 10. The table shows that each family in each *uma* has more than one sago garden. The main location of Muntei residents' sago gardens is the opposite settlement (*kasilak*). This particular place has been cultivated by a hundred people from around Maileppet, Katurei, and Rereiket. Initially, Muntei people obtained sago gardens from Saurei *uma* living in Maileppet and Sakerengan Lelegu *uma* living in Sakelo. Other families had already obtained gardens through various methods of social exchange prior to settling in Muntei. At the same time the families kept their sago possessions in their old settlements and other localities. Therefore, the sago gardens owned by Muntei residents are not all situated around Muntei. Some families have sago in other people's ancestral lands far away, while others have sago in neighbouring settlements. In general, the location of sago gardens indicates, firstly, the approximate location of the residences of earlier generations, making it possible (at least to a limited extent) to trace changes to the location of every *uma* over a period of time; and secondly, very complicated social exchanges between individuals and *uma,* both in the past and more recent times.

The household survey of Muntei shows that each family has at least three *mata* of sago around and beyond the settlement. The size of each group corresponds to the number of sago gardens. The larger *uma* with a higher number of households tend to have more sago gardens. This is probably due to the fact that the larger *uma* are originally from the Sabirut area, where their ancestors had already cultivated sago. The

spots available in their *onaja* or forest gardens. They say that they still need sago to pay a bride-price, compensation for social exchanges, and anticipate the need for it in the future.

Taro (*Gettek*)

Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), locally called *gettek,* is the main ingredient of *subbet*, mashed taro and banana balls that are rolled in grated coconut. *Subbet* is a must-have food during community rituals. For regular meals, taro is just boiled in a pan or put in bamboo containers and roasted on a fire. Fried taro is sometimes served for breakfast. Mashed taro is used as baby food. The young taro leaves of the variety named *lot-lot* are used as a vegetable dish and as a stimulant, referred to as Mentawaian tobacco (*ubek*), prior to the arrival of imported tobacco.

There are at least 24 local varieties of taro emically classified according to their texture, shape, colour, and the size of the stalk and leaves. Generally, taro varieties are divided into two broader types: 'tender' (*magabru*) and 'sticky' or (*maekket*), reflecting the received opinion of the cooked texture of taro and the itchy-effect of the tubers. 'Sticky' are planted towards the outside of a garden, as they are the first ones that a pest or a thief may encounter. 'Tender' taro plants may find themselves planted there but are mostly put inside the garden. People say a mix of both types is necessary to prolong the life of the garden and to regulate consumption. Planting only 'tender' taros will encourage people to eat them while harvesting them, leaving little for future cultivation, whereas an entire crop of sticky taros would be unenticing; either way, the garden would not provide tasty taros for very long.

Taro has a rich symbolic and cultural significance (Picture 20). This aroid plays a significant role in women's social lives. A girl first learns to cultivate taro soon after she starts to accompany her mother in the garden. However, the real taro cultivation begins after a woman marries. Initially, a newly married woman may receive her own garden from both sets of parents or as part of the bride-price paid by the groom's family. Eventually, she is expected to cultivate her own taro to feed her family. Married couples aim to increase their taro stock, not only to keep pace with a growing family, but also to be able to give half a garden upon the marriage of each of their own children.

Women often start to plant taro in the rainy months. Yet, the cultivation is not principally determined by the season but by the concerns of the individual cultivator's need. The prepared garden is dug out with the help of a machete, to a depth of a little less than 50 centimetres. The dug-out soil is piled up in the area between the fields. Taro plants collected from older fields serve as seedlings. The leaves of the taro plants are cut off from the tuber. The upper part of the tuber to base of the stalk is planted with the help of a wooden stick. Stems are planted randomly without any formal structure, with an average distance of one *ladou* (a hand's span, about 20 cm) between each stem. Older women do an offering to appease the spirits inhabiting the land prior to the establishment of a new garden and organise a ritual called *punen lia gette* to protect their garden and its harvest. However, I never witnessed such offering.

A taro garden requires intensive attention once established. The cultivation of taro involves continuous small-scale harvesting and replanting. A taro garden is rarely fallow. Women have to visit their taro gardens regularly, to tend to them, to weed them of grass and shrubs, dig up tubers, and so on. Frequently, some stalks are planted before the tubers are harvested. One replanted stalk regenerates one new corm, despite additional smaller shoots occasionally sprouting from the tuber's sides. The regenerative stalk, defoliated and severed from the corm, must be replanted within two or three days, otherwise it will rot. Taro is ready to be harvested in four to eight months. The precise timing of the harvest is determined by the garden's owner, usually with reference to two factors: (a) the maturity of the taro; (b) the demand for ritual feasts.

The availability of gley soils with relatively high fertility contributes to the wide distribution of taro gardens. *Pugettekat* in Muntei is concentrated in a small waterlogged area on an isolated peninsula

between *barasi* and the Siberut River called *Toinong Muntei* (Figure 5). The area is relatively narrow (only 6.7 hectares in total) and has been divided among 63 different households. The entire *Toinong Muntei* was once exclusively claimed by *uma* Samalagasat, a faction of *uma* Sabajou who once lived around Muntei but then moved to North and South Pagai Islands to the south of Siberut. Muntei's early residents purchased the land after Sabajao men asked their relatives to sell the land. This explains why Sabajou and other *Sasabirut* have the most sago gardens in *Toinong Muntei*.

Toinong Muntei is regularly flooded by a major river that brings rich nutrients and minerals from the surrounding hills and streams for the soil, but it also has open spaces getting plenty of sunlight, which is important for the quality of the tubers. People say the sun (*sulu*) should 'see' the taro, even though a handful of sago and banana trees are planted in the margins of taro fields. The sunlight warms the soil, maintains its moisture content, and ensures that it remains friable and does not become sticky, cloddy, heavy, and difficult to mound. The regular floods make irrigation unnecessary. The women just make a very shallow pond to catch the water. *Toinong Muntei* also has moist and loose sandy soil that is easily to pound and grind. Taro will not flourish in a garden that is too shady, because, it is said, it will be too cold, which is not conducive to the crop's growth. Further, this area is free from pigs. Fencing and digging soil to make a taro pond are not necessary. This ecological suitability allows people to have permanent gardens.

Table 8 and Figure 11 below present the schematic positions of taro gardens owned by Muntei's residents. Low-lying areas in and around the Mara River, Masilulua, Muntei stream, and a few spots in the sago gardens opposite the settlement (*kasilak*) are the second important location for taro gardens after Toinong Muntei. Sakukuret, Salakoppak, Sailuluni, and Saruruk have taro gardens in these locations.

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 20. A woman collects small fish, shrimps and frogs in a taro garden in the wet season. The garden is a gendered space, culturally and economically important for women (2018)

Table 8. The Locations of Taro Gardens (Pugettekat) Cultivated and Owned by Muntei Residents (2015)

No.	*Uma*/Clan	No. of Families	Locations, Localities (Number of Gardens)	Total (in *Mata*)
	Sasabirut			
1	Sabajou	5	Toinong Muntei: (21) Siberut Hulu (4), kasilak (3)	28
2	Sabulat	3	Toinong Muntei (2), Masilulua (2)	4
3	Sagari	11	Toinong Muntei (7), Masilulua (2) Siberut Hulu (5) Bat Mara (4) Kasilak (7) Maileppet (3)	30
4	Saguluw	1	Bat Mara (1) Kasilak (2)	3
5	Salakoppak	16	Kasilak (15) Toinong Muntei (11) Masilulua (4) Bat Mara (3) Bat Muntei (4)	37
6	Saleleggu	1	Toinong Muntei (3) Kasilak (1)	7
7	Sarorougot	3	Toinong Muntei (5) Bat Mara (1) Kasilak (3), Bat Muntei (1)	7
8	Saruruk	23	Toinong Muntei (11) Tingoik-ngoik (5) Kasilak (8)	24
9	Satotottake	2	Maliorak (1) Toinong Muntei (3) Kasilak (3)	7
10	Sauddeinuk	1	Kasilak (1) Rokdok (1)	2
	Sarereiket			
11	Samekmek	13	Bat Kokok (11) Kasilak (9) Siberut Hulu (4) Toinong Muntei (14)	38
12	Sailuluni	2	Bat Mangorut (4) Kasilak (4)	8
13	Sakakaddut	8	Kasilak (3) Siberut Hulu (2)	5
14	Sakaliou	5	Bat Kaliou (15) Bat Mara (2), Silakoinan (3)	20
15	Sakukuret	13	Bat Mara (5) Kasilak (7) Siberut Hulu (2) Toinong Muntei (7)	21
16	Salemurat	3	Bat Muntei (2), Masilulua (1) Bat Mara (1)	4
17	Samapopopou	3	Toinong Muntei (2)(3) Kasilak (2) Siberut Hulu (3)	8
18	Samatotonan	3	Matotonan (2), Masilulua (2)	4
19	Satoleuru	1	Bat Mara (1) Kasilak (1)	4
20	Siritoitet	5	Madobak (2) Kasilak (1) Bat Mara (1)	9
	***Uma*/family from Other Area**			
21	Sabattilat	2	-	-
22	Sakerebau	1	Katurei (2)	2
23	Salabi	2	Bat Mara (1)	1
24	Samalaibibi	1	Toinong Muntei (1)	1
25	Saleilei	1	-	-
		128		**287**

The least visible taro gardens are small spots located in the forest gardens surrounded by fruit trees and secondary forest growth. The total number and area of the sites is difficult to assess, but this type of taro garden indicates an integral system of forest cultivation. The limited amount of flat land in the forest gardens appears to have been mainly reserved for taro fields. This is the case for the taro gardens owned by Sakalio families on their ancestral land by the Kalio River and Samekmek families in Koko River. The taro is also planted alongside cash crops, notably cacao. In general, the table and figure indicate that people intensively use Toinong Muntei but also have taro gardens in various locations. It is safe to say that the availability of taro gardens is plentiful and more than enough for subsistence needs.

As with sago gardens, Muntei's residents count their *pugetekkat* in *mata*. The size of a taro field can vary but an average *mata* taro is about 250 square metres. On average, a family in Muntei possesses 2.3 *mata* taro. Some single families have between three and six *mata* taro gardens. Only two families have no taro gardens. Access to taro is exclusively held by the cultivator. The scarcity of suitable gardens means that access to taro gardens is slightly different from that to sago gardens. To some extent, a *mata* taro garden is a unit of family property. The mode of the land's appropriation for the constant exploitation gendered arrangement of taro fields grants owners exclusive rights.

Taro gardens, especially in *Toinong Muntei,* are now gaining importance and not only for subsistence. Reliable harvests allow women to sell the tubers for a steady price in Muara Siberut. While taro is still part of ritual feasts, the majority of the harvest is now sold. Good quality taro is also a souvenir for mainland people who visit Siberut when travelling or for work. The emergence of the market for taro has contributed to its cultivation. Every morning, women from the Sabajou, Saruruk, and Salakkopak families, who have more than enough sago gardens and always have a surplus of taro, bring tens of taro bundles, along with vegetables, coconuts, and bananas, to sell in the open market in Muara Siberut. Each bundle contains three or four robust tubers.

The emergence of a market for taro persuaded the women in Muntei to add a new variety of taro to their collection. They obtained at least four varieties from the southern islands (Pagai and Sipora). The abundance of taro varieties in Muntei reflects the relationships that residents have with people from outside the settlement. The composition of a garden and the very shape of the harvested taro are inspected as artefacts of the relationships that have allowed women to develop their role in the community.

Other Staples: Bananas, Cassava, and Sweet Potatoes

Bananas and Plantains

Muntei's residents know at least 27 varieties of edible bananas (*Musa paradisiaca* sp) and plantains (*Musa* sp.) (Appendix 2). The principal products for human consumption are the fruit, which is mashed, boiled on top of a metal oven, or roasted in a fire pit. Mashed banana is given to infants when they start to eat solid food. Ripe bananas are fried for breakfast or as a snack for visitors, while half-ripe ones are boiled, mashed, and mixed with taro as *subbet*. Plantain is mostly boiled in a pan as a substitute for taro. Unconsumed bananas are given to pigs.

The characteristics of bananas and plantains mean that they do not require specific arrangements for their cultivation. Biologically, bananas and plantains have no serious natural diseases on Siberut. This means either plantains or bananas can be inserted in any domesticated zones and they adapt to any terrain. They can grow both in *onaja* and in the hills garden. Socially, the cultivation of bananas and plantains is not rigidly gendered, both require the labour of men and women. The men are involved in opening the selected plot and transporting banana shoots from older gardens. Women will normally clean the field to allow new shoots to propagate and harvest the ripened bananas.

There are two banana-dominated areas around Muntei. One is *Toinong Muntei*, described above. There, bananas and plantains are cultivated alongside taro gardens. The other area can be found whenever a new garden (*tinungglu*) is started. The cultivation of bananas and plantains is not intensive or determined by the season. Prior to planting, all low vegetation and small trees are cleared. Fresh banana shoots are then simply put in a shallow hole which is made using a wooden sharp-pointed stick (*papakuru*). In the muddy area, banana shoots are often just simply pushed into the soil. The shoots are collected from around the new gardens or, if the cultivator selects a certain variety, they can be taken from old fields. Once the sprout is planted, bananas grow wild and dominate the area.

It is difficult to calculate the availability of bananas and plantains. Unlike sago and taro, these plants are not rigidly regulated and the term *mata* is not applied. They are available all year round, even in the drier season. The abundance of bananas and plantains contributes to the lack of regulation regarding access and rights. At any time, there is surplus of bananas. One can easily see rotten bananas in every kitchen. Any ripe banana in a garden can be taken without asking. If it is for immediate consumption, one can just grab a ripe banana from any tree anywhere.

In the last decade, there has been a change in the valuation of bananas. The mainland markets' demand for bananas has been steadily increasing. Bananas grown in Mentawaian soil, especially in the freshly-cut forest areas, have seen an increase in their quality. The availability of a regular ferry and better transportation modes has enabled the transporting of bananas from Muntei to mainland Sumatra. Now, the banana is considered to be a commodity that can be sold and exchanged for *bulagat* (money). The market demand has slightly changed the ethic of access to bananas and plantains. Taking other people's bananas and selling them in the market is considered as theft. There are occasional cases of several bunches of bananas disappearing on Sunday afternoons when most people are at the church. Everyone in the settlement usually knows exactly who stole their fruit. However, while the thieves are regularly the object of conversations, there is a strong reluctance to punish the culprits. They take the theft lightly, as they know that the people responsible must have done so out of desperation to feed themselves and their children. There is an understanding that poorer families in the settlement do not own enough land and gardens in the vicinity of the settlement, as they may have moved to Muntei only recently. Suspicions of theft are made public only when the thief sells the stolen fruit to the shops.

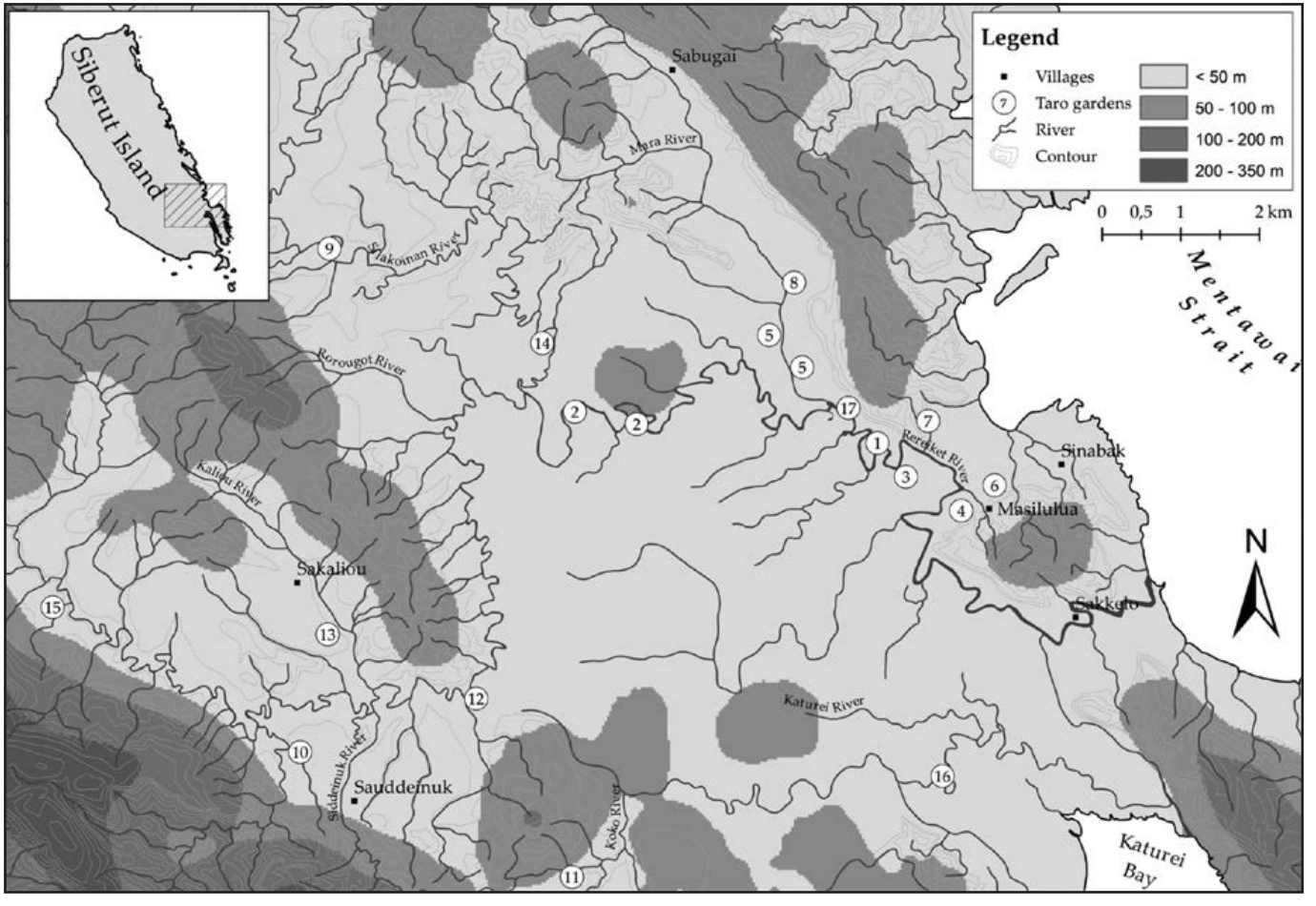
Cassava and Sweet Potatoes

Who, when, and how, cassava (*gobbik*) and sweet potatoes (*tetekket*) were introduced to Muntei is not clear. People say that their myths and ancestral stories do not contain either of these plants. Furthermore, the tubers do not have a specific tenure arrangement. Neither specific zones, nor a specific term qualifies the cultural role that is applied to the tubers. Muntei's residents know three varieties of cassava and six of sweet potatoes, all of which are sporadically cultivated. These plants are commonly planted along the fringe of any garden, marking the boundaries of the garden, but they soon spread to other parts of the garden.

The plants are normally propagated by stem cutting. These are almost always taken from the apical portion of the vine and cuttings from mature plants are preferred. They are grown almost everywhere in Muntei: one can find them around the houses, in fallowing *tinungglu*, in mature forest gardens, even around taro gardens. They quickly propagate in open spaces where sunlight is available. Cultivation of these tubers is mainly the responsibility of women. Men might clear a new area and do the heaviest work, such as removing the basal parts of the grass and unwanted bushes, while the women plant the stems and weed and harvest the tubers.

Cassava needs four months to mature before harvest; sweet potatoes require two or three more months. Both plants are available all year around but both are less-frequently consumed. There are no serious pests or diseases reported for either of these plants. Rats may cause damage to the tubers but there are no

Figure 11. The location of taro gardens (pugettekat) cultivated and owned by Muntei residents (2015). The numbers in the circles refer to locations of the clans/umas stated in the first colum in Table 8.



complaints of a harvest's failure at any of the cultivation sites. The sweet potato weevil can be a problem but is a serious menace only during the driest period. The only problem for these plants comes from feral pigs. Tubers are occasionally stored in the kitchen of the house, but are also left for long periods behind the house. They are mostly processed into a snack, either boiled or fried.

As with bananas, it is impossible to be certain of the production numbers for cassava and sweet potatoes at any level (family, *uma*, or hamlet). The tubers are continuously planted and harvested but are not consumed on a daily basis. Yet, cassava and sweet potatoes not only provide tubers but also leaves, which are consumed as vegetables. Everyone is free to pick cassava leaves from anyone's garden. There is a general understanding that, in particular, widows have the right to take any parts of cassava and sweet potatoes they find around the settlement, to ensure that they have something to eat.

Vegetables, Fruits, and Other Garden Products

Vegetables, Spices, and Annual Fruits

Spices, vegetables, fruit, and wild edible resources are numerous and present in abundant quantities in various productive zones. Vegetables are mostly found in *tinungglu* and home gardens while various fruits are cultivated in the later stage of a forest garden (*mone*). The most commonly cultivated and consumed vegetables are cassava leaves and *kangkung*, a kind of spinach. Cassava leaves are abundantly scattered around the forest gardens while *kangkung* is available only in small ponds near the settlement, or in taro gardens.

Occasionally, people also gather *lotlot*, banana blossoms, and the leaves of a gnetum family plant (*melinjo*) from the vicinity of their house to make a relish to accompany the staples. Despite being abundantly available, vegetables are not consumed regularly and sourced only when there is a dearth of meat. In general, the Mentawaians are not widely known as green enthusiasts. Some households have started to cultivate and consume new kinds of vegetables that have been introduced to the island, especially snake beans, green beans, chili, and eggplant, in their homes gardens and in *tinungglu* after various programmes from the local government and NGOs provided free seeds to plant and persuaded people to consume vegetables.

Spices are also commonly found in home gardens. Turmeric (*kiniu*), galangal (*lengkue*), fingerroot (*sikopuk*), lemongrass (*sereh*), and small chilis (*daro siboitok*) are the most common spices used and consumed by households. These spices are also widely deployed for aromatic or medicinal purposes. *Kiniu* or *sikopuk*, for example, are the basic components of a healing ritual, used either as herbs to drink (*koilokket*) or magic charms (*gaud*). *Daro siboitok* is used as a poison. As most of the home gardens only cover a small area and contain diverse useful plants, not many vegetables and spices are grown, usually only enough to meet the needs of domestic consumption.

The availability of vegetables and spices varies and corresponds to the types of gardens discussed in the previous sections. Table 9 provides an inventory of the edible resources in four sample plots of garden representing: a) traditional gardens in the lowland areas that have a complete *tinungglu* and *mone* cycle (the inventory was taken at a three-year-old garden in Mara River; b) a garden with a mix of fruit and cloves in a hilly area by the headwaters of the stream flowing through Muntei, where a flat area for tubers is not available; c) the coconut garden of a Saruruk family in Masilok, an islet devoted solely to coconut trees; d) the home garden of a Salakkopak family in the south of the settlement. Though a single inventory of this kind cannot be expected to take into account the variations, it does give a general picture of the availability of various non-staple resources.

It is clear from the table that the traditional forest garden is planted with a significant variety of vegetables and spices. The traditional garden is quite denuded of staples, spices, and vegetables. Any useful (food, ornamental, medicinal) plant is found extensively in this type of garden. In a typical garden

Table 9. Sample Edible Resources-Inventory for a Single Three Old-Year Plot of Four Types of Gardens, with Estimations of Plants' Abundance (2014)

Mentawaian Taxa	Common Name, Scientific Name	Degree of Abundance (Three-Year-Old Garden)*			
		Garden Type 1 (Traditional)	Garden Type 2 (Hilly Garden)	Garden Type 3 (Coconut Garden)	Home Garden
Tubers					
Gettek	Taro, *Colocasia esculenta*	***	-	-	**
Gettek simatiet	Wild taro, *Colocasoa dioscorea*	***	-	-	-
Magok	Bananas and plantains, *Musa sp*	***	*	*	***
Ube	Wild yams, *Dioscorea alata*	***	-	-	*
Sagu	Sago, *Metroxylon Sago* and *Metroxylon rumphii*	***	-	-	*
Gobik	Cassava, *Manihot utilisima*	***	*	-	***
Tetekket	Sweet potatoes, *Ipomoea batatas*				
Vegetables and Spices					
Lotlot	Leaves of taro, *Colocasia esculenta*				
Pucuk pranci	Leaves of cassava, *Manihot Utilisima*	***	*	-	***
Bua bagok	Banana flowers, *Musa sp*	***	*	-	***
Sereh	Lemongrass, *Cymbopogon citratus*	***	-	*	***
Kairiggi simalagak	Button Mangosteen, *Garcinia xanthoichymus*	***	*	-	*
Taratti	Wild ginger, *Etlingera elatior*	***	*	-	***
Terong	Eggplant, *Solanum melongena*	***	-	-	***
Daro	Chilli, *Capsicum frutescent*	***	-	-	***
Tomat	Tomatoes, *Lycopersicum esculentum*	***	-	*	***
Kacang tanah	Groundnut, *Arachis hypogea*	***	-	-	***
Kole	Sugar cane, *Saccharum officinarum*	***	*	*	***
Kacang siata	Snake beans, *Vigna unguiculata*				
Sikopuk	Aromatic ginger, *Kaempferia galanga*	*	-	-	***
Matimun	Cucumber, *Cucumis sativus*	*	-	-	***
Tojet	Gnetum, *Gnetum gnemon*	***	-	-	***
Boncis	Green beans, *Phaseolus vulgaris*	*	-	-	***
Arimau sareu	Lime, *Citrus aurantiifoilia*	*	-	-	***
Fruits					
Asit	Pineapples, *Ananas Comosus*	***	-	-	*
Sampelo	Papaya, *Carica Papaya*	***	-	-	*
Ailuluppa	Watery rose apple, *Eugenia aquea*	***	-	-	*
Sabbui	Common Guava, *Psidium guajava*	***	-	-	*
Bairabbit sareu	Rambutan, *Nephelium lappaceum*	*	-	-	*

*- : not-present, ***: abundance, * : available*

that maintains a full *tinungglu-mone*, edible plants start to dominate the area, in association and even competing with other grasses and unwanted weeds. If the garden is visited and managed simultaneously, it would have more diverse vegetables and spices, which would be more than enough for the next few years. The traditional type shares characteristics with the home garden in terms of the availability of edible resources. Both types of gardens are food banks. In the home garden, tubers are less abundant than in the traditional type but vegetables and spices are found in abundance. Annual fruits can also be found there, as in the traditional garden, although not in great numbers.

This is not the case for gardens that are filled with commercial crops. In gardens dominated by cloves (Type 2) and coconuts (Type 3), tubers and annual fruits are absent. Bananas, cassava, and a few spices and vegetables might be available but in limited numbers. The presence of cloves and coconuts and the requirement for clean and clear ground for these crops make the gardeners regularly weed the useful plants. All this implies a further difference between gardens with introduced cash crops and traditional fruit trees, where the number of vegetables and spices in the latter is much larger than that found in the former and is accompanied by the increasing domination of specific non-consumed plants.

Fruits (Bua)

Other seasonal but important plants food resources include numerous large leafy trees found in the forest gardens or to a lesser extent in home gardens. Any edible plants that contain flowers, seeds, or fruit are called *bua*. Coconuts are perhaps the most salient and the most important *bua* in terms of people's diet. The palm is an important source of food, for both humans and animals. The flesh of the coconut is extracted and used as a main ingredient for local curries. Grated coconut is used daily as a condiment for both human beings and livestock. The flesh of a young coconut and its water is used for a light snack called *jurutet*, mixed with sugar cane and any available fruit in the garden. Eating *jurutet* is a part of daily life when working in the garden. Other than for consumption, the leaves of the coconut tree are used to construct skirts, mats, baskets, and the walls of huts. Moreover, the shells of the nuts are used as fuel for fires and the shells are used as drinking cups or for storing tobacco. As a whole tree, the coconut palm is a valuable possession, used in most social exchanges. It also has economic importance as the source of dried coconut (copra).

While coconut is the most useful plant for daily use, the most socioculturally valuable plant in the forest garden is the durian tree. Mentawaians classify the durian into three species, namely, the toktuk (red durian, *Durio oxelanus*), the posinoso (wild durian *Durio graveolens*), and the doriat (durian, *Durio zibethinus*). Alongside durian, the presence of a number of fruit trees, including *siamung* (langsat, *Lansium domesticum*), bairabbit (rambutan, *Nephelium lappaceum*), *lakkopak* (mangostene, *Garcinia* sp), *peigu* (jackfruit, *Artocarpus integer*), and *abbangan* (wild mango, *Mangifera spp*) define a mature garden (Pictures 21). These fruit trees flower annually but they all produce fruit roughly about the same time once every two or three years, in a great harvest season locally known as the great fruit season (*rura)*. The *rura* occurs when all the fruit trees bear fruit simultaneously, a period that may last two months or more, typically from mid-June to early September. Mango trees bear fruit first, followed by *rambutan*, *langsat*, and then durian. The jackfruit normally rounds-off the season. *Rura* is celebrated and shared by all present, including those who do not own the trees and non-Mentawaians.

Durian is considered the most valuable tree since it lasts longer than the other fruit trees. Many fruit trees produce fruit for two to three human generations, but a durian can produce fruit for seven or more generations. Although it is not truly native, the durian has long been naturalised and distributed throughout the Mentawai Islands. The fruit of a single durian tree does not drop all at once, but over a period of approximately ten to 35 days. Moreover, the trees do not all ripen at once. Any fruit that has fallen

DARMANTO

Picture 21. A mature garden full of fruit trees owned by a Salakoppak family near the settlement (2014)

is free to be collected by anyone. As falling durian fruits know no time of day, waiting in a hut at night has its own special thrills. Young people are willing to stay under the trees at night, waiting for the fruit to fall. Harvesters claim they often see or hear the spirits of the forest while they wait.

The oldest and densest durian trees are in the vast forest gardens in the old settlement. These are rarely visited but are bustling during the peak of *rura*. When most of the fruit is ripe, the owners of the trees invite their extended family, friends, neighbours, and even passers-by to pluck the fruit from the trees. This event is called *pananduk*, when all gathered share and freely comment on the quality, taste, and texture of the durian. All the plucked fruits brought home are consumed over the next few weeks. In the *rura* season, the consumption of fruit is remarkable. People often skip meals of sago or rice and replace them with durians and jackfruit. Both fruits are rich in carbohydrate, sucrose, and protein, all of which are important elements of the local diet.

Table 10 provides an indicator of the fruit trees' composition in different types of gardens. Fruit trees are mostly found in the first type of garden (traditional) and the fourth (home garden). The former is dominated by lasting native fruits while the latter is dominated by easily picked fruits such as malay water apple, rambutan, jackfruit, and coconuts. Home gardens contain not only native fruits, but also various introduced fruit trees such as kaffir limes, mainland mango, and jackfruit. In contrast, gardens with commercial crops (types 2 and 3) are dominated by single tree species, either coconuts or cloves. Durian and other fruit trees might still be found in a clove garden around the settlement, but they are not plentiful.

Fruits trees are commonly cultivated by individual families on certain plots of land and considered the family's property. Yet, like other food resources, they have always been subject to social exchanges. The fruit trees in a garden, therefore, might be owned and claimed by different people. In terms of their consumption, there is a generally accepted, if not formalised, rule that members of the *uma* have the

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 22. *Udduat*, a kind of mushroom, an additional source of 'meat' (2019)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 23. *Ngebru*, another mushroom, an additional source of 'meat' (2019)

Table 10. Sample Fruit Inventory for a Single Mature Garden (>10 Years) Plot of Four Types of Garden, with Estimation of Plants' Abundance (2015)

Mentawaian Taxa	Common Name, Scientific Name	Degree of Abundance (Mature Garden)*			
		Forest Garden Type 1	Forest Garden Type 2	Forest Garden Type 3	Home Garden
Native Fruits					
Peigu	Cempedak, *Artocarpus integer*	***	*	-	*
Abbangan	Wild mango, *Mangifera sp.*	***	*	-	*
Siamung	Langsat, *Lansium parasiticum*	***	*	-	*
Doriat	Durian, *Durio zibethinus*	***	*	-	-
Toktuk	Red durian, *Durio graveolens*	***	*	-	-
Pusinoso	Wild durian, *Durio dulcis*	***	*	-	-
Bairabbit	Wild rambutan, *Nepheliumsp*	***	*	-	-
Sabbui	Common guava, *Psidium guajava*	***	-	-	***
Kairiggi	Button mangosteen, *Garcinia dioica*	***	*	-	*
Lakkopak	Purple mangosteen, *Garcinia mangostana*	**	*	-	*
Ailuluppa	Water apple, *Syzygium sp.*	***	-	-	***
Ailuluppa leley	Wild rose apple, *Syzigiym pycnanthum*	**	-	-	***
Limu	Wild mango *Mangifera macrocarpa*	***	-	-	*
Toitet	Coconut, *Cocos nucifera*	*	-	***	*
Muntei	Pomelo, *Citrus Maxima*	***	-	-	*
Teggeiluk	Wild langsat, *Baccaeura lanceolata*	*	-		
Introduced Fruits					
Arimau sareu	Key lime, *Citrus aurantiifolia*	*	-	-	*
Arimau simananam	Common orange, *Citrus nobilis*	*	-	-	*
Arimau boitok	Kaffir lime, *Citrus hystrix*	*	-	-	*
Ailuppa sareu	Malay water apple, *Syzygium malaccense*	***	-	-	*
Bairabbit sareu	Rambutan, *Nephelium lapppaceum*	*	*	-	*
Kweni	Kueni, *Mangifera odorata*	***	*	-	**
Peigu sareu	Jackfruit, *Artocarpos heterophylla*	*	*	-	***
Tojet	Gnetum, *Gnetum Gemon*	*	*	-	*
Sau	Sapodilla, *Manilkara zapota*	*	-	-	*
Sirsak	Soursop, *Annona muricata*	*	-	-	*

**** : abundance, *: available, - : not-present*

right to enjoy the fruits. The fruit trees normally function as a common food bank for the entire group, relatives, friends, and even passers-by who find fallen fruit lying on the ground. All members of the *uma* can freely collect and consume all the food planted in the communal land. Plucking a ripe durian or taking a bunch of langsat from other's people gardens is common practice. Fruit trees in faraway gardens tend to be harvested (*pananduk*) at certain times by all the members of the group, as collecting the entire fruits is impossible for one family to do. Older trees, planted by ancestors, ultimately become the group's property. In this way, the differential distribution and concentration of fruit trees and their ownership has some bearing on the development of the *uma* and the history of their movement.

The actual distribution and ownership pattern of fruit trees and mature gardens (*mone*) is shown in Table 6 and Figure 9 above. The distribution of fruit trees may indicate the approximate location of the residences of earlier generations, making it possible (at least to a limited extent) to trace the changes in the gardens' locations over a period of time. Many of the fruit trees are located around the old settlement of the residents. Meanwhile, the presence of old and mature durian and jackfruit trees around Muntei indicate the combination of earlier cultivation prior to the OPKM project and the earlier clove cultivation of people during the early years of the settlement.

Wild Plants

The inhabitants of Muntei also collect wild plants from the surrounding environment. Uncultivated plants are considerably less varied and are mostly obtained from the nearby forest. The most popular edible resources in *leleu* are three kinds of wild mushrooms: *udduat*, *buluk posa* (Picture 22 & 23), and *ngebbru*. The mushrooms are only available once or twice every three years. People said that when the earthquakes occur simultaneously, it is a sign that mushrooms will grow. The other edible wild plants obtained from the forest are shoots (*ogoet*) of the sugar palm (*poula*) and oncosperma palm (*arriribuk*). These plants are extracted when there are no vegetables available and are considered to be food for hungry people. *Ogoet* palms are not extracted on a regular basis but only occasionally when people venture into the forest. Most of the wild plants are toxic, requiring lengthy and complicated processes to make them edible. For example, raw *laggurek* fruit must be soaked in water for several nights and fermented for a few days before it can be cooked and eaten as spices for a black curry. The shoots of the *poula* palm cause a severe rash upon contact with human skin. All of these non-domesticated plants constitute an insignificant portion of the diet and are considered not to be reliable sources of edible matter.

At the edge of the forest, wild ferns (*leuk-leuk*), stalks of wild taro (*laiket*), wild eggplant (*dodolu*), and the flowers of wild ginger (*tairatti*) are sources of food. The variety and abundance of ginger and ferns increase towards the more open spaces between the gardens and the forest. The most important of these, in terms of their contribution to people's diets, is *leuk-leuk* and *tairatti*. Wild ferns are commonly gathered and cooked, but are also a source of income, particularly for older women and widows who collect and sell them to small Minangkabau restaurants in Muara Siberut. *Tairatti* is rarely consumed; it is used as an aromatic ingredient in curry.

3.3 The Availability of and Access to Animal Food (*Iba*)

Iba, is food derived from animals, both domesticated and wild. Invertebrates such as molluscs, crabs, various forms of insects, and worms are also considered *iba*. In general, *iba* is classified into several categories depending on the zones where it is obtained. Freshwater fish, eels, molluscs, crabs, shrimps, and frogs, mostly gathered in the rivers and estuaries, are commonly called 'meat from freshwater' (*iba-*

t-oinan). All sea creatures, including fish and octopuses, but particularly *sakokkok koat* and *masusurak*, are called 'meat from the sea' (*iba-t-koat*). Non-domesticated animals hunted in the forest are called 'meat from the forest' (*iba-t-leleu*). Small mammals (squirrels, pangolin) and birds are *iba-t-leleu,* but are mostly referred to by their individual names. Meat from domesticated zones (pigs, chickens, buffaloes, and ducks) is referred to by specific species names and has no collective term despite the fact it is generally known as ritual meat (*iba-t-punen*). A comprehensive list of animals consumed by people is presented in Appendix 3.

Meat from Freshwater (*Iba-t-oinan/Iba-t-sinanalep*)

Freshwater animals are mostly, but not exclusively, collected and gathered by women (Picture 24 & 25). This is why the term used to refer to meat from freshwater (*iba-t-oinan)* is conflated with the meat of women (*iba-t-sinanalep*). People have known more than forty species of freshwater fish, shrimp as well as clams and mussels gathered around estuary and brackish water (Appendix 3). Most of those species were consumed during my fieldwork. Although there is no Mentawaian concept of a primary and dependable single source of food, freshwater animals, essentially products of the non-domesticated zones, remain the most reliable, stable, and significant source of protein for everyday meals obtained from non-market sources.

The majority of *iba-t-oinan* can be found in bodies of freshwater, such as brackish areas, the inundated areas between the forest and the gardens, rivers, and streams. Small streams and creeks, as well as the mangrove areas, are actually not entirely 'open access' areas since there are always one or more claimants. If particular areas of the forest are reserved for a certain purpose by a particular group or household, access to those areas would be restricted. Unless there is a warning (*kekre*), everyone is welcome to catch animals from these areas without any particular restriction.

The major rivers and streams around the settlement and the gardens are the most reliable source of *iba-t-oinan*. On a typical day, an adult woman and a few young girls who are not in school go to the nearby river, unless it is raining. Expeditions to capture fish and shrimps (*tutuk*) are also occasionally done at night, in a group. Torches are employed to startle the fish and shrimps and make them easy to catch. Fish are scooped up in fishing nets and tossed into a bamboo tube or a rattan basket. The catch is usually just enough for one or two family meals (*sanga kopman*).

Iba-t-oinan is rather abundant during the driest months when the water level of the rivers and streams is low. Then, women can not only catch fish but a variety of clams and mussels (Burgos 2013). Gathering and catching *iba-t-oinan* are usually done in groups, using nets (*subba*) made of natural twine or artificial fibre suspended on curved rattan frames. Shrimp and fish are trapped with *subba* at the edge of the river. In certain spots, women dive into the water for a few minutes to collect clams and mussels deep in the muddy ground. The spots are not permanent but normally located in a deeper and calmer part of the river.

When the rain has stopped for a few weeks, some groups of women may decide to go further downstream, to the brackish water at the mouth of the Katurei River or to the islets on the east coast, to collect and gather brackish shells, barnacles, and molluscs around the mangrove forests and beaches. Usually, they paddle a canoe for an hour. Fishing in this way is kind of an excursion and may last a few days. They may bring cooking utensils and portable shelters with them and stay several nights at the fishing grounds. Collective fishing is a lively communal activity and nearly every adolescent girl and adult woman without an infant in the settlement participates. As the mussels, clams, and snails around mangrove forest and brackish water are relatively diverse and abundant (Appendix 3), the catch is usually significant (Picture 26). Indeed, a woman can bring home a sack containing 15 to 25 kilograms of shells and mussels after a two or three-day expedition. Even when their efforts do not produce a big yield, the excitement and sense of togetherness that accompany collective fishing are considered good reasons for getting involved.

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Picture 24. A Saruruk woman is fishing in Mara River (2014)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 25. A woman is happy with the catch, caught in the net near Kokok River (2016)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 26. The mangrove forest near Katurei River provides abundance of mussel and clams. Here a young woman collects mangrove whelk (*lilit*) (2016)

Another way to obtain *iba-t-oinan* during the dry season is by poisoning (*mutubba*) the water. After a stream is dammed, the root of *raggi* is pounded to obtain a poisonous sap. The stream is diked by placing a wattle of stones and mud across the stream at a point where it forks, is divided by a mound, or at a junction. A fish trap, made from bamboo (*leggeu),* is then placed there, parallel to the dam. Part of the group moves upstream while the others wait at the dam. The upstream group churns the water using the *raggi* root, causing poison to flow towards the dam. Poisoned fish, eels, and shrimp float to the surface to find fresh air or are scooped up by the women with their *subba*. Other fish swimming downstream enters into the traps. This method of fishing is used in tributaries of the Mara River and small streams; however, it should be noted that it is rarely used. During my entire fieldwork (14 months), I encountered just two *muttuba* by a Sakaliou and a Saruruk family in the Mara River near their gardens.

Fishing is also carried out in the wet season in streams and small ponds around taro gardens. When there is heavy rainfall after a few dry weeks in April or November, women visit their taro gardens and search for small fish and frogs. In the meantime, men catch catfish (*tuik*), eelfish (*sikapla*), and eels (*lojo*) in the swampy area near the settlement, particularly after small floods, using *leggeu* as well as a hook and line with sago grubs as bait (Pictures 27 & 28). A few inundated areas around the gardens are also fishing spots. *Lojo* in particular are easier to catch when ponds are murky after heavy rain. Women quickly jump into the ponds with their hand nets to scoop up the mud and litter where the animals are hiding.

During my fieldwork, elder women fished frequently, regardless of the dry or wet season. Younger women only fish when they can be certain of a good catch. Frogs and small fish are still attractive but only a few women go to their taro gardens after a heavy downpour. The young women now prefer to have enough cacao or coconut gardens, which decreases the time they have to spend fishing. Daily fishing is considered to be unpredictable. They also complain that they have to walk further from the settlement in order to

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 27. A Samekmek man catches catfish (*tuik*) after a rainy day near Mara River (2016)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 28. A young Samekmek hooks a giant river eel (*sikapla*) in Sabirut River in the rainy season (2016)

catch any significant amount of fish and shrimps. The availability of saltwater fish in the local market has also contributed to the decline in daily fishing. Buying either fresh or salted saltwater fish is preferred whenever cash is available, rather than going fishing. Despite the general decrease in fishing, women still enjoy going to Katurei Bay in a group to collect shrimps, clams and mussels (Picture 29).

The district government's recently introduced programme to create aquaculture has also added a source of *iba-t-oinan*. The local government's fisheries agency has encouraged people to make small ponds around the settlement and, to this end, it has provided technical assistance, including tools and training, and it has introduced exotic species such as common catfish and tilapia into these ponds (Puailigoubbat 2014, 2015). A small number of the ponds have been a success story but the majority are a total failure. The artificial ponds are simple but incompatible with the ecology of the island, especially given the amount of rainfall. In spacious home gardens the ponds have provided decent yields. The majority of ponds, however, were created around the streams and creeks, or inserted into the forest gardens. While fish may thrive in the ponds for a while, they disappear in the regular heavy rainfall and flooding before they can be harvested.

Various worms and insect larvae are another reliable source of animal protein considered as *iba-t-sinanalep*, despite not all of them being collected from freshwater sources. *Toek* is a long pink worm gathered from rotten trees that are put in the river. It is a semi-cultivated animal as *toek* occupy the logs of *tumu* (*Campnosperma auriculatum*) and *sikka* (*Glycosmis* sp.) that sink in the river. In about two months, when the log is split, the worms come out of the holes in the wood. The worms can be eaten raw or boiled. They are considered to be delicious and are significant to the daily diet, especially when saltwater fish are not available. Insect larvae are the main source of invertebrate food. There are names for different kinds of larvae and pupae. The grubs of the paper wasp are a delicacy, though hazardous to collect. The larvae of longhorn beetles (*leitik sabeu*) can be collected from rotting logs or trees deliberately felled in the gardens;

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 29. A group of women from *uma* Samekmek collects small fish, shrimps and mud clam (*meggu*) in brackish water near Katurei Bay (2016)

they are delicious but not particularly substantial. The larvae of insects living in the *karamangga* trees (*Ficus congesta*) called *sikku* are also collected. The latter is a delicious treat for women, but it is rare and difficult to obtain.

The larvae of the weevil beetle (*batra)* contribute most of the people's daily protein. A clue to the importance of *batra* is the different nomenclature that referred to them in different places. For the *Sarereiket*, the larva is called *tamra*. In another valley, it is called *subbai*. Muntei's residents cut the stumps of old sago trees to invite sago beetles to lay their eggs on them. The eggs are incubated in the palm for about two or three months. They are private property and exclusively gathered by women. The larva is delicious when eaten raw. The juicy and strong, lingering, rather rancid smell is clear evidence of delicious food. Live *batra* are wrapped in leaves and cooked in a pan or stuffed in a piece of bamboo stem and roasted. Yet, men rarely consume *batra*.

Meat from the Sea *(Iba-t-koat)*

The term *iba-t-koat* is applied to any animal living in the sea. It includes coral and deep-sea fish, squid, octopuses, and big clams (*kima*). Crabs collected by the women are also referred to *iba-t-koat*. Among the varieties of *iba-t-koat*, saltwater fish are the most stable element of the diet of Muntei residents. Located near the coastal settlements, people get daily access to fresh fish from the Minangkabau fishermen there. Especially since the availability of round-the-clock electricity in 2009, the Minangkabau fishermen and a number of Maileppet people have a constant supply of ice cubes and a proper fridge that keeps the catch fresh for a few days. This ensures the stock of fish from the sea is relatively stable. The improvement in the island's roads has also allowed the residents of Muntei to go to market to get either fresh or frozen fish on a regular basis. In just twenty minutes, they can reach Muara Siberut in the early morning and ask the Minangkabau fishermen about their night's catch. Over 170 species of saltwater fish are named and consumed (Appendix 3). In spite of the stable fish supply, not all of Muntei's residents have equal access to fish from the market, an issue I will come back to later, in the last chapter.

A tiny part of *iba-t-koat* consumed by Muntei residents is obtained by fishing in the coastal zone close to the coconut gardens. *Sasabirut*, who have gardens in the islets (*nusa*), go fishing with a hook and line from an outrigger canoe at the edge of the sea, mostly for subsistence supplies. Occasionally, they sink a gill net (*mujarik*) into the water in the evening and haul it out the next morning. *Mujarik* is carried out by men, but they are usually accompanied and assisted by their wives. The net (*jarik*) is put near the shore or in the reefs during the evening and left there overnight. The next morning, they check if any fish have been caught. Squid, cuttlefish, and octopuses are sometimes caught in the net and considered *iba-t-koat*. Another technique for fishing, exclusively done by men, includes throwing a casting net (*mujalo*) into the shallow beds around the mangrove forests in the morning. Before throwing the net, the men listen for the splash of water, which indicates the presence of fish. Then, they pull and drag the net to the beach to take out any fish they have caught.

Young men might dive the coral reefs and bring a spear to get a desirable coral fish. The latter is referred to as *manombak*, and the most prestigious catch is an octopus. Compared to the other methods, spearfishing is practiced less often. It requires additional tools, such as diving goggles and a snorkel, since the big fish that can be speared are not in the shallow beds. Fish are easier to spear at night. Young men are keen to go spearfishing using a flashlight. Despite fishing regularly, the coconut gardeners insist that they are not fishermen but *sipumone* (the gardeners). They do not fish for a living as the Minangkabau people do. Instead, it is just to fulfil their daily needs. When they collect more than they need, they smoke the fish and store them in bamboo. The surplus is brought to the settlement for their families. If there is someone asking *silakkra*, a sale is possible.

DARMANTO

Picture 30. Two women from Muntei do fishing in the mouth of Sabirut river in the morning, using a large net (*panu*) (2014)

Other kinds of *ibat-t-koat* are available periodically. Around the time of the full moon, small fish and crustaceans, especially *rourou* (greasyback shrimps, *Metapenaeus ensis*) appear in the mouth of the delta of the main river and the shallow beds around the coral reefs. When there is heavy rainfall, the siltation process brings a large amount of clay and dirt to the shallow seabed at the mouth of the river. The estuary becomes feculent and attracts *rourou*, which come seeking the rich detritus and humus from the silt. A group of four to six women go down to the mouth of the river early in the morning with a large fishing net (*panu*) and fish for about two to three hours (Pictures 30). The yield usually amounts to more than two kilograms of small fish, crabs, and shrimps.

As mentioned above, crabs are also categorised as *iba-t-koat* despite not all of them being obtained from the sea. Once every two years, the dry and stormy wind that comes from the northeast of Siberut brings *aggau* season. The season lasts anything from three weeks to three months. This period is marked by the emergence of crabs, named after the season, in the mangrove forests, beaches, and shallow coral beds in the eastern part of Siberut. Between mid-July and early September, the *aggau*, consisting of at least five different species, flock to the *nusa* to lay their eggs in the mangrove forest. *Sasabirut* stay in their coconut gardens during this stormy period to gather the crustaceans. People from other coastal settlements might join them. The *aggau* season, like the *rura*, is a social event full of excitement. People might construct a simple, temporary, hut around the spot. They use torches to attract the crabs at night. Young men and girls join the event and use it for dating or making friends. Live crabs are caught with curved sticks made from bamboo and put in baskets. In a few hours, a person can collect eight to 13 big *aggau*, equal to four kilograms.

While all the fish, clams, and crabs are considered proper meat, the most desirable and valued *iba-t-koat* are three species of turtles (*masusurak*) and dugong (*sakokkok koat*) obtained through hunting

(*muiba*). Hunting (*muiba*) is the only way to get valued *iba-t-koat* and two methods are practised. The first is cooperative hunting involving a large number of persons recruited specifically for the purpose, normally on a clan basis. The cooperative hunting is carried out on special occasions, normally to end a communal ritual. Largely because of the numbers involved, this type of hunting lacks mobility and flexibility and, most importantly, it is essentially a short-term pursuit. The second, individual hunting is undertaken by an individual or as a pair. The individual hunting is a kind of opportunistic hunting.

Hunting in the sea is only carried out by *Sasabirut* who have gardens in the islets with specialised nets and special floats. It also requires special offerings and magic charms to the spirits of the sea and not all people have hunting expertise. Hunting has limited success and is often hampered by factors such as the season and weather, the unpredictability of wild animals, and the lack of coordination. However, most people believe that the failure of a hunting expedition is caused by the failure to make offerings to the spirits of the sea. Over my year of observation (2012-2013), there were four cooperative hunting expeditions, none of which brought home a turtle. Only two out of seven individual hunts caught two turtles and one dugong. It can be said that hunting turtles and dugong contribute little to the people's diet despite them remaining important game animals, culturally and symbolically.

Forest Meat (*Iba-t-leleu*)

Wild pigs, four species of primates, and deer are the major sources of meat from the forests (*iba-t-leleu)*. Culturally, they are the most important game animals, hunted exclusively by men in *leleu* to mark the end of a religious ritual. As with the methods for obtaining major *iba-t-koat*, hunting *iba-t-leleu* is undertaken in two ways. Cooperative hunting is largely done as part of a ritual by the men within an *uma*. The most common weapons employed are longbows, spears of various kinds and, occasionally, breech-loading rifles. This type of hunting requires the assistance of dogs. The presence of dogs on hunting trips tends to boost the catch and redirect the pursuit. The dogs patrol with or near the hunters and to an extent might direct the route taken. Hunting techniques vary from species to species, but the principal method for large game (particularly pigs and deer) is to chase the animal into an open space, such as a dry river bed, where it is easily ambushed by strategically placed marksmen.

Cooperative hunting for *iba-t-leleu* is essentially a daytime pursuit. An expedition rarely exceeds 24 hours and the hunting party is led by an ad hoc leader, who is usually chosen on the basis of seniority and experience, though most cooperation is simply by mutual agreement. A few members of the *uma* might depart the day before to identify the sleeping trees of hunted primates, or check whether the wild pigs are still around in a certain spot in the forest. Individual hunting is carried out by an individual or a pair and is rarely planned. It occurs when a gardener sees the tracks of animals or believes there are animals around his gardens. This hunting method is flexible and can be done at any time, whenever signs of animals are seen.

Muntei residents always remember their past hunting expeditions. Forest animals are also still culturally and symbolically important. The joy of retelling the dramatic events accompanying a hunting expedition is palpable. There is no doubt that people, particularly the older *Sarereiket*, still have an intimate knowledge of the forest and are skilled hunters, something that they are proud of. However, hunting forest animals has been practically abandoned. During my stay in 2012 and 2013, I did not encounter a single cooperative hunt of *iba-t-leleu*. Twice I observed people in the settlement who brought home a deer and a wild pig from the forest near to the end of 2014. Neither the deer, nor the boar was ritually hunted. All these animals were opportunistically obtained after a gardener had seen the tracks of a deer and then invited other gardeners in the adjacent area to organise a large hunting party. Some people said that hunting is no longer attractive because there are only a few forest animals left. This statement is doubtful. Primates are still frequently

seen around the Mara River. Even from the settlement, the sound of *bilou* (*Hylobates klossi*) can be heard everyday in the early morning. *Bokkoi* (*Macaca siberu siberu*) are also regularly encountered in the gardens close to the forested hills near the settlement, taking ripened bananas or papayas. It was also reported that deer are occasionally encountered grazing cassava leaves in gardens around the Mara River.

Laying traps for deer and feral pigs is still practiced, but largely restricted to the immediate area of the gardens, often as a protective device against those animals. A line of traps would be placed at the edge of the garden where the footprints of a deer or wild boar had been seen. A trap might also be placed in the margin of a garden where deer are occasionally seen grazing cassava leaves or wild boar damage the crops. Such traps do not have a fence to guide the quarry into the avenue of stakes, and thus it is baited. A chunk of sago pith might be placed in the path of the animals. The trapping of big mammals is not necessarily ritualised. It is a casual pursuit that occurs when people have some spare time after tending to their cash crops. This solitary type of hunting is considered to hinge mostly on luck. While the traps may not be far away from the garden, they are not regularly checked. Often, when the gardeners check the traps, they find the trapped animals have already decomposed.

Small mammals (pangolin, squirrels, civets, bats, flying foxes) and various species of birds are casually hunted and can be categorised as *iba-t-leleu*, but are normally referred to by their species name. *Luppa* (pangolin, *Manis javanica*) is considered to have the most delicious meat. It is also believed that this insectivore has certain properties that can cure some illnesses and help men regain their fitness. However, this animal loves to stay deep in the forest, so it is rarely seen and is difficult to find. Hunting pangolin is never deliberate, being undertaken only when people are lucky enough to encounter the animal when cutting rattan or making a canoe. Squirrels, civets, and bats are hunted occasionally since they regularly come to the gardens and are available throughout the year. Coconuts and the smell of ripened bananas attract them. Squirrels and civets are commonly shot with an air rifle. A hide might be created near the rippen fruit trees for the hunt. When small animals are about to approach they are shot.

Flying mammals (bats and flying fox) are considered to be delicious. Small bats are caught with a noose snare that people place in the fruit trees around their home gardens or the forest gardens in the vicinity of the settlement. When the bats are in abundance, scaffolding is erected throughout the entire tree by a group of men. The resulting catch must be divided equally among the participants. Sometimes, a group of small bats roost in the foliage. They can be dislodged by sturdy sticks or fishing nets. Large flying foxes (*leituak*) are more desirable than small bats. Two different species of *leituak* are hunted: *leituak simakotkot*, the large flying fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*) and *leituak simabo*, the small flying fox (*Pteropus hypomelanus enganus*). When the durian trees are flowering, men wait under the canopy with air rifles. As flying foxes are nocturnal animals, hunting is only undertaken for a few hours, usually from the late afternoon until midnight. The yield from such hunts is not particularly great. Heavy rain in the afternoon prevents the hunters staying for more than an hour around the gardens. People say hunting flying foxes gives relief from routine tasks and increases the pleasure of late evening meals.

All birds are considered edible but only few are hunted and eaten. Eagles, seabirds, and owls are clearly difficult to obtain. Birds of omen such as the tailorbird (*kuilak*) and the greater coucal (*kemut*) are never deliberately killed and eaten. Other small birds such as the sunbird and flower pecker are hunted by children but not consumed by adults. The favourite birds for hunting are *kailaba* (pied hornbill, *Burceros spp*), *ngorut* (green imperial pigeon, *Ducula aenea*), and *lemendeu* (thick-billed green pigeon, *Treron curvirostra*). *Kailaba* is still used as a decorative bird. People use *kailaba* feathers and bills as trophies, displayed in the longhouse. In the past, people climbed tall trees, where the nests of *kailaba* could be found, while the bird was incubating its eggs and they would take the adult bird. Nowadays, this practice is considered wasteful and unworthy. Instead, people use an air rifle when they encounter the bird in the

forest. Traps and glue made from jackfruit sap are employed to kill or capture green pigeon and imperial dove. If there is a flock of *ngorut* that frequently stays in the gardens a large kind of noose trap, manually operated, is used for catching the flock during the night. While those birds are regarded as delicious and available all year round, people do not organise a special expedition to obtain them.

Various reptiles are edible. Snakes (*ulo*), tortoises (*toulu*), and monitor lizards (*batek*) were also once considered to be *iba-t-leleu*; however, these are now considered to be inferior sources of meat and their consumption is detrimental to one's social status. Despite monitor lizards being meaty and in abundance, no-one in Muntei puts the flesh of the reptile on their plate. It is considered shameful to consume animals that eat carcasses and always steal food from humans. The crocodile is a special animal, considered as the embodiment of the spirit of the water. In the distant past, this animal was only hunted when someone drowned. The symbolic importance of crocodiles will be explained in Chapter 6.

Domestic Animals *(Iba-t-punen)*

Domesticated animals are the most desirable sources of animal protein. Pigs and chickens are traditional sources of meat and are available throughout the year, but people do not consume them frequently. The consumption of these animals, especially pigs, is reserved mainly for communal ceremonies and occasionally a large gathering in a church. These domestic animals are valuable because the entire cycle of production and consumption is laborious and associated with many taboos and cultural sanctions. They are also the most important gifts offered to spirits in religious rituals. Considered a toy of the spirits, it is believed that these animals can transcend the perspectives of the spirits of humans and ancestors (Schefold 1973; Hammons 2010). They are used as objects in any social exchange, for compensation payments, and for the bride-price. The size of a domestic animal not only defines the wealth of a person, but also their social prestige.

Chicken (Goukgouk)

Chickens are the second most important animals. Almost all the families in Muntei have at least a few of chickens. The practice of keeping chickens in Muntei is not significantly different to the traditional one in the neighbouring village of Katurei described a century ago (Kruyt 1979). Chickens are kept around and placed in the forest and sago gardens alongside pigs, as well as in the coconut gardens in *nusa*. In a garden, a small and open shelter called a pugougoupat (chicken hut) is constructed (Picture 31). A hen and its chicks are put into baskets (*roiget*), which are hung beneath the roof of the hut to protect them from snakes and lizards while the rooster and female fowls perch on an *ailuluppa* or a small *lakkopak* tree, where they are able to take refuge from those predators during the night. In the early morning, the hen and chicks are released from their baskets to roam and forage around the home garden or the forest gardens. A mix of sago pith and grated coconut is given to the chickens twice a day. If the location of the *pugougoupat* is not far away from the settlement, hens with eggs are brought to the settlement to brood until the chicks are hatched. A particular taboo and restriction such as bathing or eating sour fruits may be imposed on an owner when a hen hatches her eggs and nurtures her chicks.

People say that chicks bred in the settlement do not grow as big as chicks bred in forest gardens. Certainly, food for the chickens is more plentiful in the sago or forest gardens that surround the houses. When the chicks have grown bigger, several of them may be brought to the original *pugogoupat* to join the adult fowls and roosters. Despite the higher risk of natural predators, having more food to forage in the gardens and around the forest gives the chickens more sustenance. Some families have developed a strategy to make a semi-permanent *pugogoupat* that is easy to move to a new location after a predator attack. This strategy is also aimed at preventing *oiluk*, an epidemic that drastically reduces the population of chickens. When the *oiluk* attacks in the wet season, the impact is more severe, reducing the numbers

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Picture 31. A shaman feeds his chickens with grated sago and coconut in his small chicken hut (*pugogoupat*) in the old settlement (Sabirut Hulu) (2018)

of chickens in certain areas to a critical point. Transporting chickens periodically to a new place lessens the risk of theft and protects them from *oiluk*. Another problem with keeping chickens comes from an invisible spirit called *silakikou*. The spirit attacks chickens in the night and takes their livers. Such attacks are unpredictable but can be devastating. To prevent this, the leaves of *baiko* (*Artocarpus* sp.) are put over the baskets during the night in the *pugougopat*, as *baiko* leaves are believed to chase the *silakikou* away.

It is difficult to calculate the exact number of chickens. The majority of the residents in Muntei have more than one chicken hut in several gardens. Most of these huts are not easily spotted as they are placed inside the gardens. Another problem is that as the gardens are far away from the settlement, many roosters and adult fowls are not fed regularly. They sleep not on a designated perch but anywhere they feel safe. Counting the number of chickens is always a delicate business. An exhaustive survey is impossible, while asking the owners will only result in hearty laughter. People commonly refuse to answer the formal question of how many chickens they have. The only occasion where the number may be estimated is at a ritual feast.

Pig (Sainak)

Pigs have been, and still are, the most important animal. A swampy area consisting of a combination of sago gardens and secondary growth opposite Muntei and a low-lying area around the Mara River and Silakoinan River has been the centre for pig keeping for people living in the southeastern part of Siberut, allowing the residents of Muntei and its adjacent settlement to keep pigs using a semi-domesticated method. It should be noted that the term 'semi-domesticated' here does not refer to 'traditional pig keeping'. A century

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Picture 32. A pig hut located in the opposite of the settlement (2015)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 33. Sago piths are laid out daily for semi-domesticated pigs (2015)

ago, during the Dutch administration, when the agglomerated settlement consisting of multiple *uma* and family living in a narrow space was created, the traditional way of keeping pigs beneath the longhouse and houses started to diminish.

In Muntei, the swine are tended around sago gardens across the river from the settlement (*kasilak*) and around the Mara River. The land for keeping pigs on is usually owned by a particular group. Each pig owner may borrow or buy a parcel of land to build a small hut (*pusainakat)* (Pictures 32). The herd can roam freely in a vast swampy area. This allows the herd to obtain most of their sustenance by foraging tubers, bananas, tender weeds, herbs, and molluscs from the regrown forest in abandoned gardens. While they obtain most of their sustenance by foraging in the secondary forest and abandoned gardens nearby and spent most of their time away, pigs are regularly returned to the hut, receiving significant amounts of sago pith (Picture 33). Pigs spend part of their lives in regular contact with humans and part foraging in the forest. In doing so, the animal has to travel every day between the domesticated zones (sago gardens, *pusainakat*) and the domain of spirits and undomesticated zones (forest, rivers, stream). Suffice to say, pigs live in the margins of social space. The untamed pigs have a chance to come into contact with feral pigs and all the spirits living in *leleu*. The ambiguities of life constitute a pig's quality and make the symbolism of the pig much more complex and rich.

Table 11 shows that during the early years in Muntei (the 1980s), 38 out of 76 families continued to raise pigs on their own in *kasilak* and in the old settlement at Siberut Hulu. During the first two decades of living in Muntei (1981-2000), the number of pigs was relatively steady, although the population doubled. Whilst a few people insisted on keeping their pigs in their old places at Siberut Hulu and the forest gardens by the Mara River, the majority of Muntei's residents moved their pigs across the river. Others brought their pigs in *nusa* and keep the animals under the shade of palm trees. The numbers of pigs per population and pig owners have sharply declined, by almost 200 per cent from 1982 to 2015. There were only 28 pigs owned by seven families in Muntei in 2015. It was possible that some owners were hiding their pigs, afraid that people would kill them or that the cacao growers would find out who the owners of the pigs were. The number of pigs in Muntei's territory might be more than the presented number, especially as the table does not count the number of pigs owned by migrant merchants. The number might also be more, since several owners might have reported the wrong number. It is also worth noting that 48 out of 98 pigs in November 2012 are owned by two Sakalio families who recently moved into the settlement from a village on the Kalio River, which is outside Muntei's territory.

Table 11. People and Pigs (Adult) in Muntei (2015)

	Date				
	1982*	**2000***	**Nov 2012**	**Nov 2014**	**Jun 2015****
Population	308	511	618	631	598
No. of *uma*	12	22	24	26	-
No. of family	76	112	144	151	144
No. of pig owners	38	29	17	8	5
No. of pigs	228	216	118	107	29
Pig owners	0.5	0.26	0.12	0.047	0.03
Pigs/population	0.74	0.42	0.19	0.17	0.04

** Household survey and oral history, **Data from Kepulauan Mentawai District's Bureau of Statistics*

In general, pig owners rarely talk about their possessions. Boasting about the number of pigs owned is considered taboo. The data of June 2015, obtained from an official survey (BPS 2015) represents this general attitude. This official inquiry was carried out quickly, by conducting interviews but without checking or validating the answers. The number presented is much lower than the number I gathered. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that pig-keeping has been declining and shows no sign of recovering in the near future.

The decline in pig-keeping corresponds with the conversion of sago gardens and forest gardens to the cultivation of commercial crops, especially cacao. I was fortunate to closely observe how cacao cultivation contributes to the decline of pigs keeping in the settlement. On 29 July 2012, the three heads of the hamlets in the settlement signed off on an official document stating that the Mara River must be free from free-roaming pigs within four months[9] (Appendix 4). The document was a decision to resolve a latent conflict between cacao growers and the pigs' owners, which initially started in 2007-2008 when the harvesting of cacao around Muntei began. The cacao growers complained that their cacao seeds and bananas were destroyed by roaming pigs. The pig owners claimed that four months were not enough to transport all their animals, as relocating pigs is laborious, requiring taboos and complicated rituals to be undertaken.

While the pig owners were busy moving the boars, the sows and their piglets would return at night and enter someone's garden. At the end of November 2012, a cacao grower from the neighbouring village of Maileppet, namely Aman Botak, speared to death two unidentified pigs in his garden near the Mara River. He claimed to have been busy guarding his garden for more than a year. A hedge, a ditch, and regular patrolling were not enough to prevent pigs from the surrounding areas getting into his garden and destroying the young cacao trees and devouring tubers and bananas. Aman Botak then slaughtered the pigs and shared the meat at a feast attended by dozens of other cacao growers—27 out of 41 were Muntei residents. His action stirred tumult in Muntei, as killing and eating another person's pig is serious misconduct, even if the animal entered one's garden or destroyed one's fenced-in taro field. An intentional threat or harmful action towards someone else's belongings is an indirect threat to the owners themselves. Destroying a garden or its elements, including pigs, is a serious social transgression. It is categorised as an assault and heavy compensation (*tulou*) must be paid. The killing generated severe tension. People started to believe that the pig owners might quietly retaliate by using sorcery (*tae*). They had reason to worry since they had eaten the pigs. Most of the cacao growers, however, backed Aman Botak's actions as they argued that an official warning from the hamlet's head had been given.

On 25 November 2012, the head of three hamlets in the settlement followed the earlier decision by organising an official meeting and issuing a written statement that officially instructed the pig owners around Muntei to move their herds away from the Mara River. They stated that the owners had two additional weeks to remove their animals. After the deadline, any free-roaming pigs would be hunted and killed. The decision was not taken easily. As in any discussion of pigs or land, the meeting featured insults, accusations, and threats. Some of the pig owners rejected the decision and walked off. The rest had no choice but to accept the decision. In the end, more than half of Muntei's residents signed the final decision, which practically ended traditional pig husbandry in the area around the Mara and Masilulua rivers, which had been transformed into cacao growing areas.

The steady rise of cacao or coconut cultivation around Muntei transformed the sago and forest gardens and meant that semi-domesticated pig-keeping was no longer possible. The area where pigs previously browsed wild tubers, snails, and roots was cleared, planted with cacao, and fenced. The cacao growers have invested their money and other possessions in land, and they expect this investment to get a decent return. Some of them are migrants who do not want pigs around their gardens. After the swampy areas have been bought individually and cultivated with cacao, all tubers, wild plants, and animals within these plots of land belong exclusively to the individual owner. This makes the husbandry of semi-domesticated pigs,

which relies on an extensive area, impossible to maintain. There is a change in perception about traditional pig-keeping: allowing pigs to roam freely became a threat to cash crop cultivation. Now, there are only a few places around Muntei that can be used for semi-domesticated pigs (Table 12).

The decline in keeping pigs in Muntei might represent the decline of the traditional ways of life and the importance of the cash economy, but it in no way defines the decline of the importance of pigs and pork. Pigs continue to be a salient feature of life in Muntei, particularly for rituals and there is no reason for people to completely abandon pork consumption. During my fieldwork, the use of pigs in Muntei was clearly no less important than in the past. Marriage rituals (*pangurei*) involved pork after the wife-taker and wife-giver *umas* agreed to settle the amount of the bride-price and dowry, which are generally paid, along with other things, in live pigs and pork. Healing rituals (*pabetei*), particularly for intractable sicknesses, required a pig's carcass, while mortuary ceremonies (*panunggru*) were all accompanied by the slaughter of pigs and the distribution of pork among relatives and allies.

Table 12. The Owners of the Pigs and the Recent Locations of the Pigs' Huts (Pusainakkat) around Muntei as per 31 December 2014

***Uma*/Clan**	**Locations**	**Number of Adult Swine (in Total)**
Sakukuret	Kasilak; Siberut Hulu	31
Sakaliou	Kalio River; Silakoinan	20
Sailuluni	Kasilak	17
Samekmek	Kasilak; Masilok	6
Sagari	Masilok	6
Salakoppak	Kasilak; Masilok	7
Samapopopu	Kasilak; Masilok	8
Saruruk	Parakbatu; Masilok	9
Total		**107**

The need for pigs has been and will continue to be high in the near future. There is always a shortage of pigs when it comes to a ritual feast, especially during the Christmas and New Year festivities. The price of and the demand for pigs (and pork) have constantly increased. People often say that they prefer to have a proper coconut or cacao garden, obtain a decent profit from them and that money can be used to buy pigs from other people. Further, the increased demand for pigs offers a chance for individuals to become specialist pig farmers and opens great economic opportunities.

Mainland Animals (Ducks, Cows, Goats, Water Buffalo)

Ducks, goats, cows, and water buffaloes are not native domestic animals but they, too, are considered to be *iba* and given a specific name. These animals were introduced from mainland Sumatra to Muntei in the 1970s under various central and local government programmes. The catalyst for this move was the government's view that pigs were dirty animals that spread disease, damage crops, and are a nuisance to villagers. Mainland livestock was considered superior and thus introduced to replace the pigs and to encourage modern methods of animal husbandry. The introduction of these animals initially met with some resistance.

Over the years, most introduced animals have been 'indigenised' as Mentawaians have found ways to integrate the animals into their cultivation systems. Cows and buffaloes were taken straight to the sago

gardens. They were allowed to roam freely without regular fences or tethers. No longer in daily contact with humans, the animals gradually became shy and even wild. They do not need intensive veterinary care and, like pigs, graze freely. Goats are the only exception. Muntei residents never accepted the goats into their lives. Goat meat is considered to be *makasak* (smelly). The animals also cause trouble since they refuse to be confined to one place and freely eat cultivated plants, causing damage to home gardens.

Cows or buffaloes are valuable animals. Yet, people do not consider them to be their favourite animals. Only two families in Muntei (from Sakalio and Sailuluni) have cows, which were obtained from a Minangkabau friend. The Sakalio family keeps cows in their forest gardens near the Kalio River, while the Sailuluni family put their animals opposite the settlement. Keeping the bovines does not require special skills or techniques, but catching feral cows and buffaloes is difficult. Cows and buffaloes might be used for the payment of compensation, but they are no significant in terms of people's diet. They are not slaughtered for ritual feasts, unless they are dying, rather they are sold to Minangkabau traders.

Ducks are perhaps the most successful mainland animal adopted by the settlement. There are two kinds of ducks in Muntei: common duck and manila duck. Both are usually kept around the houses, foraging in the small creeks and ponds. Ducks are not brought to the forest gardens, as it is believed that, unlike chickens, they are not capable of staying on a perch at night, when lizards and snakes hunt. However, it is said that ducks are more immune than chickens to *oiluk* and are rarely attacked by *silakikiou*. Unlike the chickens, the ducks and ducklings are not fed regularly with grated coconut and sago pith. Instead, they find their sustenance in streams and creeks and inside the gardens around the settlement. More importantly, ducks can be used as a substitute for chickens, although ducks are not consumed regularly for daily meals, but reserved for communal feasts.

3.4 The Availability of and Access to Imported Food

Imported food is available all year round in the market and through the development projects delivered by both the district and central governments. Rice and sugar are by far the most important products. The shop owners informed me that they sell roughly 40 kilograms of rice per week to Muntei's residents alone. Given that there are six shops in the settlement, it can be calculated that, each week, the entire population consumes about 240 kilograms of rice. This number is subject to fluctuations, however, as people purchase rice and sugar in the local stores when they have money from selling their crops. Moreover, the sales of rice decline when the government provides subsidised rice or RASKIN (Beras Orang Miskin) for poor people.

Rice is a prestige food, imported from the mainland, and therefore it is expensive. It is also the staple food of people who have a regular salary from high status jobs, such as permanent teachers, nurses, or other government positions. Most people consume rice whenever they have decent money (*mabulagat*) at hand, enabling them to avoid the hard work of extracting and processing sago palms. The ability to have rice with a meal indicates that a person is engaged in business outside of the traditional activities, whether it is involved in a governmental project or work related to external agencies (see Delfi 2011). It may also indicate that a person has recently sold a significant amount of cacao beans or cloves, or is due to have a guest—be it a tourist, a researcher, or government officials. Rice is also associated with secular communal gatherings. A rice meal is usually served as a lunch for a village meeting. Rice is most frequently consumed at the end of the year, during Christmas and New Year, when it is eaten alongside imported items like cookies and imported drinks such as syrup, beer, or canned milk.

Further, rice is highly valued because it is connoted with being 'modern' or 'advanced'. Muntei's residents realise that most of the non-Mentawaians that they watch on television, read about in school

DARMANTO

Picture 34. People distribute poor people's rice (RASKIN) in the village office (2014)

books, curiously observe in a migrant village, and experience when they visit Jakarta or mainland Sumatra, are rice eaters. The young generation of Muntei have also learned that sago producers and eaters living in other parts of the country are frequently presented. E.g. on the TV news, as backward.

There is a general perception among the residents of Muntei that rice has certain properties that are better than their native staples. First, rice is seen as 'sweeter' (*mananam*) than sago and taro. It can be consumed as a proper meal without any 'fringe' dishes like vegetables or meat. White rice does not dirty the hands of the cook, unlike sago. Cooking and serving rice-based meals are seen as easier and requiring a shorter preparation time compared to the hours required for meals based on sago or taro. It seems that the materiality of rice (white, soft, 'sweet', less cooking time) helps to convey the cleanliness, purity, efficiency, and 'sweetness' associated with modern food (Mintz 1985). The Mentawai people clearly share in the national idea to equate rice-based meals with all that is up-to-date and modern. Rice eventually becomes an object of longing. The 'sweet' taste of rice reflects the pleasure of modernity. Consuming rice is seen as a way of augmenting the status of being modern and prosperous. Rice enables the Mentawai people to obtain recognition and the social status of being 'modern' in the eyes of outsiders. It is shown by the way they organize their rice-based meals (Delfi 2011). While sago- and tuber-based meals are consumed in the kitchen, rice-based meals are moved to the open space of the veranda, where the family meal is in full sight of passers-by. Rice-based meals are a display of social difference and status.

My last fieldwork at the end of 2018 and early 2019 gave an idea of how rice is strongly associated with modernity and the expansion of local ideas of prosperity. Traditionally, the Mentawai people use the terms *makayo* (prosper) and *magebak* (poor) to refer to their economic status. A household and an *uma* with a vast area of ancestral land, several sago gardens, dozens of fruit trees in various forest gardens, pigs, and big longhouses are considered *makayo*. When I visited Aman Limakok, a well-known pig-keeper who owns

various sago gardens, fruit trees and a decent house, he was half-jokingly and half-seriously telling me that now he is categorized as a poor man. This came as a surprise as he was traditionally referred to as being 'prosperous'. Yet, he told me:

> We are poor. We only eat sago. The government gave me poor people's rice. Now I am a poor person. The rich people are working in the village office or being teacher. They have regular earnings and eat rice regularly. They do not eat cheap and bad rice from the government. Just the poor like us eat poor rice.

Cheap and bad' rice refers to the provisions from the central government through the Poor People's Rice program (*Beras Untuk Orang Miskin* or RASKIN). The RASKIN program delivers subsidized rice to those in food-insecure areas throughout Indonesia. Since 2004, Siberut has been a priority area for this program. Over a 15-year period (2004-2019), more than 32.7 million kilograms of rice were transported and distributed to 10,040 households (Picture 34). Most Mentawai people are recipients of the program, justifying them claim of being 'poor' people. Between 2011 and 2015, each family in Muntei received roughly 234 kilograms from RASKIN per year (Table 13). Although the RASKIN programme does not necessarily deliberately undermine sago or taro, it has reinforced an old idea that for Muntei people to be developed, secure, and healthy, they must consume rice. The quality of RASKIN is not particularly good. Yet, the amount provided can feed a family for a few months, and is provided at a greatly subsidised rate. Each family pays just $US 1 per sack (35 kilograms) of rice. This money does not actually pay for the rice, but rather for the cost of transporting the rice from the harbour to the village. In the local market, the price for the sack of rice is just enough for a kilogram of rice.

Table 13. The Average of RASKIN Received by Each Family in Muntei (2011-2015)

Average	Year				
	2011*	**2012****	**2013****	**2014****	**2015***
Kg (in Total)	180	270	210	240	270

** Puailiggoubat ** Fieldwork*

While people in Muntei have enjoyed RASKIN, they have, in general, ambivalent responses toward rice. While it is considered 'sweeter' and tastier, the grain does not satisfy them. There is a popular saying that rice does not satiate the belly for long. Unlike sago or taro, which are commonly roasted solid, rice is always mixed with water in the cooking process. With water in the grain, rice is easily absorbed in the body. It has more liquid than *tubbu* (essence) and does not help to constitute the body and blood. Their stomach feels empty, and their body feels hungry again just a few hours after eating. The ambiguous sensory impression of rice on the tongue and body carries an awareness of a subtle response to a foreign substance. People do not accept introduced substances into their foodways in an arbitrary manner but rather, in structured and historically contextualized ways (Bourdieu 1984; Falk 1991). The 'sweetness' and tastiness of rice may demonstrate the lure of modernity, but the 'wetness' and inability of rice to satiate reveal that people have a point of refusal. The delivery of RASKIN in 2014 evokes the ambiguous perception toward rice. At the end of October, each family in Muntei received about 130 kg rice. The problem was that the rice was of poor quality: it smelled bad and it was dirty. Aman Limakok took the rice. He asked his wife to cook the grain every single day. Yet, they did not consume the rice but gave it to the chickens and the pigs.

While rice is occasionally bought in the market and provided by the government, sugar is an imported

food that is consumed daily. People's fondness for sugar is clear from the way they consume their drinks. A sweet drink is a must to start every day. Tea or coffee without sugar is not considered a proper beverage. While sago flour or rice is not always available in the gardens, sugar is a staple condiment and brought wherever people stay away from the settlement overnight. Occasionally, sugar is also added to roasted sago. A family buys approximately one kilogram of sugar every three or four days. According to Muntei's shop owners, sugar is the highest selling comestible (matched only by cigarettes).

Ready-to-eat food such as instant noodles and canned fish are also available in the market. However, canned meat has never been popular among Muntei's residents. Instant noodles are a favourite for kids but never considered as proper food by the adults. These instant foods are frequently bought by tourists, visitors, or government officials on duty in the settlement. Plain bread is available weekly at a limited number of stores in Muara Siberut. Biscuits, crackers, and sweets are bought from the stores as snacks for children. The latter type of food is occasionally bought when people have extra cash or have a guest from outside the settlement.

While there is an increasing trend for buying food and groceries from the market, introduced food is still seen as a supplementary item rather than a staple. Consuming rice or noodles is seen as a way of augmenting one's social prestige. It is unheard of for people to sell freshly caught fish or live pigs and then use the money to buy a kilogram of rice or a tin of Japanese canned fish from the store. While rice or other imported foodstuffs carry prestige, it is considered shameful to exchange fresh and nutritious local food for imported ones. Exactly how *kat*, *iba*, and the imported food described above are consumed is the subject of the next chapter.

4
"We Eat a Lot of Food": The Dynamic and Pattern of Food Consumption

The previous chapter described the availability of food and examined the way in which people use their surrounding environment to obtain and to produce food. This chapter will focus on a description of the consumption of food. The main aim of this chapter is to answer the questions: what kinds of food do people consume? What combination of foodstuffs do they prefer? What are the patterns of the practices of consuming food through the year? To answer these questions, this chapter will present data on the food intake of selected families over a year. The first part of this chapter will present a general picture of the background of the selected families and the general composition of the recorded meals. The subsequent sections will describe the result intakes, which are based on the *emic* category of food: *kat* (plants used as food) and *iba* (animals used as food). The last section details how the selected families explain their own food intake patterns in their own words.

4.1 The Selected Families *(Lalep)*[10]

This research selected three families to record their meals, representing crosscutting identifications and internal variations in the settlement. The three families represent the main social categories in the settlement: a) a *Sasabirut* pioneer who has land around the settlement and a cash-crop oriented livelihood (mainly coconut and cloves); b) a *Sarereiket* family with a more hinterland oriented livelihood (keeping pigs, forest gardening), in combination with cash-crop endeavours; and c) a family from a smaller *uma of Sasabirut* that has no land around Muntei and has a mixed livelihood strategy of growing cash crops and hinterland oriented acivities. An identification process guided the selection of the three families from *uma* Saruruk, Sakukuret, and Sarorougot (Table 14). All the families have a teenage girl who can read and write and has been trained to record the data, which is the key to the method used for the data collection (see Chapter 1). The presentation of the backgrounds of the families here is to help the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data and to provide a thin ethnographic description.

Table 14. The General Comparative Social Identification of Three Selected Families for Food Intake Data

Social Characteristic of the Family	Aman Alfon	Aman Aturan	Aman Santo
Origin	*Sasabirut*, pioneer	*Sasabirut*	*Sarereiket*
Size of *uma*	The largest (three factions, 23 households)	The smallest (three households)	Medium-size (two factions, 13 households)
Number of individuals	Five (two males, three females)	Six (three males, three females)	Six (four males, two females)
Main livelihood	Small trade (a small kiosk) and coconut garden	Cash crops (cacao and clove garden)	Traditional-oriented garden (pig-keeping, nilam and cacao)
Education of parents	Junior High School	Elementary School	Elementary School
Involvement in coconut cultivation in small islets	High	No	No
Relations to introduced institutions (Church, village)	Semi-active	Non-active	Active

Household 1: Aman Alfon

Aman Alfon's family belongs to Saruruk, the largest *uma* in Muntei, consisting of 23 households (Table 2, Chapter 2). *Uma* Saruruk, now living in Muntei, are originally the descendants of the ancestors of *uma* Samailiming, who were adopted (*sinappit*) into *uma* Saruruk six generations ago. Prior to the creation of the agglomerated settlement during the Dutch administration in the early 1900s, both the Saruruk and Samailiming lived together at the mouth of the Silaoinan River. The descendants of Samailiming then took the name of Saruruk and have used it since.

Uma Saruruk have claimed ancestral land in Parakbatu and Sitektek (Figure 8, Chapter 3) in the eastern part of the Katurei Peninsula, where they have cultivated cloves and coconut gardens for more than half a century. The Saruruk also have a contentious claim over a section of land on the banks of the Mara River; the dispute over this land contributed to the splitting of Saruruk into three factions. Aman Alfon's family belongs to a Saruruk faction that reluctantly supports the land claim on the Mara River. After tension over the land escalated in the 1990s, Aman Alfon's faction, which then consisted of four families, decided to abandon their cultivation sites by the Mara River and focus instead on the cultivation of coconuts and cloves in small islets.

Aman Alfon's family represents a family from *Sasabirut* that has abandoned their hinterland-style livelihood and adapted to life on the coast, devoting their time and energy to producing cash crops and integrating into the market. Both parents in this family were born in the old settlement in the early 1970s but were raised in the new settlement, attending the Catholic school in Muara Siberut in the early 1980s. They married in 1997 and had their first child a year later. The family now has three children. The family is also an example of a family that has a steady income from their coconut garden, but has not entirely neglected their other gardens (Table 15). The family has a rather large grove of coconuts on Parakbatu Island. In the hilly area above the coconut garden is a small plot of clove gardens.

Table 15. Sources of Livelihood of Aman Alfon's Family (2014)

Sources of Livelihood	Unit (*Mata*)	Consisting	Locations
Small shop	1	Tobacco, sugar, rice, tea, coffe, kerosene	Muntei Hamlet
Cloves	1 plots	16 productive trees	Muntei Hill
Fruit gardens	1 plots	6 durian, 3 langsat, numerous rambutan, jackfruit, three mango trees	Muntei Hill
Coconut	1 plots	400 productive coconut trees	Parakbatu, Masilok
Taro	1 plots	Hundreds of taro stalks	Jojoet
Sago garden	2 plots	28 mature sago trees Numerous sago sprouts	Ka Silak

After the first child attended junior high school in 2011, Aman Alfon sold half of his coconut trees. This choice was taken in order to spend more time in the settlement and to be closer to his family. Before that, he spent most of his time in his coconut gardens in Masilok and Parakbatu, leaving his wife in the settlement to take care of the children. The money from the sale of the coconut trees was used to open a small shop and to buy a plot of land along the Mara River, while the rest went towards finishing their semi-permanent house. Today, the main activity of the family is managing the small shop. The family collects a small amount of cacao beans and cloves from neighbours and then resells them to a larger collector in Muara Siberut. The kiosk is not particularly bustling but provides a steady income. At the time of this research, it has been running for almost five years and there is no sign of a decline.

Running the shop has prevented the family from undertaking intensive gardening. The family possess a plot of land with fruit trees (*mone*), which also has taro and sago gardens. The taro garden was obtained from *uma* Salakkopak, from the clan of Bai Alfon, while the sago garden was bought from a neighbour in Maileppet. However, the taro garden is only visited and tended occasionally and the palm gardens are not exploited. The fruits trees are largely neglected and visited only when they are about to bear fruit. Aman Alfon does not participate in any of the village politics. Busy with his small venture, he regularly visits coconut gardens on a small islet, which are now taken care of by his parents. Meanwhile, Bai Alfon is rather active in the church and the village women's organisation. She is a teacher at the Sunday school run by the church.

Household 2: Aman Santo

Aman Santo's family belongs to Sakukuret, a medium-sized *uma* from Rereiket that moved to Muntei in 1985. This *uma* lived for generations in Madobak, a settlement upriver. A combination of a dispute with a clan and aspirations to search for a new place for their pigs made them move to Muntei. Most of their sago, taro, and forest gardens in their original settlement were sold to other people in Madobak and just few good durian trees have been retained. Initially, all the housholds forged a single Sakukuret *uma* in the first decade of living in Muntei. However, an internal dispute about inheritance split the *uma* into three factions in the mid-1990s.

All the members of *uma* Sakukuret have retained a hinterland oriented livelihood. They are famous for their pig-keeping skills. Continuing to raise pigs while others have devoted themselves to being cash crop producers has allowed them to become specialists. With the increasing demand for pigs on the island, the members of *uma* Sakukuret have gradually become *simasainak*, people who are experts on, and have lots of, pigs. Cultivating patchouli is another source of livelihood for them.

Aman Santo is the second son of the leader of the Sakukuret faction, which is famous for being the

largest pig owners in the southern part of Siberut. He was born in Madobak in 1975, while *Bai* Santo, three years younger, was born is Siberut Hulu in *uma* Saruruk. The family was established at the end of the 1990s and has four children. The oldest did not finish junior high school and spends much of his time in the gardens and pig hut. The second attends secondary school. The two younger sons are still in elementary school. The family has several gardens consisting of both cash crops and food trees in various places (Table 16). They did not participate in growing coconuts and producing copra in the islets, but have a number of coconut trees around the settlement after exchanging their pigs. The exact number of fruit trees possessed by this family is difficult to calculate, however.

Table 16. Sources of Livelihood of Aman Santo's Family (2014)

Sources of Livelihood	Unit (*Mata*)	Consisting	Locations
Cloves	2 plots	55 productive trees, 14 not-so-good trees	Muntei Hill
Fruits gardens	2 plots	13 durian, 7 langsat, 3 cempedak, five mango	Muntei Hill
Coconut trees		17 trees	Muntei and the Mara River
Taro	3 plots	Hundreds of taro stalks	Toinong Muntei
Sago gardens	5 plots	100 mature sago trees and 500 sago sprouts	Ka Silak
Cacao gardens	1 plot	300 mature trees	The Mara River
Pigs	2 pigs hut	13 mature sows, 2 boars, numerous piglets	Ka Silak, Hulu

The family's main activities are gardening and keeping pigs. Twice a day, Aman Santo crosses the Siberut River to feed the pigs and chickens. He occasionally visits the cacao garden by the Mara River. Aman Santo's son and younger brother sometimes help the family to harvest cacao beans and bananas. With his motorbike, Aman Santo is mobile enough to visit several gardens. The family processes their own sago and intensively exploits their five plots of taro. They extract sago flour for family consumption, but occasionally bring surplus tubers to the local market. The family maintains an inland lifestyle. They live in a wooden house. While they regularly buy fish from the local market, they consume rice infrequently. Bai Santo also continues to fish and gather food. They extract and process their sago palms for domestic consumption. He and his family members bring sago piths to the settlement and extract the flour in the house. At one point, the family had the idea of buying a sago grating machine and venturing into sago production; however, Aman Santo said that the idea was abandoned due to the limited availability of labour.

Not paying higher education costs and the diligence of both the male and female adults in this family has allowed them to accumulate greater wealth. The cash from selling pigs and taro is spent on buying fruit trees, cloves, and sago gardens from fellow residents who need money to pay for their children's education. Aman Santo has been loyal to the Catholic Church but is not really active in the local church's organisation. The family periodically attends Sunday Mass together, hosts a weekly evening prayer meeting, but does not get involved in regular meetings and discussions in the church. The family is a newcomer to the settlement, but a successful one as it has specialised in keeping pigs. It is a stable household with precious possessions, notoriously pigs, and a variety of gardens.

Household 3: Aman Aturan

The third household belongs to Sarorougot, a small *uma* consisting of just three families. The ancestors of the family are from *uma* Sarereake and lived in Taileleu a village in the south of Siberut, who moved to

the Silaoinan River in the early 20th century. As *sitoi* (newcomers), their ancestors had no ancestral land around Siberut Hulu. The ancestors acquired the rights to live on and cultivate a small piece of land near the Rorougot River, from *uma* Sakaliou, then took the name of the river for their *uma*.

Members of Sarorougot moved downstream to Siberut Hulu and later to the settlement. In the early years of the OPKM programme, the *uma* acquired rights to cultivate cloves on Muntei Hill from a group living in Puro. The Sarorougot is one of the pioneer *uma* that participated in coconut cultivation in the *nusa* prior to the establishment of the settlement. However, unlike the two other members of Sarorougot, Aman Aturan's family has no coconut gardens. When he was young, Aman Aturan left the settlement for a temporary job as a carpenter and labourer, and did not inherit a coconut garden from his father.

The family comprises six individuals. Both adults in the family were born in Siberut Hulu in the mid-1960s. Bai Aturan was born into the Salakkopak family. The older son graduated from a university in Padang in 2013, and is now employed as a temporary teacher in Central Siberut. The older daughter finished secondary school in the summer of 2014. The other two children are both in junior high school. Despite the fact that the children and the mother are churchgoers, Aman Aturan neither attends church regularly, nor is he active in any church-related activities.

Aman Aturan's family represents a household from a smaller clan that is devoted to the production of cash crops, but has no coconut garden in the islets. The *uma* has committed to being commodity producers and has abandoned keeping pigs and traditional forest gardening. The family has taro, sago, cacao, and clove gardens (Table 17). The taro garden is located in *Toinong Onai*, obtained as a part of the bride-price payment from the Salakkopak clan, the clan of Bai Aturan. The sago gardens are rarely exploited. Occasionally, they cut the mature trees to obtain sago grubs but do not extract the starch of the palm. The family prefers to have rice from the sale of cash crops. The lack of time and labour is apparently the main reason why they do not process their own sago.

Table 17. Sources of Livelihood of Aman Aturan's Family (2014)

Sources of Livelihood	Unit (*Mata*)	Content	Locations
Cacao garden	2 ha	700 cacao trees, 500 bananas and plantains, numerous pineapples, numerous cassava, 100 coconut seedling	The Mara River
Cloves	2 plots	28 productive trees; 30 immature trees	Muntei Hill
Fruit gardens	1 plot	2 durian, 2 coconut trees, 3 langsat, 2 rambutan trees	The Mara River
Taro	1 plot	Hundreds of taro stalks	Jojoet
Sago garden	2 plot	28 mature sago trees Numerous sago sprouts	Ka Silak

The main source of cash is a two hectare cacao garden. The family does not practice monoculture in the garden. In addition to cacao, the garden also produces bananas and plantains to be sold at the market. Once every three days, the family brings three bunches of bananas to the settlement and sells them to a local merchant. One bunch of bananas earns the family approximately IDR 30,000. The family also started to put a number of seedlings around the cacao trees in anticipation of declining cacao production. Another major source of cash, even if it is irregular, is two plots of clove gardens. The clove gardens have allowed the family to send the older children to be educated at a university in Padang. This family has fruit trees, but the land where the trees are growing is not yet secured and still belongs to Saruruk.

Prior to sending their son to university, the family had more than 100 mature cloves trees. Seventy of

the productive ones were sold to cover the tuition fees and living costs of their son in Padang, for a period of five years. In the last year of their son's higher education, the family sold another 50 of their productive clove trees to pay the graduation fee and the family's travel to attend the graduation ceremony. The impact of these sales is still being felt. When *rura* season is coming, they complain bitterly about the sale of the trees, which prevents them from repairing their rickety house. The family has tried to recover from this by making a new clove garden alongside the coconut gardens beside the Mara River.

The fruit trees and taro gardens are managed by Bai Aturan. She regularly visits the gardens and gathers vegetables, fruit, and tubers, although she does not sell the tubers. When she has time after gardening, Bai Aturan goes out fishing and gathering. She regularly takes part in collective fishing trips in Katurei Bay. She is famous for her skills at diving into the main river and collecting various *lokan* (mussels). She often brings her daughter to accompany her when fishing. The family has another source of protein; in the back of the house, they have made two small artificial ponds filled with tilapia fish (*Oreochromis niloticus*) after participating in a local government programme.

During the lean period in the gardens, Aman Aturan occasionally works as a carpenter and a house builder. He uses the skills he acquired during his teenage years working outside the settlement to seek a job in government projects. However, he has acute hyperuricemia (gout), which prevents him from travelling outside the settlement. Other than gardening, the family also gets an occasional income from making *tobat*, a traditional type of roof made from sago leaves, which is often requested by the surf industry for surfers' accommodation on the small islets.

4.2 The General Composition of Meals

This research recorded a total of 3,030 family meals over a total of 1,047 days from the three households between the 1 January and 31 December 2013. Table 18 provides an overview of the recorded days and meals. The recorded data, in terms of both days and meals, from each family, is not uniform but generally reveals a regular pattern in which each family has three meals a day.

Table 18. The Number of Recorded Days and Recorded Meals in Three Selected Families in Muntei Settlement, 1 January- 31 December 2013

Number of	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Recorded Days													
Aman Santo	31	28	29	29	28	30	11	27	30	31	30	30	334
Aman Aturan	30	27	30	30	31	30	29	29	30	31	30	31	358
Aman Alfon	26	28	31	30	31	30	31	29	30	28	30	31	355
	87	**83**	**90**	**89**	**90**	**90**	**71**	**85**	**90**	**90**	**90**	**92**	**1047**
Recorded Meals													
Aman Santo	88	84	87	86	80	90	33	81	89	91	90	90	989
Aman Aturan	87	79	89	84	90	85	83	80	86	90	86	86	1025
Aman Alfon	76	81	89	85	86	79	92	80	89	83	86	90	1016
	251	**244**	**265**	**255**	**256**	**254**	**208**	**241**	**264**	**264**	**262**	**266**	**3030**

As the table shows, not all daily meals for every family were recorded. When the families went out of the settlement or spent weekdays processing coconuts for copra in the *nusa*, they had no meals that were attended by all the members. On these occasions, data were not collected despite them certainly having meals in other places. For example, Bai Santo had to be brought to Padang for treatment in early July 2013. Aman Santo and the youngest child accompanied Bai Santo to Padang for two weeks. The other children stayed in the settlement but ate in the house of Aman Santo's brother. For a span of 20 days, the parents and the children did not eat together. This explains why the number of recorded days and meals for Aman Santo's family is lower than those of the others. Another reason why the recorded data is not entirely uniform among the three families (Table 19) is because sometimes both the adults in the families paid a visit to their gardens and stayed for a few days. In this case, the family had two kinds of family meals. The parents eat food together in the garden but the children have meals in the house. The teenage girls may have recorded the children's meals but this data are not included as their meals mostly took place at the house of and were prepared by an uncle or grandparent. However, when only one parent was not present, data were still recorded. This is also the case when the family as a whole attends a ritual feast organised by either their own clan or relatives. In the ritual feast, the participants sit and eat food together but are clustered in their own family groups.

Table 19. Types and Numbers of Meals Consumed in Three Selected Families in Muntei, 1 January-31 December 2013 (n=3,030)

Families and Recorded Days	Actual Meals				Potential Recorded Meals
	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total Recorded Meals	
Aman Santo (days = 334)	325 (97%)	330 (99%)	334 (100%)	989 (99%)	1002
Aman Aturan (days = 358)	328 (92%)	340 (95%)	357 (99,9%)	1025 (95%)	1074
Aman Alfon (days = 355)	327 (92%)	336 (95%)	353 (99,9%)	1016 (95%)	1065
Total	**980**	**1,006**	**1044**	**3030 (96,4%)**	**3141**

Generally, my data suggest that the selected families rarely skipped meals and share the habit of eating three times a day. They ate about 96.4 per cent of all the potentially recorded meals together and there is hardly a difference between the three families. Table 4.6 above shows that of all the meals, dinner was almost never skipped, while breakfast and lunch have a slighly lower percentage. When the families have just two meals in a day, they combine lunch and breakfast. This commonly happens either when there are no staples available (sago, bananas, or noodles) for breakfast, or if they are having a rather lavish meal on school-free days and then they have an early lunch together before midday.

When the main staples are not available for breakfast, the families prefer to have a cup of tea or coffee with sugar. They might buy biscuits from the local shop. Generally, however, people do not consider biscuits or crackers a proper meal. They are not satisfying (*tak maektek*) and are thought of as children's food (*kat satoga*). Adults usually reserve biscuits for their children and take only sweet drinks when a proper meal is not available. Therefore, this research does not include breakfasts with minor snacks such as crackers or biscuits.

Breakfast, Lunch, and Evening Meals

Breakfast is organised prior to family members leaving the house, normally between 6.00–7.00 am. The

days starts when the family members sit on the veranda and enjoy roasted sago, boiled bananas, or fried taro with sweet tea. Table 20 shows that breakfast is composed mostly of sago and bananas. Typically, a breakfast involves sago flour wrapped in sago leaves, which is roasted on firewood and known as sago *kapurut*. *Kapurut* is a quicker way to cook sago despite it requiring plenty of sago leaves to wrap up the sago flour and nimble fingers to make the sago breadsticks. The women usually prepare the leaves the day before, and they can be used for three days. Grated coconut might be added and sugar can be sprinkled on top of the flour to give a sweeter taste. When roasted at the back of the fireplace, *kapurut* produces a nice crunchy stick when unwrapped. Roasting *kapurut* can be done in about 15 minutes while the women are boiling water for the sweet drinks. *Kapurut* is suitable for breakfast, eaten when the sticks are still hot and crunchy. To have a proper breakfast, four to eight roasted sticks are needed per person. *Kapurut* is a favourite for breakfast because it can be consumed without condiments or meat.

Table 20. Frequency that Various Types of Food Appear for Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner in Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

	Breakfast (n= 980)		**Lunch (n=1006)**		**Evening Meals (n=1044)**		**Total**	
	No	**%***	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Sago	318	32	307	31	630	60	1255	41
Rice	107	11	615	61	422	40	1144	38
Bananas	201	21	62	5.8	146	12	409	13
Taro and yams	117	12	55	5	102	10	274	9
Cassava and sweet potatoes	121	12	31	3	26	2	178	6
Instant noodles	29	3	136	14	93	9	258	9
Meat	93	9	773	77	939	90	1805	60
Vegetables	34	3.5	112	11.03	201	19.2	347	11
Fruit	19	2	105	10	162	16	286	9

** The total percentage is more than 100% as a breakfast, a lunch or a dinner may consist of more than one item.*

Bananas and plantains are also preferable for breakfast for practical reasons. They can be served using various techniques: boiling, frying, roasting, or mashing. Boiling is a simple, fast, and cheap way to process them without losing the taste. Tubers (taro, sweet potatoes, and cassava) are occasionally eaten in the morning while rice, vegetables, or meat are rarely served. Tubers are prepared for breakfast mostly when there is cooking oil for frying. Taro is considered delicious but it requires a more complicated cooking process. The tuber is considered tasty but eaten mostly when there is meat. The families prefer to have fried taro since taro can be sticky when it is boiled. Sweet potatoes and cassava are considered to be less tasty when they are boiled.

The families rarely cook rice for breakfast. This might correspond to the status of rice as an expensive and lavish food. Rice is consumed when there is any left over from last night's meal. Occasionally, to make the leftover rice tasty, the families fry or reheat it with the addition of grated coconut. Meat, vegetables, fruit, and instant noodles are infrequently served; all of these combined only make up 11 per cent of the

food usually eaten for the morning meal, which is less than taro or other tubers. This indicates that a meal with meat and condiments is rarely served for breakfast. Indeed, if meat is served for breakfast it is usually when there is some left over from a ritual feast the day before, or when they have an abundance of meat in certain seasons.

Lunch is organised at midday, around the time when the adults are back from working in their gardens and the children have just returned from school. If there is an extracurricular activity in school after normal hours, the children might stay at school and have their lunch later. Occasionally, one parent does not have lunch at the house when there is a lot of work to be done in the gardens, such as processing coconuts or harvesting cacao. If the father is in the gardens around the settlement, a box of rice or a handful of roasted sago is brought to him. He eats the same food as his family in the house do. However, when a member of the family is not yet present, the family would normally wait until 2 pm for lunch to ensure that they eat together.

Table 20 indicates that rice is the most important staple for lunch, served 615 times in a year. All three families confirmed that the practicality of cooking the grain contributes to the high frequency of rice in midday meals. Lunch is prepared by the mother or eldest daughter in a tight schedule between gardening or doing domestic work (washing clothes, cleaning the house). While tubers and sago require hours of preparation—including preparing bamboo tubes or processing the sago flour in the leaves of sago then roasting them on the fire, washing and cleaning the skin of the tubers—processing rice is simple and takes just a few minutes. While rice has high percentage among the staples consumed at lunch, the highest percentage of food present is meat with the families consuming meat for lunch, on average, every two days.

Interestingly, instant noodles are eaten for lunch more frequently than for either breakfast or dinner. Their frequency of use for lunch is much higher than for local foodstuffs such as tubers and bananas, which appear in less than 10 per cent of the total lunch menus. The higher percentage of eating instant noodles for lunch may relate to the consumption of rice. If there is no meat, people prefer to have rice with instant noodles mixed with vegetables, notably cassava leaves, boiled in a hot pan. The practicality of cooking instant noodles might be a consideration.

Dinner features the highest frequency of major categories of food (meat, sago, and vegetables as well as fruit). Sago was present in 60 per cent of the meals, while meat was served 90 times. Sago is rarely cooked as *kapurut* for dinner, but instead is mostly prepared as *siokbuk*. The flour is divided into sections of freshly cut bamboo (*okbuk*) and roasted for about 30 minutes on a fire. Each piece of bamboo is about 30 centimetres long and filled with sago flour. When it is ready, the hot roasted bamboo containers are taken from the fire. It is now easy to open the bamboo with a big knife and take out the hot, bread-like sago from the inside. Unlike *kapurut*, sago *siokbuk* is often consumed with a condiment. Although sago *siokbuk* can be consumed on its own, it is very rare that people eat it without side dishes. As sago *siokbuk* is cooked without salt or sugar and is therefore bland, side dishes containing vegetables and meat cooked with salt, onions, garlic, ginger, and spices, are made to eat with it and give it some taste. Sago *siokbuk* is dipped in spicy or salty *gulai*, a kind of curry with spices and vegetables as well as meat, boiled in coconut milk. When fresh meat is available, sago *siokbuk* is preferred to other staples.

The frequent presence of sago in the families' dinners is certainly related to the presence of meat and vegetables. For dinner, vegetables are served six times more often than at breakfast and almost twice as often as at lunch. These data fit with the general observation that while lunch or breakfast may comprise leftover food, dinner always involves freshly cooked food in which sago, taro, and other staples are served, together with meat and condiments. If there is plenty of meat, other local staples, especially bananas and taro, are also prepared, mostly in the form of *subbet*. It is considered a great meal when sago, *subbet*, and meat are served together. Dinner is rather special as the meal almost always contains meat, either obtained

from the market or from the surrounding environment. This might relate to whether the adult males in the house have time to prepare a desirable meal and the presence of daughters in the family to assist in preparing the dinner. Certainly the availability of young girls to share the burden of preparing evening meals is a big help to the mother.

Table 21. The Modes and Places of Family Meals in Three Selected Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

	Aman Alfon (n= 1016)		Aman Aturan (n=1025)		Aman Santo (n=989)		Total Meals	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Meals in family	954	93.8	989	96.4	873	88.3	2,816	92.9
Ritual feast in *uma*	45	4.4	4	0.4	98	9.9	147	4.9
Non-ritual communal feast	14	1.4	12	1.8	18	1.8	44	1.5
Eating in a local restaurant	3	0.3	20	1.9	0	0	23	0.8
Total	**1016**	**100**	**1025**	**100**	**989**	**100**	**3030**	**100**

All meals are generally prepared and consumed in the household. It is very typical of a Muntei family to eat food that they cultivated or food obtained from their own toil (i.e. rice obtained from the market after selling cash crops) and not to eat outside their home. In very rare cases, the families go to or have take-away food from a restaurant owned by a Minangkabau or a Batak in the neighbouring villages. The families sometimes have communal meals in the church or village during a social event (i.e Independence Day or a social gathering welcoming a new head of a district). Table 21 shows that non-family meals, either in non-traditional institutions (village, hamlet, school, church) or from a restaurant, are a rare occurrence. Cumulatively, non-family meals occurred only 67 times from a total of 3,030 meals during the year.

The preference for having meals at home is not because there is a cultural barrier to eating food outside the house. People do not have a specific problem with consuming food cooked by non-Mentawaians and consider the food in small restaurants sold by migrants to be tasty and delicious. It is primarily a matter of economics. Regular eating out in a restaurant is expensive. However, there is also an idea that a proper family has to cook its own food and eat together at home. This is related to the importance of eating together as a way to maintain family cohesiveness and to sustain kinship relations, a subject that I will discuss at length in Chapter 6.

4.3 Consumption of Staple Food (*Kat*)

Composition of Staples

Staple foods are the most consistent and important foodstuffs in all the meals recorded. Sago, taro, rice, and others are a must in a meal, present in all of the 3,030 recorded meals. The settlements' residents have various sources of staple food that can be processed through various cooking techniques. The native staples are sago, taro, and bananas. Cassava and sweet potatoes might have been introduced later, but can be categorised as local staples.

The imported staples are rice and instant noodles. There are two different types of rice sold and consumed in the settlement. One is 'common rice' and the other is glutinous or sticky rice. The former has a long or round grain shape and is transparent in colour, while the latter has an opaque endosperm and a round or oblong grain shape. For daily meals, the three families ate only common rice, boiled in water. Glutinous rice

is prepared for rice cakes or roasted in a freshly-cut bamboo tube and served for specific occasions, especially for Christmas and New Year festive days. Cooking and preparing glutinous rice is clearly a new practice, influenced by Minangkabau culture. In addition to rice and noodles, wheat flour and mung beans are also recently imported staples. However, these staples are not eaten daily or cooked for proper meals. They are obtained from local markets mainly for cakes or biscuits served on special occasions.

Table 22. Types of Staple Food Present and Consumed by Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

	Number of Meals with	Percentage (%)
Sago	1,401	46
Rice	1,327	44
Bananas and plantains	449	15
Taro and yams	274	9
Instant noodles	258	9
Cassava and sweet potatoes	178	6

Table 22 shows that a large proportion of the core meals are comprised of rice and sago. Both rice and sago are served in more than 90 per cent of the total meals. Traditionally, sago is the main staple and is abundantly available through the year. The three families have their own sago gardens, but only Aman Santo's family processes the sago palm. Aman Aturan and Aman Alfon must obtain sago either from the market or from other family members. The data on how much of their sago is obtained from the market and how much from their family is difficult to assess. Sago is a food that defines Muntei residents as Mentawaian; they identify themselves firstly as sago eaters. Even if they do not possess their own sago gardens, a proper Mentawaian meal must have sago. It is important to note that sago flour is, economically speaking, the cheapest of all the staple foods. In terms of practicality, sago flour can also be stored and cooked in various ways. It can be cooked as *kapurut* in the morning, as *siokbuk* for lunch and dinner, or processed as 'pizza sago', roasted in a hot pan and called *sigajai*.

As previously mentioned, rice is easier to cook and can be consumed as a solitary staple food in a meal. When there is no meat, the three families eat just plain rice or rice with instant noodles and some vegetables. The prominence of rice is also linked to the availability of subsidised rice through the government programmes I have described in a previous chapter. Another factor is the availability of cash, which enables the families to purchase rice. Rice may have been introduced about a century ago to the island but it has only recently been gaining in importance.

The third important staple food is bananas, although they are served three times less than both sago and rice at mealtimes. Taro, cassava, and sweet potatoes are the least significant staples, contributing just under one tenth of all the carbohydrates consumed. The root crops are still cultivated and harvested occasionally by all three families. However, they are not frequently served for meals. They are served for breakfast as an additional staple, or at dinner and lunch mixed with or substituted for sago if there is meat available. Other than rice and instant noodles, all the imported staples, including wheat flour, mung beans and glutinous rice, are eaten once or twice a year, so they are not really significant.

Combination of Staples

While sago and rice are the dominant staples, they are mostly consumed with other staples. Table 23 below shows that the largest proportion of meals has a combination of various staples. Meals with two or more

staples constitute almost a third of the total meals recorded, while meals with a single staple comprise the rest. Mostly, the families eat two different staples in their meals. Meals with three or four staples are less common. This indicates that meals comprising a combination of all the staples are reserved for special occasions and may be a sign of abundance.

Table 23. Combination of Staple Food Consumed in Three Family Meals in Muntei (n=3,030)

Meals with	No	Percentage
1 staple	1,203	40.2
2 staples	1,262	40.8
3 staples	484	16.3
4 staples	81	2.7
Total	**3030**	**100**

When families have only one single staple for the meals, rice is the most frequent staple eaten (Table 24). The grain appears in almost half of all the meals with a single staple. In Muntei, rice is considered to be sweeter than other staples. It can be consumed without a 'fringe' dish, either a condiment or meat, especially by children. It is not uncommon that families with children attending school prepare rice for breakfast, but rice is prepared mostly for lunch. The combination of its sweeter taste and the fact that it is easier to cook makes rice a convenient staple for a quick meal at midday.

Sago is the second staple preferred for single staple meals. Meals comprising only sago are mostly consumed in the morning, together with fresh *kapurut*. Sweeter *kapurut* are rarely eaten with other staples, but it is taken with sweet drinks. In contrast, fresh but bland sago *siokbuk* is rarely eaten alone, but almost always with condiments. Tubers and bananas are rarely served as singular staples for meals. Less than 11 per cent of meals consist only of either taro, banana, or cassava. Instant noodles are the only starchy food that is always consumed together with another staple. This implies that instant noodles are not considered to be a staple on their own.

Table 24. Composition of Meals with Single Staple in Three Families in Muntei (n=1,203)

Meals with Only Staple	No	Percentage
Rice	572	47.3
Sago	501	41.6
Bananas	79	6.7
Tubers	51	4.4
Total	**1203**	**100**

Table 25 presents the number of meals consisting of two staples (n=1,262). The sample families apparently have various combinations of meals with two staples except, again, for instant noodles. The most common meals with a combination of two staples consist of sago and rice while the least common is sago and instant noodles. The other frequent meals with two staples involve the combination of tubers and bananas, rice and instant noodles, and sago and bananas.

Table 25. Composition of Meals with Two Staples in Three Families in Muntei (n=1,262)

Meals with	No	Percentage
Sago and rice	283	22.4
Tubers and bananas	251	19.9
Rice and instant noodles	221	17.5
Sago and bananas	213	16.9
Sago and taro	119	9.4
Sago and other tubers (cassava, sweet potatoes)	98	7.8
Rice and tubers	61	4.9
Rice and bananas	12	1.0
Sago and instant noodles	2	0.02
Total	**1262**	**100**

The numbers here reveal those meals consisting of two staples. Rice and sago are mostly served for the evening meal when 'fringe' food, either meat or vegetables, are available. Tubers (mainly taro) and bananas are frequently served together, mostly in the morning. On a few occasions, they are processed for *subbet* in ritual meals. The meals with two staples consisting of rice and instant noodles are mostly eaten for the midday meal as these imported foods are quicker and easier to prepare.

Table 26 shows that rice has apparently been succesfully adopted as a staple food in Muntei. This can be seen in the way the grain can be mixed with either native staples or other imported food. Rice with sago and rice with instant noodles are the two combinations that appear in most of the meals with two staples. This is not the case with instant noodles. The latter imported food is never combined with tubers and bananas.

Table 26. Composition of Meals Consisting of Three or More Staples in Three Families in Muntei (n=484)

Meals with	No	Percentage
Sago, tubers and bananas	192	39.70
Sago, rice, instant noodles	121	25.00
Sago, rice and tubers	56	11.57
Rice, tubers and bananas	42	8.68
Sago, rice and bananas	39	8.05
Rice, tubers and instant noodles	34	7.03
Total	**484**	**100**

Meals with three or more staples appear in one fifth of the total number of meals. The combination of sago-taro-banana is the most frequently eaten meal. Other combinations are far less frequent. It is interesting that the highest number of meals with three staples consists only of local staples. The second highest combination of three staples consists of sago, rice, and tubers, four times less than the former combination. The latter combination is also compelling. Meals with instant noodles present in the

combination of three staples occur only when there is rice. Meals consisting of four staples are the rarest occurrence, featuring in less than three per cent of the recorded meals. The most frequent meals with four staples consist of a combination of local and imported food, specially rice.

The numbers and tables above show a tendency that the families prefer to combine different staples in their meals. The data above also support the general ethnographic data on the importance of local food. The families still prefer sago and tubers over rice. People consume rice because it is quicker to prepare. Rice is a delicious and sweeter starch, according to them, but not satisfying. As I have described at the end of the previous chapter, people have ambiguous perceptions towards rice. It is sweeter but people feel hungry again just a few hours after eating the pungent grain. In particular, those who indulge in hard labour (cutting forest trees, climbing fruit trees, slashing bushes) prefer to have sago or taro, rather than rice, before leaving the house for work.

The other reason is obviously the diversity of staple foods and the variety of cooking processes for those foods. People have known more than 25 varieties of taro, six of sweet potatoes, four of cassava, and more than 30 varieties of bananas, identified by the colour of the regenerative stalk and the shape of the tuber or fruit (Appendix 2). Both local and imported staples can be prepared in a variety of ways. Tubers and sago can be served boiled, roasted, mashed, wrapped in leaves, put in a bamboo tube, or rolled in grated coconut. This diversity of processing methods allows people to have different ways of serving staples in their meals.

Patterns of Staple Consumption Between Families

This section discusses the pattern of staples' consumption among the three families. Table 27 shows that the families of Aman Aturan and Aman Alfon consume more rice than any other staple for their meals. For these families, sago is the second most frequent staple eaten. The only family that consumes less rice is Aman Santo's family. For this family, sago is the main staple. The table also shows that bananas and tubers are eaten frequently by Aman Santo's family and less often by those of Aman Aturan and Aman Alfon. The former consumes twice as many bananas and four times more cassava and sweet potatoes than the latter.

The consumption of native foodstuffs is the reverse of the consumption of instant noodles. Aman Santo's family consumes noodles three or four times less than the other sample families. It thus follows that the higher consumption of rice corresponds with the lower consumption of local staples and the higher percentage of instant noodles. In reverse, the lower consumption of rice relates to the lower consumption of instant noodles and the higher consumption of tubers and bananas. This is clear in Aman Santo's case. The consumption of bananas and taro are almost equal to that of rice.

Table 27. Number of Meals Consisting of Staples in Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

	Aman Alfon (n=1016)		Aman Aturan (n=1025)		Aman Santo (n=989)		Total (n=3030)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Sago	403	39.7	340	33.2	512	51.8	1,255	41
Rice	297	29.2	512	50.0	335	33.9	1,144	38
Bananas and plantains	123	12.1	85	8.3	201	20.3	409	13
Taro and yams	102	10.0	55	5.4	117	11.8	274	9
Instant noodles	93	9.2	136	13.3	29	2.9	258	9
Cassava and sweet potatoes	26	2.6	31	3.0	121	12.2	178	6

The specific reason for rice becoming important in Aman Alfon's and Aman Aturan's families is perhaps due to the availability of cash from their commercial activities and the delivery of subsidised rice. The livelihood strategy of the families may also be a key factor. Aman Aturan's and Aman Alfon's families are typical Sasabirut families who have devoted themselves to the production of cash crops and abandoned processing sago for their own consumption. While Aman Alfon's family is involved in coconut farming and copra making, combined with having a small kiosk, Aman Aturan's family relies on cacao and clove cultivation. They spend much of their time in market-oriented production activities. This is rather different in Aman Santo's family. The latter family still harvests their own sago and is focused on a combination of subsistence and cash crops. Of course, the family eats rice regularly as they have cash from selling pigs or cacao beans. However, they retain some subsistence activities, such as processing sago, which contributes to them being less reliant on imported grains.

If we look closely at the pattern of staples' consumption over the year, the consumption fluctuates (Figure 12). Sago and bananas are more frequently eaten in the first six months period, while rice has the highest percentage for the total meals in the second half of the year. This pattern is consistent in all three families. Sago has a higher percentage from January to May while bananas are eaten more often between January and May and less frequently in the second half of the year, especially between August and November. The lowest consumption of bananas occurs in October. Rice has a higher percentage after July, and in particular, in December and is apparently eaten less in January, February, and especially in March and May.

How can we make sense of this pattern? For sago and rice, the answer may be obvious. Sago is still the most important staple. The proportion of rice consumed in the second half of the year is due to the distribution of subsidised rice. At the end of June, the RASKIN (rice for poor people) programme distributes rice (Puailiggoubat 2013). Every single family receives nine sacks of rice, each sack contains 30 kilograms. This means that each family has 270 kilograms from June onwards. The subsidised rice can last until the next subsidised rice is delivered. The fluctuation of sago and rice implies that when rice is not available the families rely on sago, but when there is an opportunity to have rice, either obtained from the local market using cash from commercial crops or acquired from a government programme, people tend to choose rice.

For bananas it is rather different. Bananas are most often consumed in the first half of the year and this may relate to their production cycle. While the production of bananas and plantains is not heavily influenced by the seasons, there tends to be less of them in the rainy months. The plants flower soon after the peak of the wet season. This means that bananas and plantains start to produce their maximum yields in the middle of the dry season, from the end of January to early March. This may explain why the consumption of bananas and plantains is less frequent in October and November, the wettest months in the year.

The presence of other types of foods is relatively stable. Cassava, taro, and instant noodles have an apparently constant percentage. In certain months, one of these types of food is entirely absent from the families' meals. Aman Aturan had no tubers in April, September, and October. Aman Alfon's family had no instant noodles in March and May. Other than these months, all the families had tubers or instant noodles in their meals. All the families have taro gardens and home gardens containing cassava or sweet potatoes. These items are available throughout the year, despite sometimes not being so plentiful. It seems that they constantly extract the tubers and add them to their meals. Obviously, instant noodles are available in the market throughout the year. The consumption of this industrial food is constant but higher in the months when rice is the frequent main staple (August to November).

There are some peculiarities in the figure. The consumption of all staples is relatively high in December.

Sago, rice, bananas, and tubers were frequently served towards the end of 2013. Aman Aturan had the highest consumption of rice (72%) and bananas (14%); Aman Santo had rice (43%) and tubers (16%); Aman Alfon also had a relatively higher consumption of bananas, rice, and sago in this month (December). The higher consumption of staples in all the meals at the end of the year may relate to the festive days during the Christmas and New Year period. The families try to have more lavish meals, especially in the second half of December. Significant amounts of rice, of a higher quality than the subsidised variety, is bought, alongside other imported food items such as biscuits, crackers, and sugar from the shops in Muara Siberut. Consuming rice and other imported food is considered prestigious and a way to celebrate the festive days.

Does the consumption of rice and the pattern of staples' consumption show that the selected families have undergone a major change? It is not clear whether people have fundamentally altered their food preferences, in which they prefer to eat rice rather than local staples. Data for 2013 shows that rice is the most important staple, alongside sago. However, it would be unfair to say that the families have abandoned traditional staples and fully embraced rice. It is important to note that the production and the consumption of rice has come and gone since it was introduced on the island (Persoon 1992). My own observations confirm that rice is still complementary to the traditional staples and has not entirely diminished the importance of sago, bananas, and taro.

Table 28. Combination of Staples in Meals of Each Family in Muntei (n=3,030)

	Aman Alfon		Aman Aturan		Aman Santo	
	No. of Meals	%	No. of Meals	%	No. of Meals	%
1 staple	409	40	489	48	305	31
Combination of 2 staples	399	39	427	42	436	44
Combination of 3 staples	165	16	106	10	213	22
Combination of 4 staples	43	4	3	0	35	4

Table 28 indicates the variations in having more staples in their meals, across the surveyed families. Aman Santo has the highest percentage of meals containing a combination of the staples while Aman Alfon has the lowest percentage of meals with more than a single staple. The fewest meals with a combination of staples were eaten by Aman Aturan's family. Generally, more than half of each family's meals has two or more staples. This implies that a single staple, either sago or rice, does not dominate the meals.

4.4 Consumption of Food from Animal (*Iba*)

Meals with meat (*iba*) makes up 60 per cent of the total meals recorded (Table 29). The composition of *iba* is highly varied, consisting of three main *emic* categories: meat from freshwater animals (*iba-t-oinan*); meat from the sea (*iba-t-koat*); and domestic animals (*iba-t-punen*). Apparently, *iba-t-leleu* is virtually absent from the three families' meals. Birds and terrestrial reptiles (snakes, monitor lizards, tortoise) were also not eaten during the period the data were collected. The decline of ritual hunting is the main reason for the former, while the shame of eating lesser valued food is the reason for the latter. Small mammals and sea turtles were eaten, albeit only on one or two occasions.

In general, each of the families shares a general pattern, but also has variations in terms of meat consumption. All three families have more than half of their meals with meat. Aman Alfon has the highest

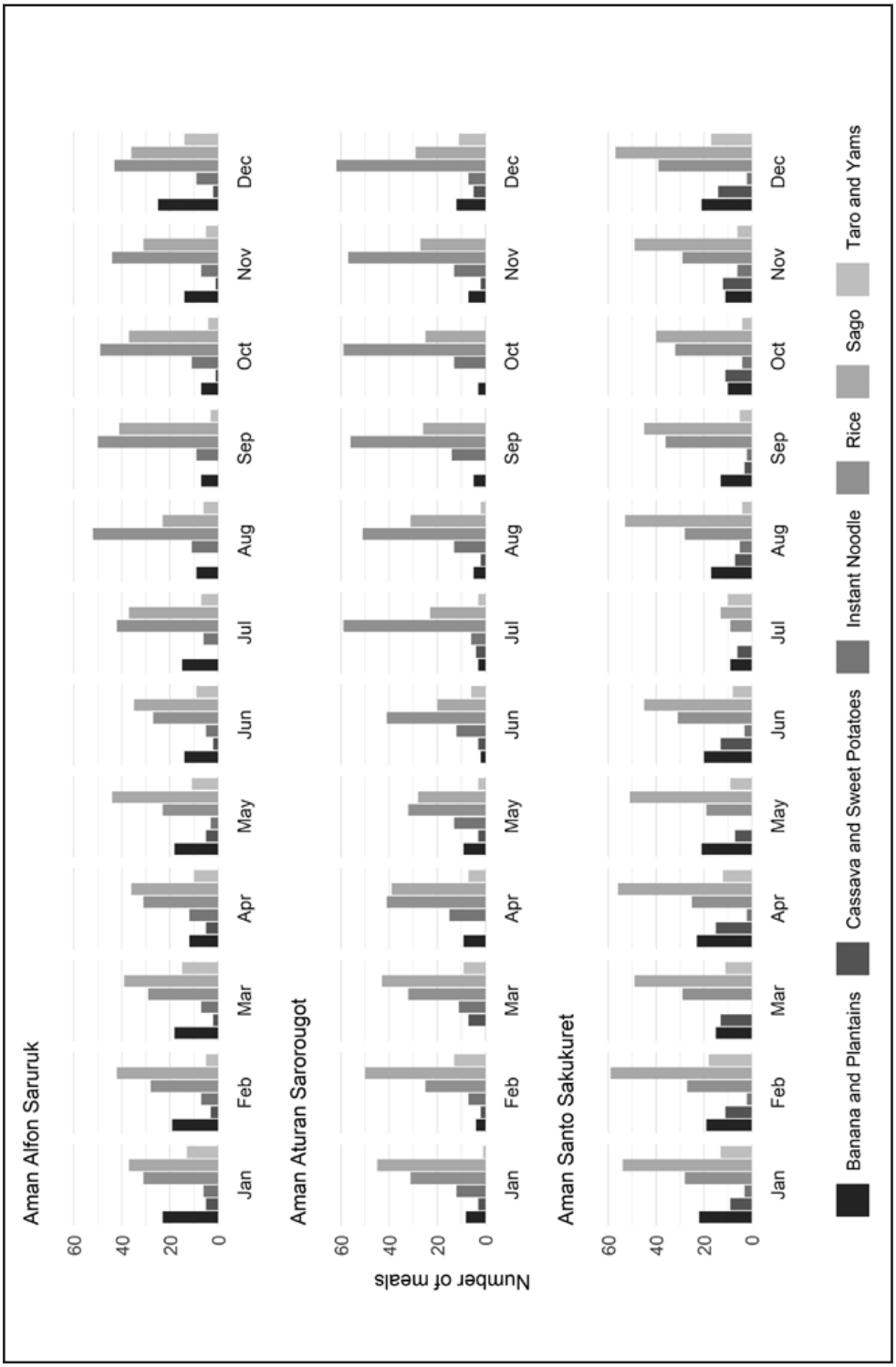


Figure 12. The Consumption of Staples Food among Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

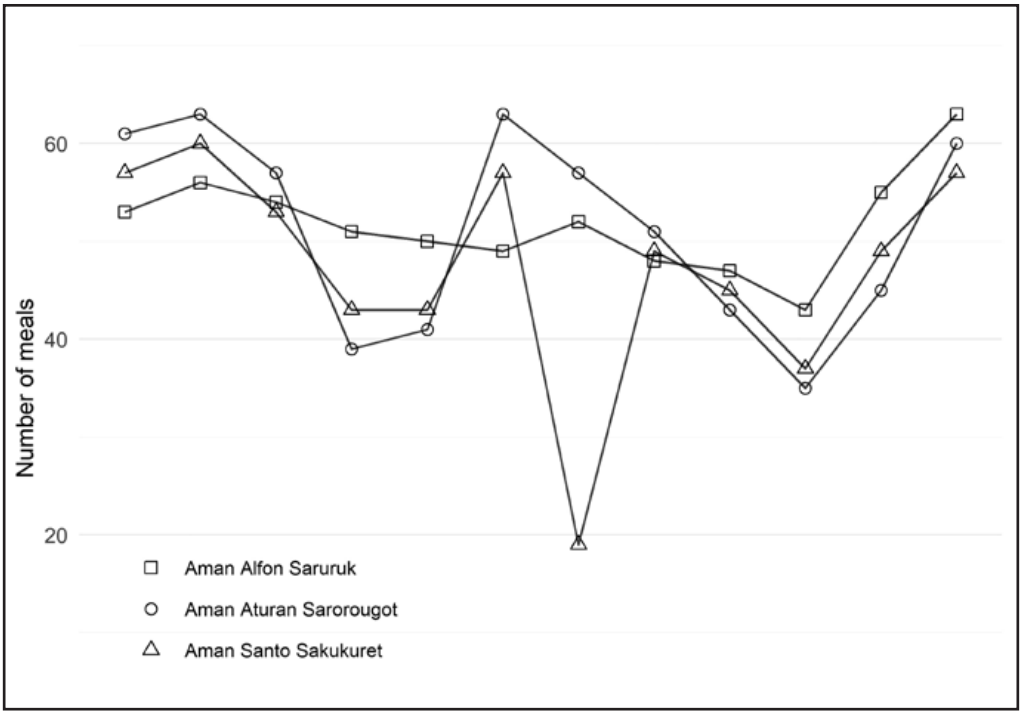
frequency of consuming meat while Aman Santo has the lowest. Figure 13 presents a detailed examination of the meat consumption patterns throughout the year. The figure reveals that the families consumed meat more frequently in January, February, June, and December. In those months, each of the families ate an average of one third of their meals containing meat.

Table 29. The Number of Meals with Meat among Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

Families and Number of Meals	Number of Meals with Meat	Percentage of Meals with Meat
Aman Alfon (n=1,016)	621	61
Aman Aturan (n=1,025)	615	59
Aman Santo (n=989)	569	58
Total meals (n=3,030)	1805	60

In contrast, during April, May, September, and particularly October, the consumption of meat is lower. In these months, each of the families only ate meat 40 times. This pattern is seemingly affected by the seasons. The months when meat is consumed less frequently are the wettest months. Especially October and April, which are the peak of the rainy season (WWF 1980, see Chapter 2). The heavy rainfall causes serious flooding. Fishing for freshwater animals is more difficult, while the supply of saltwater fish from the market might be interrupted. In contrast, January, February, and June are the driest months. Fishing and gathering clams, shrimps, and barnacles, in all water bodies (creeks, rivers, estuaries) are mostly carried out in these periods.

Figure 13. The Number of Meals with Meat among Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)



The exception to this pattern is December. The end of the year is normally wet and rainy but all three families consume meat in two thirds of their meals at this time. Again, this can be explained by the fact that December is a festive month. The Catholic Church organises a series of ceremonies to welcome Christmas and invites people in the settlement to hail the coming events with a lavish meal, which includes pigs being slaughtered for this occasion. The church establishes a committee with the main task of organising its members to buy pigs and distribute the meat. Non-Catholic members can participate as long as they have money to buy the meat. Most of the year, people usually bring home their chickens and ducks from their gardens for meals after Sunday Mass. Furthermore, whenever cash is available, they also buy saltwater fish. Some of the fish is preserved by smoking it (*silakkra*). The smoked fish is stored in anticipation of the supply of fresh fish being interrupted during rainy and stormy days.

Type of Meat

Table 30 shows that each family shares a fondness for saltwater fish. Various types of fish from the sea appear in more that half of the total meals. All three families consume a significant amount of *iba-t-oinan*, collected by the women. *Iba-t-oinan* is the second most important type of meat consumed by the families. Various freshwater fish, mussels, crabs, shrimp, small frogs, and worms are served for one third of the total meals, almost three times higher than the consumption of domestic animals (chickens, ducks, pigs) put together. In particular, worms, as an individual category of meat, are the second most frequently type of served meat. Hunted animals have the lowest presence. The combination of major *iba-t-koat* (turtles, dugong) and small mammals is less than one per cent of the total recorded.

Table 30. Types of Meat Consumed in Meals of Three Families in Muntei (n=1,805)

	Meals with Meat Aman Alfon (n=621)		Meals with Meat Aman Aturan (n=615)		Meals with Meat Aman Santo (n=569)		Total Meals with Meat (n=1805)	
	No	%*	No	%	No	%	No	%
Saltwater fish	456	73.4	338	55	277	48.7	1071	59.3
Freshwater fish	8	1.3	60	9.8	36	6.3	104	5.8
Mussels	17	2.7	59	9.6	59	10.4	135	7.54
Crabs/shrimps/frogs	22	3.5	55	8.9	32	5.6	109	6.03
Worms	44	7.1	115	18.7	111	19.5	270	15
Poultry	39	6.3	18	2.9	55	9.7	112	6.2
Pork	42	6.8	20	3.3	57	10.	119	6.6
Turtles or dugong	6	1	2	0.3	0	0	8	0.4
Small mammals	0	0	3	0.41	5	5.1	8	0.4

** Occasionally, the families consume more than one type of meat. Especially in the dry season when gathering and fishing any form of water bodies is easier, the families enjoy shrimps, crabs, and small fish for their meals. Hence, the total percentage of all these type of meat is more than 100%.*

Table 30 indicates the variation in the consumption of meat by the three families. Aman Alfon's family relies heavily on saltwater fish and consumes less meat from freshwater sources. Almost three quarters of their meals with meat consist of saltwater fish and only a few freshwater fish. The two other families seem

to rely on both saltwater fish and *iba-t-oinan* or animals gathered from freshwater. The general findings presented in the table show that the majority of the meat consumed by the families is composed of saltwater fish and *iba-t-oinan*. About half of the total meals of both Aman Aturan's family and Aman Santo's contain meat that is gathered by the women. The big difference between Aman Santo and Aman Aturan is in their consumption of domestic animals.

Two important types of meat that are associated with male work—hunted game and domestic animals—are far less significant for their diet. The higher frequency of eating saltwater fish and the lower significance of hunted game and domestic animals may correspond with a shift in the priorities of the families' activities, especially for the adults. The absence of *iba-t-leleu* and the consumption of freshwater animals support this point. Aman Alfon's family, despite still retaining their coconut gardens in the *nusa* and having gardens around the settlement, no longer spends time in their gardens or fishing along the nearby coast. Bai Alfon no longer goes fishing in the creek close to the settlement and does not participate in fishing trips to the Katurei River. With cash available almost everyday from their kiosk and from selling dried coconuts, the family prefers to buy fresh saltwater fish from the market. The occasional consumption of worms, shrimps, and frogs might occur after the family asked relatives or neighbours to share or to exchange the catch from their fishing trips for rice, sugar, or money from the kiosk. In contrast, the adults in other families are still gardening and spending some time fishing and gathering. Bai Santo and Bai Aturan still occasionally go to the nearby creeks or rivers to collect freshwater animals. The frequent consumption of *iba-t-sinanalep* indicates that fishing for shrimps, diving for clams in the river, and collecting mussels in the dry season has regained some importance for these families.

Figure 14 gives a more detailed picture of the variations and the dynamics of meat consumption in the families. In general, the consumption of meat by Aman Alfon's family is not affected by the season. The higher and stable consumption of saltwater fish represents their ability to obtain meat from the market. In contrast, the consumption of meat by the families of Aman Aturan and Aman Santo fluctuates and is seemingly affected by the season. In wet months, the consumption of saltwater fish is higher than in other months. Aman Aturan ate more than thirty meals consisting of saltwater fish in April, October, and November. Both the families consume the highest percentage of *iba-t-oinan* in the dry months.

The figure also reveals that there are different patterns for the consumption of domestic animals and hunted game. Aman Santo had a more steady consumption of *iba-t-punen* in 2013 than the other two families. The family ate chicken and pork almost every month. In contrast, Aman Aturan family ate pork and chicken only a handful of times in certain months. Aman Alfon's family meals contained meat more frequently than Aman Aturan's meals, but less so than Aman Alfon's meals. This might be because he has cash to buy pigs and chickens from the market. All these families, however, share a similarity in consuming hunted animals. Aman Alfon's family ate turtle meat after his parents caught a leatherback turtle in their nets in January. This is the only hunted animal the family consumed through the year. Aman Aturan's family purchased turtle meat from Salakkoppak in April. The latter two families ate small mammals (squirrels and flying foxes) in September, October, and November. This may be a peculiarity as flying foxes and small mammals are more often found in gardens when the fruit trees are flowering, which happened in early July that year.

Sources of Meat

All the tables and figures showing the consumption of meat can provide a glimpse of the origins of the meat and the way people obtain it. Much of the saltwater fish is sold by Minangkabau people in the market, or seasonal fishermen from the neighbouring village of Maileppet, or from large vessels from the mainland of Sumatra. The market purchases also include smoked fish obtained from relatives and canned meat acquired from local shops with cash.

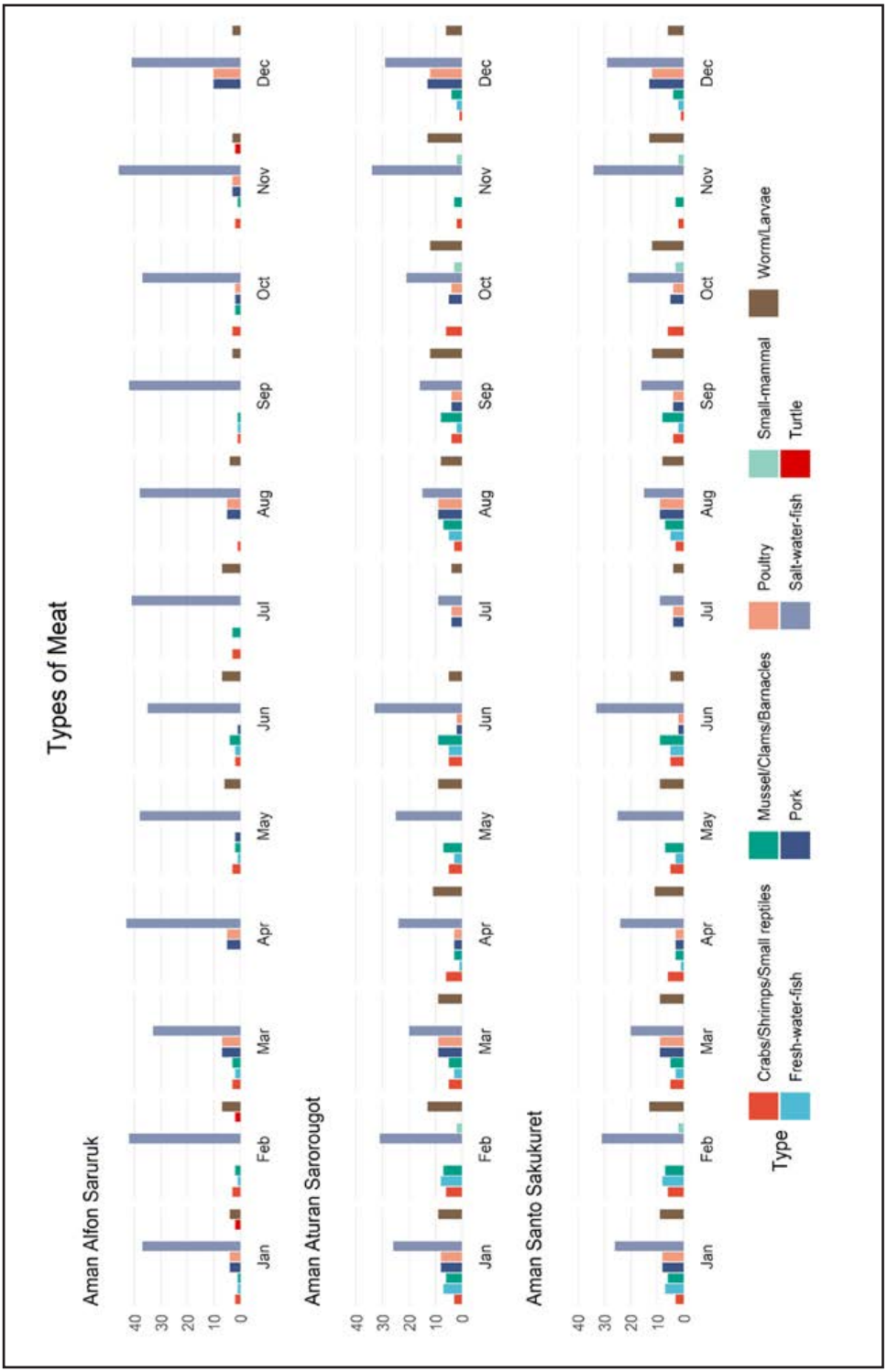


Figure 14. Types of Meat Consumed by Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

Iba-t-oinan mostly comes from gathering and fishing, which the families of Aman Aturan and Aman Santo do (Table 31). The latter family occasionally buys fish, mussels, or shrimps from neighbours with cash from their small shop. Pork and poultry are locally bought from pig farmers around the settlement. This is not the case for Aman Santo, who owns a large number of pigs. Small mammals are from the gardens while turtles are obtained through hunting with nets at sea. The category of 'other' includes meat obtained after collective events organised by the church and hamlet/village institutions to provide meat for the population.

Despite the two other families having a higher amount of meat from the market, they also have a significantly higher percentage of meat from gathering and fishing. Aman Aturan supplies almost half of their meals with meat from animals gathered or collected, while Aman Santo's family has slighlty less. It seems that, again, the livelihood strategy and the input of women influences the origin of the meat consumed by the families. The other significant difference is in the consumption of domestic animals. Aman Santo's family has a larger number of meals containing pork than the two other families. With 103 meals containing pork, the latter family has almost two and five times more than the families of Aman Alfon and Aman Aturan, respectively. The consumption of meat obtained from either church or village meetings or non-ritual feasts (category of Others) is almost identical. Each family has no more than 12 meals with pork or fish, which were eaten together during church or village meetings.

Table 31. Origin of Meat Consumed by Three Families in Muntei (n=1,805)

	Aman Alfon (n= 621)		Aman Aturan (n=615)		Aman Santo (n=569)		Total	
	Meals	%	Meals	%	Meals	%	No	%
Market	473	76.2	338	55	279	49	1,090	60.4
Gathering/fishing	94	15.1	303	49.3	259	45.5	656	36.3
Domestic animals	65	10.5	28	4.6	103	18.1	196	10.9
Hunting	6	0.1	9	1.5	8	1.4	23	1.3
Others	10	1.6	12	2	10	1.8	32	1.8

Figure 15 below presents the monthly pattern of meat consumption based on the origin of the meat. The market is a reliable source of meat almost every month, either in the wet or dry season. This indicates that the families regularly have cash available. Buying meat from the market declines significantly in the dry season, when gathering and fishing regain prominence. This is true for the families of Aman Aturan and Aman Santo. In January, February, May, and July, meat from gathering and fishing is served more frequently than that obtained from the market. In contrast, the period from October to December sees a drastic decline in gathering and fishing. During the wet season, when the water levels in the rivers start to rise and floods are on the way, the families of Aman Santo and Aman Aturan can only occasionally fish for shrimps and frogs in their taro gardens.

The figure shows the three findings that I have frequently described: 1) hunting is not an important way of providing meat; 2) the market is becoming the major source of meat; 3) gathering and fishing are still important ways to procure meat. The first point is shown by the fact that turtle meat was only consumed on six occasions by the families and there was no consumption of large mammals from the forest or the sea. The absence of meat from the forest, either deer, wild boar, or dugong, is further evidence of the decline of ritual hunting. Aman Alfon had turtle meat twice in February and twice in November; Aman Aturan had it twice in May. While the meat was obtained by hunting, Aman Aturan and Aman Santo do not hunt

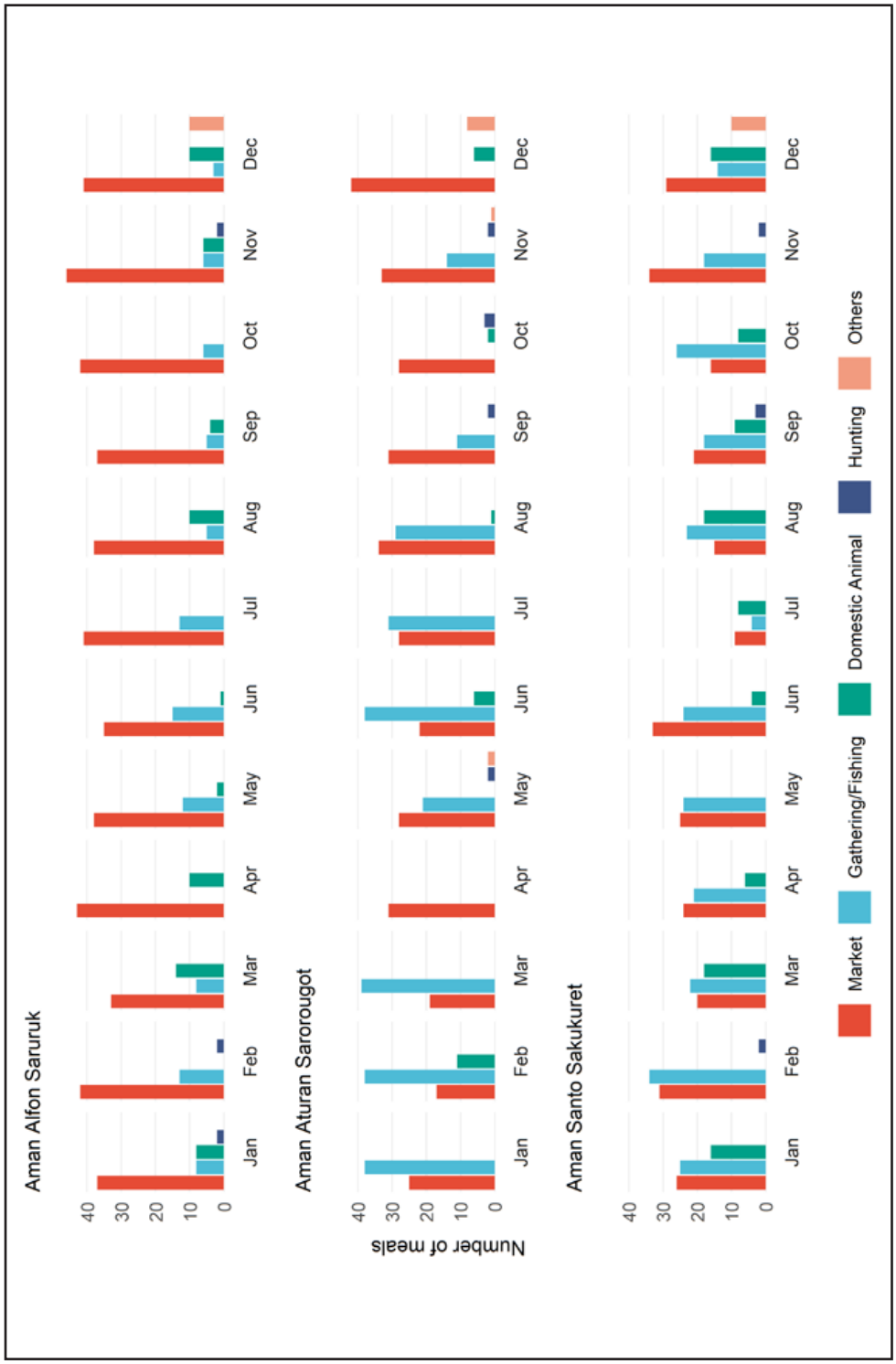


Figure 15. Sources of Meat Consumed by Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

themselves, but obtain it through a sale or as a gift from relatives. Small mammals are rarely consumed. The families of Aman Aturan and Aman Santo do hunt small mammals in their gardens. However, the yield is not particularly significant. They had a few flying foxes and a number of squirrels in the fruit season. The data show that the family that heavily relies on saltwater fish is the family that has focused more on cash crops and market exchanges. Aman Alfon has retained a sago garden and fruit trees, but the family does not have pigs or chickens and does not hunt or fish. In the case of Aman Santo and Aman Aturan, they prefer to have saltwater fish whenever money from their cash crops is available.

4.5 Consumption of Fruits (*Bua*) and Vegetables

Vegetables and fruits are the least important food components in the meals of the three families. On average, the families have non-starch *kat* in a meal every three days. The family of Aman Alfon has the highest percentage of vegetables (Table 32). For the families of Aman Aturan and Aman Santo, the number of meals with vegetables is almost identical. This is interesting as Aman Alfon's family does not cultivate a garden that contains vegetables. It seems that the family acquires vegetables from the market.

Table 32. The Number of Meals with Vegetables and the Consumption of Fruits after/before Meals in Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)

Families	Vegetables		Fruit	
	No	%	No	%
Aman Alfon Saruruk (n=1,016)	146	14.4	102	10.0
Aman Aturan Sarorougot (n=1,025)	103	10.0	75	7.3
Aman Santo Sakukuret (n=989)	98	9.9	109	11.0
Total (n=3,030)	347	11.5	286	9.4

The most common vegetable consumed by the families is cassava leaves. Another familiar vegetable is the young sprouts of wild ferns. These leaves are boiled in a pan with coconut milk and spices. Sometimes, the ferns are cooked with instant noodles and smoked fish (*silakkra*). If there is meat, the leaves are mixed with the meat to make a stew. When meat is not available, the families may cut the stalks of *lotlot*, a variety of taro, and use it as a substitute. The stalk is boiled in coconut milk and spices. This does not mean that other edible leaves and stems are not available. As has been described in the previous chapter, vegetables, both wild and semi-domesticated, grow abundantly all year round in the gardens.

Even though various vegetables are available, the consumption of green leaves is limited. This is perhaps linked to the fact that the people have maintained their pre-Hindu culture, which, in terms of diet, largely depends upon various non-domesticated meats and tubers, but not vegetables. This can be detected from the absence of a local term for vegetable. *Sayur*, the term people used for leaves or greens, is an introduced word from the national language. The consumption of cassava leaves or wild ferns in a spicy coconut cream are probably also a recent phenomena influenced by the Minangkabau.

The percentage of meals in which fruit is consumed is even lower than for vegetables. Commonly, fruit is eaten as a snack in between the main meals. Fruit accompanied a staple in meals only about ten per cent of the time. It is somehow different in *rura* season when some fruits, especially durian and langsat, are used in meals as subtitutes for the staples. Figure 16 presents the monthly consumption pattern of vegetables

Figure 16. ***Consumption of Vegetables among Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)***

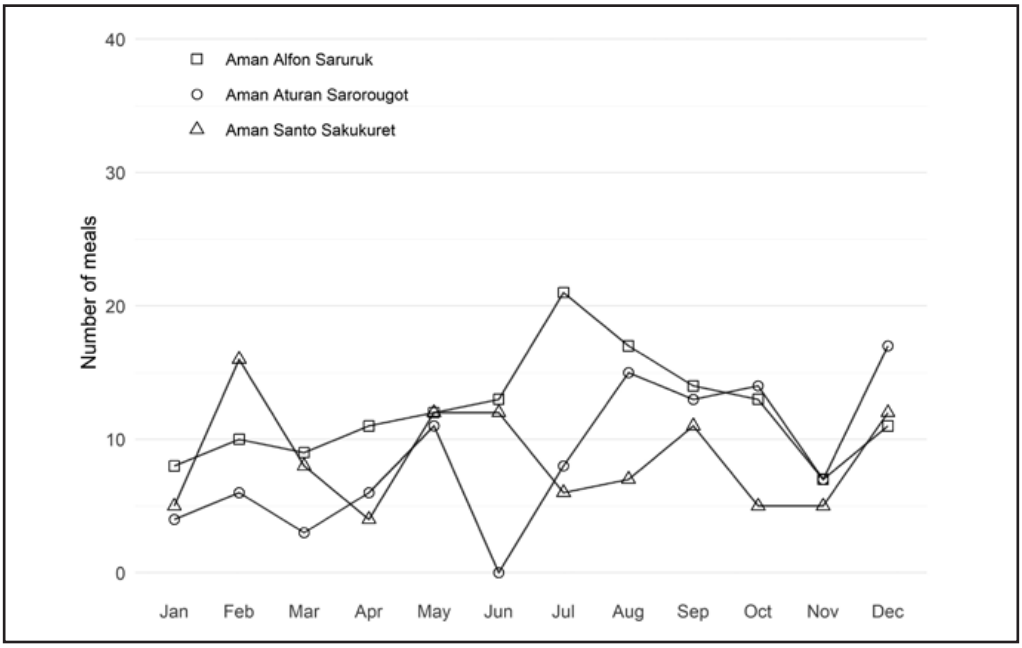
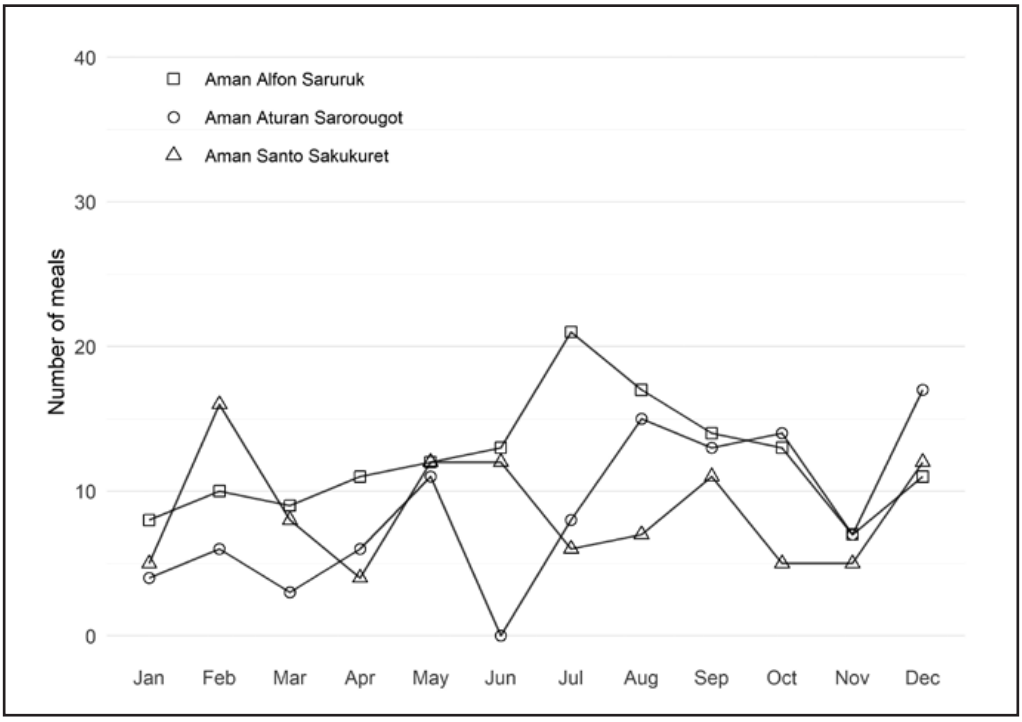


Figure 17. ***Consumption of Fruits among Three Families in Muntei (n=3,030)***



TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 35. A Samekmek family enjoys enormous langsat after harvesting the fruit in their garden (2019)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 36. A pile of rambutan is collectively harvested and collected by Samekmek men and women in gardens near Koko River (2019)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 37. Members of *uma* Samekmek are collectively harvesting durian and other fruits (*pananduk*) in a garden near Koko River (2018)

and fruit. Vegetables are consumed each month but not on a daily basis. Apparently, vegetables were served in meals roughly nine times every month in the families. Vegetables are most often eaten in December and July. In these months, vegetables are served every other day, on average. The higher percentage of vegetables' consumption at the end of the year, as with meat consumption, is due to the festive period. The case of the increased consumption of vegetables in June is somewhat of a riddle. June is the month when the subsidised rice arrives in the settlement. I speculate that the consumption of rice generates the consumption of vegetables, because rice is commonly consumed without meat but with instant noodles and vegetables.

Fruit is seasonally available and in limited supply, but is consumed heavily for the short time it is present. Data collection was coincidentally carried out during the *rura* season.[11] As depicted in Figure 17, fruit was only consumed two to three times between January and July 2013 in each of the families. During May to June, Aman Alfon's family did not eat any fruit. There was also an absence of fruit in Aman Santo's family in April, May, and June. Outside of the fruit season, the most commonly eaten fruits are pineapples and papaya from the gardens. Bananas are sometimes served after evening meals, but this is very rare. Mostly, bananas are reserved for breakfast. On a very few occasions, the families might buy one or two oranges, pears, or apples imported from mainland Sumatra in the local market when cash is available. They are normally eaten as snacks shortly after they are purchased.

The consumption of fruit drastically alters after the fruit season ends. The figure shows that the consumption of fruit around meals between August and early November is exceptional. This indicates that fruit season occurs during those months. In the span of about three months, wild mango, *langsat*, *rambutan*, three species of durians, and *cempedak* trees simultaneously bear fruit. During these months, all the selected

families have a very high percentage of fruit consumption. Especially in September, the consumption of fruit can be as high as a half of the number of total meals. This is the peak of the fruit season when ripened durians start to drop. All the families enjoyed an enormous consumption of *doriat*, *toktuk*, and *pusinoso* (Picture 35 & 36). On average, they eat durian twice a day. Jackfruit follow durian and close the *rura* season. In December, the consumption of fruit returns to a lower level as the *rura* season finishes.

It seems that the consumption of fruit is also correlated with the possession of a fruit garden. Aman Aturan has the smallest number of fruits trees and consumes less fruit; Aman Santo, the owner of many fruits trees after exchanging pigs, eats more fruit. The latter family consumes twice as much fruit after/before meals than the former. The lower consumption of vegetables and fruit may indicate that mature forest gardens (*pumonean*) consisting of fruit trees are of secondary importance in terms of people's daily diet. Staples are provided by other domesticated zones (sago gardens and taro gardens, while meat is obtained either from the market or non-domesticated zones). Fruit trees in particular are less crucial in terms of the everyday diet because they are only harvested once a year at most.

4.6 'We Eat a Lot of Food'

The numbers in all the tables and figures shows that there are both internal variations and general patterns in the consumption of food between the three households. Each family tends to favour a certain type of staple and types of meat over the others. I assume that this is related to the profile of each family and the livelihood they choose. Aman Alfon's family, with both parents focused on coconut crops and managing a small shop, prefers to have rice and saltwater fish obtained from the market. A regular cash income from their ventures provides an opportunity for this family to neglect their own sago production and to abandon fishing, because they can obtain food from the market or exchange their groceries for various *iba-t-sinanalep* from their neighbours. The parents in Aman Santo's family spend much of their time in their gardens and rely on a combination of pig keeping and traditional forest gardening, they also consume more sago and domestic animals. With a different family profile, Aman Aturan uses rice as a staple and *iba-t-oinan*. The male adult of this family relies solely on cash crops and wage labour while the female adult combines working in the garden and gathering from around the settlement.

While there are variations, the data also indicate general findings which seem to show that food shortages are not a real problem for all three families. Having meals three times a day is a norm rather than an exception. All the families have a variety of staples and meat in their daily meals, despite not eating vegetables all that often. Furthermore, the data indicate that some important sources of meat in the distant past are no longer part of the families diets, i.e. primates or deer. The families now rely on and have a more stable supply of saltwater fish than in the past, while freshwater animals are still important. This indicates that attaining food from the market is increasingly important. It seems that people prefer to spend most of their time and energy producing cash crops and having cash in hand, rather than having to process sago, or fish for saltwater animals. Considering the gardens and other subsistence resources they have, food shortages are not an immediate threat.

When I asked about their perceptions regarding the availibilty and quality of food they consume, all three families explicitly agree that they now have better access to edible items. Far from being romantic about life in the old settlement, the families stress that the variety and the quantity of food they consume are better now. They consider that contemporary life in Muntei provides the opportunity to have a regular supply of fish, fruit, and imported food. Aman Alfon says that now it is difficult to imagine not having *iba-t-laut* (saltwater fish) on their plates. They enjoy the benefits of having cash crops, while their location close to

GERARD PERSOON

Picture 38. A family meal in the early years of the OPKM program (1981)

DARMANTO

Picture 39. A light lunch (*musubuk*) of a Samekmek family in the settlement, consisting of steamed fish, *subbet* and sago (2014)

the coastal zones enables them to access a variety of food from the local market. When Aman Alfon recalls his childhood in Siberut Hulu, he did not eat much saltwater fish. Now, his children consume saltwater fish almost every day. For Aman Santo, living in the settlement allows him to breed pigs and accumulate wealth so he can spend it on rice and fish. He says that moving to Muntei from Madobak Village was the best decision his father took. 'When we were in Madobak, we did not eat saltwater fish. Now, like other people here, we can enjoy a variety of salt-water fish.' In Aman Aturan's case, while he feels they are in a more precarious position, they do not have serious problems getting food. They still have sago and taro gardens. They might not eat meat regularly when their cloves or cacao do not produce a crop, or no-one asks him to repair a house, but they can still eat well with sago, taro, and meat obtained by his wife. 'We do not have much money in our hand every single day, but neither are we suffering from having no food. There is always sago, taro, and bananas in our kitchen. The problem is money for my children's education.'

The perception of the three families regarding the absence of food shortages in the settlement echoes the general sense of Muntei's residents that they have an abundance of food. Compared to non-Mentawaians living around the settlement, the size and number of meals enjoyed by people is considerably greater. This is perfectly captured in the stereotypical view held by non-Mentawaians that Mentawaians are people who eat a lot of food. The Javanese, Batak, or Minangkabau people living around the settlement have long perceived that people in Muntei and other Mentawaians are lazy because they always eat a lot. It is a common grudge among migrants that they cannot employ Muntei residents unless they feed them. These stereotypes are happily accepted.

Muntei people are aware that they are stereotyped by migrants as verocious eaters. The leader of my host *uma*, Aman Reju Samekmek (73-years old) made light of the stereotype and claim that each group of people has its own pleasure. Aman Reju told me that his favourite time is when he is having bountiful taro balls and salt water fish or plenty of roasted sago and pork with his family (Pictures 37, & 38). One day, after enjoying a lunch meal, he made a remark:

Batak people love to sing
Javanese love to plant things
Minangkabau people love trading
Mentawaians love meat and eating

Aman Reju is not an exceptional case. In every family setting, Muntei people have proper meals three times a day, although each meal does not necessarily take place at a specific time. The proper meals mean involve eating a staple foodstuff, either roasted sago, boiled taro, rice, or a combination of them, with condiments, either vegetables boiled in a kind of coconut curry or meat in bamboo. Pork and chicken are rarely served during mundane meals. Small fish, shrimps, or sago grubs are frequently consumed. If there is cash available, saltwater fish is a favourite. The amount of food, especially *kat*, is always more than enough for the expected participants. They do not rigidly calculate how much sago flour they cook or how many kilograms of rice they cook. It is better to have more food and of different types than less for the participants of any meal.

At all the family meals I attended, I never encountered anxiety about there not being enough food. After a rattan mat is spread out on the floor, a bountiful supply of roasted sago, bananas, rice, condiments, and meat are laid out. All family members are expected to sit down and eat together. After a short prayer, the meals are eaten in comfortable, relaxed positions without explicit rules about where people should sit or how the food should be laid out. Everyone sits around the food and eats quietly. They can eat with their fingers using their left or right hand, or a spoon. Small children usually want to take the best position,

closer to the more desirable items, especially rice and meat. They frequently cry before getting what they want. Adults do not say much about boisterous children and usually normalise the noise they generate. Hitting, even scolding, are not part of the culture of disciplining children at mealtimes. '*Aleee, kom simaeruk*' (Please, eat your food properly) is usually the only comment from adults.

Dogs and cats may join in the meal. These domestic animals are normally allowed to sit down behind the participants, waiting for their share. Occasionally, fish bones or skin from the pork or chicken are given. Sometimes, the animals sneak into small gaps between the diners and snap at the best meat when people relax too much. A little commotion occurs in a flash. The animals may get hit if they are not quick enough to escape. Even if they do get hit, they already have good food in their mouths. After this small incident, people concentrate on the meal again while the runaway dogs or cats quietly return to the scene. If the kitchen door is open or the meal is served on the veranda, a hen and her chicks might also join in.

During the meal, talking or joking is not prohibited but people generally focus on their own food rather than talk to each other. When there is a serious conversation, there is always someone reminding everyone that they are eating and that talking too much will disturb their meal. All participants can eat as much as they want, until their stomach is full and are also strongly encouraged to have more portions when they are about to finish their plate. 'We have a lot of sago and rice, please do not worry about it. We can cook again.' It is considered a shame if the participants eat quickly, withdraw from the circle, and leave some food untouched.

When a meal is about to end, the participants encourage each other to put the rest of the food onto their plates. Someone will gradually stand up without asking for anyone's explicit permission and normally say, 'I am full. You all can continue eating. Please, satisfy yourselves' to the others who are still eating. Then he/she moves away from the circle into an empty space, stretching his/her legs. Others are taking a toothpick from the sago leaves and murmur '*enaababai*', which can be roughly translated as 'thanks mother, what a good life.'

There is always leftover food after a meal, especially staple foods. This is not always the case with meat and condiments. Typically, the leftovers, if any, are not stored. Untouched roasted sago, boiled bananas or rice are collected and put in a container made from rattan. If there are hungry dogs and cats around, the food is given directly to them. Much of the leftover food, however, is brought to the pig or chicken huts and given to the animals next morning. It is very rare that a family consumes food that was prepared for the previous meal. People say that cold sago is hard and tasteless (*masepsep*). To keep their body and soul happy, they prefer to have warm food. Even untouched rice or bananas from a previous meal are considered flavorless unless they are fried. Generally, people always have warm food for their meals, especially for *kat*.

No dinner is complete without a sweet drink. Hot coffee or tea is almost always served. Ready-to-make drinks from the local shops are preferrable if there is cash available. If they have ripe fruit in the kitchen, the family would sit together on the veranda, have their drink and enjoy sweet/sour pineapple or *rambutan* as an evening snack. Even though there are plenty of ripe bananas, people rarely eat them as an evening snack, as they are a staple for the morning meal.

There is a palpable enjoyment at having plenty of food during a ritual feast. At such times, the carcass of a pig and chickens occupies the whole of the longhouse's veranda. In the kitchen, women prepare an inexhaustible supply of roasted sago and *subbet*. The carcasses are then chopped into smaller pieces and boiled in three or more large pans, each pan big enough to cook all the meat from two large sows. The boiled meat is then distributed equally to each family, who have prepared their own sago and taro. Like the family meal, all the people sit and squat around the bountiful meat. The participants of the feast can eat as much *kat* and *meat* as they like. Children do not have to fight over desirable items. If they are already full, they stand up and take a seat on a wooden bench on the veranda, and start to pick toothmeat. On

occasions like this, dogs and cats can enjoy much more meat without being afraid of getting hit, as they do at a family meal.

There is no evidence that Muntei residents have a problem with food. Despite there being little indication of food shortages, many people repeatedly told me that they are *sitakiba*, 'those without meat'. Often, this term is followed by the term for being hungry ('*malaje*'). The term *sitakiba* or *malaje*, as I explained at the beginning, was frequently heard during my fieldwork. This is remarkable since the three families I recorded and Muntei residents more generally have more food resources than they need. They always cook much more food than they consume. Having leftover food is a habit. Why, then, do they say they are 'people without meat' or 'being hungry'? This puzzle leads to my analysis that food's production and consumption are intertwined with the creation of a people and society, and are used to create and manipulate the social values that bind them together, all of which will be discussed in the following chapters.

5

Food, the Production of Persons, and the Perpetuation of the Community

The previous chapters showed empirically that Muntei residents have no substantial problem with availability and access to food and that they consume more than enough meals. Yet, there is often the claim that they are hungry, as described in the first chapter. The phrases *malaje* (being hungry) and *sitakiba* (people without meat) are presumably culturally conceived statements. This chapter and the next are devoted to understanding the cultural and social role of food in order to comprehend these terms. This begins with answering the basic question: What is the role of food and activities related to producing food resources (gardening, hunting, fishing, eating, exchanging, and sharing)?

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is divided into four sub-chapters, all describing the importance of producing food for the construction of social actors. The first sub-chapter examines the way in which producing food, gardening (*mumone*) in particular, influences how people assert the idea of being humans and qualify a social person. The second section explores how the production of food relates to the lifecycle of a social person through the family institution. The last section describes the relationship between producing food, the collective identification of being Mentawaians, and the identification of others. The second section is also divided into four sub-chapters, all describing the importance of sharing and eating together in the perpetuation of social institutions, specifically *uma* and family. The fifth sub-chapter examines why eating food alone, especially meat, is prohibited. Keeping food for yourself is the ultimate social transgression. The two sections thereafter examine two major contexts in which food is shared and consumed together: a) at the household level through everyday family meals; and b) at the *uma* level, on special occasions, through communal ceremonies. Sandwiched between these two sections is a description of the role of women in the reproduction of family through cooking, serving, and preparing food. The main point of this chapter is that producing food is not merely producing material substances for basic needs, but a part of a total process of producing social persons and institutions.

At the beginning of my research, I tried to ask people about the function of and relations with the edible items in their lives. Often, they simply replied: food is to fill your stomach. When I asked

about the qualities of food they loved to eat, the answer was monotonous: everything that humans can eat is good. Some claimed that clean and white sago flour is better than dark or brown flour. People differentiate many banana and taro varieties according to colour, texture, sweetness, or other properties. Some durian trees are seen as bearing better and more fruits than others. The size of pigs is an important consideration in any social exchange. These attributes are certainly attached to the producer and bestow social pride on those who cultivate the food item in question. The properties of food, however, do not always impart value upon the person who cultivates, owns, or processes it, or symbolise something beyond the materiality of food. The properties of food (size, colour, smell, texture) are not overtly used as a symbol of salient relations. Every time I asked about the cultural association of certain foods or certain qualities of types of food with its role or importance, the answer was always short and direct. For example, when I asked "why do you not consume raw food during *punen* (rituals)?," the answer was mostly "that is what our ancestors did and passed on to us," or "we would have an accident after the ritual'. Few people were able and willing to provide interpretations of symbols or analysis of my queries on the relations of food.

Instead of continuing to prepare and carry out elicitation techniques, I eventually decided to simply follow people's daily activities and concentrate on the daily pattern of food production and consumption. The importance of food was not explicitly articulated and verbally expressed, but it infused everything. I discovered that food is a basic but a special item, not merely because of the symbolic quality or the nutritional value. I found patterns and consistencies that hint at the importance of food in people's idea of human beings, social persons, and society. This ethnographic necessity became the platform for both the description and analysis of this dissertation. By understanding patterns of concrete food-related activities and implicit ideas, I could generate a systematic description and interpretation of the importance of food in the construction of personhood and social values. People do not always inform me about the importance of food explicitly. Indeed, sometimes, I could not elicit an explanation or opinion about the role of food in their life. Thus, in the analysis that I present in the following chapters, I blend what people say about their food in their terms and in their view with my own understanding and interpretation of what that means. Nonetheless, the description and analysis I present in this chapter systematically integrate the importance of food and social activities related to food with people's idea of being humans, being social actors, and being Mentawaians.

5.1 Making Gardens, Defining Humanity

The residents of Muntei carry out various activities to obtain food from the surrounding environment: gathering, fishing, foraging, and, in the recent past, hunting. They have specific terms for these activities. For example, fishing with a hook is called *pangabli*. Collecting small fish, crustaceans, and frogs with a hand net in daylight is termed *paligagra*. Gathering fish at night with the help of a torch or lamp is called *pangisou*. Hunting animals with arrows or spears is called *murourou*. Casting a seine net for turtles in the sea is termed *mujarik* or *muiba*. While there is a specific term for certain ways of obtaining food, there is also a general term for cultivation activities that produce food: *mumone*. The term is a verb derived from two words: the noun *mone* literally meaning 'an area of cultivation' and a prefix *mu* meaning 'doing something'. *Mone* also refers to any object of cultivation (durian trees, banana, sago, coconut). In short, *mumone* is a kind of forest cultivation comprising activities ranging from clearing forest, slashing weeds, planting fruit trees, raising pigs and chickens, cultivating taro, growing coconut trees, and so on (Picture 39 & 40).

When Muntei residents are asked 'what do you do for a living?', *mumone* is the immediate answer. They call themselves *sipumone*, which can be translated as 'he/she who cultivates forest'. *Mumone* is often referred to as *pangurep siboboi* (cultivating everything), involving a diversity of annual and perennial plants and animals through *tinungglu* and *mone* cycles. The result of *mumone* activities is *mone*, a cultivated area generally containing a combination of tubers, sago, and fruit trees. Physically, *mone* is a kind of forest garden that is closer to the Indonesian term *kebun* and the English term garden. Hence, I translate *mumone* as forest gardening. Essentially, everyone engages or has engaged in *mumone*, either in the past or the present.

The main difference between *mumone* and other food production activities is primarily the division of the spaces where the activities take place (Chapter 3). *Mumone* takes place in domesticated places (sago, taro gardens, etc.), while hunting, fishing, or gathering occurs in undomesticated spaces (forest, rivers, the sea). The division of undomesticated and domesticated spaces here is important. Sago, taro, and forest gardens are a bounded space where humans invest their labour and time in cultivation. With the regular presence of humans and constant cultivation activities, a forest or sago garden is not seen as a wild space. The garden is a place where humans socialise and interact. It is believed that unknown spirits may wander around and occupy a garden. However, the spirits would not be dominant entities there as the constant presence of humans would eventually make the spirits return to their places somewhere in the forest.

Forests, rivers, and the sea, on the other hand, are seen as infinite spaces and a limitless resource: a zone that contains a vast quantity of wild plants and animals ready to be collected, taken, and used for human purposes. While they are an important space containing valuable food resources, they are not human spaces. They are considered as the place of spirits and strongly associated with death and danger. Forests belong to *sikaleleu* (the spirit of the forest) while everything in the water belongs to *sikaoinan* (the spirit of the water). *Sikaleleu* possesses wild boar, deer, monkeys, and uncultivated plants while *sikaoinan* owns fish, turtles, dugongs, clams, mussels, and is strongly associated with the crocodile. All resources in these spaces may be taken by humans providing a ritual asking permission (*panaki*) from the spirits is performed.

Despite people appearing to divide their space dualistically into domesticated and undomesticated space, natural sites and cultural sites, the space of humans and the space of spirits, these spaces are defined not by a static dichotomy but in relative terms, according to the opposition and dynamics between the elements of each space, and, crucially, the degree to which the spaces are transformed. The difference between domesticated and non-domesticated spaces is the human actions and social activities that transform them. Undomesticated spaces are defined as realms that have not yet been transformed by human activities. Constant human intervention into undomesticated spaces transforms the natural world into a domesticated one.

The transformation of undomesticated into domesticated spaces is related to the two principal modes of human appropriation of the environment: making/creating something (*mugalai*) and taking something (*maalak*) from the natural environment. *Mugalai* is derived from the word '*galai*' (making/creating something) and the prefix *mu* (doing), as in the statement '*sibajakku mugalai saponia*' (My uncle is making his house). *Mugalai* is associated with intention, self-conscious activities, and something that will eventually provide a certain result that has already been imagined, taught, and expected. It requires planning and a longer process to provide this certain result. In contrast, *maalak*, derived from the prefix *ma* (doing) and *alak* (taking), is actions/activities that appropriate something without much meticulous planning and take a short time. As such, the result of *maalak* can never be predicted with certainty.

The idea of *mumone* as essential work can be seen in how people see the difference between *mugalai* and *maalak*. *Mugalai* sago and fruit gardens require a set process of thinking, imagining, and transforming spaces. A man does not come to the forest all of sudden and slash giant trees and all shrubs. He must plan

which part of the forest they are going to turn into a garden, how large the plots should be, and predict how much effort this will require. The creation of a garden requires activities that are carried out for years to yield end products. A man will certainly talk and discuss with the others before deciding to make a new garden. A series of rituals is also required. Large cooperative labour is not common, but a Muntei resident making a garden needs the cooperation of others, at least his wife, if not other members of their clan, to realise their imagined garden, as the land he will cultivate belongs to the group.

Hunting and fishing require the acts of thinking and imagining. In particular, planning and cooperation are important aspects of hunting rituals. In most cases, however, hunting and fishing are carried out over a short time and in opportunistic ways. Moreover, even the result of a well-prepared hunting expedition is unpredictable and unreliable, i.e. the result is not solely dependent on human intentions and planning. Even in a hunting ritual, the expected result is not always achieved and the expedition may differ from what was meticulously planned. More importantly, hunting and fishing are about taking something from nature without the need for much transformation of the environment. The act of transforming undomesticated space into domesticated space is crucial. In the words of Aman Reju:

> We are human (*sirimanua*) and do not simply take something (*maalak*) from the forest and eat it. We are thinking about how to open the forest, how to cut the big trees before we actually cut the trees, slash the shrubs, and clear grass and weeds. We imagined everything

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 40. A Samekmek man cuts a tree and opens the forest in the early stage of gardening (2018)

> (*anai kapatuatmai*). When we make gardens, we think about our grandchildren and grand-grandchildren. We anticipate what happens in the future. We think about knives, axes, and other tools. After that we plant banana and sago. *Sikaleleu*, *sikaoinan*, and other spirits did not do gardening. We do not know. The spirits have their own livestock. Deer, wild boar are theirs. But they do not feed them with sago and coconut. We are not like animals. Animals do not cultivate things. Chickens and pigs wander around forest taking grass and *leitik* (worms). It is important for humans that we eat what we produce.

A garden and the objects in it are extensions of the person who cultivates it. This is the main difference between humans and non-humans: humans produce their food and gardens, other beings do not. Gardening forms the most basic schema in people's culture: activities that transform natural things into social products acquire value and define them as humans. The ability to engage in this transformative activity is the most valued human quality. The transformation of spaces, the importance of self-consciousness, and the amount of human actions invested in those spaces are three important aspects in the identification of becoming humans. It is the product of *mumone* and *mugalai* that contribute to affecting the changes and relations between domesticated and undomesticated space, natural and social, spirits and humans. Both undomesticated and domesticated spaces can be transformed by human actions. These changes are reversible. Just as a forest can be converted to gardens or a settlement, the settlement can become forest when humans abandon it.

The importance of gardening is evident in the similarity between the terms used to describe its products. Sago palms, fruits trees, pigs, and chickens in the gardens are generally called *purimanuaijat* ('livelihood'). The term *purimanuaijat* is a noun related to the words *murimanua* ('to live') and *sirimanua* ('human beings'). The products of cultivation activities in the gardens (*purimanuaijat*) are an extension of *sirimanua*. Hence, plants and animals in gardens are not only seen as a source of livelihood for the human beings who cultivate them, but as an integral part of their lives.

People value their gardens highly and the food they produce reflects the importance of gardening activities. Because gardening generates value, and nature can only be dominant in its absence, people consider any food in the garden to have a higher value than any food just taken from the surrounding environment. Fish and shrimp from the rivers are desirable. Collecting and cooking them for family meals are valued activities. Yet, *iba-t-sinanalep* are considered inferior and are only consumed in the domestic sphere. Small fish or shrimps are never displayed on public occasions or offered during a lifecycle ritual such as a marriage or funerals. The low status of *iba-t-sinanalep* is due to the absence of space transformation and *mugalai* activities. Fresh water animals are obtained in undomesticated spaces whilst other *iba-t-sinanalep* such as sago grubs and are not really cultivated and do not require the constant labour investment required for pig and chicken husbandry. *Ibat-t-leleu* (primates, deer, wild boar) and *iba-t-koat* (turtles, dugongs) are culturally and symbolically important. However, the value of hunted game does not lie in the quality of the meat, but in its symbolic worth. The most valued food are pigs and chickens which require complicated social processes.

The different values attributed to different food explains why people does not eat raw things (*kop simatak*) during religious ceremonies, the most important socialised and culturally elaborated events, as taboo. Only cooked foods from domesticated spaces are eaten together in the ritual. It is not difficult to see that the prohibition of consuming unboiled water, fresh shrimps, or unripened fruits are associated with the absence of space transformation and elaborate social relations. Raw foods are easily consumed individually in undomesticated spaces while cultivated and cooked food are processed and consumed collectively in social spaces and require elaborate work. Harvesting, preparing, and bringing food from the

garden entails a series of social processes. Hence, people say that the best meal is a meal that is shared and consumed together with families (*kom simakere*).

Producing Food and the Quality of Persons

The importance of *mumone* is linked with how people define the socially perceptible qualities of themselves as human beings. Muntei people commonly identify themselves using phrases such as '*kai, si mattawai siurep sagu*' (we, Mentawaians, are sago cultivators) or '*kai sipumone*' (we are forest cultivators). Muntei residents believe that, as Mentawaians, they are primarily characterised by their engagement in social relationships and productive labour to make a garden and produce food (Picture 41).

Mentawaians proudly define themselves through activities such as being in the garden, extracting sago, harvesting fruits, and gathering non-domesticated animals and plants. Any person or *family* that does a combination of gardening and pig keeping is referred to as *mattaoi siburuk*, ('an old Mentawaian'). This term implies a degree of social prestige and recognition. However, this term is not applied to everyone. Younger generations living in the settlement who spend much of their time at school and then work in government service offices, and others who invest their creative energy solely in cash-crop production, are not referred as *mattaoi siburuk*. Instead, they are labelled *mattaoi sibau* (new Mentawaians). The term does not necessarily refer to an older person. Aman Santo (described in Chapter 4), for example, is a relatively young man. He is categorised as 'an old Mentawaian' as he raises pigs traditionally and processes his own sago.

DARMANTO

Picture 41. A respected person from *uma* Sakaliou visits and tends his new garden (2018)

The phrase 'old Mentawaians' is perhaps more accurately translated as 'people who are living with old customs', or 'people who are practising old activities', and has the figurative meaning of a 'genuine Mentawaian'. 'An old Mentawaian' has special attributes, such as a strong body, skills, and knowledge required for gardening and making food. The quality of the body is the most perceptible quality of an old Mentawaian. A strong body (*kelak tubu*) is a common qualification used to refer to a good gardener. Gardening or pig raising is strongly associated with physical properties. *Kelak tubu* is achieved through years of clearing forest, planting tubers and bananas, and grating sago starch. Indeed, almost all substantial Mentawaian food production requires hard labour and physical effort. *Kelak tubu* is a product of active and continual work in the garden. The term *kelak tubu* is also associated with a healthy body (*marot tubu)*. A person with a healthy body *(simarot tubu)* eats good food and therefore is rarely attacked by disease or sickness. A healthy person is a person who has been up in the gardens doing productive things and is always consuming good things.

For women in particular, physical quality, which is considered the result of activities related to food production, is important. Women with a stalwart body (*badagok*) are considered to be of good quality. This quality is the cause and result of food production activities. Planting and weeding taro, collecting firewood, and fishing requires a strong body and constitutes a *badagok* woman. There is also an association between *badagok* and reproductive ability and quality. It is believed that active and industrious women can give birth more easily than inactive or lazy ones. *Badagok* women are preferred as wives because they have the qualities for both biological and social production.

Aside from a strong body, an 'old Mentawaian' possesses certain knowledge and creativity. Making a new garden and raising pigs, for example, not only requires heavy physical exercise, but also skills and knowledge to enact rituals and communicate with the spirits. Gardening requires experience and ability to know the quality of soil, the terrain, and to transcend the perspective of the spirits. The process of clearing forest requires the knowledge and skills regarding cutting giant trees, the correct timing, ritual offerings, and asking for the blessing of the spirit of the forest. The process of pig keeping, for instance, requires a series of rituals on the day the piglets are separated and brought to a new place, when a pig hut is erected, when a boar is trapped, caught, and killed for ritual purposes and so on.

The perceptible qualities of a body, knowledge, and gardening skills are intricately intertwined with the qualities of a person. A very good person (*simaeru*) is referred to as a person whose body is continuously moving (*majolot tubbu*). A *majolot tubbu* person (*simajolot tubbu*) is active, independent, doing something, and making his/her own decisions. A *simajolot tubbu* is always doing productive things, either in the house or in the gardens. Another term used to refer to a good person is *mamoile kabei*, which means 'having hands which are always doing something.' A *simamoile kabei* is a person who acts and does something without another person's direction and is always busy making something; they never return home from the gardens empty handed.

The residents of Muntei differentiate between the quality of *majolot tubbu* and *mamoile kabei* with *mangamang* (diligence). *Mangamang* is attributed to a person who is willing to work or is working hard. A diligent person (*simangamang*) is considered to be a good one. However, *simangamang* does not always entail the quality of doing something voluntarily. *Simangamang* can be working hard when under supervision or when there is another person who sees or watches you. The person in question does not always have the initiative or the creativity encompassed by *simajolot tubbu* or *simamoile kabei*. The idea of carrying out a productive act of your own will is the definition of a good quality person. Here, willingness to do productive things independently is the quality that define the difference between a very good and a good person.

In everyday conversation, the positive quality of a very good person is expressed in terms that related

to gardening. *Simajolot tubbu* and *simamoile kabei* are referred as *simategle*: those who always use their machete. They are also called *simakbokbok*: those who always have wounds or a sore body after working hard in the garden. Furthermore, *simajolot tubbu* is also referred to as *simasabaet*: he/she who is always looking for a new place to cultivate. Social judgements about a person revolve around their ability as a food producer. The way Muntei people qualify the quality of persons can be seen when they talk about the bride-to-be. Bai Reju, the wife of Aman Reju has a say when her grandchild is about to marry a young man from a Sakukuret family: "Julius (Sakukuret) is a good person (*simaeru*). Even though he is educated, he has a large garden. He is a prospective husband because he spends most of his time in the garden. My great grandchildren will not be hungry."

By contrast, a bad person is someone referred to as being *takmei tubbu* (a still body/inert) and with an inactive body (*mabeili*). *Takmei tubbu* persons (*sitakmei*) is perceived as inactive, always sitting (*mutobbou*), eating (*mukom*) and sleeping (*merep*), all of which are associated with passivity. Someone who is *sitakmei tubbu* prefers to stay in the house and does not go to the gardens to do something productive. They have a soft body (*mamekmek tubu*) because they do not work hard or use their body for productive purposes. A *sitakmei tubbu* is not only associated with physical inertia but also with the deactivation of will. Being inactive involves a minimisation of social activity and will, a condition that often results in subordination to others. Moreover, being lazy is considered shameful as it connotes a constant dependence on others.

People have a popular joke for a lazy person. Once I heard people gossip about a pretty but lazy girl who was compared to a pretty nail.

> The new type of nails you buy from the shop is very shiny and pretty. The problem is that they need a very strong hammer. The nail did not work unless we have to hit the hammer hard. The girl will not give her parents a high bride-price since people knew that she has little initiative and will. She does not go to taro gardens and is afraid of being dirty. Her husband will have to be hard as a hammer. Her children and family will be suffering. The girl would be waiting for directions from others and will have no drive to do things on her own initiative. She is not a high-quality-person. Her parents-in-law will not be happy.

(Re)producing Men and Women

In Chapter 3, I described how the types of gardens are divided along differentiated gender lines. Sago gardens are for men, taro fields for women. However, the importance of food in the (re)production of women and men is not limited to the cultivation of taro or sago. The categories of men and women are continually produced through food production over the course of a lifetime, both symbolically and concretely. It starts when a human is in the womb. As a foetus, people say, there is no specific gender differentiation. All foetuses are commonly called *suruket*, those who are in protected places and who must be protected. A foetus has no gender until it is born, when it is referred to with gender-specific terms: a baby boy is called *kolik*, a baby girl is called *jikjik*.

An infant is believed to be a weak creature (*tak pei marot ketcatnia*). The infant is considered human (*sirimanua*) but it is not a fully-fledged social actor yet. Its body and spirit are soft and not familiar with the surrounding environment and the entities which have emanate power (*bajou*). For example, the infant is not strong enough to encounter the powers of the spirits of the lights, rain, or wind. If the infant encounters strong powers of those entities, it could be aghasted. Its body becomes warmer than usual and can become sick. To familiarise the spirit of the infant with surrounding environments, a few days or weeks after a baby is born, there is a minor ritual called *nemnem kabei*, which literally means 'soaking hands in water'. Figuratively, this ritual helps infants to adapt to the environment outside the house. In Muntei, *nemnem kabei* is carried

out to prepare and to introduce the spirits of the infant into a new environment outside the house.

The ritual is not particularly fastidious and elaborate and is sometimes part of a larger, more important ritual. During the *nemnem kabei* ritual, women in the group but particularly aunties and grandmothers engage in *paligagra* (fishing with net) in nearby rivers. Any small fish, shrimps, and clams caught are soaked in cold water, which is then sprinkled on the *jikjik*. If the infant is *kolik*, the men in the *uma* go to the gardens or forest nearby to catch a bird (*musiaggau*). Then, the carcass of the bird is soaked in water, which the *kolik* is then sprinkled with. The different versions of the *nemnem kabei* ritual provide a platform for gender differentiation in terms of productive work. A *kolik* is given water from hunted animals and introduced into the men's world; a *jikjik* is given *iba-t-sinanalep* and introduced to the world of women.

When the babies start to walk, their parents take them into the surrounding environment. They may be brought to nearby gardens and begin to understand their position in society. As a toddler, a boy is called *situt amanda*, a person who follows his fathers. The boy spends most of his time with his father and observes what he is doing. At the same age, a girl is called *situt mamaknia,* a person who follows her mother's steps. Girls stay close to their mothers and spend most of the time observing and watching what women do. Until the age of four or five, boys and girls may still sleep with their mothers, but from about this age, they look for their own sleeping place although some boys still sleep next to their fathers.

The gender difference becomes explicit around 6-10 years of age. At this time, girls are taken on a fishing expedition around the settlement but they do not necessarily fish by themselves. Boys accompany their fathers in the gardens. Once the children have been familiarised with the different activities of men and women, a ritual may be enacted to mark and distinguish these gender roles. In Muntei, this initiation ritual is called *eneget*, which is usually part of a larger ritual. This is the first time boys and girls are given *manai*, a kind of ornament that is worn by all participants in a religious ritual. *Manai* signifies that the children are strong enough and can fully participate in all stages of rituals. The most important feature of *eneget* is that the head of the ritual gives a speech and the boys are permitted to touch a bow and the girls touch a fishing net. This symbolic act pronounces them as a male and female subjects. A boy is expected to hunt and be a provider of ritual meat. A girl must be a good gatherer and a provider of daily meat. From the day of the ritual onwards, boys can go to gardens with a small machete and engage in male activities. The girls follow their mother's to the freshwater areas for fishing and gathering. They start to repair broken fishing nets.

The *eneget* ritual is the basic template for gender roles for the rest of their lives. Men tend to be hunters and engage in activities around the forest and the sea, including gardening and pig keeping. They go to the forest and garden with a bow and machete. Opening the forest, cutting sago, fishing, performing rituals are all male activities. Men lead all cultivation projects and initiate the harvesting of food. Today, they spend more time managing cash crops. Women, in contrast, tend to be gatherers. They go to their taro gardens with fishing nets to obtain small fish, clams, shrimp. They collect sago larvae and worms. Women may prune sago leaves or plant sago shoots but only the men are allowed to cut down a sago stand, chop it into pieces, remove the bark, grate the flesh, and extract the flour.

While there is ideal template for men and women, in reality, the relationship between gender and food production is more complex. While women tend to be symbolically associated with the domestic sphere, their activities are not limited to this area. In fact, women's productive activities extend beyond the binary of domestic-undomesticated space. They go to the margins of the forest to collect wild vegetables or firewood and paddle their canoe to mangrove forests to gather crabs and fish. They also plant sago and feed pigs and chickens. Some strong women can pick up coconut or fruit trees. The role of women beyond the domestic sphere is recognised, but not always explicitly, as will be discussed in sub-chapter 5.7.

5.2 Producing Food, Producing Social Persons

Muntei people, and Mentawaians in general, emphasise that all humans are equal, with an equal voice and equal rights. Each person is made up of the same elements: a body (*tubbu*), spirits (*simagre*), emanating powers (*bajou*), and a mind (*patuat*). Yet, in my observations, it became clear that not all persons have political equality. Young people usually follow the decisions taken by adults in the family. Unmarried girls' decisions and activities are occasionally directed by adult females, while young men's decisions are guided by male and female adults. Women and young people evidently have less of a voice and less decision-making power than men. Apparently, the main locus of political equality is the family, with the adult men as representatives of the family.

One of my informants told me that men have decision-making power because they have the responsibility as the head of family (*utek lalep*) and, thus, would take the consequences of decisions on behalf of the family. The patrilineal system means the man is the head of the household. It was also said that men represent the voice of the family as they inherit and gain access to ancestral land where they can garden, produce food, and sustain their lives. The ability to claim the property of the family (a house, gardens) enables each adult man in the family to assert their political equality and resist any subordination from other fellow male residents. Just as adult men represent the family, they represent the independency and autonomy of the family. A family's political equality is obtained through material independence, particularly in relation to food: the product of joint labour between a man and a woman. Understanding the social relations within the family provides a picture that reveals the role of food in the establishment of the family as an elementary social unit, and in the production of social persons.

Family, Food, and the Development of Social Persons

The family is, by definition, composed of a man and his wife, and their unmarried sons and daughters living in the same house. The core relationship of the family, therefore, is a couple working together to assert their equal position within their *uma* and to produce a person for the next generation. It is organised by the principle of mutual dependency and co-productive work and relations between men and women from different groups and relations between parents and their children.

The family is the core of domestic production and has dual functions. The formation and expansion of the family produces not only the family itself, but also the most important products of the family, i.e. children and food, for the *uma*. The temporal form and spatial relations of the process of social production in the family thus relate to two cyclical processes of transformation: the natural cycle and social cycle. Naturally, the unity of men and women in the family initiates the process of natural production and reproduction—sexual intercourse, pregnancy, birth, parenting. Socially and economically, the *lalep* is the starting point for a married couple to initiate a relationship as a coherent productive unit. Only through the family can an adult engage in structured and productive work and acquire properties (a garden, a house) to sustain and maintain the family institution. In the family, adult men and women are producers of natural products (children) and social products (mainly food) as a means to transform the former into fully fledged social beings.

The connection between the social function of the family and the development of a social person lies in adult men's and women's abilities as producers. Having several gardens with food plants and animals is a fundamental means for adults to retain their independence and for to raise their children as capable social actors. In turn, the children will eventually take over the position of their parents through their own marriage and the family institution, becoming social actors in the process. To be a full and proper social actor, a person must experience a series of social stages and a succession of physical and cognitive

developments over time through various social processes within the family and they must have a family of their own.

The production cycle the social person starts with natural relations, beginning when humans are inside their mother's womb. A foetus is not an independent social being, as it gets liquid food from its mother. The behaviour, words, and activities of the parents are important for the protection of the vulnerable foetus. The parents are expected to have at least a *tinungglu* with sufficient food crops. The bride-price in the form of taro or sago garden is important. There are also some food-related taboos applied to parents during pregnancy. When the baby is born, it draws sustenance from the mother's milk. A mother with a new baby has the privilege of the best food available for daily meals, including the best available meat. Muntei people recognise a connection between the quality of a family's food and the quality of milk and the condition of the child.

Physically and mentally, an infant is not a fully independent person despite the Mentawaian emphasis on autonomy in the early stages of life. The baby is continually dependent on its mother. It is not strong enough to adapt to its environment. People say that his or her soul is not yet strong enough ('*tak pei marot ketcat nia*'). The soul of an infant is not used to the surrounding environment and its body has little *bajou*. If it is taken out of the house, its spirit and body will be distressed as the infants are not familiar with the spirit and power of trees, water, and any object outside the house. The previously described *nemnem kabei*, together with nourishment from the mother's breast milk and good quality solid food will enhance the power and strength of the infant's soul and body.

After five months, mashed taro and banana are gradually added to the infant's diet to help them develop their muscular coordination and movement. At the age of around six to ten months, the infant develops skills and coordination. The infant will learn to turn their body, to sit, and to crawl. People believe that infants crying a lot at this stage, partly because the infants feel hungry and also because they are developing the ability to move their body. They are fed chewed sago *siokbuk*, pigs' liver and mashed taro (Picture 42).

Infants become children (*satoga*) at around two or three years old. A child starts to use their physical and mental apparatus to actively socialise with other children or adults other than their parents. Young children remain in the vicinity of the house, watched over by their parents or siblings. Gradually, they learn spatial and mental orientation, and can thus visit and play at their peers' homes. Occasionally, they eat the food of their peers, though most parents sternly remind their children that they must eat their own food. The common reminder is 'Do you want to be member of x clan?' or 'You no longer want to be our family?' when a father finds that his child ate at another house. This socialises children in the proper attitude towards food-family relations. The characteristic of food as socially nurturing means that parents can assert their authority over their children. Parents are givers and producers, while children are consumers and receivers.

The process of feeding and caring for a child over time results in the gradual growth of the child, both as a physical being and as a socialised person. Through socialisation, children experience the adult world. The *eneget* ritual marks the child's entrance into the domain of independence, where they can follow adult activities to obtain food and gain individual prestige among their peers. Beyond this age, no notice is given to puberty in a classificatory sense. Physical developments such as the growth of breasts and the change in a boy's voice, of course, mark the transformation from child to adolescent. Boys are referred to as *silainge* (the beautiful one) and girls as *siokkok* (the well-nourished one). However, this is not used to mark a definitive transition. The onset of puberty does not initiate any new phase of the lifecycle and is not ritually celebrated. In the past, tattooing and teeth-cutting were arguably rites of passage for teenagers, marking the entrance into adulthood and/or the eligibility for marriage. However, in Muntei these traditions are no longer practiced and have lost their cultural significance.

GERARD PERSOON

Picture 42. A woman feeds her infant baby with chewed sago and taro in Muntei (1981)

Adolescence comes with a gradual increase in both work and responsibility. The teenagers may work in the gardens and be encouraged to plant their own sago or raise their own chickens. Boys and girls are already productive workers, but they are not yet responsible for their own family. They still eat daily from their parents' food. The boys may be called upon to contribute to heavy work (opening forests) or the girls may be asked to prepare daily meals. They also learn to make a chicken cage or a fish net. Yet, as they are not yet independent, they work and produce something in the garden for their parents not for themselves. Adolescence is commonly said to be a 'beautiful life' (*malainge*) as boys and girls may still walk away from work and responsibility to have a good time on their own. During this phase, they are engaged principally in lateral relationships with their peers across clans, and more recently in attending school or working for cash. The only sign of independence is their reluctance to work for their parents and the fact that they are busy expanding their friendships and networks. It is at this time that their relationships are at their broadest and most varied.

Adolescence is in stark contrast to the next phase: that of marriage and having their own family (*pukebbukanan*). Married people enter the phase of linear reciprocity—repaying their parents for what they have previously given and producing food and looking out for their own children. Marriage is a moment of transition and the most important rite of passage before death. It is the shift from a position of a cog in the natal family household to that of an initiator and responsible actor in a new family unit. In the early stages, a new couple may still depend on the production of a man's natal household, occasionally eating at their homes. The bride-price may help the couple to have their own food. However, they are not able to produce the wide range of garden products necessary for a proper

family. Crucially, they do not yet have any children to feed. In the meantime, they are expected to be independent as quickly as possible. They are encouraged to have their own garden and house and prepare all necessities if they are about to have children of their own. They are expected to prepare themselves as fully independent social actors.

Food Sufficiency and Independent Social Persons

Generally, Muntei boys and girls marry in their mid or late-teens or early twenties. Recent generations may marry later as they undertake university education on the mainland until their mid-twenties. In the early years of marriage, young married men and women still tend to spend much of their time in the same-sex group. They may not have enough gardens and sufficient food. The husband's extended family may support the newly married couple and both sets of parents are constantly involved and devoted to the young couple's needs.

Only after having children do men and women gradually spend less time with their same-sex group and more time with their family. Over time, a couple begins to do almost everything together. The couple spends much of their time together in gardens to provide food for the family and cultivate cash crops for exchange. Men and women are most active in productive and reproductive terms for about 20 years after marriage. At this stage, the couple normally have several children, a few gardens, and construct their own house. As the child grow up, the family becomes a more united and cohesive unit. Meanwhile, sago and fruits trees they have cultivated are ready to be harvested. People often say this is a stage in which men and women would be ashamed of playing around (*maleak*), watched by their growing children. It is time to realise that they are getting older and must be wiser. As time elapses, with middle age and grandparenthood approaching, the couple becomes a truly cohesive productive and social unit. Sexual activity becomes less important as biological reproduction wanes in significance, and there is a growing emphasis on unity.

The gradual process of the development of the family as a cohesive social unit generates social status for adults. Among Muntei residents, parenthood is the source of social status. Only when they have their children and grandchildren do the men and women acquire status as fully respected social actors. This normally occurs around the age of 40. A man who has grown-up children and is about to be a grandfather can be called *sikebbukat* (the older one). The term is derived from the word *kebbuk* (older brother) and has the figurative meaning 'the wise one'. The female partner of a *sikebbukat* can be called *sikalabai* (the adult woman). The term is derived from the word *kalabai* which has the figurative meaning 'the experienced one'. *Sikebbukat* and *sikalabai* are reserved for adult men and women who have attained the social age and family status of a parent, at which stage they are considered to be 'in the know' and able to perform with the necessary level of mastery and influence, especially in terms of the socialisation of their children.

The status of *sikebbukat* and *sikalabai* connotes two domains at once: food sufficiency and status differentiation. *Sikebukkat* and *sikalabai* are a married couple who have children and who are able to run a household, cultivating and in possession of food and cash crops, and feeding their co-resident descendants. Producing children as a natural product and transforming them into social beings requires experience in producing food and maintaining reciprocal relations with kinsmen, and, to some extent, establishing a social exchange with members of other clans. *Sikebbukat* and *sikalabai* are persons who can make good decisions for their own life. Their independence means they are able to express themselves freely and do not have to live constrained by other members of the *uma*. They are expected to play an important part in the affairs of the group, to be the sort of person others listen to as a voice of moral authority, and to ensure that their children may also reach the same level one day. They have personal qualities that are associated with being independent, developed and manifested in the specialised performance of a variety

of ritual actions, leadership, gardening, and other respected behaviours. All these experiences teach a man to assert their decision-making and their perspective (*patuat*) in relation to others and to attain a sense of completeness, marking a man as a full social being and an independent social actor.

5.3 Food and Intersubjective Relations

The importance of food and gardens in the production of the social actor, however, is not just located in the family sphere, but also in interpersonal relations. When people show off the importance of their food and garden, they do not announce the number of sago or taro gardens they have cultivated or the number of meals they consume; instead, they tell of how, where, when their living trees and plants were acquired and with whom they were exchanged.

Sago palms and fruit trees are important not only as comestibles, but also as living property that can be exchanged and circulated with others to develop intersubjective relationships. As the product of an individual's or a household's labour, sago, taro, pigs, and durian trees can be deployed to establish personal and familial exchange beyond their group. Individual trees or animals are seen rather differently from land, which is communally claimed by the entire *uma* and (ideally) cannot be the subject of individual sale. Individual sago or fruit trees can be used to establish new social relations and be sold to acquire imported goods and obtain social prestige for the cultivator. They are individually owned but occasionally used by the group. Therefore, food resources owned by a family are important assets both for the individual family and for the *uma*.

People often say that they must have more than enough garden to both strengthen existing relationships and, furthermore, to anticipate future social events. Adult men always talk about the next few years when their son might get married. They have to be ready to hand over sago, pigs, and other valuable plants in the garden to the bride's family. They also tell me that they must be ready for potential conflict with others or, in the event that their children make a mistake, they must be in a position to pay compensation. Hence, almost all people have more than one plot of sago, taro, or orchard. These gardens are kept, despite the fact that some of them may not be being exploited. Despite having more than enough to sustain their needs, they are always making new gardens and cultivating new crops. This preparedness for social exchange with others in the foreseeable future is called *anai kakabei* (we have it in our hand).

The importance of food resources is linked to the basic principle of intersubjective relationships highlighted in Chapter 2: *paroman*. To achieve *paroman*, a social actor must be able to assert their intention and affect the other person's attitude, perspective, or orientation. The judgement about whether the relation is *paroman* or not depends on a specific kind of relationship between the actors. It requires social actors to form inter-subjectivity by influencing and/or accepting another's *patuat* (mind/perspective). However, any attempt to form inter-subjectivity is uncertain, not least because the mind is invisible and cannot fully be grasped. There is no guarantee that an act will yield the desired outcome from others.

A successful *paroman* exchange happens when two parties converge their minds and perspectives and agree upon the objects involved in the exchange. An unsuccessful exchange is when the actions and objects do not match the perspective of both parties. The term *isese* means that the relation involves both proper actions and proper objects of exchange; that they accept or to act according to the desires of the other person who has moved their mind. People say a successful *paroman* exchange happens when two social persons are 'having same mind' (*makerek patuat*) or when the intention and the will of two persons' match each other (*tuguruk patuat*).

A person with many pigs or gardens has a greater chance of a successful *paroman* exchange. Possessing garden products generates social status and results in the power to influence the mind (*patuat)* of others

and expand a person's space and time. A man who owns many pigs and fruit trees enjoys greater social status. He can acquire social prestige and authority, and expand social influence when he contributes his food during clan affairs. He can take on many social transactions, making him well-known throughout the region. People say that those with large gardens and many pigs are both wealthy (*makayo*) and have swagger (*magege*). The ones with swagger are not afraid to initiate social relations and make mistakes as they are always ready for social exchange, either *paroman* or *tulou*, because they have enough sago, taro, and pigs. In contrast, persons without sago or fruit trees usually avoid social relations. The lazy one is ashamed and embarrassed (*maila*) since he/she has nothing (*tak anai sibabara*) to start a new social exchange or to strengthen old ones. When he/she is invited to attend a ritual feast, the lazy person does not always attend because they feel shame at not being able to contribute a chickens or piglet.

The amount and the quality of garden products and other food resources, as well as the act of persuasion in any social exchange are important since they are subjects of the intertwined processes of remembering (*repdeman*) and promising (*janjiake*): the objects involved should not only reflect the past *paroman*, but also stimulate a new one. In the case of a new relation or the re-establishment of an old *paroman*, each party will enthusiastically recall the sago, fruit trees, or machetes of their predecessors in past social exchanges and promise their own possessions to ensure their next exchange. People frequently remember special events or specific social relations in terms of the food resources involved in the transaction. Men speak of remembering their allies as regular donors of certain kinds of gifts or as partners of *paroman* exchanges. By remembering and promising food resources involved in social exchanges, people are obliged, in turn, to produce their own food for future exchanges and prevent sago, durian trees, and taro gardens from disappearing.

Producing garden products and having food resources symbolise a person's capacity and potential to assert political equality in the web of intersubjective relationships. Thus, garden products have an invisible potency because they can become many other things in the future. Food resources allow an individual's identity to be distributed or expanded, as individual property is constantly circulated throughout the exchange network. Furthermore, exchanging sago palms or langsat trees constructs and maintains inter-subjective social relations, constructing and renewing social relations on an ad hoc basis. By exchanging these high value items, people create the web of social relationships that defines and binds them as a community.

5.4 Producing Food, Producing 'The Others'

Producing food and gardens is not only important for maintaining familial or intersubjective relationships, it is crucial to interethnic relations. Muntei residents have been in contact with non-Mentawaians—Minangkabau traders, Batak Priests, and Javanese teachers—for centuries. These migrants might spend a few years in Muntei doing teaching, trading, or both, but then move to the migrant village in Muara Siberut or return to their natal home. Between 2013-2015, eight per cent of the settlement's population was non-Mentawaian (Table 2; Chapter 2). Most of them started life in Muntei as traders when cacao was booming in the early 2000s. A few of them have married Muntei women and bought a plot of land.

Sasareu: Those Who Do Not Cultivate Sago and Have Pigs

People call non-Mentawaians living in and around settlement *sasareu*, which literally means 'those from afar'. *Sasareu* (*sa* is a prefix for a collective subject and *areu* means afar) refers to people who have no genealogical, land, or language relations with certain *uma* in the Mentawai archipelago. *Sasareu* is a broad category and can refer to a Niasan shopkeeper, an Australian surfer, or a Dutch anthropologist. However,

the term *sasareu* has specific connotations and narrowly refers to the Minangkabau people. Minangkabau people are occasionally referred to by their ethnicity, *sai minang* (Minang people) but frequently they are called *sasareu*. Other *sasareu* are identified by their places of origin or the name of their ethnic group. A white foreigner is a *sareu*, but he/she is normally called *sai turist* (a tourist) or *orang barat* (Western people). When he/she is specifically known to come from the Netherlands or the US, the distinction of *sai belanda* or *sai amerika* is used. This same applies to other Indonesians. A Batak priest is called *sai batak*; a Javanese teacher is called *sai jawa*. People frequently assign a specific or family name to Batak traders or a Javanese priest. 'Pasaribu has cheapest price for pork', a man would say about a Batak shopkeeper. This is rather different when people refer to the only Minangkabau shop owner in the settlement. People always use the terms '*sasareu*' or '*saiminang*'.

The use of *sasareu* specifically for Minangkabau people is part of a cultural and political repertoire in an asymmetrical ethnic relation I have described in chapter 2. Muntei people insist that the Minangkabau are different *sasareu*. In contrast, most Minangkabau with whom I have talked to about this, particularly those who are officials or government employees, reject the term *sasareu*, insisting that they are not 'faraway people'. This perception was clearly stated by the Minangkabau shop owner in the settlement:

> I am living more than half of my life here. We [Minangkabau] people are in the same island and living together for a long time. We have shared the same place, the same food, the same water, and the same air. I am in this settlement for years. I married a Muntei woman and have children. How can they still call me a man from afar (*sareu)*?

In contrast, his wife's uncle from *uma* Salakkopak uses the very same reason to reiterate the difference with *sasareu*. Here, I present the uncle's perception of the Minangkabau trader:

> He has been around for a long time. Yet, he does not do what we do. He and his family in Muara Siberut bring their own *arat* (practice and belief). He is living here for years. He does not cultivate sago. He does not do pig keeping. He could not cut or climb a tree. He does not eat sago. Always rice with chili. He is living side-by-side, but he would not share the same food with his parents-in-law. He is very close but at the same time he is afar. That's why we call him *sareu*, not only because he is from afar but also because he is far away. All *sasareu* are the same.

From the quote above, the uncle's wife identifies the *sareu* trader primarily by the kind of food he produces, and the substances and practices that constitute and form the body. The trader is seen as a rice producer and belongs to people who have cows, goats, and buffaloes as livestock. This is in contrast to Muntei people who are sago producers and pig keepers. Minangkabau people living in Muntei have mostly been traders, teachers, or, in one case, a Muslim cleric. They all do not cultivate sago and never set their feet in the forest. Other Minangkabau people in the area are mostly fishermen and traders, teachers, or government officials. Indeed, some of them produce rice fields in a narrow strip of land in Muara Siberut and keep cows and buffalo around their settlement. A handful of Minangkabau people in Muara Siberut have clove gardens and cultivate cacao in the islets but people claim that Minangkabau people do not entirely cultivate undomesticated spaces by themselves and instead pay Mentawaians to do the opening, clearing, and cultivating of these crops. This is rather different to other migrants. A handful of Javanese teachers who had been living in Siberut Hulu are remembered as very good gardeners and for their love of cultivating things. Batak and Niasan people are not particularly fond of gardening but a few of them have planted their own sago and recently cultivated cacao.

Muntei residents believe that the way people practice cultivation and carry out labour corresponds to the perceptible quality of their bodies. They quickly identify that *sasareu* are dark skinned (*makotkot tubu*) and have a soft physique (*mamekmek tubu*). These qualities are the result of specific work. *Makotkot tubu* is the result of working in the coastal zone as fishermen or constant work to protect their paddy fields from pests. The cycle of rice cultivation and fishing requires the *sasareu* to work under the sun. It is also associated with the colour of *rendang*, a famous Minangkabau dish made from beef and coconut curry. People associate *makotkot* with the colour of spices, especially chilli (*daro*), in the dish and the long process of making it. *Mamekmek tubbu* is associated with a lack of physical movement. Minangkabau traders are seen sitting all day long in their shop and no taking physical exercise. They do not paddle canoes, clear forest, or harvest fruit trees, so their bodies are not working hard.

This is in contrast to the muscular and strong (*makelak*) and light-skinned (*mabubut*) bodies of Muntei people. Cutting giant trees, clearing bush, and cultivating forest produces a strong body. In particular, a strong body is believed to be the result of gardening and pig keeping activities. Nearly all people, including those who were born in the settlement and spend most of their time at school, claim that they have experience with pig keeping and forest gardening. They are brought to the garden by their parents in early childhood and have the ability to use their body in any food-production activity. Sago cultivation and pig keeping is a critical attribute to the identity and definition of a Muntei person and the bodies of Muntei people are bodies that produce and digest sago and pork (see Delfi 2012). The bodies of *sasareu* are not. Mentawaians' strong bodies and light skin are also believed to be the result of a combination of production and consumption habits.

Aman Joni, a young father (28) from *uma* Samekmek once told me when I asked him what the main difference is between the Mentawaians and the people from Sumatra and Java:

> […] we are sago cultivators and pig producers. From birth to death, in health and in sickness, we need both of them. Before we were born, we ate sago and pork. Our mothers eat sago and pork and feed us when we are in their tummy. Before we have teeth, our mothers feed us with hewed sago and pig' liver. When we are *silainge* (teenager), we learn everything on sago gardening and pig keeping. Our strong powers are always used to cut sago palm, grate the pith, and bring pigs from the hut. When we marry, we eat pork. When we die, we need pigs and pork to release our souls. Our bodies are developed by producing sago, pigs and eating pork. Our bodies are always asking for this food. This is different to those *sasareu*.

The identification of the self and the 'other' in terms of sago and pig production, however, is not one-sided. Influenced by Islamic beliefs, the Minangkabau generally view Muntei residents as polluted and dirty like their swine. There is also a widespread belief among Minangkabau people that not only Muntei but all Mentawaians are irrational and undeveloped because they raise pigs and eat pork. In the settlement, the *sasareu* trader does not accept food-oriented hospitality from his wife's family, nor does he offer food to them, for this reason: her family members are dirty since their hands touch and their stomach digests pork, which is forbidden in Islam. He cannot use kitchen tools that have been used to cook and serve meals with pork, a perception is generally held by all Minangkabau around Muntei.

Sometimes Minangkabau teachers or nurses may request chicken or vegetables. Muntei people are never reluctant to provide this, especially when there is an equally valuable object (mainly money) exchanged. Yet, the exchange never involves processed food. If there is a public gathering in the school or village, the Minangkabau teachers or nurses bring their own plate or food. Otherwise, they usually ask the aforementioned traders' wife (who follows her husband's religion) to cook. They also prefer to eat in the traders' home, with his plates and spoons. This reiterates their perception of Muntei people as being

unclean or polluted. More importantly, it is a rejection of social relations.

In fact, *sasareu* is neither an ethnic category, nor a static identification; rather, it is a term defined through social practices. Muntei people always use food associations when they refer to *sasareu*. In everyday conversation, the *sasareu* social category simply refers to 'those who won't drink from our glass' or 'won't eat from our plate'. Equally, Mentawaians categorise non-Minangkabau migrants, even other Mentawaians, who reject food-oriented hospitality as *tubut sasareu* (*sasareu* par excellence). Alternatively, if a Minangkabau teacher receives an invitation to eat in a Mentawaian house and enjoys the meal, people will say, "You are from afar but you are not *sareu*" or "Your origin is *sareu* but your body is not." People respect any *sasareu* who accepts and invitation to a communal meal and are tolerant of those who are unable to consume pork. In such cases, they would offer fish, instant noodles, or chicken. Cultural identification is therefore seen as dynamic. It is highly dependent upon what a person produces and consumes.

The *sasareu* identity, based on food production and food habits, explains why people see themselves as having more in common with Batak and Niasan people. These peoples have been a part of Mentawaian social life for as long as the Minangkabau. They also occupy a social niche as middlemen who mediate the relationship between the Mentawaians and the state administration and regional economy. Most of them are teachers, traders, government employees, and priests. To a certain extent, they are thought to be as cunning as the Minangkabau; however, Muntei residents insist that the Batak and Niasan people are not entirely *sasareu*. In their homeland, both are seen as pork producers and eaters. By ingesting pork and sago, the Batak and Niasan *sasareu* share a bodily substance with the Mentawaians. The Batak and the Niasan are people from afar, but their bodies and stomachs are not considered *sasareu*.

Food, especially sago and pork, is seen as an important constituent of people's body and identity that is produced, ingested, and digested. They become part of Muntei personhood. Being a Mentawaian means being a sago gardener and a pork producer and eater. People identify themselves as pork lovers while *sasareu* are pork haters. The story of the origins of *Mentawai-sasareu* identification and the stereotypical pork lover and pork hater are enmeshed in local myth. In this myth, food not only qualified social relations between the ancestors of Mentawaians and *sasareu*, but it also engendered their differences. Pork was the food substance that resulted in violence and the eventual separation of the two peoples' ancestors. The myth of the originin of the Mentawaians as pork lovers and *sasareu* as pork hater and recolected are important elements in constructing and manipulating ties with *sasareu*. The identification of *sasareu* is borne out of an acknowledged difference and contrasting values with respect to forest gardening and pork consumption.

Food and the Resistance Against Marginality

In Chapter 2, I described the asymmetrical and hierarchical relations between Mentawaians and Minangkabau. The feeling of marginality has been deeply ingrained in Muntei life. Yet, there is a way for villagers to resist this marginalisation. Sago gardening and pig keeping practices limit the marginalisation to the realm of political and economical relations. The role of pigs and sago production is important considering the ever-growing *sasareu* population on the island. In the last few decades, the Minangkabau population has gradually increased and they have expanded their settlement. Unlike the previous generation, the current migrants are not solely civil servants and traders. Recently, some Minangkabau, Batak, and Nias migrants started to look for and buy up vast tracts of forest and land around Muntei as potential areas for cultivation and investment (as described in Chapter 3).

The practices of pig and sago cultivation are quite problematic for *sasareu* cultivation practices such as rice growing or annual cash crop monoculture (vegetables, fruits). The presence of roaming pigs certainly makes the expansion of *sawah* almost impossible. From the Mentawaian perspective, pig rearing offers autonomy. Muntei is the only settlement in the South Siberut that has little interest in government rice

cultivation projects. During the OPKM period, in the 1980s, people were asked to create a block of paddy fields from sago or taro gardens near the Mara River. Most of the paddy fields were created on flood plains and in swampy areas along riverbanks, slightly separated from the forest gardens. However, much of this rice cultivation lasted for only a year after the project was implemented. The presence of pigs prevented the state's attempt to sustain an effective programme. During my fieldwork, the central and district governments re-launched the old programme of making extensive rice fields (*sawah*). In 2013, 'a thousand paddy fields' programme was promoted by the central government in a bid to convert 'unused' swamps into rice fields. While Puro and Maileppet villagers are eager to have their own rice fields, Muntei residents are reluctant to convert their *onaja* to rice. The presence of pigs, people claim, provides no incentive for rice cultivation.

The presence of pigs and sago around the settlement contribute to preventing Minangkabau from having intensive social intercourse in Muntei. In daily village life, the consumption of pork contributed significantly to the barrier in interethnic relations. The presence of pigs kept the Minangkabau at a social and spatial distance, prevented serious conflicts, and served as an important cultural boundary. Most of the Minangkabau living in Muara Siberut do not immerse themselves in daily Muntei life. Food production, particularly pig rearing, allows the Mentawaians to simultaneously negotiate political equality in the asymmetrical relations with their powerful neighbours (Persoon and Iongh 2004). The importance of pig keeping and pork consumption is a central problem for the Minangkabau, particularly those in government positions. Pigs symbolise the stubbornness and 'dirtiness' of Muntei people. Development projects have repeatedly tried to replace pigs with Minangkabau-oriented domestic animals, such as buffaloes, goats, cows, and ducks. The Mentawaians have never explicitly rejected the introduced animals; indeed, many of them accepted them and raised them alongside their pigs. This does not merely represent the unequal and asymmetrical relationship between Muntei and *sasareu*, but more importantly it maintains their autonomy within this asymmetry. The differing importance placed on the value of food, especially pigs and pork, establishes the Minangkabau as the other, the *sasareu*.

5.5 The Taboo of Eating Alone

Muntei residents do not completely avoid a particular type of food or food group. Food avoidance only happens in the period of communal ceremonies when people are strongly prohibited from eating raw food. This applies specifically to shaman who have a primordial relationship with the spirits and do not eat the flesh of certain animals (eels, Siberut macaque) and plants (fern). People told me that, in the distant past, their ancestors ate everything. During my fieldwork, however, it was clear that there are animals that people prefer not to have in their meals. I did not see people consuming lizards or snakes, for example, but, as far as I am aware, this has no particular symbolic or cultural reason. The only persistent food proscription is related to eating. When asked what the most important prohibition relating to food is, people consistently referred to eating alone, especially if the food item is meat.

Drowned in the River

Nearly everyone in Muntei links eating alone with events of people drowning in the river. Since they moved to Muntei at the end of 1970s, four villagers have died in the Siberut River. The first was a woman in 1987, the second a teenager in 1998, and the last were both young children in 2004 and 2009. The accidents are associated with the wrath of a particular water spirit, namely the *sikameinan*. It is believed that the *sikameinan* punished the Muntei residents for not sharing their food. People narrate these incidents as important events that reveal how harmful enjoying food alone can be for their society. When recollecting

the latest drowning accident (2009) in which a Sagari boy drowned in Sabirut River, Aman Reju, the leader of *uma* Samekmek, had a comment:

> Nobody drowned in the river when we were living for many generations in the old settlement. In less than 25 years of living here, four people died in the river. There has been something wrong with our community. Look, two of the four drowned people in the river are Sagari while the others were from Salakoppak and Sabajou. *Sikameinan* has certain reasons to be angry. The way people died conveyed a clear message. We do not share food today as much as we did in the past. We do not have as many *punen* [communal ceremonies] as we did before. We rarely eat together. We are not together anymore.

The notion of the *sikameinan* reveals the common belief in the connection between food, eating, and social unity. The belief is that when a person consumes food, especially meat, in secret, without sharing it with others, the *sikameinan* will punish the person and the community. The role of the *sikameinan* in society is to be a punisher of anti-social behaviour, especially not sharing and consuming meat in private. The story of the *sikameinan* reveals the origin of the taboo of eating alone. Almost all adults in Muntei know the story. Here, I defer to a short version of the story told by a Salakkopak elder:

> Once upon a time, there was a man living with a kid and a sister. His sister looked after the kid when he was away in the forest, making gardens. He had been furious as his kid was malnourished and had lot of wounds. The kid was always hungry and crying. Apparently, his aunty (*meinan)* did not take care of him. She kept food for herself and ate alone. One day, the man brought home a lot of meat and asked his sister to prepare food. He pretended to go away but he was hiding himself to observe what his sister did. The sister put all food and meat in a container away from his kid and consumed it alone while his kid was looking for food. He became really angry and killed her. He then threw her body into the river. From the water, the spirit of the sister spoke: "I died because I kept food for myself. Please look after your kids and your grandchildren and teach them to share food. If they do what I did, I will take them with me in the water." The spirit of the aunt (*simeinan*) became *sikameinan* and stayed in the water. She will cause sickness and drown those who do not share their food.

Ever since, the *sikameinan* punishes people who keep food for themselves. Two levels of punishment are meted: at an individual level, the *sikameinan* sends a message to a specific person. The spirit enters the house of the perpetrator and begins to reside in the beam. Its presence causes the person to fall ill (*pangoringen*). The illness is non-specific and there are no symptoms. When a person falls ill, seemingly without reason, people are quick to state, 'he/she eats meat alone' or 'he/she does not share meat with his/her family'. Typically, the illness lasts for a while. A healing ritual (*pabetei*) must be enacted to cure the ill person, during which a shaman makes an offering of a plate consisting of a pinch of meat and a magic charm (*gaud*) to persuade the spirit to forgive the transgression. All members of the group attend the ritual. The patient confesses his/her mistake and promises not to repeat the act of eating alone. The spirit will eventually leave the beam and occupy the plate. The plate is then brought to the river by the shaman to be set afloat and drift away with the current, returning the spirit back to its place in the water.

At the community level, the failure to share food has direct and drastic consequences. The absence of sharing and the act of eating alone are punishable with death. It is believed that the *sikameinan*

punishes the community for this anti-social behaviour by drowning one of them in the water. An elder told me that, in the past, an extensive ritual had to be enacted to heal the community after a drowning accident. The victim's group was entitled to go on a hunting expedition to *Bat Simaruei*, a small lake in the south part of the island. They took one or two crocodiles from the lake, killed them, and ate them together in a very elaborate ritual. Only after they had consumed the meat of the crocodiles was the social order restored. Despite the fact that people no longer practice crocodile hunting, drowning incidents are still strongly associated with an attack by the spirit in the water; the same is true for people who are attacked or killed by crocodiles.

The relationship between eating alone, the *sikameinan*, and crocodiles is telling. The crocodile is a special animal that embodies and is the companion of the water spirit (*sikaoinan*). In a series of the most important Mentawaian myths that tell the origins of the longhouse, the shaman, and rituals, the crocodile appears with a specific task. The animal appears as the saviour of the main protagonist, an orphan boy *Maliggai* or a prophet figure like *Pageta Sabau*, who tells and teaches people how to construct the longhouse and how to enact a ritual. The protagonist was then killed by the members of the *uma* as they worried that he would create a social hierarchy with his ability to establish individual prestige (by acquiring special skills like the ability to construct a house and to sing a song). The crocodile is the creature that helps the Mentawaians to attain communal solidarity. Anything that resembles a communal issue can be traced back to the spirits in the water, *sikaoinan* or *sikameinan*.

We can return to the direct quote from the shaman from the opening of Chapter 1. The unity of the community is strongly associated with the communal consumption of food and sharing meat. The dearth of occasions and opportunities to share food as a community can be the cause of social tension and misfortune. Interestingly, people do not link the drowning with the cultural or social failure of controlling gluttony and avarice over food. While there are strong social sanctions on consuming meat privately, drowning has never been associated with greed. In everyday meals, anyone can eat as much as he/she can. At ritual feasts, everybody is encouraged to eat food. The more food the ritual has, the more prestige the organiser earns. The fear of hunger does not stem from the perceived lack of food or an insatiable appetite. A person who does not share his food is not punished for his ravenous appetite and lack of gustatory control, they are punished for the act of failing to share.

Why Meat Must Be Shared

While eating food alone is generally prohibited, this taboo is particularly related to eating meat. Sago grubs or clams and mussels are often eaten by individual collectors on the spot or in the garden. Bananas or rice are sometimes consumed personally, especially when people are away from the settlement. This, however, would never happen with pork, chicken, and hunted game. It is clear that not all edible plants or animal food are considered equal. There is a clear hierarchy of different types of food. Where a food item ranks in this hierarchy depends on how desirable it is for all categories of persons in the domestic as well as public spheres. The rank is associated with how it is obtained, where and when it is consumed, and whether it can be categorised as natural or social, domestic or public, or for ordinary or ritual purposes.

At the bottom of the ranking is everyday meat collected by women and staples like sago, tubers, and bananas. Canned meat bought from the local market is also considered to be in this category. These food items can be eaten daily. Sago, taro, and bananas are important staples for a ritual meal, but these foods can also be consumed at any time and at any place, either individually or collectively. *Iba-t-sinanalep* is at the bottom of the hierarchy since it is predominantly consumed by women and children on a daily basis. This meat is typically sourced from undomesticated spaces. The kind of food that is largely produced by women is relegated to the lowest category despite its importance to daily meals. Next in the hierarchy

are fruits from gardens, which can be consumed privately but which are usually enjoyed collectively. The importance of fruits goes beyond their nutritional value. To have ripe fruits, which necessitates laborious work to gather, harvest and bring them home, requires cooperative work between the men in the group. The fruits are usually shown off in a public display, demonstrating that the clan is in a state of unity due to the cooperation that yielded this harvest. The top place in the ranking is reserved for domestic animals (chicken, pigs) and meat obtained from hunting game animals.

Pigs are the most important animals because they are the only animals—along with chickens and wild game—enjoyed exclusively during ritual feasts. The importance of pigs, however, goes beyond their flesh. Pigs are a unit of measure used to compare the value of different things. For instance, a plot of sago garden (*sangamata sago*) is worth the same as a few productive durian trees (*duangakajuk mone*). This can be determined by ascertaining that both are equal in value to a sow. In this capacity, pigs are a complete abstraction; there is no need for concrete animals. However, pigs also act as a concrete medium of exchange. To acquire a large gong or pay compensation after threatening someone or committing adultery, the accused needs to pay a few large boars. In both cases, pigs are simply a means of exchange. A pig is also inherently valuable. The most important thing is that pigs facilitate action; the animal is a means to an end. Pigs have become the embodiment of value, the ultimate object of people's desire.

Pigs are therefore the ultimate measure of a person's productive activities, and thereby his importance. In pigs, people see the meaning or importance of their own creative energies, their skills and knowledge, and their own capacity as social persons. Living pigs can be exchanged by the individual owner for valuable imported goods. In this capacity, pigs can produce social prestige for an individual in intersubjective relationships. Yet, when the pigs are slaughtered and transformed into pork, the meat must be consumed communally. Here, pigs represent and embody the ultimate social significance of a person's activities; they become the means of one's integration into his group. Pigs integrate people into a contrastive totality, the *uma*, during the ritual feast or a social exchange with other *uma*. Therefore, pigs are the concrete material means by which the unity of the *uma* and the equality of members of the *uma* are restored and realised. Having as many pigs as possible becomes the ultimate goal of individual actions, but sharing pork to enact the unity of the group is the ultimate goal of *uma*.

Pigs bring equality in a way that is perceptible to ancestral spirits, siblings, affines, friends, and other clans that observe it from a distance. This generates its own contradiction: since garden products are not all valued on par with the pig, pig owners can assert their autonomy by keeping their pigs for themselves. Therefore, any pigs needed for a communal ritual risk promoting conflict and disrupting the social order.

Such tension is particularly evident from the split of *uma* Sakukuret into three factions. The clan are renowned pig keepers in Muntei and beyond. In 2000, the clan held a large funeral ritual for its great shaman (*kerei sabeu*). The new leader asked every family to contribute at least two or three sows to this ritual to show the other groups that they could have the largest ritual in the settlement and to show that they were a solid and united group that pays respect to their important community figures. One of the families only contributed one sow after the family found out that the other sows were pregnant. The family decided to keep the sow as they did not want to lose a valuable pig that could produce more offspring. Out of anger and in order to avoid shame, the leader brought seven of his own sows and boars to the ritual. His action was considered right but not proper. The families who contributed less felt embarrassed. They consumed only a little of the pork and this created serious social upheaval. Instead of creating unity, the ritual generated tension, which caused the group to split.

The decision to give or withhold pigs from a collective event is an opportunity for a family and the adult male, as the family's representative, to assert itself on the communal stage. Hence, as mentioned before, a pig owner always has a dilemma: to keep the pigs for his own autonomy and individual prestige or to

give them away for communal meals for the sake of collective prestige and communal value. There are also points at which the process of value production becomes contradictory and the constituent values of giving clash with the decision to withhold. A family may be reluctant to contribute its own pigs at the cost of disrupting the communal harmony or end up giving more in an attempt to gain potency and power, making other kinsmen feel insulted.

The Danger of Not Sharing Food

There is a clear connection here between not sharing food (especially meat), the danger of individual prestige, and social unity. Muntei residents have a high regard for individual prestige but view equality as the strongest principle. The two principles can sometimes contradict each other. Individual prestige may enable a social person to do something for himself, like create new gardens and then give away the produce grown in the garden. However, this same prestige can be an obstacle to political equality. The pursuit of autonomy itself tends to subvert equality. The added advantages gained when one obtains prestige can easily instigate rivalry and a sense of competition that can pose a threat to harmonious coexistence.

By producing a lot of pigs and gardens, a person can acquire social prestige. To make individual prestige socially acceptable and recognised, one must share his valuable possessions. Typically, people who fail to share their food with others, upon obtaining wealth or fame, become the target of rumours, gossip, and, in extreme cases, accusations of sorcery.[14] A man with numerous pigs can have infinite potency. This can be dangerous. If someone has a lot of pigs, gardens, and sago, he can potentially commit malicious acts and harm others, simply because he can afford to pay compensation (*tulou*) for any misconduct. In the words of one of my interlocutors, 'a swagger person (*simagege*) with plenty of pigs can do anything and be very dangerous to others.'[15]

Keeping food and not sharing it can generate rivalry and lead to a malicious act, which, in turn, can lead to the destruction of the community. A person who excels in gardening, with a surplus of pigs or fruit trees, is both respected and terrified. He can be generous but also dangerous. There is a strong perception that a powerful person has an unknown perspective on things and an undetectable mind. He may gain certain social status, yet if his wealth is used solely for personal prestige, he is quickly accused of betraying his family and destroying the unity of the group. This is why people are prohibited from consuming the products of their *mumone* activities alone, without sharing it with family and relatives. There is also a strong association between the invisibility of thoughts and hiding food from others. Unwillingness to share food and a tendency to keep one's *patuat* hidden are both perceived as anti-social behaviour.

One of the principal ways to prevent social tension and disruption of the community is eating together and sharing food, especially meat. Eating together and sharing meat are a way to negate the negative value of selfishness. Communal rituals and feasts have to be organised in order to heal the person attacked by the *sikaoinan* and *sikameinan*, to acknowledge the lack of unity, and to recreate the moral order. The ideology of food sharing and the taboo against eating alone are inimically connected to the potential of an individual to attain social prestige, and the necessity of political equality in the group and beyond. Therefore, sharing food and eating together are a must, either in daily life at family level or in a ritual at *uma* level, which is the subject of the next sections.

5.6 Sharing Food, Creating Relatedness: Daily Meals in the Family

Muntei residents do not consume elaborate meals on a daily basis. Instead, they emphasise togetherness and ensure everybody has enough food. The family expects to enjoy all meals together (Picture 43 & 44).

DARMANTO

Picture 43. A dinner of a Sabulat family in Muntei. All members of the family participate for the meal (2015)

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 44. All members of a Samekmek family sit together and enjoy a lunch meal (2019).

There are clear unspoken rules governing how relations in the family should be sustained by consuming food together. Food is placed on the floor with family members sitting in a circle. Each person has his/her own plate, and each member of the family is expected to sit down together at mealtime. A person will rarely have a meal on his own, without the rest of the family members, even in informal settings. It never occurs that someone takes his/her portion and stands away from the circle. If a member of the family has not returned in time for a meal, the other members wait until he/she is back.

A family sitting down together to have a meal is a microcosm of the community (and social relations), established within the family. The process of putting a meal together fosters unity and togetherness. Parents contribute the material while children may help with their labour. The meal set on the floor of the house every day also requires a transformation of substances from one form to another. The amount of work that goes into producing one simple dish requires a level of coordination and understanding that can only be achieved through cooperation.

Mundane communal meals both represent and constitute equality in the family. The equality is evident from the absence of any privilege enjoyed by the parents, as the producers of the food, in relation to the amount and type of food they get to eat. A very young child can sit closer to a desirable item (especially fish/meat) and have as much of it as an adult. A pregnant mother may receive the best portion and consume more meat but, in general, anyone is free to take any served food. The togetherness represented in such family meals forms the family relation. Eating is not only an activity performed by all family members together; a family member is also not allowed to eat a meal away from the house. Thus, there is a great reluctance to eat meals in other people's houses. Eating everyday communal meals with another family is strongly discouraged, even for children. This commensality is a prime focus of what it means to be an autonomous family. When visitors come to the family during a meal, they are automatically invited to join in and eat. Usually, the visitors refuse. The invitation is a gesture of hospitality and inclusion; the refusal marks the boundaries of the family.

Eating together forces family members to be equal and united. In the highly exceptional case that a member of the family cannot join the meal, he/she is given their portion of the meal (*musibla*) separately. The head of the family invokes an uttering to call the spirit of the absentee and tells the absentee's spirit not to be sad. The absentee is remembered and given an *otcai* (fair share) of the meal. The practice of *musibla* is not only relevant to living family members, but also for those who have already died. Especially when there is pork or chicken meat, there must be a fair share of the meal reserved for the spirits of the ancestors, which is often served in a ritualised but inexplicit fashion. The head of the family commonly throws a small portion of meat between the floorboards at the beginning of every meal[16] as an invitation to the ancestral spirits. This offering signals to the ancestor spirits that the family is remembering and thinking of them. It is an *otcai* that cheers up the spirit of the ancestors and reiterates the point that they belong to the household.

Food, Daily Meals, and Kinship Relations[17]

Eating together in the family has structural significance for Muntei practices of kinship. To Muntei residents, kinship is formulated firstly in biological terms. They have an elaborate terminology to describe their consanguine and affine ties. I will not repeat the usage of terms and the description of analysing kinship relations (see Loeb 1928; Schefold 1980). Instead, I am more interested in observing the importance of food in the daily process of kinship relationships.

In Muntei, the marriage and the family are the institutions that initiate and produce kinship ties. A marriage starts with an emotional relationship between a man and a woman. A couple will figure out the relationship long before they inform their parents. Forced or planned marriage is almost unknown. When the relation is serious and becomes a public affair, both parents may intervene. Otherwise, a couple

may approach their parents and inform them of their intention to marry. When both the couple and the parents share the same view, both of the bride and groom families prepare the marriage. A proper marriage requires elaborate rituals and the complex arrangement of the bride-price payment. The entire process is complicated and takes several months, even years, to complete.

The most important step of the marriage process is the formal induction of the woman into the man's *uma*. The induction is organised through a ritual called *paruruk simagre* (inducing the spirits). The ritual entails informing the ancestral spirits of the man's *uma* that the bride is now a member of their *uma*. The central feature of the induction ceremony involves the groom and the bride eating together from the same wooden plate (*lulag*). This is the first time the couple shares a meal in public. In the ritual, the bride and groom are given a chicken and a big taro dumpling. Eating the food together causes the spirits of the couple to converge, meaning that now they have their own family and must eat together. The person administering the rituals gives a speech, suggesting that the new family should be like chickens. Much like chickens, they have to eat together, know when it is morning and evening, become wise parents, and rear lots of children. Once the ritual is complete, the pair is expected to go to the garden or an equivalent space and collect shrimps and crabs. It is believed that these creatures will give the young couple the power of transformation due to their ability to change their skin. The creation of a family by a new couple is a transformative process, requiring two people to share their belongings to create a new family of their own. It also marks the transformation of their young single lives into adulthood.

In marriage, sexual relations and eating are intimately connected, as indicated by the importance of eating and the social permission of having sex. Immediately after the ritual, the couple is socially married despite the fact that they might not have completed the marriage ritual (*pangureijat*) yet or the payment of bride-price (*alak toga*). They are referred to as people who are 'eating together' or 'eating each other', which are euphemisms for having sex. Intimacy and food sharing are strongly emphasised. From this moment, it is taboo for a married couple to eat separately and spend too much time with other people. Breaking this taboo is considered to be a serious mistake (*masoilo*) that will anger the spirits of the house. When a couple commits *masoilo*, the spirit of the house may inflict illness upon them.

Sexual intercourse of a married couple, for Muntei residents, is believed to be a transaction and sharing of substances. It is said that both father and mother contribute equally to the creation of a foetus (*suruket*). The mother contributes to the blood of the foetus while the father's semen (*suat tigei*) produces the body. After the woman ceases to have periods, her blood will flow to the foetus. Marriage and sexual relations enable a pair to produce persons through transacting substances (semen and blood) and transforming substances (milk and food), through which they are now related physically and socially to each other. The importance of the blood in the production of familial ties is palpable. Blood is believed to be generated inside the body, primarily from food. This is why pregnant women and women with infants are given the best available food, especially meat. The quality of food is directly related to the quality of blood of the mother, which in turn is directly related to the quality of the milk and the blood of the foetus. With good food, mother and child can build a strong emotional bond. Blood, milk, and food are more than sources of physical strength.

The womb is regarded as the first house and home of human beings. In the womb, a foetus is not alone. It belongs to a set of 'friends' whose existence precedes birth. The foetus and the placenta are seen as befriended (*paalei).* The placenta is a friend (*alei*) and has the power to protect the foetus. Later, the *alei* can cause sickness and mood changes in the foetus so it has to be well guarded and treated. When a baby is born, the *alei* is washed and wrapped in clean and warm clothes. Then it is placed in a bamboo tube and given the mothers' breast milk (*suatottotnia*) and freshly-cooked sago, before being buried along in the ground, with an invocation performed by the father in a manner that recalls the burial of a human corps in the graveyard.

The quality of a baby depends on the quality of the mother who takes care of her own food (*pasikeli kokopnia*) and the baby's food. If the mother does not eat well, the baby will be sick and unhappy. Interestingly, it is prohibited to compliment or comment using the term 'healthy baby'. People believe that the healthy baby would eventually become sick, inactive, and unhealthy. Calling a baby healthy is considered arrogant and invites bad spirits to persuade the spirit of the baby to join them. To ensure that the baby is mentally and physically healthy, the mother ensures that she always eats fresh food, and, if it is possible, meat. Feeding the baby with good food will ensure that the child will have the ability to develop its mental and physical strength as described earlier part of this chapter.

Indeed, people clearly state that kinship is primarily formed by sexual relations through marriage and family institution. Yet, they show it also has a lot to do with consuming food together. Sex initiates the relations but food, then, is a constitutive part of the production of a person. Subsequent feeding within the womb, after birth, and throughout life, is vital in the production and sustenance of the person. The ties that bind different generations together in the family are just as dependent upon providing the right kinds of food as engaging in sexual relations and giving birth. Kinship in Muntei, therefore, is a process, created firstly by biological relations but maintained and reproduced through social processes. Sharing a place to live in and consuming the same food in the family is at the core of these processes.

Food and women are two basic elements that produce kinship and relatedness. Daily communal meals are largely the product of women's labour. The quality and quantity of food in the family are strongly associated with motherhood. In everyday meals, sago, tubers, bananas, and women's meat (*ibat-sinanalep*) define a proper meal. Women transform raw food into a meal and this transformation is only completed when it is consumed by every member of the family. The day to day sharing of food in the family cooked by the same women defines who live as family. If people consume meals together in the family, they are considered kin. Those who sit together and share a meal on a daily basis can be defined and considered as one family (*sanga lalep*), in the same way as those who share the blood and milk of the same mother.

By seeing it as a process of becoming, kinship has to be maintained and nurtured. Sharing substances and collective consumption lies at the core of this process. Almost all parents in Muntei regularly send a bucket of sago, taro, banana, and, during fruit season, sacks of durian or *langsat*, and smoked fish to their children who are living away from the settlement. Even those who have already married and settled elsewhere regularly have food delivered to their doorstep. The packet is usually welcomed enthusiastically. Young Mentawaians who attend education in mainland Sumatra regularly flock to the harbour in a group. The packet normally consists of sago flour, taro, banana, or smoked fish. The food they receive is shared in a large communal meal among themselves. The delivered food is a significant way to materialise commensality in the absence of physical presence in the family.

5.7 Women, Kitchens, and the Reproduction of the Family

The relations between women, food and kinship constitute the unity of the family. Women are identical to the family so that the word for women (*sinanalep*: those that are in the house) derives from the word for house or family relations (*lalep*).[18] A house without an adult woman is not a proper house because it does not have a *sinanalep*— mother of the house (Picture 45 & 46). This is partly because women spend much of their time in the house, especially in the kitchen, while men are absent during most of the day doing something outside the house. The unity of the family is maintained by the ability of women to have reproductive powers, both natural and cultural. Through their body, women naturally produce children. This ensures the continuity of the family and the continuity of the *uma*. Through their relentless activities

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 45. An adult woman makes *subbet* (taro balls rolled in grated coconut) in her kitchen (2015)

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Picture 46. The term for women (*sinanalep*) literary means the guardian of the house. The locus of women's space in the house is in the kitchen. The hearth and cooking are integral to the status and role of women in the house (2014)

in the house, producing food, feeding the family women socially contribute to the perpetuation of the family institution.

The kitchen and the food are the important locus of women's power and authority within the family. The kitchen is a special space that is integral to the role of women. The unity of the family is reflected in the number of kitchens in a house. A house has never more than one *sinanalep*. A house also never has more than one hearth (*abu*), no matter how many people live together there. The importance of the single kitchen for the mother of the house generates authority and autonomy for an adult woman, practically making her the guardian of the house. Adult males are not explicitly prohibited from the kitchen but they are rarely seen there. When men have to do something in the kitchen, they do it in a hurry and return to other parts of the house quickly. It is in the kitchen area that women enjoy full authority.

Women not only enjoy greater authority in the kitchen, but also in the entire house. They can sit on the terrace just as men do, and join them in welcoming visitors and entertaining them. They can sleep in the family room and do most of the domestic work in the hearth. Women walk freely all over the house as they go about their tasks: cooking, looking after children, cleaning. There is no sense of confinement or restraint in their movements or use of space. This lack of restraint is also reflected in other aspects of women's behaviour. Their conversation is neither dull, nor subdued. In the absence of men, it is likely to be particularly full of lively gossip and jokes, spiced with sexual innuendoes. Subjects of local interest, gardening, planning a fishing expedition, learning a new cooking technique, marriages and disputes are all discussed in a lively and opinionated manner.

Women and the Perpetuation of the Family

The presence of women determines the reproductive cycle of the family as a physical or social space. The family is established with a marriage. The family practically ceases to be once the mother of the house dies or returns to her clan. Without the mother, the house would be in disarray. No one would cook or do domestic chores. Children and the father would not be well managed and fed (*malilimai*). "*Makerek goukgouk sitakina* (they are like chicks without a hen)," as one of my informants aptly put it. Soon after a widower loses his spouse, he is urged to marry again to start another cycle of family formation. While this pressure to re-marry is placed upon widows as well, the more intense pressure to re-marry is reserved for widowers. A widow may continue to live well in a house, but the same is not true for a widowed man.

The widowed man (*sigobbai*) is considered more miserable than the widow (*sipulumang*) because it is assumed that without a wife he will not have proper food regularly and will not have anybody to help him to wash his clothes. A widower that remains in the house once his wife has died is unheard of in Muntei. It is considered shameful for men to cook, wash clothes, and do other domestic chores. Usually, a widower eats and stays in the house of one of his sons. However, the presence of a widower usually creates a tension, since he is expected to live as a guest, which can cause discomfort to all parties involved. A widower may feel embarrassed to ask his daughter-in-law for food or to partake in meals freely. As a result, a widower generally tends to have an unsettled life. Some wander around the settlement. Others stay out of sight by semi-permanently living in the garden. This is rather different from the life of a widow. As part of the patrilineal system, it would be customary for a widow to return to her pre-marital clan. Yet, in Muntei, nearly all widowed women continue to live in the house with their unmarried children.

Thus, as long as there is an adult woman in a house, the house continues to be a family. Adult women are able to live comfortably in the house without men, while adult men certainly have a hard life without a woman. This explains why women enjoy greater autonomy and power in the domestic sphere than in public. Women who have given birth to more sons certainly earn social prestige but they do not automatically attain more independency at any level. However, women who are industrious and diligent in

food provision will always enjoy both social status and power. This identification of the woman within the domestic arena should not be construed as merely symptomatic of their absence from the public domain. What should be stressed is that women's activities play a part in the self-sufficient of a household. Women ensure that the family is a solid foundation upon which men can build their authority. With the never-ending task of domestic work, the role of women is paramount to the reproduction of the family.

5.8 Sharing Food, Reproducing Community: Equality in Ritual Meals

The Ritual (Punen)

Sharing and eating food together are an integral part of a communal religious ritual. In Muntei, the communal ritual is commonly called *punen* (Picture 47). *Punen* is derived from the noun *kunen* (activities) and is associated with 'doing something which has a certain outcome'. It is closer to English term 'event', 'festivity', or 'ceremony' and has a broader meaning, which can be translated as 'an event out of the ordinary that requires a series of activities which have to be done within a set time'.[19] The term has been translated, adopted, and codified by both the Protestant and Catholic churches and has now been spread and employed across the archipelago to refer to any religious event, either for traditional religious or church- or village-based communal gatherings.

However, people also deploy the term *lia* or *puliaijat* when they refer to traditional ceremonial events.[20] People often conflate *punen* and *lia* or *puliaijat* when they talk about communal ceremonies. These two terms, however, have never been used for ceremonial events in the church. When I pressed for a more detailed explanation, it was revealed that these terms are both applied to, and are associated with, traditional religious ceremonial events but refer to different processes in the event. *Punen* refers to the whole ceremonial event, including the process and the series of activities such as preparing food, inviting guests, and making ornaments. *Lia* specifically alludes to the acts and events of the slaughtering of pigs and chickens, the enactment of invocations and offerings to the spirits, and communal feast. During a *punen*, *lia* or *puliaijat* occurs when all participants are present, animals are ready to be sacrificed, and a series of taboos are in effect.

Punen may be conducted for many different reasons or with a specific aim and have different durations, but are mostly related to major life events: marriage, death, and the inauguration of collective possessions such as the construction of a longhouse and the initiation of a new shaman. Other related events such as moving into a new house, curing rituals, making a new garden, or clearing the houses are usually integrated into the ritual for major live events. During my 15-months of fieldwork, I attended and participated in eight *punen* from six different *uma*. They included two *punen panunggru* (mortuary rituals), one *punen pasibitbit uma* (clearing the house ritual), two *punen pabetei* (curing ritual), two *punen pangurei* (marriage rituals), one *punen tinungglu* (creating a new garden). I found that other minor and smaller *punen* are enacted during or as part of those larger *punen*. For example, the *punen tinungglu* I attended in *uma* Samekmek was carried out together with punen *abak* (a ritual for new canoes). During a *pasibitbit uma* punen of Sakukuret, I observed that several minor *punen*, such as *eneget* for children, *nemnem kabei* for infants and *punen masin* (ritual for machine) for a small outboard machine they had just bought, were also organised. The duration of each *punen* I attended was also different. Minor and smaller *punen* last for a few hours up to a half of a day, while a large *punen* can be a few days. Generally, the more important the ritual, the longer it lasts.

The eight different *punen* I attended shared at least three common features. First, *punen* consist of a series of performative and coordinative acts to reinforce the relations between the spirit of the living, the

TEOFILUS SAMEKMEK

Picture 47. A communal ritual (*punen*) organized by *uma* Sakukuret. Two shamans perform an opening of the ritual (2014).

spirits of ancestors, and the spirits who own hunted animals. Preparing food, inviting allies, slaughtering sacrificed animals, cooking food, and giving offerings are acts to establish communion between those spirits. Secondly, *punen* requires collective sacrifice. All participants, the members of an *uma* and invited guests, have to contribute food, labour, and other possessions. A lot of work goes into preparing for the actual event. There has to be sufficient food. Each family in an *uma* is expected to contribute sago, taro, chicken, and pigs. Days before the ritual, women collect flowers from nearby gardens and forests and prepare food. Individualism is suppressed by a collective sense of taboo. Everyone sacrifices his individuality to re-enact the unity of the *uma*. Third, the availability of pigs, in particular, determines when and how the ritual can be enacted. Affines and allies are invited to attend, usually a few days ahead of the ritual when pigs necessary for the *punen* are already secured. This enables them to contribute something, usually a chicken or a small piglet.

"Do Not Eat Raw Food": Taboo of Punen and Social Order

During *punen*, but particularly in stage of *lia*, all members of the *uma* are obliged to attend. A few allies and affines are also invited. The participants are prohibited from walking away from the ritual house until the proceedings have been completed. They also have to abandon productive work such as cutting trees and clearing weeds in the garden. Contact with members of other groups is strongly discouraged. It is also taboo for members of other *uma* to step into the house where the ritual is being organised. Flowers and leaves of *duruk* (sugar palm) are strung together around the house.

During preparation, usually one or two days prior to animal sacrifices and invocations to the spirits, taboos are rather loose. People still consume food in their houses or work in the gardens, feeding pigs and chickens. However, when sacrificed animals are about to be killed for the offering and a gong is beaten to start *lia*, participants must gather together and are banned from consuming raw food. It is also taboo to consume smoked or wild meat. Eating meals alone is also prohibited. Participants are also prevented from having sexual intercourse during *lia*.

Schefold (1982) provides an excellent interpretation of the role of food and sex taboos in the communal ritual. He describes that eating sour and raw food and sexual taboos are associated with the success of hunting expeditions. People told me exactly the same things as the Sakuddei people told Schefold. Unprocessed and wild foods are considered sour (*malagak*) and associated with sharpness. Wild orange or mango can make lips burn. This is interpreted as signifying that the participants could injure themselves with their sharp weapons (machete, spears). Sexual intercourse is a private relationship and, as such, contradicts the collective goal of the group. If a couple isolates itself from the rest of the group during a communal ritual, it betrays its purpose. The taboo complex is part of a set of performances to entice the spirit of game animals and to make the spirits of the participants happy. Taboo transgressions would make the spirit of game animals avoid the ritual and cause participants to get injured.

While I generally support Schefold's analysis, I observed that food and the taboo complex are not merely acted out symbolically. I found that the role of food is tangible and has a concrete effect. Firstly, food and sex taboos mark *punen* as an entirely social and cultural affair. All activities associated with nature are prohibited. Raw food is a natural product. Sex is a natural activity that all animals engage in. Hence, the aforementioned taboo on uncooked substances and sex are deemed to fall into the natural sphere. Anything that comes from the natural world is denied. Further food-related and sex taboos do not merely try to enact a symbolic explanation of the disorderliness of everyday life but are aimed at transforming disorderliness caused by selfishness of an individual interest—which instigates competition, rivalry, social tension—into collective solidarity through sharing the same substance (cooked food). Taboos are applied to all participants and aimed at suppressing individualism in favour of the unity of the group. The taboo of ingesting is not only meant to symbolise nature/culture, but also to transform individualism into collective actions in the social sphere. According to residents, every participant must be able to control his/her selfishness in order to make *punen* successful.

All food taboos in the ritual are a manifestation of the denial of individual acts and motivated by an ultimate collective purpose, given that the ritual feast is at the core of communal identity. The taboo is a guide for the social construction of a person, a directive on how to perform one's social roles. Thus, participants are prohibited from consuming or keeping their own food and must contribute to ritual food. They cannot participate in activities done individually, out of sight. Their labour is to be devoted only to the ritual. They must also eat the same cooked food. While outside the ritual, their daily activities may be aimed at obtaining individual social prestige, in the ritual, individual actions are coordinated for achieving togetherness. All these codes of conduct transform the individual into an equal part of the collective.

Feeding the Spirits: Food in the Punen Procession

The ultimate objective of *punen* is the communion of spirits—the spirits of the participants, the spirits of ancestors, and the autochthonous spirits in the forest. To come closer together, all spirits are required to be summoned and enticed. The invitation and enticement of spirits require *gaud* (Picture 48). *Gaud* are important offerings made to attract spirits through a shaman and the leader of ceremony. *Gaud* comprises diverse leaves, flowers, and food, and is a term typically applied to an item that serves a single purpose. Each *gaud* has properties and qualities (*kerek buluk loinak*), both physical and metaphorical, which provide

power and correspond to a wish or aim of *punen*. Each type of *gaud* is used to perform specific events in which each action is directed at the different spirits. However, the *gaud* can affect the world of spirits only through the invocation of the leader of ceremony[21] (*kerek tiboijet*). The energy or power that emanates from *gaud* has to be in tandem with invocation of human agency. For example, the most common *gaud* is the leaves of the *aileleppet*. The first leaves of the *aileleppet* plant are called on to lower the body temperature of the participants and to cool the angry spirits (the word *aileleppet* is derived from *maileppet*, meaning 'cool'). To give a certain and expected effect and affect, *kerek buluk loinak aileleppet* and *kerek tiboijet* of the shaman have to come together (*pasese enungania*). In the invocation, the leader calls out *aileleppet* and asks it to perform specific tasks that correspond to the element attached to it. In the hands of the leader, *aileleppet* are treated like conscious beings; *gaud* are objects vested with a sort of disembodied intelligence.

Leaves and flowers are not the only *gaud*. Food items are constantly offered to the spirits of the participants, either human, ancestral, or those of the forest and the sea who own the hunted game. Coconuts, chickens, and pigs are the most important *gaud* during the ritual process. When everything needed for *punen* is ready, sacrificed animals are about to be slaughtered, and *lia* is about to enacted, the *punen* leader begins the process of food offerings in the house by sounding a gong and uttering a call for the sacrificed pigs. The leader then comes to the house heirloom (*bakkat katsaila*) and offers *gaud*, consisting of several herbs like the leaves of the *doro* palm (*Arenga* sp). Some of the leaves are put in the heirloom while others are given to the participants.

A whole coconut fruit is the first food *gaud* to be offered. It is cut open with a machete, the flesh sliced and given to the assistant (*pamuri*), normally the oldest son of the leader, and to the youngest son. A slice is put in the *bakkat katsaila* as an offering to the ancestral spirits, and another is offered to the spirit

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Picture 48. Teu Rima, the shaman, makes an offering with a magic charm (*gaud*) in the mortuary ritual of *uma* Sagari (2014).

of the game animal by the post where the *bakkat katsaila* is located. The rest of the flesh is sliced up and given to the wife of the ritual leader and grandchildren. In the invocation, the qualities of the coconut are metaphorically associated with the aim of the ritual: protection of the group from negative external influences and prosperity and unity of the group. The shell of the coconut is symbolised as a protective shield that will prevent the penetration of external powers and spirits. The fruit also symbolises the power of life, bearing many offspring and sprouting a new generation. The number of coconuts deployed in the ritual depends on the number of families that attend the ritual and the size of the ritual.

Chicken is offered in the sequence of events**,** particularly to the spirits of the forest and water and the spirits of the participants. The leader of *punen* takes the chicken and gently swings it over the head of the participants, touching their bodies with its tail feathers. The chicken is then killed and its entrails (*lauru*) are read to predict the results of the hunting expedition to be conducted after the end of the ritual. In the invocation, the leader invokes the spirits of the hunted animals to appease them and to ask them to be hunted easily. He also calls for the protection of the spirits of the participants from negative powers. The number of chickens killed and offered is proportional to the importance of the ritual and depends on the reading of the *lauru*. A blurred *lauru* means that an animal spirit has not been appeased. Another chicken might have to be sacrificed until the *lauru* is favourable.

After chickens, pigs are sacrificed (*teinungakek*) as *gaud*. Each pig is persuaded not to be angry and is offered a flower and leaf *gaud*. The leader of the ritual brushes the *katsaila* stalk against the pig's body and asks permission to read their *lauru*. The invocation is aimed particularly towards the spirits of the hunted animals. The entrails, especially the lungs and the heart of the pig, are then read. The carcasses of the chickens and pigs are brought out of the house to be singed and later butchered, sorted, and divided. However, the chicken's liver, tail fat, right thigh, and the pigs' right leg are set aside by the leader and his wife and stuffed inside a few bamboo tubes for the next event. Later, this meat is taken out of the bamboo and put on the wooden plate (*lulag*) along with taro dumplings rolled in coconut. As the leader of ceremony splits up the bamboo and places slices of liver meat on the dumpling, an invocation is uttered toward the spirits of the ancestors by the *bakkat katsaila*.

The placement of liver meat into intestines mimics the position of coconut flesh relative to the coconut shell. The liver is safely positioned on the right half of the hearth. When the chicken is split into two halves, the liver is protected. The liver's power to protect, is activated through the leader's speech. Other slices of liver and dumplings are then offered to the spirits of participants and the spirits of the game animals. The liver is food for the spirits, the *gaud*. The leftover slices of meat are given to the leader's wife, children, and grandchildren. The rest of the meat is collected and put together in a bamboo pole, and later cooked by the wife of the leader. When the leader performs a series of offerings, the procession of the communal meal has begun.

***Eating Together: Transformative Quality of Food in* Punen**

The next set of offerings is generally performed in a manner identical to the earlier phase and is conducted by the leader of *punen*. The mood is more upbeat as the communal feast starts. After the gong is resounded, the leader takes more *subbet* in the wooden platter and breaks up the cooked liver and tail fat, uttering phrases similar to those accompanying the opening of the coconut. The presentation of the chicken's liver and its tail to the *bakkat katsaila* serves the same purpose as that of the presentation of the coconut: the protection of the group from bad influences. The tail meat invokes the ability of the chicken to run away from or avoid danger approaching from behind. In the case of human beings, the danger is from bad influences or spirits. The leader also invokes the reproductive ability of chickens so that it may help the members present to have many children.

The defining feature of the second set of offering is that they feature only cooked meat, marking a fundamental shift in the proceedings. The participants consume exclusively cooked meals. While the leader performs the ritual, the participants start preparing firewood, heating up a few large pans, and boiling meat for the communal meal. Cooking is crucial to understanding the state of *lia* (*mulia*) in which food is the transformative agent in the two themes of the ritual—the protection of the group from external (bad) influences and the resuscitation of the internal unity of the group—both symbolically and literally. In the penultimate stage of *mulia*, the cooked meat is sorted and divided into muscle meat (*akula*), fat (*lainang*), skin (*kulit*), and entrails (*siribaga*). An equal share (*otcai*) is put aside for each family. Boiled meat is then served, accompanied by taro dumplings and sago. Each family takes a spot and eats together.

The communal meal in *punen* resembles daily family meals. Each family has its own place in the ritual. The food is laid on the *lulag* platter or a large metal plate (*talam*), with members of each family sitting around it. Eating together makes forces each family equal and fosters unity. It is performed by the family in an undivided way, which realises equality, yet simultaneously marks the boundaries of each family. Arguably, food in itself does not produce these qualities. Instead, it is the transformative process in which food plays a central role that produces them. The meal enjoyed by all the families is not from the garden of any single family, but the result of the labour of all participants. Each family contributes pigs and chickens of varying quantities and sizes, as well as sago, banana, and tubers. All contributed food is assembled, cooked, spread out on the floor, and then distributed equally. The collected meat is all cooked together, in the same pot or pan, whereby individual contributions become integrated into a unified whole that is subsequently shared equally by everyone. Thus, through the eating of collectively produced and processed food, they perform acts of giving and sharing.

At the end of the communal meal, the leader of *punen* makes an offering to the spiritual forces. Taro dumplings and the special meat cooked in the bamboo tubes are put on the *lulag* alongside plant *gaud*. The leader performs the offering with his wife on behalf of all present. He utters a spell addressed to spirits of ancestors, the owners of hunted game, and living persons. The invocation is identical to the previous one, which is aimed at the diversion of sickness and bad powers and the attraction of a healthy life and good influences. Once the invocation has been concluded, the leader informs the *simagre* of the participants that they are now no longer threatened by bad forces. He also expresses that he expects they will grow as a group until they are old. A small portion of the taro balls and the meat is offered to the spirit in attendance before the heirloom. Then, the leader's wife and eldest male grandchild are summoned to replace the leader. The meat is given to the leader's wife who then gives the meat to the boy. Later, the leader and his wife exclusively eat dumplings, and the special meat cooked in the bamboo, with sago before the *bakkat katsaila*.

The meat consumed in the latest phase comes from the upper right thigh of the chicken. The form of the meat is round (*simuine*). As the leader splits the bamboo containing the meat, he utters a speech addressed to the spiritual forces. Then, he offers a slice of meat to the spirits of the ancestors, participants, and those that own wild animals. He calls upon the spirits to ensure that the group will be 'round' and that the participants will be 'united' their lifecycle to a great age. The leader then asks his wife to figuratively accept the meat he offers. The wife accepts, saying, '*ngemet*' (welcome) and both touch their right hand to the *lulag* platter. A portion of meat is taken by the *rimata* and given to his wife. Then they eat the food from the plate freely, without any specific codes.

If the *uma* intends to complete the *punen* with ritual game hunting in the sea or forest, a small ritual is organised the following day. A pig is slaughtered and the uncooked meat is offered by the leader to the spirits of the game animal and the ancestors. The invocation summons the spirits in order to appease them so that the hunters have an easy expedition. The meat is then cooked and consumed by the participants who are departing for the hunt. A portion of meat is put in the heirloom by the *sikebbukat*. Of all the *punen*

I attended, only one (a mortuary ritual of *uma* Salakoppak) was completed with ritual hunting. The Sagari men were successful in obtaining a turtle after two days hunting on the east coast of Siberut. The success of the Sagari men in obtaining hunted game accomplished the ritual and marked the definitive end of the *punen*. Other *punen*, however, were not completed with hunting. People say that the game animal can be substituted with a domestic animal.

Sharing Food: Bringing Uma into Being

All the *punen* I attended in several *uma* involved the killing of animals and communal meals. I have never heard of a *punen* occurring without pigs and chicken. People say that pigs and chickens must be sacrificed and offered to the spirits to be *mulia* or to have *lia*. Eating meat together is also a must in every *punen*. The flesh of a domestic animal is probably one of the most important offerings that can be made to spirits. Pigs and pork are just as imperative to rituals. The availability of pigs and chickens determines the timing and the size of the ritual. The ability to provide domestic meat represents a kind of potential for ritual action. We can return to the role of pigs, and to a lesser extent, chickens, as a token value and a way of obtaining communal ideals, explaining why meat has to be eaten together. The meat represents a value that can only be realised through it being giving away to others and consumed collectively.

During *punen*, all families are aggregates of persons; food consumed together is an aggregate of human actions (Picture 49). As in the family, adult men and women are the producers and contributors while children are consumers. Every adult contributes food and labour to the *punen*. Unmarried persons are not expected to give possessions, but instead their labour. Each family is encouraged and expected but not compelled to provide sago, coconut, taro, chicken, and pork. The role of men and women in *punen* is similar to their role in general. Women work in the inner space of the ritual house and perform a task of preparing *kat* (sago and *subbet*) and serve drinks (sweet tea or coffee) (Picture 50). The men perform a task of preparing and cooking all the meat in the large iron pan during the ritual process and determine the distribution (Picture 51 & 52). Every adult man does whatever he can to help prepare chickens and pigs, *gaud* and the communal meal. They work together to slaughter the sacrificed animals, singe, butcher, and distribute the meat. In such public events, men perform and display the act of offering. All tasks to prepare meat are carried out in the front space of the ritual house.

Whilst there is an arrangement differentiated along gender lines, *punen* commemorate an ethos whereby the only possible excuse for accumulating personal wealth and asserting social prestige is to acquire the ability to give it all away. Giving and sharing food, the product of human activities, especially domestic animals, generate unity. Any families who participate in *punen* have their own *otcai*, regardless their contribution. The contributors of pigs, and even the head of ritual, do not enjoy any privilege and are not celebrated. Each adult person and family has equal rights and obligations. No matter how much a family contributes, each family receives an equal portion of the food (*otcai*). A family that contributed all pigs will be given the same amount of food as other families.

Food, particularly meat, is the substance that sustains the existence of *uma*, evident from the fact that eating together is the focus of the ritual that is so important for group unity and identity. The meat of pigs and chickens is not only a product of labour and skill, but also invisible potency such as a person's magic and ability to transcend the perspective of the spirits. Pigs are valuable human (social) products. For pigs to become the life force of people, they must be consumed and shared communally. The absence of rituals implies absence of sharing meat. The absence of sharing meat is the lack of social relations, the lack of individual labour devoted to the perpetuation of the group.

Muntei residents believe that those eating together in *punen* are sharing the same mind and perspective (Picture 53 & 54). They are equal. They are a group firstly united by biological ties. Yet, cumulative social

relations are entailed by the pile of food on the *lulag*. The ties that bind the group can only be truly perpetuated if there is a denial of individual pleasure for the sake of the welfare of all members. If they do not share food for and in *punen*, they are no longer one *uma* and considered as different group.

It is necessary to emphasise that participation and contribution in the ritual is by no means compulsory. The leader of *punen* or the head of the family does not have any political authority to punish any individual that does not want to contribute to and participate in the ritual. Thus, *punen* is experienced and formulated in terms of a voluntary model. The participating families are independent institutions and social actors are continually confronted with negative (selfishness, individualism) and positive possibilities (togetherness, solidarity, equality) whose realisations are being grounded by the procedures in the ritual and which require determination of personal will. The communal meal in *punen* are the means through which social actors continually redefine and even remake themselves to generate political equality. By sharing and eating together, they reproduce and transform the social structure which constitutes the collective actions of each and every person in the *uma*. Food is both symbol and agent of solidarity and equality.

DARMANTO

Picture 49. A pile of meat ready to cook is an aggregate of human actions and social relations (2014)

DARMANTO

Picture 50. Women prepare sago and taro balls (*subbet*) in the *punen* (2019)

DARMANTO

Picture 51. Men prepare pigs and chickens the most important sacrificed animal (*iba-t-punen*) (2015)

DARMANTO

Picture 52. Men slaughter pigs (2015)

THEOFILUS SAMEKEMEK

Picture 53. Eating and sharing together in a *punen*. All members of *uma*, social alllies and friends enjoy food together (2016)

DARMANTO

Picture 54. All men, women, old, young, and children are equal. Sharing and eating food together bring egalitarianism in *uma* into being (2015)

6

Festivity Without Feasts: Living in the New Community, the Emergence of Inequality, and the Articulation of Hunger

Thus far, I have presented quantitative descriptions of the availability of and access to food, the pattern of consumption, and ethnographic descriptions of the cultural and social role of food and food-related activities separately. I now bring the two separated descriptions together, conducting an in-depth analysis to make sense of the riddle of my informants' claim of being hungry presented in the first chapter. This chapter will start with the qualification of the statement *malaje* (being hungry) and the availability of and access to food. The second section analyses the relations between food and food-related activities with the production of the two most important social values, autonomy and egalitarianism. The ethnographic background of Muntei, outlined in Chapter 2, will serve as the historical and social context for the analysis in the third section. This part will discuss the social transformation in the settlement brought by market intensification and state administration, which generates social inequality, contradicting the value of egalitarianism. These three parts will provide answers to why people say they are hungry, which will be explored at the end of this chapter.

6.1 Plenty of Food but Still Hungry

Chapter 3 showed that Muntei residents have an abundance of plant food, both staple and complementary. Most types of *kat* have been adapted to the island ecosystem and socio-culturally integrated into people's social life. The most important types of food (sago, tubers, and bananas) biologically reproduce themselves by vegetative regeneration. Their biological characteristics and wide distribution allow these plants to provide the most reliable source of food in the long term. This is also the case for fruit trees. The trees last for generations and can produce enormous quantities of fruits almost every year. Ecologically, all types of food have adapted well to the island ecosystem. They are able to compete with weeds and grasses that grow wildly and quickly due the humid and rainy climate. They suffer little damage caused by animals and other pests. All staple *kat* provide a stable output, are not affected by seasonal fluctuations, and are largely pest-free, and thus have considerable potential as a food reserve.

Socially, all types of plant food are important components of both the social fabric and the physical landscape. The distribution of sago and fruit trees is evidence of the history of migration, the establishment of settlements, and incipient cultivation. Even though most cultivated plants grow without much intensive human interference, sago, taro and fruit gardens in particular are the result of human activities. Further, sago, taro, and fruit trees are valuable objects that can be used for social currency. Whether as an individual or a whole garden, these plants are used primarily to create, establish and transform social relationships. Not only are they important in the exchange of material goods—sago, taro, and fruits trees—but their primary purpose is seen to lie in arranging marriages, resolving conflicts, consoling mourners, making treaties, assembling allies, making gifts, or rewarding services. These plants are part of the local legal, economic, and social system. This is why people keep cultivating plant foods and making gardens even though they do not need to do so.

Table 33 below indicates that each family in Muntei has more than enough food. This is also indicated by the list of forest, sago, and taro gardens in the table and shown in the locations of the gardens on the maps in Chapter 3. The abundance of *kat* available in various domesticated zones produces a kind of 'ethic access' (Peluso 1996). There is a general cultural understanding that everyone has a right to access *kat* resources. Fallen, ripe durian fruits can be collected by anyone. Within an *uma*, asking for sago flour or a bunch of taro is a mundane practice, especially among women. This applies for people from different *uma* who consider themselves as friends. Food cultivated in the communal land is meant to be for every member of *uma*. A person can collect ripened bananas or cassava from another's garden if they intend to consume and not sell it.

Table 33. The Average Household Possession of Gardens in Muntei in 2015 (n=45)

	Average (in Local Term)[22]	**Average (in m²)**	**Content**
Sago garden	Three plots (*telu mata*)	6,000	75 mature sago stands and thousands of sprouts
Taro garden	Two plots (*dua mata*)	600	900 taro stalks and hundreds of sprouts, hundreds of banana trees,
Forest garden			
1) with a *tinungglu/ mone* cycle	Two plots (*dua mata*)	10,000	16 durian, 32 langsat, 18 jackfruit trees, 32 mango, 36 rambutan, 18 mangosteen, hundreds of bananas; a plot of taro garden; pigs, chicken
2) with a shorter *tinungglu* cycle	One plot (*sanga mata*)	4000	300 cacao trees or 60 clove trees. 4 jackfruit, 5 durian, 5 mangos, bananas
3) without *tinungglu* cycle	One plot (*sanga mata*)	4000	250 coconut trees; 5-10 pigs; 10 chickens; 60-70 clove trees

In terms of consumption, three families representing Muntei's population have three proper meals per day, as shown in Chapter 4. There are always leftovers of sago or rice after every meal. The presence of meat in everyday meals is also relatively stable. Shrimps, frogs, and small freshwater fish are served mostly for daily meals, especially in families that retain the practice of working in the gardens. Small mammals are seasonally hunted around gardens and eaten especially during fruit season. However, the regular source of meat is saltwater fish from the market. Their involvement in cash crop production and temporary non-

farm jobs are a key factor. Money from the sale of cloves, cacao, coconut, and recently banana as well as other minor products such as taro is spent on imported food which is considered more prestigious and tastier. This may be a kind of concession they do for the decline of traditional fishing and the rise of cash crops. The cash from off-farm activities is important, especially for younger generations and latecomers who do not have a significant number of gardens.

Geographical advantage enables people to have varieties of food. The settlement has several zones, both for domesticated and undomesticated food. The environment surrounding settlements has been heavily cultivated for edible resources. Low-lying areas in the east and northwards of the settlement have been supplying sago, taro, banana, and fruits. Muntei also has hills around the settlement where people cultivate cloves. The settlement is not far away from the coastal zone and few clans have ancestral land there. For half of the Muntei population, having coconut and clove gardens in the Muntei hills and the coastal zone provides them with not only source of regular income but also allows them to enjoy a regular supply of fish, shellfish, and other edible resources sourced around the coast. The combination of various domesticated and undomesticated spaces enables people to undertake both subsistence and market-oriented activities.

Why Hunger

Although there is no indication of food shortages, people told me frequently that they are *sitakiba*, 'those without meat'. Often, this term is followed by the term *malaje* (being hungry). "*Kalulut sitakiba*, *malaje kai*" or "Because we do not have meat, we are hungry." In South Siberut, the term *sitakiba* is more prevalent among people in the upstream settlements where, geographically speaking, they are far from the sea and do not have the skills to fish nor regular access to saltwater fish. Yet, the people of Muntei also often claim that they, indeed, are *sitakiba*. The term *sitakiba* might be associated with the access to saltwater fish, ability to do fishing in the sea, or the availability of meat. Yet, the data presented in Chapters 3 and 4 suggested otherwise. All the three families have meat for 90 per cent of their meals.

The term *sitakiba* is more likely linked with the decline of traditional food-related activities. As undomesticated zones have come under pressure, for example the forest being cleared to create cacao or clove gardens or a stream being dammed as a source of drinking water, fishing grounds have declined. Fishing in nearby rivers and streams is becoming rare, mainly done by older women. Young girls are now mostly busy with school, church, and doing homework. Another mode of obtaining food, hunting, is no longer practiced. The decline of traditional methods of obtaining animals is culturally important. Hunting and gathering in combination with pig and chicken keeping essentially formed the core of people's self-sufficiency for meat. Pork, chicken, and hunted game are the only types of meat that are truly 'befitting' (*mateu*). They are essentially part of cultural self-identification. The term *mateu*, and its association with satisfaction is not merely a reference to a physical state, but also a social and cultural one. Saltwater fish from market or freshwater animals collected by women are considered delicious (*mananam*), but not fully satisfying (*maektek*). Pork and chicken are the most valuable and desired, not merely because they are considered nutritious, but in the words of an informant because "they can be equally shared and satisfy everybody".

The importance of pigs and chickens lies in the ability for people to share them. This can be particularly seen in their consumption, which is never an individual event. Consuming domestic animals is always a matter for the kin-group involving particular social alliances and institutions. The owner of the pig can never freely decide when and how many pigs are slaughtered, distributed, and consumed. It seems that the contribution of pigs follows the principle "from each according to their abilities, to each according to the needs of kin-group." The consumption of meat, therefore, does not only correspond with the type of meal, the type of activities to obtain it, and the status of meal, but also with the value of the activities that precede

the meal. The consumption of pork and chicken, hence, marks the frequency of communal ceremonies, the ability of sharing, and the unity of the group.

The consumption of meat presented in Figure 18 below serves as a good starting point to find an explanation as to why my informants deploy the term *sitakiba* and complain about the lack of meat, the sense of hunger and social values this entails. The Aman Aturan family has the fewest ritual feasts. This family consumes pork and chicken together with other members of Sarorougot and invited associates from their wider network only once every three months. The lower frequency of ritual feasts means that they mostly eat in the house. This is rather different for Aman Santo's family. The latter had the most ritual feasts and the least family level meals. The number of ritual feasts of this family is double that of the Aman Aturan and Aman Alfon families put together.

There are many reasons why Aman Santo's family has a much higher number of ritual feasts. It is well known that members of Sakukuret are the best pig keepers around. They have plenty of pigs and chickens in different gardens. Sakukuret also maintain relationships with their genealogical line in Madobak, which have a more hinterland-oriented livelihood and have firmly maintained *sabulungan* beliefs in which *punen* is the most important social event. When Sakukuret people in Madobak organise a ritual feast, the members of the Aman Santo family are always invited. This is rather different from the families of Aman Aturan and Aman Alfon. They obviously are not pig keepers and members of *uma* that have moved entirely into Muntei and are devoted to cash crop production. Only two members of *uma* Saruruk have pigs. The other twenty have spent much time in the coastal zone, cultivating coconuts and producing copra, with less time to have ritual feasts. The less frequent ritual feasting of Saruruk and Sarorougot gives an indication that communal feasts are perhaps less frequent for *uma* with all their members and affiliates living in Muntei.

It is worth emphasising that the livelihood strategies do not necessarily affect the ability to have a ritual feast; *punen* is not just organised because someone has many pigs. The reasons for having *punen* are myriad, and livelihood preference has no direct consequence. A teacher who has a regular salary might have more *punen* than pig keepers as pigs nowadays are available regularly in the local market. Certainly, Aman Aturan and Aman Alfon families have money from cash crops and can afford meat—as they demonstrate with their purchase of saltwater fish. At the same time, the timing and decision of having ritual feasts are certainly not determined solely by the availability of cash. These animals cannot just be bought, slaughtered, and enjoyed whenever cash is available.

Nonetheless, the lack of eating *iba-t-punen* means that the family and the group have less events to share and eat together. This is apparently the case for the Aman Aturan family; Aman Aturan regularly complained about the lack of ritual feasting (*punen*) in his *uma* and he deployed the term '*malaje*' and 'without meat' to explain their lack of togetherness. He frequently expressed bitter remorse that Sarorougot is the smallest clan and rarely has a ritual feast. He considers that their life is harder than others because his *uma* has a small number of families and it lacks a wider social network. Their genealogical relatives are far away in Taileleu and they have long been out of contact with them. If there is a problem, nobody helps them. He frequently cites the fact that he has to pay education fees for his son by himself. When he is ill from *gout*, none of his relatives brings him pigs and chickens for a curing ritual. While his family is staying in the settlement, the other two families are busy keeping their coconut gardens in the *nusa*. As all households have focused on cash crop production, the Sarorougot lack the resources for a communal feas.

After listening carefully to Aman Aturan's complaint and analysing quantitative data, only gradually did I come to understand the subtlest messages that were ingrained in the '*sitakiba*' or '*malaje*' statements. I recalled my earlier experience in 2004 when, as an undergraduate student, I visited Ugai hamlet upstream to do research on forest cultivation. A man asked me why I left a city in Java and decided to stay in their village. The question was posed as his wife prepared dinner. This question was followed by another about

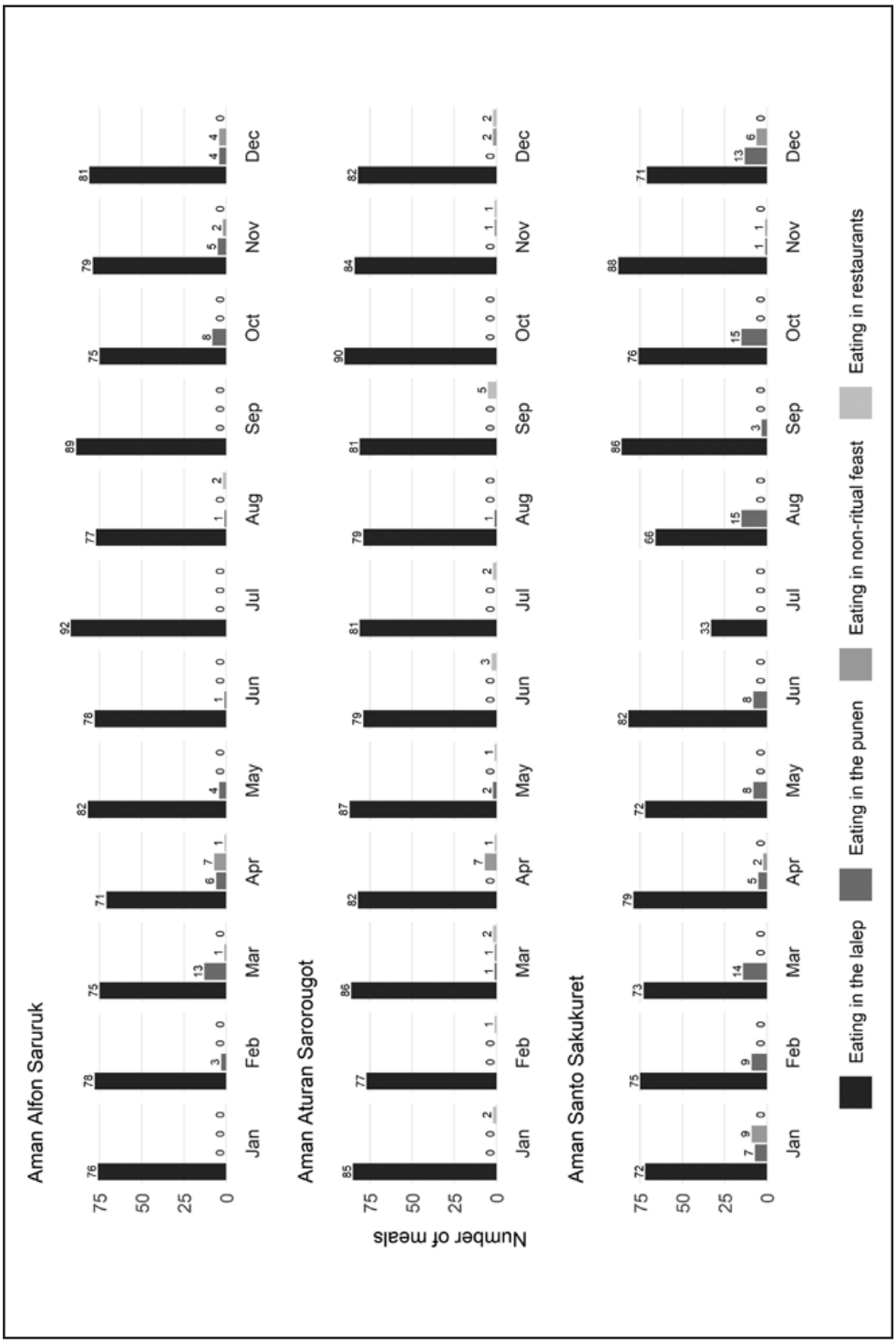

Figure 18. Modes of Eating of Three Families in Muntei (2013)

why I had abandoned what they considered to be a privileged life on the mainland—the land of rice, paved roads, luxuries, and above all, bountiful meat. It was not that the village was facing a dearth of food, causing them to worry. Ugai is a good place with plenty of banana, sago, and taro. Yet, they could not comprehend that I had made a choice to leave the city and stay in a place where I had to eat sago and taro.

While they understood that I brought a small amount of scholarship funds with me, my host was afraid that I would be hungry. He was worried that I would find it difficult to eat sago or taro every day. "We do not have rice. Your belly will not be happy. Your soul will not be happy. Eventually, you will get sick." There was a sense that I would be hungry if I consumed unfamiliar food. There was also a sense that I would have trouble eating alone and without family. As every family has *punen*, I am the only person in the settlement who will not enjoy eating together and consuming domestic animals. They referred to my loneliness as *malaje* as nobody would share food and eat together with me.

In understanding the cultural meaning of *malaje* (being hungry), it became clear that the term is deployed more as social and cultural statement. The term *sitakiba* or *malaje* does not necessarily convey the condition of absence or lack of meat. The term *sitakiba* has a deeper meaning if we consider the cultural meaning of meat and what it embodies. Having enough meat equates to being socially and physically satisfied. Another layer of meaning to 'being hungry' is added when there is meat but not enough to share it with others. The term *sitakiba* is strongly associated with a person/family who lacks communal feasts. Aman Aturan is just one of the families that use this word frequently. Without a communal feast, they do not have meat that can be distributed, shared, and consumed. The words '*iba*' and '*hunger*', therefore, are closely associated with sharing meat with each other. They are hungry because they have meat but cannot share it with others.

Furthermore, people use the idiom *malaje* to indicate that they have encountered a failure of social relations. They say *malaje* when they are left alone to feel their loneliness. They are *malaje* when they have no relatives and are far away from domesticated places. Here, *malaje* is the state of a person being outside the community. It is attached to a person who is removed from his or her social milieu. When people refer to hunger, it is primarily a reference to the lack of sociality or social relationship that manifests in the absence of sharing and eating together. Thus, being hungry is closely related to a lack of solidarity and togetherness.

6.2 Food, Actions, and Social Values

Chapters 4 and 5 describe gardening as the most valued activity. The process of opening and clearing undomesticated forest to create a garden full of plant foods and domestic animals is the underlying schema of life in Muntei and it delineates the most basic values. The villagers value the actions of gardening and the product of gardens because, for them, they epitomise the process of transforming the undomesticated (natural) into the domesticated (social). Gardening and the garden embody social values in the sense that they require and result in cooperation and social relations. A garden is certainly not established by an individual but by a man and woman in the context of the family institution. Social relations are required to create gardens, which have, in this sense, become social products. Producing food through gardens is thus the concretisation of conscious and productive human actions and also the epitome of the values held for them.

My analysis suggests that there is an idea behind the importance of human actions in gardening: in order to live, people must eat and work. Work continually consumes energy that is produced by the consumption of food, which, in turn, is acquired by transforming natural spaces and products into consumables through a set of social activities and transformative processes. For transforming undomesticated spaces and raw

food into a meal, people require social relations. Only humans have the ability to make this transformation. Only humans process raw food into cooked food. Transforming natural products through cultivation and the processing of food resources into a meal defines people's humanity.

Producing food is also valued since it defines the socially perceptible qualities of people in Muntei, both as human beings and as Mentawaians. Producing food is inseparable to the qualification of person, gender differentiation, labour division, and the reproduction of family as the basic social unit and the reproduction of *uma* as the basic social organisation. Producing food is also crucial for the process of self-identification and for the construction of the other, as described in Chapter 5. People see food as having both inherent and acquired attributes, which are imparted upon those who produce and ingest them. Gardening and pig keeping are concrete activities that maintain the political autonomy of Muntei people amid the intrusion of interethnic social relations with Minangkabau and other migrants. Therefore, planting sago or tending to pigs is better understood as part of the wider process of constructing a social person and society itself, rather than merely as the production of material subsistence, despite it including the latter.

Producing and having plenty of food resources, either animals and plants, are associated with the ability of a social person to have 'power' and 'potency'. Possessing gardens and pigs is evidence of a person's prestige and also a means for producing prestige. Having lots of animal and plant food generates an aura of independence. It contributes to the constitution of an individual actor as an autonomous social being and a family as the basic autonomous social unit. The will of being autonomous motivates and activates people to create new gardens and then to exchange its products. It also enables a person to initiate a new social exchange, but also to re-establish and expand existing ones. By having regular social exchange of garden products, men circulate and attain social prestige and autonomy. This is because an individual's identity is distributed or expanded as his garden products are increasingly circulated throughout the exchange network. Further, exchanging garden products constructs and maintains intersubjective social relations, and builds and renews social relations on an ad hoc basis. By exchanging these highly valued items, people create the web of social relationships that define and bind them as a community.

What Kind of a Valued Social Person? The Importance of Autonomy

What kind of social persons do people value? In Chapters 5, I tried to describe that activities related to the production of food contribute to the positive construction of a social actor. A good gardener is a good human being. A good gardener always keeps himself busy and is making something. As a result, he/she is never dependent upon others. He/she is not subordinate to others. Essentially, he has autonomous or sovereign will— decision-making power. Therefore, autonomy is valued as the ultimate basis for action for a social person. This is in contrast to people who do not produce something. A person without a garden is one who engages a minimum of social activity and will, a condition that can easily subject them to subordination by others. He has no gardens and no food, and his motionless body possesses immobility *patuat* (perspective). Being lazy or inactive (*mabeili)* is considered shameful as it signifies always being dependent on others. A person without a garden never has autonomy. Here, autonomy and willingness to act productively and independently are the qualities of a social person.

Indeed, the term autonomy is not an *emic* term postulated by people themselves but a term I deploy to define qualities produced by the relative amounts of activities or actions involved in producing food and gardens. The range of the social activities they engage in throughout their everyday lives in producing food is ultimately aimed at turning themselves into a decision maker or the locus of decision-making. The level of activities or action is not necessarily the amount of time and energy necessary to produce a garden or to have food, but rather the amount of time and energy deemed culturally necessary, which often exceeds the minimum amount necessary to get the job done. The activities must be part of total social life. The value

attributed to certain task/activities is, therefore, a relative measure of its socially defined importance. Here, being an autonomous, independent person is the ultimate value for an individual and family as it is the basis of any social relations. Autonomy is the quality attached to a good adult person or to a *family*.

Now, we can clearly see the parallel of producing persons and the production of food, as well as the link between them. The autonomy and political equality of an adult person or a family are acquired through the capacity to have sufficient food. By feeding themselves, adults in the family can nurture and feed their children, infusing them with the value of autonomy and developing the children into autonomous social beings. Hence, the autonomy of a person is inseparable from the state of self-sufficiency. Autonomy and self-sufficiency are made visible by the products of garden labour. Self-sufficiency is a necessary characteristic of autonomy; it is the opposite to dependency and being hungry. Food is not only a symbol of nurturing but an active agent to transform nurture and to create autonomy. Producing food contributes to the production of autonomy as a social value. Activities such as planting, tending, cooking, and especially gardening, are highly valued as they give a person sufficient amounts of food, which forms the basis of social actions and valuation.

A person's autonomy can only be attained through the family, a social institution that enables men and women to share their labour and produce their own food. Ideally, autonomy applies to everyone, but in fact it occurs primarily among adult or married men. Women and young men are regarded as autonomous but they have little opportunity to express themselves and little voice in public matters. They are not fully autonomous subjects since they depend on adult men to access food (property, land, and labour). Autonomy is a basic quality for social actors within the family since it gives them an equal voice. Within an *uma*, each family must be autonomous and politically equal. *Uma*, the immediate collective matrix or social identity of the self and family, must be autonomous and equal within the wider Mentawaian whole. In short, food is of tremendous significance in terms of the status and the quality attached to a person's autonomy. Without food and gardens, an adult person or family or *uma* is negatively valued. With plenty of food and gardens, they are positively valued.

Sharing and Eating Together: Producing Communal Value

Although all activities related to food production are valued, people also value certain activities related to food: sharing and eating together. While autonomy is a core value, it can also instigate rivalry and competition that pose a danger to the mutual co-existence between individuals and families. Possessing plenty of gardens can generate a negative valuation since it can be dangerous, subterranean, and a threat to the cohesiveness of the community. While having plenty of food is dangerous, the ultimate taboo is eating alone. Keeping food for yourself is strongly prohibited as it is the ultimate manifestation of selfishness, the extreme version of autonomy. It is seen as a threat to society as it prevents development of social relations. Eating alone is deemed anti-social and thus immoral. Eating alone will cause sickness. The absence of sharing food is thought to be the cause of community misfortune. People drown as a consequence. Sharing and eating together are important to prevent someone being hungry, but primarily these actions forestall individual autonomy and prestige. Sharing and eating food together symbolise and manifest an egalitarian value or ethos. In everyday life, daily meals represent the most basic form of both autonomy and egalitarianism created in the domestic sphere (family). Occasionally, lavish and ritualised communal meals in the public sphere (*uma*) serve as a social renewal.

Daily meals both represent and constitute the autonomy and egalitarian ethos within family. Daily meals also have basic structural significance for Mentawaian practices of kinship. Food continues the social relatedness that commences with natural relations (sex). There is an obvious idea of kinship as a process of becoming in which, through living in the same house and eating together, people become related. Sharing and consuming

substances together, i.e. food. This is continuously reproduced through daily communal meals. Food giving and sharing in daily communal meals are mundane and repetitive activities but they are valued because they create and renew the social bonds between the father and mother and between the parents and the children. The medium, food, that produces such a bond, is therefore imbued with social value.

The most important activities that imbue social values are the sharing and eating of food in *punen*. A ritual feast is a socio-cultural institution created to transform individual autonomy into a collective goal. In a ritual feast, all autonomous social actors are expected to contribute their wealth and labour. They produce food and eat, but it is only when they eat together that the food they produce is valued beyond its materiality. In a ritual feast, all the food, but particularly domestic animals, are removed from the individual person or family that produces them. The food is distributed among all families and consumed by them. In this way, food produces and generates the group (*uma*). Sharing and eating food together are social processes organised to generate social solidarity and a shared identity.

The ability of the group to enact a ritual feast and to transform individual autonomy creates an event during which everyone is free from envy and jealousy and joyously participates in communal meals. Food has value as a transformative agent in this kind of production. The more meat on the *lulag*, the bigger the *punen* is and the more the social prestige earned by the *uma*. The more the meat is offered to the spiritual forces, the greater their ability to protect themselves against sorcery will be. Thus, such events allow the group to assert its autonomy at a higher level. In turn, this autonomy means the group has the ability to freely develop any collective social relations with other groups.

Contributing food and labour to a series of performances and invocations in the ritual transforms the autonomy of the individual person and family into collective structured experiences in the *uma*. The sense of communal solidarity in the ritual has largely been conceived as an effort to repress individual autonomy, which is seen as a perverse version of the egalitarian ideals that are the basis of the community. The obligation to give away the fruits of one's labour and the products of one's personal gardens has been placed on people in order to offset the risks posed by autonomy. Individual sacrifice and sharing of personal wealth are not regarded merely as a way for an individual to earn social or collective recognition but also to dispel envy. If jealousy and rage are not resolved collectively, the resentment that emerges certainly produces social tension. The ritual feast is a tangible demonstration of the rejection of selfishness and social disorder.

6.3 The Emergence of Social Inequality

Chapter 2 provided an ethnographic and historical context that is important in understanding social transformation and the social values it brings. I have highlighted that the people of Muntei have had fairly continuous contact with missionaries, the colonial and post-colonial state, and the market. There have been many intrusions into their social world. Their involvement in cash-crop production and state institutions also has certain consequences for food production and consumption, and thus for social values. These external stimuli have forced each *uma* and family to abandon life in their traditional settlement (*pulaggaijat*) and live together in a larger and official settlement, in order to embrace a world religion and to engage in cash-crop production. While in a traditional setting in the old settlement people would largely exchange pigs, chickens, sago, or fruit trees between themselves, the arrival of traders complicated and stretched these existing social exchanges. In this section, I will analyse how involvement in cash-crop production and state administration generates social values that contradict egalitarianism.

The Effect of Cash Crops

Selling and buying a commodity are certainly not new for the people of Muntei. Chapter 2 explained that they have been participating in the market economy through the trading of forest products and other commodities for imported goods since at least the 18th century. Initially, the production of coconut complicated local food production but did not fundamentally alter it. Both coconuts and cloves were adopted and cultivated in the same way as fruit gardens were. Both crops also occupy a specific area of hilly landscape, mainly along the eastern coast where dry winds from the sea are present. Around the settlement, the effect of the cultivation of cloves and coconuts on staple food, however, is less visible. These crops do not compete with sago, taro, and fruit trees. Economically and socially, cash crop production has been subsumed in the basic schema of producing autonomous persons and the egalitarianism ethos of the group. These crops are treated the same way as sago palms or durian trees and are part of local legal and social system. It is true that the products of planting, nurturing, and harvesting of cloves and coconut are not comestible in a way that can be shared communally. Instead, dried clove buds and copra are sold for inedible cash. Cash from selling copra or *nilam* has never been shared equally with all kinsmen in the same way as pork or chicken meat. Money from coconuts or clove buds has been spent to gain individual prestige—constructing houses and to buy wristwatches or televisions. They also acquired valuable goods such as gongs or large cooking pans. These items, just like garden products, were attained to establish social prestige and autonomy.

Yet, involvement in cash-crop production also enabled people to instill communal values in another way. Personal belongings such as a mosquito net or a bush knife (*tegle*) obtained from selling copra or cloves could be shared communally. These could be part of or contribute to the collective affairs such as the payment of a bride-price or compensation for a dispute. These imported goods were indigenised and completely incorporated into existing social relationships, becoming a medium for producing social values as they were subsumed into the basic schema of sharing and collective use. There is also a general understanding that those who have more coconut or clove gardens must help fellow kinsmen in need. Helping a nephew to attend university or paying their bride-price represents not only the communal duty of giving young people an understanding of a new world, but also a clan's task to gain social prestige and prowess to show that they are a more successful group than others. By sending members of the clan to the mainland for university, the clans not only instill the new but compatible value of formal education into the roster of activities that they need to acquire to become social actors, but it also enhances their reputations as being a modern group.

In short, producing commodities for the market has allowed them to not merely preserve the existing tension between the autonomy of a person and the egalitarian ethos of the group, but also to intensify the dialectical processes of generating these values. When there was a boom period, money from selling crops was used to construct a large house or to acquire communal items such as a gong and to organise an elaborated ritual. Selling rattan and copra enabled a person to accumulate foreign objects, generate autonomy, and pursue social prestige. In turn, it might generate or intensify existing competition and rivalry (*pako*). The more intensive rivalry instigated social exchanges and rituals. In anticipation of such a tension, each person had to produce more gardens, either for subsistence or for cash crops to sell on the market. As a result, the greater tension and competition generated attempts to strengthen the solidarity of the clan, and greater efforts to establish political equality through social exchanges among clans. In short, their involvement in cash crop production and the influx of external goods intensified the actions to balance autonomy and egalitarianism, stretching and extending the balance without breaking it.

The involvement in cash production, nonetheless, has produced social differentiation. During the peak of copra and clove production in the mid-1980s, people saw some families or *uma* gain more than others. The pioneer Sasabirut clans had the advantage of having land on the small islands or along the coast and

were the first to cultivate cloves in the hills around Muntei. When the price of copra and cloves was high during 1980s and early 1990s, their crops already produced a substantial yield. Sarereiket did not have this advantage. When members of Sakukuret, Sakakadut, Salemurat and Sailuluni arrived in Muntei in the mid-1980s, the hills were already filled with cloves from the pioneer clans. The latter also did not have experience with cultivating land in the small islets. As a result, the pioneer clans, especially those who have both cloves and coconut gardens along the coast and in the hills around Muntei, have gained greater prosperity. This can be detected in the number and composition of young men and women from Muntei attending university or schooling in Padang since the 1990s. They are mostly from pioneer families. The other sign of prosperity can be seen in terms of housing. Semi-permanent brick houses with tin roofs are predominantly owned by members of the pioneer clans.

The inequality, however, is rather relative. Having no advantage in terms of land for coconut gardens and being too late for cultivating cloves around Muntei, the latecomers from Rereiket quickly seized the opportunity to develop semi-intensive traditional forest gardens and especially pig keeping, which are practices that have been largely abandoned by the pioneers. *Uma* Sakukuret, Sailuluni, and more recently Sakaliou have become specialists in pig keeping. They exchanged pigs with the pioneers and other neighbours and eventually acquired substantial wealth. They, just as their pioneer counterparts, have spent their fortune on constructing permanent houses with tin roofs and sending their children away to the mainland for higher education. Luck and timing of cash-crop booms have also complicated the fortunes of those involved in commodity production. When the price was at the highest point in the mid-1990s, all members of the *uma* Samekmek had already harvested their *nilam* garden in the old settlement near Kokok river. While others were still clearing their forest, they already sold litres of distilled *nilam* oil. They earned a fortune, at least by local standards, and spent it on building permanent houses and collectively constructing an impressive *sapo-uma*.

Other latecomers from Rereiket such as the *uma* Sauddeinuk, Sakakadut, Salemurat, and Samapoupou did not experience such advantages. They only started coconut production recently and struggled to access land for their cloves. A few families of the Saruruk, Saleleggu, and Sabulat that were not involved in coconut production and who relied on wage labour around the settlement also did not have a regular income. All these families consider themselves unfortunate as they cannot send their children to Padang or upgrade their houses. They saw an emergence of inequality in terms of housing, education, and limited non-gardening work in the settlement.

Market Intensification and Pressure to Traditional Food Production

The intensification of the market can be detected from the impact of cacao on sago and pig production, the two most important types of food. The effect of cacao on Muntei shows how market intensification influences food production and social values. Cacao drastically changed the valuation of the swamp forest. With cacao, the swamp forest has become a symbol of development and economic progress. This change in resource valuation has pushed people towards cacao production and a wider market economy. They cut sago palms and replaced them with cacao trees.

Another immediate effect of cacao was the change in land tenure. Cacao has complicated the basic principles within the *uma* and the family. The claimant of cultivated land after the production of cash crop have triggered the privatisation of communal land. The production of cacao transforms the value of land as a symbol and manifestation of an *uma*'s unity into segregated plots owned by individual families. Cacao demands tenure security and encourages individual families to enclose their cultivated land separately from their *uma*'s land. The privatisation of land is part of the larger changing position of the *uma* as the pivot of social production. The stronger emphasis of family as the core unit of production in cacao

cultivation has complicated the relations of *uma* and the family, which were already stretched when they cultivated coconut and cloves. Reciprocal relations within *uma* may not have entirely been diminished, but involvement in cash crop production has forced the family to establish and maintain a degree of spatial and social autonomy from the *uma*, with whom the family members were previously tied via the sharing of food, ritual obligations, and gift exchange. While the enclosure of land has not entirely separated individual family from the flexible and fluid arrangements of *uma's* social relations and obligation, it did affect the solidarity between families and the contribution of each family when the *uma* is organising a *punen*. For example, the new generation born in the settlement and devoted to cash crops prefers to build a larger brick house than a longhouse or buying pigs for a large *punen*.

The conversion of sago and *onaja* have pressured people to participate more and more in commodity production and abandon their food crops. However, agrarian differentiation and the compulsion to neglect food production have not been emerging in Muntei cacao production as it happened elsewhere when indigenous people became involved in cacao and other cash crop production (Li 2014; 2016; Hall 2004). The combination of land availability, the limited participation of migrants, and the encumbrance surrounding the privatization of ancestral land have prevented the enclosure of the entire land into private property. Some people have tried to make adjustments by planting taro and banana in the early years of cacao production while the seeds of cacao were growing. Others selected mature gardens, cutting few unproductive fruits trees and integrating cacao with some valuable durian. It seems that Muntei people still have a choice to participate either in cash or food production and do not surrender their land entirely for market production.

The most significant impact of cacao production is on traditional pig keeping. The prohibition of pig keeping along the banks of the Mara River that I have described in Chapter 3 seems quite dramatic, but it follows a precedent present long before the hamlet's decision. Most men raised in the settlement told me that traditional pig husbandry was not suitable for contemporary life. There were a number of reasons for abandoning pig husbandry. A complicated system of taboos was a handicap for ordinary people to participate in commercial ventures. They felt that pig husbandry requires difficult skills, with few direct benefits but many risks. The taboos would prevent them working in cash crops. Another commonly mentioned reason is that pig keeping required hard work. Pigs require daily attention but are easily wiped out with an attack of *oiluk*, a kind of swine flue. Regular feeding required owners to travel back and forth to pig huts at least once a day, sometimes having to cross the river. The facing of difficult taboos and heavy labour was not always rewarded. People claim that it is easier to work on cash crops because cloves and coconuts produce a stable harvest and are not related to complicated taboos and rituals.

The third reason is that space for traditional pig keeping has grown increasingly scarce. The impossibility of practicing traditional pig husbandry comes from the transformation of sago gardens and swampy forest into cacao gardens. Pig owners eventually found that their pig hut was no longer in the middle of sago gardens and secondary forest but surrounded by hundreds of plots of cacao gardens. The places where swine previously browsed wild tubers, snails, and roots was soon cleared, trenched, and drained. Cacao gardens are very different from sago gardens, where the owner of cultivated plants and the land was not always the same person. All cacao gardens have been cultivated individually. The owners of the cacao gardens have invested their money and other possessions in land with the expectation that the investment would help them to get a decent return. Inside their fixed and bounded plot, the cacao growers take exclusive rights for all concerted efforts they make including uncultivated vegetation that was previously free to take for humans or non-humans. This makes the practice of semi-domesticated pig husbandry, which relies on an extensive area, impossible to maintain. There is a swift perception about pig keeping: allowing pigs to roam around in cacao gardens became a threat for their livelihood. Surrounded by cacao gardens, pigs became a pest. The prohibition on pig keeping in and around the settlement and the cacao gardens symbolically represents,

and literally manifests, the significant shift of social life of the people of Muntei. People are continually, as I have shown in Chapter 3, redefining and even remaking themselves through the production and consumption of pork and yet, they are increasingly seen as a problem too in a new circumstance. In the meeting in question, the words of Aman Sege Salakoppak (53), the head of Peining Butet hamlet expressed the general perception on pig keeping:

> We are all Maliggai children.[23] We were all born with pigs. When we are sick or have a family member passed away, we begged Aman Limakok to give his pigs. I swear to our ancestors; our life is in pig owners' hands! But… but, we will be starving if pigs eat cacao and coconut sprouts. We don't want to lose the money that we spent for land. We all now need *hasil* [product of cash crops] so we can earn money. Otherwise we will be poorer. Look, our neighbour along the Mara River are not only people from Silaoinan, Puro or Maileppet. Our brothers from Nias, Java, the Batak lands also cultivate land there. They do not want pigs around their gardens. We are all poor Maliggai children living in a bad time. We can't live with pigs in gardens.

He points to several issues underpinning the perceived shift in relation to pig keeping. First, he highlights the importance of pigs in the social relations and the prominent role of pig owners for the entire community in Muntei. He uses the myth of Maliggai, the Mentawaians' ancestor who brought pigs to them, to remind the audience that they possess a distinctive pig culture. Pig owners are respected since communities rely on their herd for important occasions. Second, however, he emphasises that pigs cannot coexist with the new crops. Pigs are a source of trouble. This hints at the transformation of spatial arrangements. Third, he shows that the people of Muntei are now part of larger social networks: the interest of migrants to cultivate cash crops, the involvement of financial investments in land, and the expectations related to the crops. To attain a better future, they must adapt to commodity production at the expense of their pig culture. Their old desirable object has to be given away as the pigs have become a threat to new valuable ones.

Both pigs and cash crops are the reasons why people spend time and energy working in the gardens. By producing commodities for the market, people see the meaning or importance of their own creative energy and capacity to be productive as means through which to acquire money. By having more money, they can buy clothing and modern luxuries such televisions and motorcycles. Their involvement in commodity production has helped people to reorganise their desire for goods that they do not produce themselves. They can obtain food and other goods from elsewhere. Furthermore, income from cash crops can connect their actions and activities to larger social networks beyond their settlement or even their island. Money seems to be a concrete form of desire, contributing to social prestige and somehow replacing pigs. The new way of acquiring prestige through cash-crop cultivation and money-based exchange has added a sense of pride and autonomy. Paddling a canoe full of copra or putting down a sack of dried cloves in front of a merchant's store is something people can be proud of. They can wander into a migrant's shop to examine the goods, select their clothes, and buy a sack of rice. Having a regular source of money from a good cacao garden represents the ultimate social significance of their activities, the means by which it is integrated into the broader relations.

Market intensification has forced some people to accept that they are no longer pig producers. Instead, their activities are directed towards cash-crop production. In a traditional setting, having pigs would assure their livelihood and was an obvious way to obtain the forms of autonomy and privilege that allow people to obtain and assert social prestige. Keeping pigs provided a guarantee of life security. In the contemporary setting, they now have to accept that their future lies in their involvement in the cash-crop economy. There are still a handful of pig keepers in Muntei, but their number is rapidly decreasing. And there are no new pig keepers, as young men have little interest in it. This is not to say that pigs cannot be sold for money,

or that they are less valuable or no longer important. On the contrary, pigs are still valuable, desirable, and important. Yet, producing pigs is seen to be impractical. Unlike dried clove buds or cacao beans, pigs cannot be kept in storage. The market for pigs is also limited. The traders are predominantly Minangkabau. For religious reasons, the Minangkabau traders do not collect pigs and deliver them on to regional market. Cacao, copra, or cloves are the only means by which traders incorporate the people of Muntei in wider social networks. A sack of dried cacao beans is valuable because it can create social relations with others. It can be exchanged at a migrant's shop, pay for a ferry ticket at a travel company, and be saved for their children when they enter a university. Commodity production has become an important part of the overall process of social life since it produces the person they want to be. They feel the future is no longer about becoming a pig producer, the animal that embodies the value of sharing and egalitarianism.

Eating Money: The State and the Emergence of Elite

In Chapter 2, I described how that incorporation into the state administration requires several new institutions such as the village head, the hamlets, the schools, and the church. These institutions have offered positions for some villagers to be power brokers for relevant government agencies and officials. While some positions were selected by people themselves, they are not rooted in an egalitarian-traditional setting but imposed from outside and installed more for external purposes. With external support and connections, those who hold a position in an introduced organisation have an advantage and gain more social prestige and power over others. Eventually, certain people have developed the ability to establish authority and have learned to be intermediaries between the villagers and government institutions and officials. These people have taken the opportunity to establish a link with particular state institutions and officials, and to establish themselves as representatives of the settlement. This has provided them with power and authority over other people. The position of power brokers is quite clearly reinforced by successive development projects. They are able to profit from state hand-outs, while others need more assistance to negotiate the increased array of rules and bureaucratic procedures that are part and parcel of state formation processes in general, and development in particular. The power brokers become elites in the settlement and are seen as those who gain more than common people. This creates social inequality as the authority and privilege they have are associated with a mode of either social, cultural, or economic prestige.

Certain uma and families benefit more from development projects than others. They belong to the elite (*sautek*) created through the state administration. The members of the elite who have benefited from the state are always accused of betraying the community. Sagari and Salakkopak have constantly been accused of being 'money eaters' (*sikop bulagat*). *Sikop bulagat* is a popular term applied to those in charge of a development project but who keep the benefits of it for themselves or their families. It was initially an accusation directed towards Minangkabau people, especially those who hold authority or administrate state funds, for instance by running development projects on the island. Now, the term is also applied to fellow Muntei and other Mentawaian residents who 'keep' public funds in their pocket—a euphemism for any form of corruption done by officials. Therefore, not only Sagari and Salakoppak men stand accused, but all *sautek:* the head of a hamlet, the village secretary, or the head of the district have all been accused of being 'money eaters' (*sikop bulagat*).

The usage of 'eating' is particularly telling. 'Eating money' is perhaps not a term originally created by the people of Muntei or other Mentawaians. Most people in Indonesia generally use the term 'eating money" to refer any form of corruption. Yet, the term is particularly apt in the Muntei context. Eating money is always attributed to those who have benefitted from their positions as the officers or implementers of a development project. The term has always been used with regard to demanding fairness, equal rights, and equality. According to them, any authority, power, and wealth should ideally be shared. Everyone should

have a fair share (*otcai*), either in the form of cash or development hands out. *Otcai* represents political equality and help (*paroman*).

The accusation of 'eating money' is not a trivial matter, even though it is often articulated in a jocular tone. To claim a person is 'eating money' is as serious accusation, as eating alone and not sharing are asocial acts. They breach a taboo that is punishable by sickness and even death (remember the *sikaoinan*). It is worth saying that people believe that money comes from the market and the state. The metaphor of 'eating money' illustrates the ultimate idea that humans naturally tend to be corrupt when they hold power without any institution or social mechanism to force them to share. The accusation of local elites 'eating money' is commonly associated with their selfishness and sickness, and the lack of sharing.

The complaint of elite 'eating money' is regularly heard in daily conversation. Everytime I sat in the varanda of a house talking about a government project or the village officers, the conversation inevitably went into the direction of complaining about the head of village or the person in charge of government project. The complaint was particularly strong when it came from a small clan or family who is less prominent and has no power and authority. One complaint I recorded is from a Salelenggu family. Aman Jeto, the head of family, is a full-time gardener and a part-time chainsaw operator. He lamented that he is rarely asked by the village officers to supply wood materials for the government projects. He critisized that people in charge of development saved government money for their own families. It is not surprising that he deploys food-related-terms to protest:

> *Sautek* [elite] and their family eat *sarat simananam* [delicious things]. They always have money. They steal it from us. They eat meat (pork) a lot. Every day, they go to market and buy fish. Their children always have rice on their plate. They have smooth skins [*mabubut*] from regularly eating delicious food and working mainly in the office. They get all the money from *pamerenta* [government]. Once they are up, they do not want to go down. They keep their place. Someday, they will be sick as they do not share wealth.

Aman Jeto understands that 'eating money', however, is not the most serious thing. He said that he could be the money eater if he holds government projects or become the head of the hamlet. He admits that whoever is in power certainly has self-interest. "Holding authority and power is a delicious thing. It looks like you have plenty of pigs and food!" Aman Jeto claims. The central problem is the failure to share. As described in Chapter 6, illness results from any substance consumed alone. Hence, it is strongly believed that all 'money eaters' (*sikom bulagat)* will eventually suffer serious illnesses. Consider the wrath of *sikaoinan*: healing rituals are needed to remove something eaten or enjoyed by someone alone. The substance must be removed from the body, extracted, and shared. Pork, sago, or taro can be shared and this will convert sickness into the possibility of successful social relations. Power, authority, and money, however, are not food. They may be shared but cannot be divided, distributed, shared, and consumed as pork or chicken. While the illness of 'eating alone' is curable, there is no ritual to remove money 'from' the body of the sick person and share it with the community. The 'money eater' eventually dies.

Eating money is a social metaphor for the social inequality that people have experienced since living in the settlement. State development projects restructured social relations, contributing to the rise of 'money eaters'. The state and its development projects not only favoured Minangkabau people, as in the past, but also a few Mentawaians who are positioned as patrons of the projects and power brokers. The development processes have created an uneven distribution of power and resources. While the development projects might not be particularly large in scope and scale, they can offer power and positions, and create local elites. The prominent people from Sagari and Salakoppak were the first to seek and take advantage of

development hand-outs or government schemes to build new roads, schools, and other infrastructure. Their children were educated and have access to government jobs—opportunities that remain limited and require recommendations and connections, and are usually afforded to those close to state officials and bureaucrats and, more importantly, those who have cash to offer.

6.4 Festivity Without Feasts

It has been almost four decades since the first people moved from Siberut Hulu to Muntei. Currently, they are living together and enjoy communal life. People gather in narrow spaces along the Siberut River and in the hills around Muntei, living quite literally side by side. They socialise every single day, spending time greeting and talking to each other. The settlement has a collective and festive atmosphere like that during a ritual feast—unlike the old settlement, where they spent most of their time in their gardens or their own houses. Young men and women have unlimited time to socialise with their peers in the church, school, the local kiosks, or on the volleyball pitch. Enjoying collective moments in public arenas makes the village more attractive compared to a lone hut in the middle of the gardens. For the children, they are in the settlement most of the time as all of them were born and raised in the hamlets. Another appeal of the settlement is the variety of livelihoods. People can devote their time to both traditional gardening, cash-crop production, and off-garden earning activities. The members of the older generation are ambivalent. They enjoy living in the settlement but feel that there is not much work for them. They enthusiastically attend Sunday mass and watch people all dressed up in fine clothes, but sometimes they prefer the calmness and quietness of the old gardens.

Muntei is a settlement with a new community, consisting of hundreds of people from several *uma* tied to government authority and the market relations. While the self-identification and loyalty to their *uma* remains unshakeable, people have gradually identified themselves as 'people from Muntei', regardless their origin, clan, or ethnicity. They have been living on the same land, sharing the name of hamlets and villages, and enjoying access to modern infrastructure. Apparently, Muntei as a community has generally brought satisfaction.

The only resentment shared by both the older and younger generation is the lack of meat. Teu Rima, the shaman or Aman Reju of Samekmek, bemoaned the lack of meat; but this does not necessarily mean a shortage of domestic animals or the absence of meat itself. Meat brings people together and creates unity. The lack of sharing meat—or food in general—in the settlement illustrates a lack of togetherness, cohesion, and solidarity. Now, they meet and greet each other often but do not eat pork together. There is a collective identity but no equality. They are members of Muntei settlement but have no equal chance to belong to the elites. The statement that they are lacking meat illustrates their ambivalent position to living in the settlement. They emphasise that they live as a solid, proper, and strong community, yet resent the lack of communal feasts, which are synonymous with solidarity and egalitarianism.

Maintaining Egalitarianism?

While they have experienced social inequality, people have tried to maintain their egalitarianism. One particular attempt to bring unity, not surprisingly, is through food. Three times a year, people in the settlement organise the slaughtering of pigs (Pictures 55 & 56). As they are predominantly Catholic, the church facilitates the event. Easter, Christmas, and New Year's Eve are the moments when people collectively buy and slaughter pigs. There are a few members of the church appointed to a committee that organises the event together with a night party. The church will first compile a list of people who want to collect money for obtaining the pigs. The number of people on the list and the amount of money collected will determine the number of pigs they can buy. Non-Catholics are encouraged to participate too.

DARMANTO

Picture 55. Muntei people distribute pork during Christmas festive (2014)

DARMANTO

Picture 56. Muntei women prepare shared food in Christmas festive in the Catholic Church. Note that there is no sago, *subbet*, or meat in the event but just foreign snack (biscuits, crackers, cookies etc.) (2014)

The slaughtering of pigs has been steadily organised since people moved to Muntei in 1981. The joy with which people participate in this event illustrates their willingness to maintain the unity of the community. The slaughter is the biggest and perhaps only regular communal occasion at the settlement level. The process of killing and chopping the pigs and the distribution of the meat, is almost identical to the sacrificing and killing of pigs during a regular *punen*. All buyers participate in slaughtering and distributing the meat. Young men help their fathers and uncles with minor jobs such as washing the pigs' intestines or sharpening knives. Children enjoy this event with great laughter. People stand around, watching with eyes moving back and forth between the meat and the knives. The meat is then sorted and divided according to the list of people who have committed to buy. The names on the list are called aloud, and one by one, the buyers collect the meat, put it on trays and take it home.

To some extent, the event brings egalitarianism beyond the *uma*. It allows people to feel togetherness and unity. The process of killing and distributing the meat is equivalent to traditional ceremonies. A shaman will do a small offering before the animals are slaughtered. However, the egalitarianism in this event seems incomplete. The main difference to traditional *punen* is that the Catholic pig slaughtering is not followed by a communal feast. The fresh meat is brought home, cooked, and consumed in individual families. The average amount of meat is also not particularly large. In three years (2013-2015), the average weight of the meat taken home by each household was about 1.4 kilograms, which is only enough for one meal (*sanga kopman*) for a family. Moreover, the mechanism of obtaining meat is rather different from that of the *punen*. The pig owners neither give their animals freely, nor provide a discount for the price. They buy the meat the same as everyone else. The meat they bring home is put up for sale. Only those with cash can enjoy it.

The fact that wealthier families are able to buy more meat than others puts people and the church in a dilemma: the church buys a certain number of pigs so that every household can get at least a portion of meat, since the price of meat increases in the period before important events such as Christmas. But if they buy more pigs, some families will get more meat than others, with wealthier families certainly dominating the purchasing. However, the church would also be blamed for providing only a small amount of meat. Virtually no one is satisfied with the meat bought from the church. Eventually, wealthier families buy another pig for themselves. They may also perform a mini-ritual for themselves that shows off their wealth.

The Catholic feast, despite being a communal event, shows different types of sharing. People do not share the meat and do not eat together. All meat is distributed equally but cooked and eaten in the individual household. The wealthier people do not provide the slaughtered pig. The event is not a social mediation for redistributing wealth and possessions. All they do is buy meat in a collective manner, no different from buying rice or sardines from a trader's shop and then eating at home. The meat they get is not entirely an equal portion (*otcai*) as a few families who have more money get more while others get less. Hence, the event does not generate equality. Unlike the ritual feasts in traditional *punen*, each family's meal during Christmas or Easter does not come from the collective food contributed by all families in the settlement from their own gardens. Therefore, the event does not integrate the work of each family and every clan into the ultimate unity of the settlement as a whole.

Against Egalitarianism: Contemporary Social Life in The Settlement

Living in the settlement has transformed food production and reconfigured the social values it entails. By staying in the *barasi*, people have focused on cash crops, converting their sago and abandoning their pigs. Productive work has shifted from producing and exchanging food and other garden products between clans to producing and exchanging goods with traders. Cultivating crops means less time for raising the pigs and chickens necessary for exchanges and religious ceremonies. With limited social and cultural exchanges involving rituals and exchange of garden products, the settlement lacks reciprocity. Instead,

the people competitively devote their labour to better housing, modern devices, and cash-crop plots. All this pulls them into the cash economy and requires a dedication to their cash crops. It means that they have to gradually leave behind some traditional practices that once defined their unity and solidarity—pig keeping, building longhouses, and ritual hunting.

This is not to say that social transformation has fundamentally transformed the full range of existing social relations. Reciprocal relations within and between *uma* and other traditional institutions are certainly maintained but some have also found new forms. Despite public acceptance that many traditional rituals have been modified, they have not entirely vanished. The market and the state have stretched existing patterns of reciprocal relations within and between groups. Within clans, subsistence items (e.g. sago, fruit, vegetables) are constantly changing hands. Reciprocal relations include helping other clan members to pursue further education or a more prestigious job. Between clans, people maintain social allies not by exchanging pigs and frequently serving kinsmen with plenty of animal fat in rituals, but by electing their kinsmen as the head of hamlets or the head of local church, or sending money for higher education on the mainland. Between clans, social exchanges mainly involve land transfers.

In general, Muntei residents do not have substantial complaints over living in the new settlement. They enjoy the paved road, the church, the school and governmental services. The move to Muntei has fulfilled their desire to have a better life, compared to a muddy and isolated place in the old settlement. Living in the new settlement is what they envisioned four decades ago. When I asked Aman Reju for his opinion about living in the settlement, he gave me the following comparison:

> I guess living in Muntei looks like your education and your life. You had an experience of study and life in Indonesia and now you study and live in the Netherlands. You must enjoy living abroad. Otherwise you will stay with us in Siberut. For you, studying in the Netherland is better life. You are learning new languages, eating new food, and having a good road. You travel with train and airplane and not with canoe or walk on feet. We now have a better life than in the old settlement. We are able to travel by motorcycle or speedboat, compared to paddling a canoe. Living in a brick house is better than living in a wooden hut. Having coconut and clove garden is better life than just having sago and taro. Living in Muntei is better as we got development projects. It is better than being ignored by the government.

Aman Reju's statements contain various understandings of a better life. It seems that the better life is a kind of desire. The desire of being fully incorporated into the nation-state and development agendas. The desire of being involved in the wider market community and commodity-based production. The better life is associated with having a different way of life that contrasts with the traditional way of life. It does not necessary mean that all aspects of the traditional life are worse compared to the new one. Having lots of pigs and gardens has been, and is still considered, a better thing than just having a brick house, for example. Yet, in contemporary circumstances, the better life is strongly associated with the ability to have progress. The progress means that they have material goods from the market, holding authority and power (being a *sautek*, head of a government project) and having a permanent job. A better life also includes the ability to have what others have beyond their status. It is no longer enough to merely have basic necessities such as food, a house, a machete, and mosquito nets. While pigs and the longhouse are still important features and sources of social prestige, most youngsters in Muntei do not aim to have a large longhouse, many more pigs or larger rituals. Their aspirations are to enrol at a university, be civil servants, or get a regular salary from a non-agricultural job in the city. Owning many pigs is still desirable as pigs can be converted to cash. Yet, the aspirations of the villagers and direction of the development of Muntei are moving toward becoming 'like those on the mainland" who

produce commodities on a regular basis or work for wages. People feel that having a combination cash and food crops in several gardens, and securing government jobs is a real sign of a better life.

However, the fulfilled desire of a better life in the new settlement has presented a dilemma. They have a better life but they no longer share the good part of the life. Their food might be better and more varied but not everybody has equal access to it. The practice of sharing is declining. People start to keep food for themselves. The lack of meat and the notion of hunger are both physical and social conditions of people's new social life. They are both symbols of and the actual cost to be paid in the pursuit of a better life in the government settlement, incorporation into to the market and the state administration. The settlement is a better place, but it is not a place where they can raise pigs. It is not a place where all residents enjoy equal consumption of pork and communal feasts. The settlement is not where the ultimate aim of social production is to ensure equality and to bring egalitarian values into being. Not everyone in the settlement is equally successful at acquiring possessions, dominance, and power. The gardens are productive, but not for sago and pigs. The products of the gardens can instigate autonomy and prestige, but they cannot always be easily shared and certainly cannot be consumed. Social productions have now complicated the balance relations between family and the *uma*. In the settlement, people build brick houses, not longhouses. Each nuclear family dedicates its labour towards commodity production but spends little of the fruits of its labour on others. *Uma* as a social organisation might be still important for communal ceremonies, but there is a growing feeling that inequality within *uma* has become more visible. This is why the better life in the settlement comes with the complaints of a lack of solidarity and cohesiveness.

While they have a problem with inequality, it is incorrect to portray Muntei people as victims of state development or the market. They are active and conscious participants of the social transformation who pay the social costs of their own social productions. The main problem is that there is not a sociocultural schema or institution that suppresses the social inequality which accompanies progress and development. All their social actions—such as making cacao gardens or sending children to university—are aimed at producing autonomy but do little to ensure equality. The flow of cash, from either the state or the market, is unevenly distributed across families and social groups, which in effect produces a new social hierarchy. The privatisation of land has also broken up the traditional arrangements of land relations and shifted the balance of *uma*-nuclear family relations. The major problem of living in the settlement then is not a lack of autonomy, but the absence of social mechanisms to share social prestige and transform autonomy into egalitarianism. The emerging social inequality reflects the lack of sharing and inadequate social relations. It is the polar opposite of egalitarian values.

The shaman's social comments, mentioned at the outset of this dissertation, are best read as an expression of this sense of social insecurity: a newfound experience of how a better life in the settlement can be acquired, but at the cost of the most important social values: equality, solidarity and togetherness. Hunger is appearing because of both physical and social transformation. Cash crops have replaced sago and pigs. Sago and fruit gardens are considered less valuable than cacao. Pigs are seen as troublesome for cash crops. People now eat more rice and less pork. Engaging in the market economy and with the state leads to the uncontrolled autonomy of the family, which in turn creates increasing social inequality. The emergence of inequality and the transformation of *uma*-nuclear family relations as a threat to solidarity are not mitigated, as genuine sharing and communal feasts at the entire settlement level are now virtually absent. This is why people associate hunger and a lack of solidarity with the consumption of meat despite there being no evidence that they have less meat and food than in the past. Complaints about the lack of meat have to be seen in this light, where social production in the settlement has created autonomy but not a collective institution to preserve their egalitarian values to guard against the emergence of systematic forms of social inequality. Hunger is a social sentiment to express the dangers of social inequality.

7
Conclusion: Good to Produce, Good to Share: Food, Hunger, and Social Values

At the beginning of this research, I attempted to link people's statements of being hungry (*malaje*) with food insecurity. Participant observation and analysis of quantitative data on the availability of food resources and a year of food consumption, however, did not provide me with a picture showing that Muntei residents have a serious problem with food shortage. The value of the Muntei people's claim of *malaje* is precisely what challenged my research to rethink the meaning of hunger, to reevaluate the questions on food insecurity, and to search for a new perspective capable of dealing with the complex socio-cultural roles and importance of food.

Taking up this challenge, the description and analysis presented in all chapters offer a concluding discussion on the cultural dimension of food and society in three main respects. First, the statement of being hungry does not merely refer to physical condition or signify food insecurity. The claim of being hungry is a socio-cultural statement. Second, food is an active agent that mediates human's social activities and is neither a cultural metaphor (good to think), nor a basic necessity (good to eat). By identifying this, the focus of this dissertation is not only on the amount, the size, the taste, the smell, the shape, the form of food people produces and consume, but also on the activities and social processes related to food production and consumption such as cultivating, cooking, sharing, and eating. Third, this dissertation tries to link up the activities related to production and consumption of food with the production of persons and reproduction of social institutions through the production of social values in the context of ongoing social transformation. These three main themes will be a starting point to engage with anthropological discussions on the role of food and social values in society, both on Mentawai Island and beyond.

7.1 The Socio-Cultural Meaning of *Malaje*

This dissertation showed that food for Muntei residents serves a purpose beyond providing nutritional sustenance. Being hungry (*malaje*) refers to a physical condition and is also a cultural statement. People use *malaje* when their bellies are empty. Although *malaje* is bound to the ingestion, it has little to do with food shortages. The claim of *malaje* does not refer to scarce resources, a mismanagement of food production, or nutritional deprivation. Muntei people have an abundance of food resources, especially staple foods (sago, banana, and tubers). The statement of *malaje* is strongly associated with the lack of sharing and eating food. It is in particular linked to the lack of sharing and eating the meat of domestic animals. This touches on a general discussion in anthropology on the meaning of people's statements on

hunger. When people suggest that they are starving they tend to relate it with a lack of meat despite other sources of calories and protein being available (Richards 1939; Holtzman 2009). Further, it supports the argument that the hunger for meat is, first and foremost, not a physical and ecological phenomenon, but a social and psychological one (Simoons 1994; Gell 1998).

The claim of *malaje* is deployed more as a social sentiment and moral-political evaluation of existing social relations, which are marked by lack of sharing or lack of unity. The statement *malaje* is not merely explaining the physical condition of an individual, but rather hints at the relations between persons and between individuals and the wider community. It is a qualitative and moral evaluation of ongoing social relations. People use the idiom of *malaje* to indicate that they have food, but they do not use it to renew existing relationships or establish new ones. In a more general sense, being hungry is a social comment on the imbalance between pursuing individual desires (associated with eating alone and keeping food for yourself) and collective demand (manifested in sharing and eating together). Existing between opposing worlds of keeping and sharing, individual autonomy and social collectivity, people rely on their food and feelings about hunger to manage the tensions produced by these desires.

The claim of *malaje* can be categorised as a kind of social sentiment in Durkheimian terms (1972, 219-220): "a culturally constructed pattern of feeling and behavior which constitute, initiate and motivate a person's actions upon the world." It is stated by individual persons but projected outward from the individual onto the social order. It binds individuals together and individuals with clans, or the Muntei settlement as a new community. As a social sentiment, the statement of *malaje* does not always mark everyday experiences (Fajans 1983, 178). It is in contexts where the boundaries between the ideals of the community and the daily actions of individuals are problematic, where sets of expectations are in conflict, where new activities are producing new values and old social values are threatened with transformation, that being hungry is called upon to express and mediate the situation. *Malaje* then defines the transformative value of social creation and the importance of food as an agent of social unity. The sense of hunger is articulated loudly when people sense a threat to that unity.

Arguing that hunger is a social sentiment allows me to contribute to the conceptualisation of hunger. Most interpretations of hunger, especially from a nutritional and evolutionary perspective, have an assumption that hunger is a universally biological phenomenon (Young 1986) while a political ecologist and economist have argued it is caused by scarcity and inequality of power (Lappe and Collins 1997). It is clear that the claim of being hungry in Muntei does not connect with the scarcity and unequal distribution of food. Muntei people have been, and are still largerly self-sufficient. The food regime that has caused deep problems in food distribution and access at global and national scale (Friedmann and McMichael 1989; Edelman 2009) and caused global famine (Lappe and Collins 1997) has little impact on the local food system in Muntei. Generations of anthropologists have found that hunger is a culturally, socially and historically specific phenomenon. Audrey Richard, the pioneer of the anthropology of food suggests that hunger cannot be considered from a biological perspective alone, but must be regarded in relation to the specific 'social organization' such as kinship and tribal relations (Richards 1932). Others suggest that the obsession with food and hunger is a psychological coping mechanism within an unreliable and unpredictable environment, a primary symbol of lack of social control (Young 1971), associated with powerlessness (Harstrup 1994). The notion of hunger is a cultural ethos to control and master the anxiety and fear of life in which food is a basic necessity (Young 1971; Kahn 1994). It is also mainly seen as a way to control a person's appetite and desire as the supply of food is uncertain, subject to fluctuations, and insufficient. Certainly, the Mentawaians experience anxiety and fear in regard to food provision. Schefold (1982) describes the cosmological belief of the Sakuddei, a small group of Mentawaians living on the west coast of Siberut, explaining that they are constantly encountering an unpredictable and unconquerable

environment around human dwellings that are crowded by powerful spirits. Humans have to control their actions and balance their relations with spirits through elaborate taboos and rituals in order to take any resources for their livelihoods. However, my data shows that being hungry has little reference to physical or biological problems and had nothing to do with scarcity.

It seems that Muntei people's articulation of being hungry does not significantly relate with either the need to control human desire and activities, or the need to control the surrounding environment. Neither is related with the social control over limited resources. Muntei people have no cultural repertoire showing that desire for food and appetite has to be controlled or that ferocious eating is prohibited. There are no known elaborated cultural or social mechanisms to control gluttony and avarice except in the taboo period of *punen*. There are no regulations and prohibitions on the amount one eats and eating is never seen as essentially negative. There are no attempts to control human appetite. *Malaje* does not stem from the perception of an insatiable appetite. While there are strong social sanctions on consuming food privately, this is never associated with fear of scarcity.

Maektek (being satisfied), the opposite of *malaje* is always achieved when they have eating and sharing meat together. Being hungry is associated with the lack of sociality. It is manifested in the action of eating alone and the lack of eating together. Eating alone is seen an action that seeks to undermine the cohesion of community that can generate envy and resentment, which, in turn, leads to the dismantling of community. Distributing meat, sharing food, and organising ritual feasts are highly satisfying exactly because they bring people together. Being hungry or satisfied, therefore is neither a symbol that people's thinking is separated from the dynamic perpetuation and transformation of the social system (as the structuralists might argue) nor merely a result of food shortage and the miscalculation of food production (as the materialists may argue) nor the result of inequality of powers (as the political economists may argue), but rather is an integral part of a dialectical system which involves particular acts, behaviours, metaphors, social values, and social relationships and institutions.

Malaje and *maektek* adhere to the boundaries of the Mentawaian social order and come into play when the unity of community is threatened or penetrated in some way by excessive individual autonomy, and is enacted by sharing. Being hungry is not really a sanction against greed but a vehicle to motivate certain acts that maintain and transform political equality, preventing individual prestige from becoming a problem. To claim *malaje* is to qualify existing social relations in which social inequality is emerging, accompanied by intensive relations with the state administration, the market, missionaries and other external agencies. Incorporation into government administration, connections with external agencies, and involvement in cash crop production have produced internal variation and social differentiation. Some people have power and authority while others feel the are being subordinated. Some groups of people obtained prestige and desirable jobs and positions while others did not. It is not that Muntei residents have a problem with individual efforts to have wealth and positions. They lament that those who have more power and authority do not distribute their wealth. The value imbued in actions and products of new social relations is socially realised against the existing egalitarian value. The emergence of social differentiation and the lack of sharing create a crisis: *Malaje* is a state of social crisis and a way of expressing that social crisis. It is both a social condition that reveals the new social life in the settlement and a social warning regarding contemporary social life, which is marked and associated with the emergence of social inequality without a cultural institution to prevent it.

In this context, the statement of *malaje* and the complaint of lack of sharing meat may also be interpreted as a social demand. It is a statement to demand a better distribution of wealth from those that are seen as holding power—especially those who are wealthier or in a position of distributing state funds, and those who are successful in cash-crop production. The way in which people use the hunger for meat to articulate

the demands of social equality is typical of many egalitarian societies. Woodburn (1998) claims that the sharing of meat in immediate-return foraging societies is basically the result of the aggressive demand by individuals to receive an equal share. This demand is derived from the right which is attached to each person as a member of the community. Widlok (2012, 188) points out that sharing meat is neither just as a form of generosity, nor takes place under conditions of scarcity. Sharing meat is, in fact, obligatory and recipients feel they are fully entitled to the meat they receive.

The association of meat hunger and equal rights (Woodburn 1998; Widlok 2013; I use the term equality or egalitarianism) is particularly telling if we consider the distribution and consumption of meat in Muntei. Despite the fact that Muntei residents are not a hunter gatherer society, the way they treat persons who contribute food reminds us of immediate return foraging societies. In Muntei, those who do not have pigs or chickens and are not contributing domestic animals in the *punen* will receive the same amount of meat to those who contribute a lot. Indeed, the meat provider in Muntei is neither celebrated, nor thanked, and, in fact, has no choice over who will receive the meat and how much they will be allocated, as it has to be given to everyone who is either biologically or socially related (Widlock 2012). Having an equal portion of meat is a right held by everyone. Accusing wealthier and powerful people of eating *bulagat* and eating meat alone while lamenting their own hunger, is a critical statement in demanding equal rights amongst the residents of Muntei regardless of their specific identification (*uma*, *sarereiket-siberut*).

7.2 Good to Produce, Good to Share: The Social and Cultural Roles of Food

Conceptualising hunger as a social sentiment gives me an expansive understanding of the socio-cultural roles of food. Food is a substance which people produce and reproduce themselves through socially necessary activities such as gardening, cooking, sharing, and eating. All circular activities related to food are part of a total process of constructing persons and society, rather than merely the product of material substances. People consider sago, taro, and pigs as substances that create who they are. With these foods, they see themselves as a different group from faraway people (Minangkabau) who are pork haters and rice lovers or Western people who eat 'books' and bread, make metal weapons, and grow potatoes. However, neither the deployment of food to construct social identification, nor the food or the person in question remain static. The identification of *sasareu* is affected through physical substance but it is also produced socially through activities such as cultivating and eating together. Faraway people, therefore, is not entirely an essentialist categorisation.

The way Muntei residents deploy food to construct themselves as particular social actors is commonly found. As food literally constitutes the body of a person, there is always an intimate link between the body, food, and social identity (Meigs 1987; Jansen 2001; Carsten 2000). In many societies, people create, transform, and control their essences through food they produce and eat. They see their food as having both inherent and acquired attributes that associate with their own identity (Hastorf 2017). Melanesian societies believe that the attributes (greasy, wet, dry, clean, pure, hard, soft, dirty) of food (taro, yams, pigs, bananas) impart these qualities to those who ingest them (Young 1971; Meigs 1984; Kahn 1986). Young shows how Kalauna people distinguish different types of foods (hard and pure) and contextualise different categories of person (children, women), while among Wamiran, food is the vehicle for the production of women and men (Sahlins 1976; Kahn 1986). In the Malay world, people use rice and rice meal to construct their social and cultural identity (Janowski 2007a; Janowski and Kerlogue 2007) while in Eastern Indonesia, the consumption of sago or cassava cake (*embal*) contributes to the self-identification of being Inanwatan and Kei respectively (Oosterhaut 2007; Kartinen 2007).

However, I found that the usage of food in the construction of persons in Muntei is rather different to other societies in particular aspects. People barely touch upon the substantive qualities of food when they construct their personhood. Size and the amount of food are probably important, but to them it is activities that produce a variety of food resources in the garden that bestow value and prestige. Clearing forest, cultivating sago, and raising domestic animals set humans apart from animals and non-human agencies. The amount of necessary social activities to establish a garden and cultivate food resources gives food its social value. What underlies the process of food production and consumption is that all actions related to food provision generate the positive value for persons while all actions related to eating generate togetherness of the community. Autonomy is a central value for people since it gives a person the social prestige and status of a fully proper social actor. It makes each adult person who has his own family will have political equity. The social criteria upon which judgment about a person is made is revolves around the ability to produce food. Food is crucial in the definition of personhood: 'you are what you produce'. Cultivated food, hence, is the concretisation of the value of human actions and also the epitome of the value that human activities hold. In sum, food is good to produce, because food contributes to the production of a valued social persons.

Food, however, does not just transform individuals into socially valued and recognised persons. Food is also deployed to congeal sociality. It is a principal medium of socialisation. Food is processed and deployed to create, establish, and re-establish ties between families within *uma* and between *uma*. In terms of ethnographic findings, the role of food as a medium to both create new and re-establish social relations within and between communities is not entirely new. Generations of anthropologists have analysed that either staple food (sago, taro) (Malinowski 1935; Kahn 1986; Fajans 1997; Young 1971; Benda-Beckmann and Tale 1996; Oosterhout 2007; von Poser 2013; Battaglia 2017) and perennial fruit trees (durian, coconut, betelnut) (Peluso 1996; Rocheleau 1988, Fortmann, Antinori, and Nabane 1997) are not just a raw material for daily diet but a property that defines and determines social relations between social persons. My intepretation shows that all cultivated food resources not only have the capacity to develop social relations. More than that, food resources have the capacity to embody social values. First and foremost, we know that Muntei people do not have a meal alone. All cultivated and gathered plant and animal food has to be shared and eaten together. The social taboos against keeping food are values in themselves and decisively define the broader cultural concept of self and society. A social person always shares his/her meal. Food must be shared as the person's autonomy and social prestige attained through having and producing food have to be publicly recognised. It is through the sharing and giving of food to others that a person's autonomy and prestige have social value.

Sharing and eating together constitutes a key substance of Mentawaian kinship and is very much a social glue that holds *uma* together. Food is good to share because it is a medium for people to create and recreate their two basic and most important institutions: the household and the clan in which two dialectical social values are produced, and in which the Mentawaian whole, as a society with its key values, is constituted. Sharing food and eating together through daily meals and ritual feasts embodies the forms of the transformation of individuals implicated in the construction of the collective relations. At family level, people share food to create the parent-child bond and to perpetuate the family, which is founded upon biological relations. Through eating together in daily meals, people define a process of natural reproduction parallel to, and inseparable from, the social process of reproduction. At *uma* level, people share food and eat together in a ritual feast to transform individual autonomy into collective ideals and generate social renewal. Eating together is the ultimate way for people to generate the equality and eradicate hierarchy by transforming individual actions into collective structured ones. The sense of equality in the communal meals is largely conceived in efforts to repress individual prestige which is seen as a perverse version of the

very egalitarian ideals that were the basis of *uma*. Sharing and eating food together are a tangible rejection of images of selfishness, the danger of social hierarchy and the fear of social disorder. The importance of sharing and eating together for Muntei people echoes of what von Poser terms "moral foodways" (Poser 2013, 74). The term means that food and the way food is cultivated, exchanged and shared, generates and creates social interdependence. By eating sago, durian, pork or chicken, a social actor participates in the complex relations of exchanging and sharing that form the basis of community. The taboo of eating alone and the obligation of sharing and eating together is very much a societal strategy and the important social values, found in the myth of *sikameinan*, for creating solidarity and equality.

Sharing and eating food together are both a symbolic and concrete manifestation of the commitment to equality and the construction of autonomy of social actors within the limit of egalitarianism. The egalitarian ethos is generated through giving away food, but also ensures that food must be accessible for everyone. The ritual feast is the ultimate way for the people of Muntei to generate the ultimate egalitarian value by transforming autonomy of individuals into collective structured actions. Individual sacrifice and sharing personal wealth are not regarded merely as ways to get social or collective recognition, but also to dispel envy and social inequality, the ultimate threat to the unity of community. The ritual feast, thus, is a way for people to create and recreate the uma as a kind of community—an abstract form of aggregated individual human actions—as a whole and to ensure it is aligned with its key values. The emphasis on sharing food parallels their perspective of human nature: they see each person, and especially themselves, as innately a glory hunter and seeking social prestige above others (Schefold 1979, 1982). They integrate this understanding of the purpose of their food production for social prestige and individual glory with social values, which are those of sitting together, distributing the same amount of meat and enjoying the meal together.

The importance of eating together and sharing food in the construction of social value and social institutions echoes other findings universally found by generations of anthropologists. In diverse Southeast Asian societies, sharing of food in its various forms over time is crucial to forge kinship and ethnic identification. Among Kelabit in Borneo and Malay people in central Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, people who eat together, garden on the same land, and eat the same food are believed to share the same substance, the same identity and the same vision (Carsten 1995; Kerlogue 2006). Malay people see the blood, the substance that binds people together, is produced by the same food processed by the same people. The direct sharing of substance through food is an essential agent in the establishment of kinship relations. Among the Bosum people living on the Ramu River of northeast Papua New Guinea, exchanging and sharing food are the basic elements of relatedness and interdependence (von Poser 2013). Tending, producing, offering food, and consuming food are the sites for Bosum to form social relationships. For another Melanesian society, Meigs (1987) provides powerful examples of strong community boundary formation through eating together. Among Highland New Guinea societies, residents become family and village members not only through birth or marriage, but through being fed by the same person or eating food from the same land. Strangers can become kin through eating food produced on community lands and prepared by its members (Meigs 1987). In other communities, eating together could be an important sign of community definition, kinship, or even ethnic identification (Appadurai 1981; Mintz and DuBois 2002).

In analysing the value of food in Muntei, we have gained a deep insight into social processes of kinship, gender relations, construction of personhood, and reproduction social institutions, and the way in which they have engaged with social transformation. Hence, food is not just a symbolic (good to think) or basic material (good to eat) separate from the dynamic functioning of a sociocultural system. Food is a social agency which can be a reaffirming, transforming, or realigning social process. Food and related activities

are ultimately the medium through which the inhabitants of Muntei construct themselves, self-identify, express, and produce gender relations, reproduce their social institutions, and generate the ultimate value of their social production.

7.3 Food and Social Values: Understanding Human Relations

Studying Muntei people's relations with their food provided me with a deep insight into the dialectic tension between individuals and society among Mentawaians and beyond. Almost all anthropologists who have studied Mentawaians across the islands have observed that their social relations are characterised by the constant tension between rivalry and cooperation, peaceful co-existence and competition, jealousy and solidarity, individual autonomy and responsibility to communal interest (Loeb 1928, 1929a; Nooy-Palm 1966; Schefold 1973, 1982, 1991, 2017; Kruyt 1979; Reeves 2001; Hammons 2010; Persoon 2002). The Mentawaians prize individual prestige through traits such as competitiveness, individual prowess, and personal prestige. Yet, they appear to undermine individuality for the unity of the social group. They acknowledge the fundamental contradiction between individual desire and freedom and communal consensus and obligations.

This tension has generated questions about what exists in a system or institution that unites people amid the fundamental contradictions of these conflicts. Hammons (2010) implicitly calls it 'mimetic rivalry' (*pako* in local terms). He does not explicitly call it an institution but a 'cultural order'. Others do not have explicit terms for this tension. I suppose this is partly because they want to see a core idea or fundamental thought within the order. In contrast, I see the content of the social order or social structure not as core ideas or inert objects but as actions or activities. It seems to me that the tension is neither from institutional, nor cultural order, but perfectly illustrates what Nancy Munn (1986: 18) calls 'fundamental value processes'. Rivalry, competition, jealousy, and autonomy are terms strongly associated with human actions that generate hierarchy, an element of value creation (Graeber 2021, 52).

Actions that create hierarchy can transform the relative potency of person's action into concrete, perceptible forms. For example, Aman Limakok of Sakukuret produces social prestige (making your name, *pasingin onim*) by producing a lot of pigs. If he contributes pigs in a ritual, it is the act of giving that generates social prestige, and not the number of pigs he owns and/or produces and contributes. In other words, he has autonomy to decide to contribute or not. However, the acts to create hierarchy are limited by certain cultural governance premises with regards to the creation of equality or egalitarian value. For the Mentawaians, the dialectic of hierarchy and equality specifies the fundamental relations between persons, between families, and between families and *uma* as the community. Balancing the individual autonomy and the interest of the *uma* is perennial theme in Mentawaian culture. This is structured and enmeshed in their myths. In the most important myths telling of the origin of communal stuffs (the longhouse, the origin of pigs, the origin of *kerei*), there is a certain theme: the skillful protagonist is always killed by his community because the community is fearful that the skilful person will excel above others (Loeb 1929a; Schefold 1973, 2007; Spina 1982). The killing of the protagonist reveals the danger of individual autonomy.

My analysis on the relations of food and two dialectical social values considerably extends beyond the archipelago. Activities and idioms concerning food, sharing, and eating in Muntei are representative of widespread ideas where autonomy and relatedness mark the basic human conditions. A human always has the desire of having freedom and being autonomous. On the other hand, it is also universally acknowledged that each social person always tries to be recognised by others and is longing to be socialised and part of a collective entity. As a result, each human being in any given community has two differential

and contrasting social aims: autonomy and interrelatedness (Fajans 1983). Autonomy is generated from will and independence, associated with desire, authority, power, dominance, competitiveness, fame, and prestige. It has to do with self-assertion and self-aggrandizement. Nancy Munn (1986) defines autonomy as the extension of self into spacetime to encompass aspects of the sociocultural world outside the social actor's body. Activities that enhance prestige, power, and dominance frequently impinge on other social actors to maximise their own authority, independence, and will. There is inevitable friction arising between individuals, each of whom is constantly asserting her or himself vis-a-vis others. To foster assertion, aggression, and power, each society develops a tool. Cooperation, caring, sharing, interconnection are inverse patterns employed to tame autonomy and to produce interdependence and relatedness.

According to Fajan (1986), the tensions between the autonomy of the individual and egalitarian values of society are not always reflected in an explicit indigenous term, model, or cosmological belief. It is, rather, an analytical model of the implicit assumptions on which human activities are based. The terms are derived by inference from the repeated appearance of certain human actions and the symbolic terms in which these are expressed, which are apparently found universally in different societies from Australia and Melanesia to China (Munn 1986; Myers 1986; Schieffelin 1990). Autonomy and relatedness are abstract but culturally defined values which are attached to, and transformed into each individual through particular activities. Values in this sense are made real through the concrete activities of people (Fajans 2006; Graeber 2013). As any social activity is pulled over in two different poles of value, there is always a constant but inseparable tension between the values of autonomy, power, and authority and the need to relate and share, to love, nurture and show compassion for others. Each culture and society has a particular way to balance the value of autonomy and interrelatedness.

As I have shown, in Muntei the desire for social prestige and being equal is inseparable, but most of the time egalitarianism is the most encompassing and valued one. The desire for being politically equal is what motivates individuals to share their food and to eat together. The desire for relatedness through eating together is particular for Muntei residents but is also found universally, as sharing food is central in the creation of social life. Sharing food and eating together is considered the primal quality of human beings as it is the first and most common item in creating mutual obligation, cooperation, sociality and the basic foundation of morality, altruism, and any socio-economical-political system (Mauss 1970; Sahlins 1976; Woodburn 1998).

7.4 Concluding Remarks: Research and Action, Towards a Balanced Future

I started this research with the initial question of what kind of food do people in Muntei eat and how much. Ultimately, I ventured out to understand and write about gender production, kinship, social transformation, rituals, social exchanges, and social values. Looking back at the initial plan and proposal I wrote in 2012, I realise that I have detoured far from the initial departure point. My research proposal posed a question on how agricultural transformation, especially involvement in cacao production, affected the way people produce and consume food and expected to detect certain impacts of agricultural change on food insecurity. I was planning to use the political-ecology approach and to participate in agrarian transformation debates. Then, the cacao boom around Muntei abruptly ended. Many mature cacao trees are dying because of fungal attack and the lack of labour. People slowly stopped converting their sago gardens to cacao. Migrants abandoned their newly bought land. The majority of people have returned to their sago, fruit garden and coconuts, while a few others seek another cash crop.

The sudden changes that no one had anticipated brought a mixed surprise. It brought relief as I was very worried that the cacao boom might bring agrarian differentiation, capitalist relations, and the development of class in a classless society, as had happened in Central Sulawesi and beyond (Li 2002; 2014; Hall 2004). Yet, it also brought me hard times as I needed to reformulate my research. It forced me to redirect my questions, approaches, and theoretical guidance. This was more complicated as I had been already collected quantitative data on food intake in three families that was prepared in order to support my ethnographic description. I struggled for years to make a proper analysis of all ethnographic materials and the quantitative food intake data. I had to rethink and reformulate my research questions. I was forced to read and reread the literature on anthropology of food and to develop different tools to bridge the initial questions, arrange quantitative data I had gathered and accommodate the different types of ethnographic materials. In the end, the trajectory of my research offered me a different lens to understand the complex relations between people and the food they produce and consume, providing me with a long but enjoyable journey to produce a monograph which is totally different to what I envisioned eight years ago.

My trajectory is actually in no way strange for anthropologists who have studied the relations of food and society. There are a lot of stories of ethnographers who initially wanted to explore food only to find themselves writing on kinship, economics, politics, gender relations, and rituals. Audrey Richards (1932; 1939), the pioneer of food anthropology, set off in the 1930s to study the nutrition and food consumption practices of the Bemba in Zambia. After encountering unresponsive informants, she then shifted her topic to social organisation. Eventually, she produced a richly detailed ethnographic volume that discusses many aspects of Bemba society—kinship, rank, economy, marriage, rituals—while illustrating the central role of food. The opposite trajectory could also occur. Anna Meigs (1984) went to Highland New Guinea to study divorce and its function in the creation of social alliances among the Hua. She found, however, that no one wanted to discuss marriage separation: "instead they wanted to tell me about what they were and were not allowed to eat […]" (Meigs 1984, ix). She proceeded to study the daily food practices of the Hua. In so doing, she uncovered a richly subtle world of social meaning, bodily identity, and social interaction that opened up the Hua existence to her, from kinship to personhood to politics and, finally, to social alliances and divorce.

My research trajectory is just one example in the long list of cases demonstrating the intricate process of studying food in societies. The wonderful thing about studying food is that one can start with one thing and end up with another thing. Someone may start to study diet or nutritional issues but can end with analysing rituals, construction of personhood, or political systems. Food is a principal medium for social interaction, for human comfort and reassurance, for anxieties and fear, for political purposes, for enacting or resolving conflict; it is at the heart of the fundamental nature of our humanity. Moreover, many cultural aspects of food and food-related-activities are not always visible. Anthropologists have the advantage of methodologies to unpack these invisible practices. The broad and ever-surprising nature of studying food enables us to learn more about how people act out their social and cultural dynamics. Studying food allows us to understand the diversity and the complexity of culture and society. It can pull a researcher in unexpected directions and throw an anthropologist into unknown space. Indeed, it offers an intricate reward for understanding the hidden patterns behind social processes which are initially taken for granted.

Understanding cultural and social complexity of food-society relations is particularly important as I reflect on my experience in understanding food insecurity. And this is beyond the academic world. There are so many ideas, projects and practices of various actors in the real world which attempt to provide sufficient food for every human being and to resolve food insecurity. In this context, my research process and results may be interesting in at least three aspects. Firstly, they provide a challenge to a formal understanding of food insecurity. Official documents and much academic research on food security have mainly deployed

economic and nutritional perspectives. This can be seen from the indicators of food insecurity in terms of grain consumption, access to modern infrastructure, and relations to markets (McCulloh and Timer 2008; Maxwell 1992; FAO 1998; DKP 2015; 2014; Yates-Doer 2015). This is obviously not the case of Muntei and many other areas in Indonesia and beyond. The Mentawaian Islands and some parts of eastern Indonesia, which are categorised as areas with food insecurity, do not really have a problem with food. They are seen as experiencing food insecurity only because they do not cultivate grain, especially rice.

This is not denying the fact that many rural people do suffer malnourishment or lack of basic necessities. Indeed, people elsewhere have encountered crop failure, environmental destruction, and famine, especially in recent times when climate change has been in effect. Indeed, I showed there is a change in the diet of Muntei residents. Rice has become a more important staple in the meals, especially for young generations. Certain types of food such as reptiles and hunted game are no longer part of their meals while certain types of activities providing food (traditional sago processing, hunting) are no longer practiced. These situations may result in changing diet in the near future and lead to food or nutritional insecurity. Yet, I do believe it is very important to have specified, localised and culturally defined and contextualised what food security and insecurity is (Chao 2019a; Yates-Doerr 2015). The anthropology of food certainly can make "a significant contribution to understanding cultural aspects of food insecurity", as stated by Mintz and DuBois (2002, 111) almost two decades ago. Conceptually, food insecurity has often conflated to other jargon such as food sovereignty and is less clearly defined (Agrawal 2012). As a global issue, food security is often directed and oriented by macro-level policy, which was often not well-grounded in a bottom-up understanding of the foodscapes of those at whom it was ostensibly aimed (Pottier 1999).

I have shown that hunger in Muntei is not directly related to food insecurity status as is described in the Indonesia Atlas of Food Insecurity. My analysis provided an understanding of the meaning of hunger and challenges the official verdict of the status of food insecurity in a specific context. If levels of food security are to be raised successfully and the future generations in Muntei and elsewhere are to be made aware of their insecurity, a far more comprehensive development must consider people's conception of the environment, cultural meaning attached to foods, as well as ideas concerning control and human intervention in affecting production, distribution, and consumption of food (see Chao 2019b, 15). This is beyond just delivering subsidised rice or encouraging people to make their own paddy field or propose large scale plantations and forcing people to participate in commodity-based production as the Indonesian government has promoted. This is especially important in view of the present concern in Siberut Island with the ongoing debates of the possibility of replacing local resources management with large scale alternatives. As recently as January 2020, the central government accepted a 19,500-hectares forest estate proposal. Between 2010-2019, five companies proposed permits to secure 73,000 hectares across the Mentawai Islands for palm oil plantations (Puailiggoubat 2017). In the meantime, a national tourist project proposing to convert 3,000 hectares of forest and gardens into an international tourist destination with hotels, an airport, and resorts has been under review. The supporters of these proposals have argued that oil palm or tourist development would transform idle and underused land into productive areas. These exclude the district government attempts to set up plans to construct a paved road at the expense of forest areas and gardens across the island and to establish rice fields. All of those efforts are a continuation of the old ideology to replace inferior native food (sago, taro, banana) and local food systems with so-called modern resources (plantation, logging, rice production).

It is tempting to imagine how sago, taro, and fruit gardens around Muntei will be replaced by a plantation scheme. Or perhaps we do not need a much deeper imagination to see the consequences of large-scale resource exploitation on the island. Everywhere, from Brazil to Cambodia, or the Sahara, there have been cases in which agricultural land, previously under the control of native inhabitants, has been

handed over to large land owners and corporations for the production of currently popular commodities. While the native inhabitants produced export items that were consumed and enjoyed by affluent people living faraway, they eventually found themselves have very little to eat.

More than providing a deeper understanding of the importance of food, anthropological research can offer a platform to actually appreciate and defend local food systems. Any good ethnographer could contribute to the appreciation of any form of cultural practice by teasing out "the unacknowledged—or more often half-acknowledged—logic underlying it, and to make it clear to those who were never completely aware of what they were actually doing" (Graeber 2016; 5). Most of my interlocutors do not have the words equal to autonomy or equality to understand and be aware of the value of their gardening skills and what they are actually doing to provide food and share it with others. Through gardening and cultivating food, Muntei residents produce their social identity and reproduce and transform their own of society. Forcing people into dependency on plantations, the cash economy, and imported foods may entail more than a shift from economic self-reliance to economic dependency. In the case of my research, it certainly affects how Muntei persons and society are produced and reproduced. Dependence on external powers creates social hierarchy and eradicates people's ability to maintain their autonomy and political equality. Entirely replacing sago, taro, and pigs with only oil palm or another fast-growing species and persuading people to adopt rice-based meals would force them to define themselves and their relationships in terms of a symbol that is entirely different to their existing social values.

I agree with Sherry Ortner (2016) who argues that "the discipline of anthropology has been proceeding almost as if to prove to itself it is really on the side of the underdog" (Graeber 2016, 8). During my last visit in 2019, I had the opportunity to ask people about their response to the proposed oil palm plantation or forest estate. Most Muntei residents expressed their desire to own perennial cash crops and were tempted by the prospect of palm oil and the promise of a regular income. Yet, they are also suspicious of the risk of releasing their land and gardens to unknown people under the proposed plantations. In the end, instead of talking about the promise and prosperity of oil palm, people talk more about their sago, pigs, and gardens. Teu Rima, the shaman, told me that it was beyond his imagination that a vast area consisting of forest, sago and fruit trees would all be burnt and replaced with monotonous palm lines. He remarks that, as a Mentawaian, he cannot understand how he and his fellow residents would be able to cure their grandchildren without pigs or how they could arrange their children's marriages without sago and durian trees. Consider the powers and authorities that have designed Siberut Island as a state forest and have issued logging and forest estate permits, and who may grant licences for a plantation to operate in the immediate future. I hope that my dissertation offers a better understanding of the importance of gardens, the forest, sago, taro, and pigs to the future of Muntei and in general Mentawaians, and contributing a little to the defence of their food system against any unsustainable resource management platform.

Notes

1 I deliberately make frequent use the term of community, rather than society or settlement, for Muntei and its residents. I am fully aware of the problematic usage and critical debates surrounding the term in anthropological research. However, this term is more appropriate for describing Muntei and its residents than other available terms (village, society, hamlets). As will become clear to the reader of this dissertation, I do not narrate the story of Muntei as a homogenous and harmonious community.

2 I do believe that *uma-factions* are a post-multi-clan settlement phenomenon. In the distant past, when unoccupied territory was available, a separated group would move to unoccupied land and declare a new uma with a different name. The availability of space is a critical constraint to the establishment of a new uma after the separation (Hammons 2010, 12, 78).

3 This is the basic justification for using the family (*lalep*) as the basis for the data analysis of food intake data in Chapter 4.

4 I understand that this section may attract critiques as I present a kind of 'ethnographic present' (Fabian 1983; Sanjek 2014). Yet, my intention for using this particular narrative technique is not to essentialize a temporal moment of Muntei settlement and employing merely syhnchronic pretense anthropology (Harstrup 1990; Crapanzano 1986; 51). My main aim is to give an impressionistic account about what people do in their every day lives during a particular time period (the year 2014 when I was doing a fieldwork). In this section the reader would be easily noticing both basic Mentawaian activities (gardening, cooking, organizing rituals) but also new development and non-traditional activities (attending church, watching television, going to school, working for government projects, etc.).

5 All tables and maps in this chapter detail only general claims. The actual ownership is an empirical question. While a leleu as a whole is usually claimed by an uma, part of it might have been cultivated by different individuals and groups, and objects on it (individual tree, river, or stream) might have been claimed and owned by another individual. The story of leleu is always complicated and often muddied, involving the history of the separation of uma, migration, conflict, and complicated ritualised and non-ritualised social relationships (See Tulius 2002; Darmanto 2016). Von Benda-Beckmann and Tale (1996, 11) call this type of tenure arrangement 'horizontal division of resources', a phenomenon where the ownership and rights to land and objects on it are different subjects. In Siberut, this tenurial system is applied to other zones (fruit gardens, sago gardens, home gardens, etc).

6 I follow the *emic* distinction of food. This helps to describe the availability and access to the community's food supply, the way they consume it, as well as the type of *labour* necessary to obtain it. Imported food, either from the market or from state development projects, supplements local food and all types of imported food follow the *kat* and *iba* categories. The list of domesticated and non-domesticated *kat* is presented in Appendix 2.

7 $US 0.13.

8 $US 2.

9 Puailiggoubat put this event in a two-paragraph column in its 14-30 September edition stating that cacao growers were angry at the pig owners because they didn't keep their animals securely penned

10 The methodological justification for using the household as the unit of analysis is explained in Chapter 1. Detailed methods of data collection among selected households are described in Appendix 1.

11 The timing of data collection certainly affects the data as rura season happens only once in three years, the consumption of fruit in this period is likely to be higher than the year before and after. See Appendix 1.

12 Laurens Bakker (1999), working with Sagulu and Sakaliou clans around Silakoinan, records the story in detail. His collection was told to him by an elder of Sakaliou clan. In Muntei, there are several stories that have a *sasareu-Mentawaians* theme. The stories I collected share a theme with the Bakker collection but many have a different emphasis or details. To distinguish a clear identification of pig lovers and haters, I rely on Bakker's work and confirmed it with members of the *uma* Sakaliou living in Muntei. The story told to me by Aman Boroioigok, who is also the main interlocutor in Chris Hammond's dissertation, is rather similar to Bakker's collection.

13 Schefold (1973; 1991, 92; 2017, 117) and other (Loeb 1928; 1929a; Spina 1982) writes that *sikaoinan* is the spirit that punish the community by attacking or drowning people in the water. However, my informants insist that *sikameinan* is the spirit in the water that punish anti-social behavior. The spirit of the aunty (*sikameinan*) stays in the water is one of *sikaoinan* who specifically punishing community of not sharing food.

14 In Mentawaian cultural reportoire, the accusation of witchcraft is almost always levelled against those who excel above others. As has been noted by earlier anthropologists (Loeb 1928; 1929a; Schefold 1991; Hammons 2010), a person who is successful in something, is liable to be suspected of sorcery.

15 There is a famous story of a maverick and violent ancestor of a clan namely *panajojo* who once lived around Muntei. He was very brash and malicious. His name literally means the shooter of dogs and indicates that he could kill others and harass any woman as easily as he could kill and harass dogs. He had plenty of land, pigs, and gardens but all of them were gradually given to compensate his victims. His wealth had made him dangerous since, nobody could prevent him from committing malicious acts that could lead to the disintegration of the community. Tulius (2012) has documented this story in his PhD dissertation.

16 This act is consistently reported in the accounts of Loeb (1928), Kruyt (1979), Hammons (2010).

17 I am fully aware of the problem with the term 'kinship', discussed brilliantly in Janet Carsten (1995; 2000). As I will show in the proceeding paragraph, I believe that kinship is a process, consisting elements of natural actions (having sexual relations), transacting substances (blood, sperm), and transforming social substances (food) and social actions (sharing, feeding, nurturing).

18 It is perhaps more correct to say that the term *sinanalep* is derived from the words *kina* (the guardian, "thou who possesses a soul of" ...) and *lalep* (house/family) than si (a prefix to refer a person) and *lalep*.

19 Cambridge Dictionary (2019).

20 Anthropologists have different opinions on these terms. Working in the southern islands, Loeb (1929b) distinguishes *punen* and *puliaijat*, according to the scale, the reason, and the place of the ritual. *Punen* is held at a community level (*uma* and village), while the *puliaijat* is organised at the family level. Anthropologists working in Siberut rarely employ *punen* but commonly use *lia* or *puliaijat* (Schefold 1972; 1985; 1991; Reeves 2001; Hammons 2010). Those anthropologists also have different views on the ultimate purpose of *punen* and *puliaijat*. It is not my aim to jump into all the discussions and debates of the term.

21 Most anthropologist use the term *rimata* to refer the leader of ceremony (Loeb 1928; Schefold 1973; Reeves 2001; Hammons 2010). Reevers (2001) uses the term 'master of the ceremony' when he refers to *rimata*. During my research, I did not hear people mention this term. Instead, they use term '*sikebbukat uma*'. The *sikkebukat uma* is perhaps the *rimata* but he is not always a shaman (*kerei*) and can simply be the most respected person in the clan who has mastered ritual skills.

22 The local term to refer a plot of garden is *mata* (growing area). See Chapter 3.

23 It refers to the myth of Maliggai, a well-known myth telling the origin of shaman, the longhouse, pigs, and chicken.

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SUMMARY

Good to Eat, Good to Produce: Food, Hunger, and Social Values in a Contemporary Mentawaian Community, Indonesia

This PhD study is about the role of food and food-related activities in the production of social persons, the reproduction of social institutions, and the creation of social values. This dissertation also seeks to understand the impacts of cash-crop production and government administration on the local food system and social values surrounding it. The research combines 15 months of participant observation, household surveys, archival study, and forum group discussions in Muntei, a settlement of 647 inhabitants in the southeast of the island Siberut (West Sumatra, Indonesia). It is also records and analyses a total of 3,030 meals over a year to get an overview of diet patterns at household level.

This dissertation starts with a riddle. People regularly claim they are hungry (*malaje*). This expression is deployed almost daily to explain various situations. The word is referred to when a person has not eaten. It refers to a situation when there is insufficient food. The word is often attached to a widower or children who do not have a wife or a mother to cook for them. However, it is more often employed by people wanting to make a social comment about not having sufficient meat to eat. The claim of being hungry seems to support the verdict of the *Food Security and Vulnerability Atlas of Indonesia* (2015), which classifies Siberut as an area of food insecurity. However, the statement of being hungry contradicts accounts by earlier observers, who describe the island as having abundant and diverse food resources. It also contradicts my own ethnographic material and food intake data.

Chapter 3 shows that the villagers have sufficient food from surrounding ecosystems, which are locally classified and divided into specific zones (sago gardens, taro gardens, forest gardens, forest, water bodies, the sea, small islets and mangrove forest), according to the animals or plants cultivated or extracted from them, and their arrangement. Sago gardens are essential domesticated zones and provide the most abundant plant food. Apart from sago starch, sago gardens supply sago grubs, a source of daily protein, and they bestow valuable non-edible products, including leaves for roofs and bark for walls and firewood. The second important staple, taro, is cultivated in taro gardens. The gardens are heavily domesticated, filled with banana, sugar cane, cassava, sweet potatoes, and ornamental plants. Forest gardens produce banana, cassava, yams, and sweet potatoes in the early years of cultivation (*tinungglu*) and a progeny of fruit trees (durian, jackfruit, rambutan, mango, Malay apple, langsat, common guava among others) in the later stage. Complimentary food, such as spices, vegetables, and medicinal plants, is readily available, seldom requiring people to venture far beyond home gardens. Sago, banana, tubers, and fruit trees are a

reliable food source, successfully competing with the weeds and grasses that grow wildly and quickly due to the humid and rainy climate. They suffer little damage from animals and other pests. They provide a stable output and are not affected by seasonal fluctuations.

Edible animals are obtained mainly from the freshwater zone. Small fish, mussels, clams, and shrimps are taken from small lakes, rivers, and streams. Sago grubs are semi-cultivated in the sago gardens while woodworms are semi-cultivated in the river nearby. Closer to the sea, people go fishing daily around their coconut gardens. They also occasionally organize a hunting expedition to obtain meat from the sea, especially turtle and dugong, when they are about to finish a religious ceremony. Saltwater fish are available daily from the market, provided by neighbouring fishermen. Chickens and pigs, two crucial domestic species, are kept and tended in sago and forest gardens. Although animal food is less plentiful than plant food, the community's advantageous location enables people to obtain meat regularly either from the market, their gardens, or from the surrounding environment.

Chapter 4 presents evidence that, in terms of consumption, people have three proper meals per day. Sago, taro, and banana are the main staples consumed and are occasionally supplemented with rice. There are always leftovers after every meal, which are collected and given to the dogs, pigs and chickens. People consume fresh meat in around 70% of their meals. Shrimps, frogs, and small freshwater fish are served mostly for daily meals, especially in families that retain the practice of working in the gardens, while saltwater fish from the market is the primary source of meat in the diets of non-gardening families. Involvement in cash-crop production and other non-gardening jobs, such as being a teacher or a village official, is a critical factor in providing access to saltwater fish. Hunted game has little significance in terms of diet as they are obtained just once or twice a year. People rarely consume fruit, but when it is available during the great fruiting season they enormously enjoy this complimentary food.

Given this demonstrated abundance of food, the riddle implies that being hungry goes beyond a physical and biological problem and is rather a social and cultural statement. The term *malaje* has a deeper meaning if we consider the cultural significance of meat and what it embodies. 'Proper' meat is pork, chicken, and hunted game, all of which are served and consumed together in religious ceremonies. The claim of being hungry is strongly associated with a person/family who lacks the ability to host communal feasts. No communal feast means there is no meat to be distributed, shared, and consumed. Hence, when people refer to being hungry, it is primarily a reference to a lack of social relationships, manifested in the absence of sharing and eating together. By seeing hunger as a social sentiment referring to a lack of sharing or the absence of social relations, this dissertation provides an expanded understanding of the socio-cultural role of food.

Chapter 5 describes how food is a substance that Muntei people use to produce and reproduce themselves socially through necessary activities such as gardening, cooking, sharing, and eating. Muntei people give gardening priority over other food-producing activities because it defines the socially perceptible qualities of themselves as human beings and as Mentawaians. Gardening sets humans apart from non-humans, as only humans can transform undomesticated space (forest) into domesticated spaces (gardens). Producing sago and keeping pigs sets the Mentawaians apart from non-Mentawaians. Furthermore, gardening is highly valued as it generates autonomy for a social person. The term autonomy is not an emic term postulated by Muntei people, but rather it is a term that I deploy to define those qualities produced by the relatively large amount of activities and time that people devote to producing food and gardens. The range of social activities they engage in with respect to food production is ultimately aimed at producing a social actor as the locus of decision-making. Being autonomous is the ultimate value for a social actor.

However, possessing plenty of gardens and food can also generate a negative valuation since it can be dangerous, subterranean, and a threat to the cohesiveness of the community. While having plenty of

food is dangerous, it is not the ultimate taboo. Eating alone is. Keeping food is strongly prohibited as it is the ultimate manifestation of selfishness, the extreme version of autonomy. Eating alone is felt to be anti-social and, thus, immoral. Sharing and eating together are essential cultural ways to forestall individual autonomy and prestige and to maintain equality. Sharing food and eating together in daily meals represent the most basic form of both autonomy and egalitarian values created in the family. Family meals have a fundamental structural significance for Mentawaian practices of kinship. Food giving and sharing in daily communal meals are valued because they create and renew the social bonds between social persons. Food mediates, produces social bonds, and is imbued with social value.

Occasionally, lavish and ritualized communal meals at the community level (*uma*) generate social renewal. People produce food and eat, but when they share their food and eat together, the food they produce is valued beyond its materiality. During big feasts, all the food, particularly domestic animals, is removed from the person or family that produces it. A ritual feast is a socio-cultural institution created to transform individual autonomy into a collective goal. The food is distributed among all members of the group and consumed together. In this way, sharing and eating food together are social processes organized to generate social solidarity and a shared identity. The sense of communal solidarity in the ritual has primarily been conceived as an effort to repress individual autonomy, which is seen as a threat to the community's highly egalitarian ideals. Food has value as a transformative agent. It enables the group to enact a ritual feast and to transform individual autonomy, creating an event during which everyone is free from jealousy. The ritual feast is a tangible demonstration of the rejection of selfishness and the renewal of social order. Therefore, all circular activities related to food are part of a whole process of constructing persons and community, rather than merely the product of material substances. Producing food is inseparable from the qualification of the person, gender differentiation, labour division, and the reproduction of family as the basic social unit and the reproduction of *uma* as the essential social organization.

In Chapter 6, the dissertation analyses how contemporary notions of hunger are strongly associated with the imbalance and tensions between autonomy-egalitarian values within the community. The imbalance is related to the development of Muntei as a new community and particularly to the emergence of social hierarchy and inequality since people have been engaging with a commodity-based economy and state administration. The market and the state have affected how the villagers produce, distribute, and consume food, which, in turn, reconfigures existing social values. The involvement in cash crop production has particular consequences for food production and consumption and the associated social values. Intensive cacao cultivation has changed the valuation of the swamp forest, replaced sago gardens, and altered customary land tenure and turned pigs, the most important animals, into a pest. These transformations symbolically represent and manifest a significant shift in social life. Incorporation into the Indonesian state administration has created a sense of social hierarchy, an antithesis of the egalitarian ethos. The state administration has introduced new institutions such as village heads and schools. These institutions have offered positions for some villagers as powerbrokers for relevant government agencies and officials. The new authorities and institutions produce new elites. These elites are frequently accused of betraying the community and are commonly called 'money eaters'. 'Eating money' refers to selfishness and a lack of sharing. Both are anti-social and immoral acts. The accusation of 'eating money' is always used in the context of demanding fairness, equal rights, and a fair share.

The new social relations revolve around the market and the state and generate social values that emphasize individual household autonomy rather than the egalitarianism of *uma* in the settlement, putting autonomy above equality and creating a social hierarchy. *Uma*, as social organizations, might still be necessary for communal ceremonies, but there is a growing feeling that inequality within and between *uma* has become more visible. People build big brick houses for their individual families, not communal

longhouses. Some people get better jobs than others. Some *uma* are socio-politically more dominant than others. Being hungry is both symbolic and the actual cost of being paid in the pursuit of a better life in the government settlement, incorporation into the market, and the state administration. The settlement is a better place, but it is not a place where pigs can be raised. The settlement has a festive aura, but it is not a place where all residents enjoy regular consumption of pork and communal feasts. Living in a settlement contradicts the ultimate Mentawaian social value of egalitarianism. The growing social hierarchy and uncontrollable autonomy create a sense of danger and a sense of hunger.

The cultural statement of being hungry in which people sense and make sense of their lives informs us of the importance of having a specified, localized, culturally defined and contextualized meaning what food security and insecurity is. Relying on a narrow nutritional perspective is inadequate in designing and delivering healthier food systems across local and global scales. It is necessary to consider the moral dimensions, sensory experiences, and the psychological aspect of food. Any food-related development project must consider people's conception of the environment, cultural meaning attached to foods, as well as ideas concerning control and human intervention with respect to the production, distribution, and consumption of food.

SAMENVATTING

Goed om te Produceren, Goed om te Verdelen: Voedsel, Honger en Sociale Waarden in een Hedendaagse Mentawaise Gemeenschap, Indonesië

Deze studie onderzoekt de rol van voedsel en voedsel-gerelateerde activiteiten in de productie van sociale personen, de reproductie van sociale instituties en het scheppen van sociale waarden. De studie beoogt ook de impact van de productie van *cash crops* en overheidsbeleid op het lokale voedselsysteem en de daarmee samenhangende sociale waarden te onderzoeken. Het onderzoek combineert de resultaten van 15 maanden van participerende observatie, surveys onder huishoudens, archiefstudie en groepsdiscussies in Muntei, een nederzetting van 647 inwoners in het zuidoosten van het eiland Siberut (West Sumatra, Indonesië). De studie geeft ook een verslag en een analyse van een totaal van 3030 maaltijden over een periode van een jaar ten einde een overzicht te krijgen van de eetpatronen op huishoudniveau.

De dissertatie begint met een raadsel. Mensen beweren regelmatig dat ze 'honger hebben' (*malaje*). Deze uitdrukking wordt bijna dagelijks gebruikt om verschillende situaties mee aan de duiden. Het woord wordt gebruikt wanneer een persoon niet heeft gegeten. Het verwijst naar een situatie wanneer er onvoldoende voedsel is. Het woord wordt dikwijls verbonden met een weduwnaar of kinderen die geen vrouw of moeder hebben die voor hem of hen kookt. Echter, het wordt nog vaker gebruikt door mensen die duidelijk willen maken dat er niet genoeg vlees is om te eten. De bewering 'honger hebben' schijnt het oordeel van de *Food Security and Vulnerability Atlas of Indonesia* (2015) te ondersteunen, die Siberut classificeert als een gebied met voedselonzekerheid. Echter de bewering van 'honger hebben' staat in contrast met de verslagen van eerdere waarnemers, die het eiland juist beschreven als overvloedig en rijk aan voedselbronnen. De bewering spreekt ook mijn eigen etnografische gegevens en de resultaten van het onderzoek naar de inname van voedsel tegen.

Hoofdstuk 3 toont aan dat de dorpelingen voldoende voedsel kunnen halen uit de hen omringende ecosystemen, die lokaal geclassificeerd en verdeeld worden in specifieke zones (de sago-velden, de taro-velden, de tuinen, de velden in het bos, het oerwoud, de rivieren en moerassen, de zee, de kleine eilanden en de mangrovebossen), op basis van de planten en dieren die er verbouwd of gehouden worden of die er verzameld dan wel bejaagd worden, en hun beheer. Velden met sagopalmen zijn essentiële gedomesticeerde zones en verschaffen het meest overvloedige plantaardige voedsel. Naast het sagomeel, verschaffen deze velden ook sagolarven, een dagelijkse bron van proteïne, en ze geven waardevolle niet-eetbare producten zoals bladeren voor dakbedekking, schors voor wanden en brandhout. Het tweede belangrijke voedselgewas is taro dat wordt verbouwd in speciale taro-velden. De tuinen worden nauwkeurig

bijgehouden en staan vol met bananenplanten, suikerriet, cassave, zoete aardappels en sierplanten. De velden in het bos produceren bananen, cassave, yams, en zoete aardappels in de eerste jaren van bebouwing (*tinungglu*) en allerlei fruitbomen (durian, jackfruit, rambutan, mango, Maleise appel, langsat, guava e.d.) in de latere fase. Aanvullende soorten voedsel, zoals specerijen, groenten en medicinale planten zijn ook ruimschoots beschikbaar en leiden ertoe dat de mensen zich zelden ver voorbij hun erftuinen behoeven te begeven. Sago, bananen, knolgewassen en fruitbomen zijn een betrouwbare bron van voedsel. Deze planten wedijveren met succes met het onkruid en de grassen die snel en wild groeien dankzij het vochtige en regenachtige klimaat. Ze hebben weinig last van schade door dieren of plagen. Zij verschaffen een permanente opbrengst en ze zijn niet onderhevig aan seizoenschommelingen.

Eetbare dieren worden vooral verkregen uit de zone van zoet water. Kleine visjes, mossels, gaapschelpen en garnalen worden gevangen of verzameld in de kleine meren, rivieren en stroompjes. Sagolarven worden half-gecultiveerd in de sago-velden, terwijl houtwormen half-gecultiveerd worden in de nabijgelegen rivier. Dichter bij zee gaan mensen vissen in de buurt van hun kokosnoottuinen. Zo nu en dan, aan het einde van een religieuze ceremonie, gaan ze op jacht op zee om een schildpad of een zeekoe te vangen. Vissen uit zee zijn dagelijks beschikbaar op de markt, gevangen door vissers uit de buurt. Kippen en varkens, twee belangrijke gedomesticeerde soorten, worden gehouden en verzorgd in de sago-velden en de tuinen in het bos. Hoewel dierlijk voedsel minder overvloedig aanwezig is dan plantaardig voedsel, staat de gunstige ligging van het dorp de mensen in staat om regelmatig vlees of vis, hetzij van de markt, hun tuinen of uit de omliggende omgeving te halen.

Hoofdstuk 4 presenteert de gegevens waaruit blijkt dat mensen in termen van consumptie drie behoorlijke maaltijden per dag hebben. Sago, taro en bananen zijn de belangrijkste soorten hoofdvoedsel die af en toe worden aangevuld met rijst. Na iedere maaltijd is er voedsel over dat aan de honden, varkens of kippen gevoerd wordt. Mensen consumeren vlees of vis in ongeveer 70% van hun maaltijden. Garnalen, kikkers en kleine zoetwatervissen worden meestal bij dagelijkse maaltijden geserveerd, vooral in families die vasthouden aan het werken in de tuinen, terwijl vis uit zee van de markt de belangrijkste eiwitbron is in het dieet van families die niet meer in de tuinen werken. Betrokkenheid bij de productie van cash crops of andere niet-landbouwgerichte werkzaamheden, zoals die van een leraar of een dorpsambtenaar, is een cruciale factor in het toegang krijgen tot vis uit zee op de markt. Buit van de jacht heeft niet veel betekenis in termen van dieet omdat het slechts één of twee keer per jaar wordt verkregen. Mensen eten zelden fruit, maar wanneer het beschikbaar is tijdens het grote vruchtenseizoen, genieten ze enorm van dit aanvullende voedsel.

Gegeven deze aangetoonde overvloed van voedsel, impliceert het raadsel van 'honger hebben' dat het verder gaat dan een fysiek of biologisch probleem en dat het vooral een sociale en culturele uitdrukking is. De term 'honger hebben' (*malaje*) heeft een diepere betekenis als we de culturele betekenis van vlees en waarvoor vlees staat, in ogenschouw nemen. 'Goed' vlees is vlees van een varken, kip of jachtbuit, dat altijd geserveerd en geconsumeerd wordt bij religieuze ceremonies. De bewering van 'honger hebben' is sterk geassocieerd met een persoon of familie die niet in staat is om gemeenschapsfeesten te organiseren. Geen gemeenschapsfeest betekent dat er geen vlees is om te distribueren, te delen en te consumeren. Daarom, wanneer mensen zeggen dat ze 'honger hebben', is dat primair een verwijzing naar een gebrek aan sociale relaties, dat zich manifesteert in de afwezigheid van delen en gezamenlijk eten. Door honger te zien als een sociaal sentiment dat verwijst naar een gebrek aan of de afwezigheid van sociale relaties, verschaft dit proefschrift een uitgewerkt begrip van de socio-culturele rol van voedsel.

Hoofdstuk 5 beschrijft hoe voedsel een zaak is die de bewoners van Muntei gebruiken om zichzelf sociaal gezien te produceren en te reproduceren door middel van noodzakelijke activiteiten zoals het werken in de tuinen, het koken, het delen en het eten. De bewoners van Muntei geven prioriteit aan

werken in de tuinen boven andere voedselproducerende activiteiten omdat het de sociaal waarneembare kwaliteiten van henzelf als mensen en als Mentawaiers definieert. Het werk in de tuinen onderscheidt mensen van niet-mensen, omdat alleen mensen de niet-gedomesticeerde ruimte (bos) in gedomesticeerde ruimten (tuinen) kunnen omzetten. Het produceren van sago en het houden van varkens onderscheiden Mentawaiers van niet-Mentawaiers. Daarnaast wordt het werken in de tuinen hoog gewaardeerd omdat het de autonomie voor een sociaal persoon genereert. De term autonomie is geen *emic* term die gehanteerd wordt door de bewoners van Muntei, maar het is term die ik zal gebruiken om die kwaliteiten te definiëren die geproduceerd worden door het relatief grote aantal activiteiten en de tijd die mensen besteden aan het produceren van voedsel en het werken in de tuinen. Het scala aan sociale activiteiten waar zij zich mee bezig houden in relatie tot voedsel productie is er uiteindelijk op gericht een sociale actor te produceren die in staat is om besluiten te nemen. Autonoom zijn is de ultieme waarde van een sociale actor.

Echter, het bezitten van veel tuinen en voedsel kan ook een negatieve waardering opleveren omdat het gevaarlijk en heimelijk kan zijn, en een bedreiging voor de hechtheid van de gemeenschap. Terwijl het hebben van veel voedsel gevaarlijk is, is het niet het ultieme taboe. Alleen eten is dat wel. Voedsel vasthouden is streng verboden omdat het de ultieme manifestatie is van egoïsme, de extreme versie van autonomie. Alleen eten wordt aangevoeld als anti- of asociaal en dus immoreel. Delen en samen eten zijn essentiële culturele manieren om individuele autonomie en prestige te tonen en gelijkheid te handhaven. Het delen van voedsel en het samen eten tijdens dagelijkse maaltijden vertegenwoordigen de meest basale vorm van zowel autonomie als egalitaire waarden gecreëerd in het gezin. Gezinsmaaltijden zijn van fundamenteel en structureel belang voor de Mentawaise verwantschapspraktijken. Het geven van voedsel en het delen in dagelijkse gemeenschappelijke maaltijden worden gewaardeerd omdat ze sociale relaties tussen sociale personen scheppen en vernieuwen. Voedsel bemiddelt en produceert sociale verbanden en het is doordrongen van sociale waarden.

Zo nu en dan genereren overvloedige en geritualiseerde gezamenlijke maaltijden op gemeenschapsniveau sociale vernieuwing. Mensen produceren voedsel en eten, maar wanneer zij hun voedsel delen en samen eten, dan wordt het voedsel dat zij produceren gewaardeerd boven het materiële aspect ervan. Gedurende grote feesten wordt al het voedsel, in het bijzonder de gedomesticeerde dieren, 'los' gemaakt van de persoon of de familie die het geproduceerd heeft. Een ritueel feest is een socio-culturele institutie, dat geschapen is om individuele autonomie in een collectief doel te transformeren. Het voedsel wordt verdeeld onder alle leden van de groep en gezamenlijk geconsumeerd. Op deze manier worden het gezamenlijk delen en eten van het voedsel sociale processen die georganiseerd worden om sociale solidariteit en een gedeelde identiteit te genereren. De zin van de gemeenschappelijke solidariteit in het ritueel wordt primair opgevat als een poging om de individuele autonomie te onderdrukken, die wordt gezien als een bedreiging van de sterk egalitaire idealen van de gemeenschap. Voedsel heeft waarde als een *transformative agent*. Het stelt de groep in staat om een ritueel feest te houden en de individuele autonomie te transformeren, en daarmee een bijeenkomst te houden waarbij iedereen vrij is van jaloezie. Het rituele feest is een tastbare demonstratie van de verwerping van egoïsme en de vernieuwing van de sociale orde. Daarom zijn alle circulaire activiteiten gerelateerd aan voedsel deel van een proces van het construeren van personen en de gemeenschap, meer dan slechts het product van materiële substanties. Het produceren van voedsel is onscheidbaar van de kwalificatie van een persoon, gender differentiatie, arbeidsverdeling en de reproductie van het gezin als de sociale basiseenheid en de reproductie van de *uma* als de essentiële sociale organisatie.

In Hoofdstuk 6 wordt geanalyseerd hoe contemporaine ideeën van honger sterk geassocieerd zijn met de onbalans en de spanningen tussen de waarden van autonomie en gelijkheid binnen de gemeenschap. De onbalans is gerelateerd aan de ontwikkeling van Muntei als een nieuwe gemeenschap en in het bijzonder het opkomen van sociale hiërarchie en ongelijkheid omdat mensen betrokken zijn geraakt bij

een markteconomie en staatsbemoeienis. De markt en de staat hebben invloed gehad op hoe dorpelingen voedsel produceren, distribueren en consumeren, waardoor bestaande sociale waarden veranderden. De betrokkenheid bij de productie van *cash crops* heeft specifieke consequenties voor voedselproductie en -consumptie en de daarmee verbonden sociale waarden. Intensieve verbouw van cacao heeft de waarde van het moerasbos veranderd, het heeft de sago-velden vervangen en het heeft het traditionele systeem van landbezit veranderd. Het heeft varkens, de meest gewaardeerde dieren, veranderd in een plaag. Deze transformaties geven op symbolische en manifeste manier een belangrijke verschuiving weer in het sociale leven. Incorporatie in het Indonesische staatsbestel heeft een zekere sociale hiërarchie geschapen, een antithese van de egalitaire ethos. Het staatsbestel heeft nieuwe instituties geïntroduceerd zoals dorpshoofden en scholen. Deze instituties hebben posities geboden voor sommige dorpelingen die als tussenpersonen dienen voor relevante overheidsdiensten en gezagsdragers. De nieuwe autoriteiten en instituties produceren nieuwe elites. Deze elites worden dikwijls beschuldigd van verraad aan de gemeenschap en worden vaak 'geldwolven' (*money eaters*) genoemd. '*Eating money*' verwijst naar egoïsme en een gebrek aan delen. Beide zijn antisociaal en immoreel. De beschuldiging van '*eating money*' wordt altijd gebruikt in de context van vragen om eerlijkheid, gelijke rechten en het krijgen van een eerlijk deel.

De nieuwe sociale relaties die zich ontwikkelen rond de markt en de staat, en die sociale waarden genereren die de autonomie van het individuele huishouden benadrukken meer dan de gelijkheid van de *uma* in de nederzetting, stellen autonomie boven gelijkheid en scheppen een sociale hiërarchie. *Uma*, als sociale organisatie, kan nog nodig zijn voor gezamenlijke ceremonies maar er is een groeiend gevoel dat ongelijkheid binnen en tussen *uma* zichtbaarder is geworden. Mensen bouwen grote stenen huizen voor hun individuele families en geen gemeenschappelijke *longhouses* meer. Sommige mensen krijgen betere banen dan andere mensen. Sommige *uma* zijn socio-politiek meer dominant dan andere. Honger hebben is symbolisch en de werkelijke prijs die betaald wordt in het streven naar een beter leven in een dorp van de overheid, en geïncorporeerd worden in de markt en het overheidsapparaat. De nederzetting is een betere plek, maar het is niet een plaats waar varkens gehouden kunnen worden. De nederzetting heeft een feestelijke aura, maar het is geen plek waar alle inwoners regelmatig kunnen genieten van varkensvlees en gezamenlijke maaltijden. Leven in zo'n nederzetting weerspreekt de ultieme Mentawaise sociale waarde van de het egalitarisme. De toenemende sociale hiërarchie en de oncontroleerbare autonomie scheppen een gevoel van gevaar en een gevoel van honger.

De culturele bewering van 'honger hebben', waarmee mensen zin geven aan hun leven, informeert ons over het belang van het hebben van een gespecifieerde, gelokaliseerde, cultureel bepaalde en gecontextualiseerde betekenis van wat voedselzekerheid en –onzekerheid is. Vertrouwen op een beperkt perspectief van voedingswaarde is niet geschikt voor het ontwerpen en uitvoeren van meer gezonde voedingssystemen op lokale en globale schaal. Het is nodig om de morele dimensies, de zintuigelijke ervaringen en het psychologische aspect van voedsel in ogenschouw te nemen. Ieder project op het gebied van voedselontwikkeling moet de manier waarop mensen naar hun omgeving kijken, de culturele betekenis die gehecht wordt aan voedsel, evenals de ideeën over de controle en menselijke interventie met betrekking tot de productie, de verdeling en de consumptie van voedsel in ogenschouw nemen.

RINGKASAN

Penting untuk Diproduksi, Penting untuk Dibagi: Makanan, Lapar, dan Nilai-Nilai Sosial di Masyarakat Mentawai Kontemporer, Indonesia

Disertasi ini mempelajari peran sosial sumber pangan dan arti penting kegiatan-kegiatan yang terkait dengan produksi dan konsumsi makanan dalam pembentukan aktor sosial, reproduksi lembaga sosial, dan penciptaan nilai-nilai sosial. Disertasi ini juga berusaha memahami dampak-dampak produksi tanaman komersial dan pembangunan pemerintah terhadap sistem pangan lokal dan nilai-nilai sosial tersebut. Data dan analisis dalam disertasi diperoleh melalui penelitian lapangan selama 15 bulan, survei rumah tangga, studi arsip, dan diskusi kelompok di Muntei, sebuah pemukiman yang dihuni 647 jiwa di tenggara Pulau Siberut, Kepulauan Mentawai. Penelitian ini juga mendokumentasikan dan menganalisis 3.030 makan bersama di tiga keluarga terpilih selama satu tahun (2012) untuk mendapat gambaran umum pola makan.

Disertasi ini berangkat dari sebuah teka-teki. Orang Muntei sering menyatakan bahwa mereka lapar. Ketika seseorang belum makan, dia akan bilang "lapar". Ketika makanan yang tersaji dianggap terlalu sedikit dibanding jumlah orang yang akan menikmatinya, orang akan bilang "masih lapar kita". Namun, istilah itu juga merujuk beragam situasi lain. Lapar kerap disematkan pada lelaki dewasa tak beristri atau anak-anak tanpa ibu yang memasak makanan untuk mereka. Kata lapar juga sering diutarakan bila mereka tidak punya lauk daging. Pernyataan lapar dan beragam makna lapar seakan mendukung pernyataan Food Security and Vulnerability Atlas of Indonesia Atlas (2015) yang menyebut bahwa pulau Siberut adalah kawasan rawan pangan. Namun, pernyataan lapar dan status rawan pangan di Siberut bertolak belakang dengan pengamatan para antropolog yang secara konsisten menyatakan bahwa orang mentawai memiliki sumber pangan yang beragam dan melimpah. Data kuantitatif dan etnografi disertasi menemukan bahwa orang Muntei punya kecukupan pangan dan makan makanan berkualitas tinggi. Jadi, kenapa mereka sering bilang lapar?

Bab 3 menunjukkan bahwa orang Muntei memiliki sumber pangan lebih dari yang dibutuhkan. Mereka mengolah, menamai, dan memilah-milah lingkungan sekitar menjadi beragam kawasan produktif yang menyediakan sumber pangan berlimpah. Kebun sagu merupakan kawasan paling penting. Sagu, sumber makanan utama, melimpah di kebun yang tersebar di rawa-rawa berair. Selain tepung, kebun sagu menyediakan ulat sagu dan menghasilkan beragam produk non-pangan penting, termasuk daun untuk atap, kulit untuk dinding rumah dan kayu bakar, dan bagian lain seperti pelepah untuk bahan kerajinan. Kebun keladi menyediakan makanan pokok penting kedua. Selain umbi talas, kebun keladi berisi pisang, tebu, ubi jalar, dan ubi kayu serta tanaman-tanaman yang diperlukan seperti obat-obatan dan hiasan untuk ritual tradisional. Ladang menghasilkan pisang, ubi-ubian, dan buah-buahan seperti nanas, dan sayuran di

tahap awal pembukaan (*tinungglu*) dan diisi oleh himpunan pohon buah-buahan (durian, nangka hutan, rambutan, langsat, mangga, jambu, sirsak, jambu air, jeruk dan lain-lain beberapa tahun setelah makanan pokok tidak produktif). Pekarangan menjadi tempat bercocok tanam sayur-sayuran, rempah-rempah, tanaman bumbu, buah-buahan, dan memelihara hewan ternak. Hutan merupakan kawasan non-budidaya yang penting, memberikan hewan buruan, jamur, dan beragam sayur-sayuran liar.

Sumber protein didapatkan dari kawasan non-budidaya dan hewan-hewan peliharaan. Ikan adalah sumber utama protein sehari-hari. Ikan air tawar, bersama kerang-kerangan, katak, dan udang, dikumpulkan dari sungai, kali, dan rawa-rawa di sekitar rumah dan kebun. Ikan laut diperoleh dari nelayan Minangkabau atau tetangga desa di Maileppet. Sebagian orang yang memiliki kebun kelapa di pulau-pulau kecil di lepas pantai timur memancing, menjaring dan menombak ikan-ikan karang di pantai-pantai dangkal dan di sekitar hutan bakau. Selain ikan, ulat sagu dan *toek*, sejenis moluska-memanjang tak bercangkang, adalah sumber protein harian yang penting. Kedua sumber pangan tersebut dibudidayakan di kebun sagu dan sungai dekat rumah. Sesekali, orang Muntei berburu penyu dan pesut di padang lamun, terutama jika mereka hendak mengakhiri ritual. Ketika musim buah tiba, mamalia kecil—bajing, luwak, kelelawar, kalong—yang mencari durian matang atau rambutan diburu di malam hari dan menjadi sumber protein tambahan. Babi dan ayam adalah hewan peliharaan dan sumber protein paling penting. Kedua hewan dipelihara di kebun sagu atau di ladang.

Orang Muntei memiliki sumber pangan tanaman yang berkecukupan. Sagu, pisang, dan beragam umbi-umbian dan buah-buahan tersedia sepanjang waktu, dan ketersediaanya bisa diandalkan. Tanaman tersebut menghasilkan panen yang stabil dan tidak terpengaruh oleh perubahan musim. Mereka juga unggul karena mampu beradaptasi dengan ekosistem Pulau Siberut yang lembab dan basah, bisa bersaing dengan gulma, semak, dan rerumputan yang tumbuh cepat akibat curah hujan tinggi. Mereka juga tahan terhadap serangan hama dan aman dari hewan peliharaan. Sumber protein tidak semelimpah makanan pokok. Kendatipun begitu, lokasi Muntei memberi keuntungan untuk mendapat beragam sumber daging. Ladang-ladang tua di pemukiman lama masih menjadi tempat memelihara ayam dan babi. Mereka juga dikelilingi rawa-rawa dan sungai besar, tempat memancing dan mengumpulkan ikan, kerang, katak dan larva sagu. Sebagian dari mereka tinggal di kebun kelapa di dekat pantai dangkal dan hutan bakau, tempat ikan, kerang, dan beragam hewan-hewan laut yang mudah dikumpulkan.

Bab 4 menunjukkan bahwa orang Muntei makan tiga kali sehari. Sagu, keladi, dan pisang adalah makanan pokok sehari-hari yang disajikan selalu berlimpah dan hampir selalu ada sisa. Sisa-sisa makanan tersebut dikumpulkan dan diberikan kepada babi dan ayam. Untuk protein, orang Muntei makan daging segar kurang lebih dua kali sehari. Udang, katak, ikan air tawar merupakan sumber protein utama bagi keluarga yang bekerja penuh-waktu di ladang, sementara ikan laut dikonsumsi secara teratur oleh keluarga yang memiliki kebun tanaman komersial (kelapa, kakao) dan pekerjaan non-pertanian seperti guru atau pejabat desa dan punya usaha kecil-kecilan. Hewan buruan, baik dari laut dan hutan, yang secara simbolik masih penting, hanya kecil kontribusinya bagi diet sehari-hari. Buah-buahan tidak selalu tersedia setiap hari. Namun jika sedang panen raya, orang Muntei menikmati mangga, durian, langsat, rambutan, dan nangka hutan selama hampir tiga bulan penuh. Seringkali, buah-buahan tersebut dimakan sebagai makanan utama, menggantikan sagu atau pisang.

Berdasar data ketersediaan sumber pangan dan data konsumsi selama setahun, disertasi ini berpendapat bahwa pernyataan lapar di Muntei tidak menandai kelangkaan pangan. Istilah lapar memiliki makna yang sangat dalam jika kita mengkaji peran dan makna hewan peliharaan dan buruan yang dihidangkan dalam acara ritual. Bagi orang Muntei, daging babi, ayam, dan hewan buruan adalah makanan yang memuaskan jiwa dan raga. Hewan-hewan tersebut tidak diperoleh dan disembelih sembarangan. Mereka hanya disemahkan, dibagi, dan dimakan bersama dalam acara ritual. Pernyataan lapar merujuk pada

semakin jarangnya rituak makan daging tersebut bersama-sama. Jarangnya ritual dan pesta bersama menandai absennya tindakan saling berbagi dan merosotnya rasa kebersamaan, dan semakin menipisnya ikatan sosial. Lapar adalah pernyataan sosial yang mengungkapkan kekahawatiran akan hilangnya nilai-nilai sosial yang penting. Dengan menyatakan bahwa lapar adalah pernyataan sosial, disertasi ini menghadirkan pemahaman yang mendalam tentang peran makanan dan kegiatan terkait produksi dan konsumsi makanan.

Bab 5 menjelaskan bahwa makanan adalah substansi yang memungkinkan orang Muntei menciptakan dan mencipta-ulang diri mereka sendiri melalui kegiatan sosial seperti berkebun, memancing, memasak, tukar-menukar makanan, berbagi, dan makan bersama. Orang Muntei mengutamakan berkebun dibanding aktivitas lain karena membudidayakan tanaman menentukan kualitas seorang manausia sebagai aktor sosial. Pertama-tama, berkebun membedakan manusia dari entitas non-manusia (binatang, roh-roh, bebatuan) karena hanya manusialah yang mengubah lingkungan alami (hutan, sungai) menjadi kawasan budidaya dan menumbuhkan makanannya sendiri. Kedua, berkebun sagu dan memelihara babi adalah kegiatan yang membedakan mereka dengan yang lain (non-Mentawai). Ketiga, menanam sagu atau memelihara babi meningkatkan harga diri dan memberikan otonomi bagi setiap aktor sosial.

Orang Mentawai tidak memiliki kata yang sepadan dengan otonomi. Ini adalah istilah yang saya gunakan untuk menentukan kualitas produk yang dihasilkan oleh aktor sosial, yang juga menentukan kualitas si aktor tersebut. Setiap hari aktor sosial di Muntei mencurahkan tenaga kerja dan waktunya secara konstan untuk menghasilkan sumber pangan. Kegiatan-kegiatan tersebut beragam jumlahnya namun produk dari kegiatan tersebut membuat si pemilik memiliki harga diri dan otonomi. Otonomi inilah kualitas tertinggi dari aktor sosial dan saya sebut sebagai nilai sosial. Seorang aktor sosial yang dihargai adalah seseorang yang memiliki kecukupan sumber pangan. Dengan kecukupan pangan, ia memiliki kemerdekaan bertindak dan tidak tunduk oleh perintah aktor sosial lain. Semua kegiatan sosial untuk menghasilkan sumber pangan ditujukan untuk menjadikan seseorang dihargai sebagai pribadi yang independen. Menjadi otonom dan bertindak merdeka adalah nilai dan kualitas yang melekat bagi aktor sosial.

Memiliki sumber pangan melimpah dan harga diri yang tinggi menghasilkan nilai positif. Namun, hal ini juga bisa dipandang negatif karena pemilik kebun atau babi yang terlalu banyak dapat membahayakan dan mengancam keutuhan komunitas. Dengan sumber pangan berlimpah, seseorang bisa bertindak sesuka hati dan semena-mena terhadap orang lain karena dia bisa dengan mudah membayar kesalahannya dengan memberikan kompensasi. Sementara memiliki banyak kebun dan sumber pangan dilihat sebagai hal yang buruk, itu bukanlah ancaman utama. Yang dianggap paling berbahaya adalah: menyimpan sumber pangan sendiri, tidak mau berbagi, dan makan daging—substansi yang menyimbolkan kebersamaan—secara sembunyi-sembunyi. Keengganan berbagi dan makan sendiri adalah perwujudan egoisme dan individualisme, titik ekstrem dari otonomi. Makan sendiri dianggap tindakan anti-sosial dan tak-bermoral karena tidak peduli dengan orang lain.

Berbagi dan makan bersama adalah cara utama untuk mencegah individualisme dan sikap mementingkan diri sendiri. Kedua tindakan itu juga penting untuk memelihara kesetaraan dan kebersamaan. Ada dua mekanisme berbagi dan makan bersama. Yang pertama, berbagi makanan dan makan bersama sehari-hari di tingkat keluarga inti. Makan bersama sehar-hari ini menggambarkan proses dialektis penciptaan nilai sosial otonomi dan kesetaraan di unit sosial paling dasar. Makan bersama punya nilai penting karena hal itu menghasilkan dan memperbaharui ikatan-ikatan sosial di antara individu. Kedua, makan bersama diselenggarakan secara berkala melalui acara ritual, di tingkat keluarga besar (*uma*). Makan bersama dalam ritual merupakan acara untuk memperbaharui komitmen sosial. Setiap individu dan keluarga inti diharapkan menyumbang sagu, ayam, atau babi yang mereka punya. Makanan

tersebut kemudian disatukan dan dibagi-bagi secara merata sejumlah anggota keluarga inti yang hadir. Dalam acara makan bersama tersebut, semua makanan, terutama daging pesta persembahan dari hewan peliharaan, dipisahkan dari aktor sosial atau keluarga yang memproduksinya. Daging peliharaan itu menjadi milik bersama. Siapa saja yang menjadi peserta ritual itu berhak menikmatinya. Ketika mereka makan bersama, babi, ayam, atau sagu memiliki makna dan nilai yang melampui materialitasnya.

Dalam acara makan bersama, daging babi atau keladi bukan sekadar lagi menjadi zat pengisi perut tetapi medium bagi pembaharuan dan pembentukan solidaritas sosial. Lewat berbagi dan makan bersama, sumber makanan itu mentransformasikan otonomi individu menjadi solidaritas kolektif di mana setiap orang dan keluarga inti memiliki hak, kewajiban, dan status yang setara. Solidaritas kolektif dalam acara ritual dihasilkan dari usaha bersama untuk menekan otonomi individu yang berpotensi menghasilkan ketegangan sosial dan mengubahnya menjadi nilai sosial tertinggi: kesetaraan dan kebersamaan. Makanan mentransformasikan otonomi individu, mencegah kecemburuan sosial, dan meleburkan semua aktor sosial dalam kolektivitas. Kegiatan-kegiatan berantai yang menghasilkan, memproses, dan mengkonsumsi makanan merupakan proses dialektik dalam proses pembentukan aktor sosial dan komunitas, dan bukan semata-mata bertujuan untuk menghilangkan rasa lapar belaka. Memproduksi sumber pangan dan mengkonsumsi makanan berkait-kelindan dengan penciptaan aktor sosial, pembedaan jenis kelamin, pembagian tenaga kerja, reproduksi keluarga sebagai unit sosial paling dasar, dan reproduksi *uma* sebagai organisasi sosial yang paling penting.

Di Bab 6, disertasi ini berpendapat bahwa pernyataan lapar berkaitan dengan ketakseimbangan antara nilai sosial otonomi dan kesetaraan. Ketidakseimbangan nilai sosial itu disebabkan perkembangan Muntei sebagai dusun atau desa, lembaga supra-komunitas yang melampaui *uma*. Rasa lapar diungkapkan setelah kemunculan hirarki dan kepincangan sosial. Hirarki dan ketidaksetaraan terjadi setelah Muntei menjadi pemukiman pemerintah dan warganya terlibat dalam produksi tanaman komersial dan terintegrasikan dengan sistem administrasi negara Indonesia. Kemunculan pasar dan negara mempengaruhi bagaimana warga Muntei menghasilkan, berbagi, dan menikmati hasil kerja dan pangan mereka dan mengubah nilai-nilai sosial yang dihasilkannya. Terlibat dalam produksi tanaman komersial mempengaruhi curahan tenaga kerja dan waktu untuk mengurus sumber pangan pangan. Budidaya kelapa, cengkeh, nilam, dan terutama kakao belakangan ini mengubah penilaian kebun sagu, ladang, dan hutan. Kakao tumbuh baik di rawa-rawa sehingga orang-orang menebang sagu, hutan, kebun buah dan menjadikannya kebun kakao monokultur. Akibat lain adalah perubahan pengaturan tanah, munculnya konflik sosial, dan terutama menjadikan status babi, hewan paling penting dalam kebudayaan Mentawai, menjadi hama. Perubahan-perubahan ini secara simbolik menggambarkan pergeseran nilai-nilai sosial.

Sementara itu, integrasi orang Mentawai dengan negara Indonesia menciptakan kepincangan sosial dan perbedaan status, sesuatu yang berlawanan dengan nilai-nilai kesetaraan mereka. Administrasi pemerintahan mengenalkan lembaga-lembaga sosial baru seperti desa, dusun, sekolah, gereja. Lembaga-lembaga baru tersebut menawarkan posisi politik baru bagi sebagian warga dan menyediakan otoritas baru yang melampaui otoritas keluarga dan *uma*. Dengan otoritas tersebut, mereka menjadi perantara politik bagi warga kebanyakan dan lembaga dan pejabat pemerintah. Status dan otoritas ini menghasilkan elit-elit baru. Elit-elit ini menikmati posisi sosial yang baru dan memiliki peluang untuk mendapatkan keuntungan langsung dari program-program pembangunan pemerintah. Posisi istimewa elit ini selalu digugat. Elit-elit tersebut acapkali dituduh mengkhianati masyarakat dan diberi julukan sebagai 'pemakan uang' karena mereka dengan mudah menyalahgunakan otoritas, kekuasaan dan posisi politik untuk kepentingan dan status sosial mereka sendiri. Asosiasi antara elit tersebut dan 'pemakan uang' menjelaskan bahwa keterlibatan dengan negara tidak memberi kesempatan bagi setiap warga mendapatkan kesetaraan. Penting diingat, 'makan uang' selalu dikaitkan dengan kepentingan-pribadi, egoisme, dan ketidakhadiran

berbagi. Seperti menyimpan makan sendiri, makan uang, dan penyalahgunaan otoritas adalah kegiatan anti-sosial dan tindakan amoral.

Rasa lapar adalah sentimen sosial yang menjelaskan bahwa mereka harus membayar harga untuk mendapatkan hidup yang lebih baik di pemukiman pemerintah. Lapar bukan berarti orang-orang Muntei tidak punya makanan atau kurang makan. Muntei adalah tempat yang diidam-idamkan. Tempat ini lebih baik dibanding pemukiman lama. Dekat dengan pantai memampukan mereka berkebun kelapa dan mendapatkan uang tunai. Dekat dengan pusat pemerintah membuat mereka mengakses pembangunan—jalan, air bersih, sekolah. Akan tetapi, ini adalah tempat yang tidak memungkinkan lagi bagi mereka untuk memelihara babi. Muntei memiliki aura pesta—tetapi bukan tempat setiap orang atau *uma* menyelenggarakan ritual bersama dan berbagi daging pesta. Hidup di pemukiman pemerintah dianggap lebih baik tapi mereka kehilangan nilai sosial yang paling penting: kesetaraan dan kebersamaan. Hirarki sosial yang terus meruncing, individualisme dan otonomi yang tak terkontrol, memberi ancaman dan menghasilkan rasa lapar.

Pernyataan tentang lapar, yang digunakan oleh orang Muntei untuk mengkespresikan kondisi sosialnya, memberi pelajaran penting untuk memahami peran sosial makanan dalam kehidupan sosial. Ini sangat penting terkait dengan wacana global dan nasional tentang ketahanan dan kerentanan pangan. Selama ini proyek-proyek perbaikan sistem pangan kebanyakan hanya mengandalkan sudut pandang nutrisi yang sempit dan terbatas. Sangat penting untuk mengerti konteks spesifik dan lokal tentang apa itu makanan, lapar, dan kepuasan sebelum menyatakan masyarakat itu mengalami kerentangan. Perlu juga mempertimbakan dimensi-dimensi moral, pengalaman inderawi, dan aspek-aspek psikologi kegiatan terkait makanan makanan. Proyek-proyek perbaikan sistem pangan musti memahami pandangan lokal atas lingkungan sekitar, makna simbolik yang melekat pada makanan tertentu, dan juga akses dan kontrol orang lokal terhadap sumber daya yang tersedia.

APPENDIX 1

Method, Process of Data Collection, and Data Analysis of Food Intake Record

Method

There are three main types of dietary studies done by anthropologists: one concerns the pattern of food consumption, the two others focus on nutrient intake (including energy) and nutritional status (Ulijazcek 2004, 120). Methodologically, the first type obligates to measure the variety of food eaten during certain periods of time through observation, interviews, and oral history. The nutrient related dietary studies are compulsory to calculate the quantities of different foods eaten which can then be converted into amounts of nutrients eaten by the application of food composition table values. The first type of study is more popular among cultural or social anthropologists who generally have more interest in the population while the latter are more deployed by physical anthropologists or physiological nutritionists who are frequently content with smaller numbers of people studied but who require significantly more detail with regard to the amount and the quality of the nutrients.

To examine the pattern and frequency of food consumption by the people of Muntei, I used the first type of research. The reasons for omitting the detailed and laborious nutrient intake figures are ethnographic and practical. My research deals with the role of food in a contemporary Mentawaian community living in a settlement rather than the nutritional status of one or two individuals. The application of a meticulous and laborious method has commonly modified the habitual patterns of research subject and does not capture the whole process of food production and consumption. The laborious methods, commonly used by nutritionists to provide detailed records and data of food intake from which quantification of nutrients and/or energy intake from a few individuals can be calculated, would not be a great addition to my ethnographic analysis. In term of practicality, weighing and measuring all nutritional elements of food eaten by subject of my study are labour-intensive, time consuming and expensive (Ferro-Luzi 1982). While the nutritional studies provide a higher level of accuracy and precision, they also usually create fatigue among the subjects. To get a full data set on nutritional status, one researcher can only work with a maximum of three individuals for the period surveyed. Therefore, there is no merit in using a more elaborate or expensive technique than is needed for the purposes of my research.

This research modified a 7-day food intake survey proposed by Henry and Macbeth (2004, 139). This method can provide a macro survey of dietary pattern in a given population within a short-time survey done by single researcher. To give a long-time perspective, I used and modified this method for a one-year period. The longer the data recorded, the more patterns can be identified. This method is significantly useful to identify food preferences, the sources of food, consumption patterns, and the practices and places of eating. While it does not provide the highest accuracy, the method implies a low respondent burden

and is therefore in terms of practicality, suitable for my research. The full-year food intake survey is part of the study on the role of food among the population of Muntei, complementing participant observation, household interviews and surveys. The frequency survey covered special feast days, particular seasons for certain edible resources (fruits, crabs, shellfish), and various months with different amounts of rainfall.

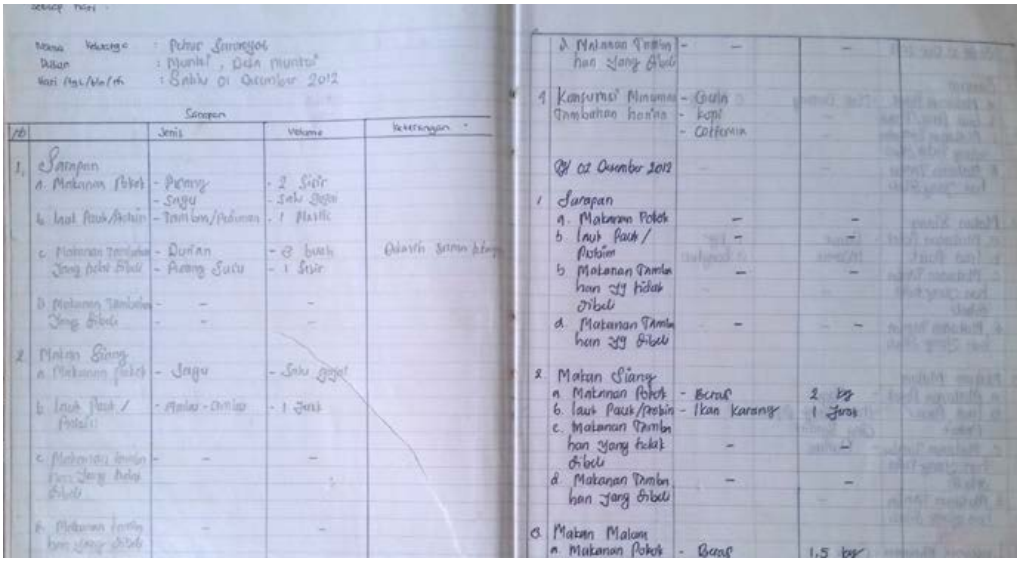
I decided that the information on the food intake from each respondent was to be obtained through a daily designated record sheet. The record sheet was designed with food and drink items listed down the left-hand column, grouped in categories familiar to Muntei residents. For example, sago, taro, and banana are grouped as 'traditional staple' but recorded on its own while rice and noodle are clustered together as 'imported staple' (*kat sareu*). The form was designed as simple as possible. The complicated record sheet would certainly have been a burden for the informant. Hence, cooking oil, butter, and fats were recorded but not elaborately analysed as the research did not focus on health variables. It was also thought that frying and roasting with oil and butter were not really popular methods of cooking in Muntei. For introduced food such as some vegetables and fruits, careful study of the use of the translated words was undertaken by interviewing women. Choice and limitation of items to be either individually named or given group categories were significant issues to resolve.

To collect the daily intake data, I made a simple template sheet of dietary diversity. The table below is the English translation of an example of the questionnaire which is prepared in Bahasa Indonesia but then can be answered in either Bahasa Indonesia or Mentawai language. All that the respondents needed do was to place a single vertical mark every time a food or drink item was consumed along the row of that item and in the column for 'everyday meal'. The meal of the day sheet was a useful variable as this showed daily meals of the respondent and could be used for further calculation of the total number of meals. There was no attempt to gain information on size or weigh of portion. Prior to the intake of the data, each of the respondents was briefly informed about how to use the questionnaire form. The example form was printed and shown to the respondent. A simple instruction was given on how to transfer the column in the sample sheet into a long logbook which was given for each respondent. The respondent then filled the logbook following the sample form. A two-weeks trial period was used for each respondent. Every two-days, I checked the logbook and looked at the recorded data. One respondent took longer to understand what he/she had to fill in, while others only needed a few days to easily write down what they had eaten. When the logbook was exhausted and full, the new logbook was provided for the next recording period. To ensure that each respondent had consistently recorded their meals, I employed an assistant to check and recheck the process of recording data regularly and to collect the recorded data every month. The recorded data were then sent to me. If the data were inconsistent or unclear, I would ask the assistant to clarify with the respondent. Picture 57 below gives an example of the daily food intake data.

Reasonable sample sizes were more important than detailed information on frequency and quantity of meals. As this dissertation studies a single settlement consisting of hundreds of individuals and families (*lalep*) from different groups (*uma*) from different original settlements (*pulaggaijat*) with a different emphasis on livelihood strategies, the food intake data had to represent the population. There were some slightly different identifications in terms of *sasabirut-sarereiket*, the pioneer and latecomer, religion (Christian or Islam), or gender difference which were assumed to influence food consumption. I used a basic analysis at the household level, especially using the day-to-day food intake data. The purpose of using this family unit-based analysis was to look for food intake patterns at the core level of production and consumption, which is the family in the Mentawaian context (Loeb 1928; Schefold 1973; 2017).

The Process of Data Collection

Decisions about how to sample a population and how to reach that sample were taken based on both



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Picture 57. A sample of logbook 2019

methodological and practical considerations. In this research, my focus was not on the number or the variation of intake data, but rather on the consistency of recorded family meals in the specific period. Note that not all Muntei people were staying in the settlement and that they had meals in the houses every day. As the various types of gardens are scattered, some far away from the settlement, some people, especially elders kept staying in the garden huts while youth and children stay at home. Some families had a regular schedule of staying in the forest or coconut gardens on weekdays and just returned to the settlement on the weekend. Consequently, daily family meals were not always attended by all members of the family. Hence, it was not possible to obtain regular data on food intake for most of the families. It was felt that recording data for a family mainly staying in the gardens might lead to irregular data. Where the research budget was limited as was the case in this research, asking every family or a large number of families that represent each social identity to fill the forms was out of the question.

My attention turned to a few families that would make the daily recording of data possible. It was decided that distribution would be undertaken through the families that have at least a teenager girl who attends secondary school. In a Siberut context, this idea provided an excellent practical solution. The teenage girls (aged twelve to eighteen) are the links in the daily family meals. The presence of school children at the family affect the rhythm and pattern of family meals. Everyday meals are organised around the school time—breakfast prior to departing to school (between 6 to 7 am), lunch meals after the school time (1-2 pm), and evening meals before they do homework or other school related activities (6-7 pm). The presence of a teenage girl in the family, hence, is pivotal. Around the mid-teens, they are viewed as capable of making meals (*paneuk*) for the family and are always involved in the preparation of meals. They might not cook all dishes, but they were assisting their mothers in preparing, serving, or cleaning the dishes. When their parents were outside the settlement and not attending the family meals, the teenage girls would replace their mothers, and be responsible for preparing and serving the family meals.

Further, the teenage girls born in the settlement were commonly literate, and being able to read and write. They were important interlocutors who could record family meals on a regular basis. While their

mothers were always busy, especially with infants and children, and did not have time to write down what they had eaten during the day, the teenage girls had time to sit and recall what the family had consumed. From over 34 families with teenage girls, I selected three that had an older daughter in teenage years who was responsible for daily meals. There was a certain problem since not all family members joined in all recorded family meals throughout the year. This was particularly so when it was fruit season or harvesting time for cash crops. The parents sometime had their meals in the gardens, children took food from families but might eat leftover lunch in the house. On a few occasions, the families had communal feasts in their *uma* or in the church. There was also a short period when the recorders of the meal were sick or away from home. In these cases, data of family meals were unavailable. I decided to not use the data collected for days when the records were not complete.

Data Analysis

In total I have collected data for 3,030 meals over 1,047 days from the three families. These data were collected between the 1st of January and the end of December 2013. All the meals consumed during the data collection period are compiled. From the data I gathered, a breakdown of the data was made based on the general classification of types of food according to the perspective of the people under study, which are plant food (kat) and animal food (iba). The category of kat includes some types of industrial food such as biscuits, crackers, candies, and instant noodles sold in the shop. For the analysis, this general category is further elaborated. The kat was divided into several categories such as sago, taro, banana, cassava and sweet potatoes, rice, and instant noodle. I did not include minor types of food from the shop such as sugar, biscuits, or crackers since these types of food are not part of the communal meals of the families and they are difficult to record.

The non-staple types of plant food are separated and categorised as non-staple garden products. This category includes various types of fruits and vegetables. The people of Muntei are not big fans of vegetables but they have a strong appetite for fruits, especially durians. Fruits are seasonally available, known as *musim buah*, particularly in the great fruiting season (*rura*). The year of 2013 actually had such a *rura* season. Data on fruit consumption in this dissertation is certainly influenced by the fact that all families enjoyed more fruits than during the previous year and the year after. In the analysis of food intake, the amount and frequency of fruit consumption were probably higher than the normal years. In the analysis, apparently people were rarely buying fruits from the market. They did enjoy imported fruits such as salak, apples or peers but they had no particular interest to bring them to their house as family comestible.

The animal food was initially classified according to local categories such as *iba-t-sinanalep* (animal food collected by women), *iba-t-leleu* (meat from the forest), *iba-t-koat* (meat from the sea) or *iba-t-sisaki* (purchased meat). From this classification, I made a further categorisation for statistical purposes. The animal food was classified into small mammals (pangolin, civets, squirrel), big mammals (dugong, wild pigs, deers), poultry (chicken, ducks, various species of birds), pork (from domestic and wild pigs), clams, shrimps (including crabs), fish, worms and beef.

I compiled all daily meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and made a breakdown for each category of food (sago, taro, instant noodles, etc.). Then, I calculated the frequency of each category of food in the different types of meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). I have analysed the frequency distribution of detailed categories of *kat* and *iba,* other garden products (mainly fruits) and processed food. This analysis was presented in graphs. This frequency distribution showed the percentage of a specific category of food served in the meals. This analysis allowed me to get an overview of diet patterns at the family level for a full year. The analysis helped me to identify patterns in the types of food my informants consume, and how they obtain these types of food. All analysed data are presented in Chapters 4 and 7.

APPENDIX 2

List of Plant Food (*Kat*)

1. List of Kat (Plant Food) Consumed by Muntei People

Category	Vernacular Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Staple	Sago	Sago	*Metroxylon sago*
	Gettek	Taro	*Colocasia Esculenta*
	Magok	Banana	*Musa spp*
	Gobik	Cassava	*Manihot Utilisima*
	Tetekket	Sweet potates	*Ipomoea Batatas*
Vegetables	Taratti	Torch ginger	*Etlingea Elatior*
	Tottonan	Wild ginger	*Etlingera spp*
	Lotlot	Taro stalk	*Colocasia esculenta*
	Bilijo	Banana blossom	*Musa spp.*
	Rebung	Bambo shoot	*Schzistosoma sp.*
	Ogoet toitet	Coconut shoot	*Cocos Nucifera*
	Ogoet poula	Aren palm shoot	*Arenga Pinnata*
	Buluk tojet	Paddy oat	*Gnetum Gnemon*
	Sampelo	Papaya	*Carica Papaya*
	Leuk-leuk	Wild fern	*Diplazium esculentum*
	Ogoet nibung	Nibong palm	*Oncosperma tigilarium*
	Dodolu	Wild eggplants	*Solanum torvum*
	Pucuk peranci	Cassava leaves	*Manihot utilisima*
	Kangkung	Morning glory	*Ipomoea aquatica*
	Kacang siata	Snake beans	*Vigna unguiculata*
	Terong	Eggplants	*Solanum Melongena*
	Tomat	Tomatoe	*Solanum tuberosum*
	Laggurek	Rowal fruit	*Pangium spp*
	Boncis	Green beans	*Phaseolus vulgaris*
	Peigu sareu	Jackfruit	*Artocarpus heterophylus*
	Kacang tanah	Groundnut	*Arachis hypogea*
	Matimun	Cucumber	*Cucumis sativus*
Spices	Kairiggi simalagak	Button mangosten	*Garcinia xanthoichymus*
	Sikopuk	Aromatic ginger	*Kaempfaria galanga*
	Sereh	Lemongrass	*Cymbopogom citratis*
	Jahe	Ginger	*Zingiber officinale*
	Aririmau sareu	Lime	*Citrus aurantiifolia*
	Aririmau siboitok	Kaffir lime	*Citrus hystrix*
	Daro siboitok	Bird-eyes chilli	*Capsicum annum*
	Suat kole	Sugarcane	*Saccharum officinarum*

	Daro simabo	Chilli	*Capsicum frutescent*
	Toitet	Coconut	*Cocos nucifera*
Mushroom	Ngebru/gebru	Straw mushroom	*Volvalaria volvacea*
	Udduat	Oyster mushroom	*Pleorotus sp*
	Buluk posa	Jelly ear mushroom	*Auricularia auriula*
Fruits	Doriat	Durian	*Durio zibhetinus*
	Toktuk	Spiky durian	*Durio oxeylanus*
	Posinoso	Wild durian	*Durio graveolens*
	Teggeiluk	Wild langsat	*Baccaeura lanceolata*
	Bairabbit	Wild rambutan	*Nephelium xerospermoides*
	Sipeu/kueni	Saipan mango	*Mangifera odorata*
	Abbangan	Wild mango	*Mangifera spp*
	Peigu	Jackfruit	*Artocarpus heterophylla*
	Sampelo	Papaya	*Carica papaya*
	Bairabbit sareu	Rambutan	*Nephelium lappaceum*
	Lakopak	Mangosteen	*Eugenia spp*
	Ailuluppa	Water apple	*Syzgium sp*
	Ailuluppa leleu	Wild rose apple	*Syzigiym pycnanthum*
	Tojet	Gnetum	*Gnetum gemon*
	Sau	Sapodilla	*Manilkara zapota*
	Sirsak	Soursop	*Annona muricata*
	Muntei	Pomelo	*Citrus maxima*
	Sabbui	Common guava	*Psidium guava*
	Arimau simananam	Common orange	*Citrus nobilis*
	Ailuppa sareu	Malay water apple	*Syzygium malaccense*
	Siamung	Langsat	*Lansium parasiticum*
	Asit	Pinneapples	*Ananas camosus*

2. List of Local Varieties of Taro

No	Variety	Characteristics	Suitable Places	Use
1	Simakeppu	Tuber has hard skin and solid; tall and broad leaves	Forest garden; home garden	For sale but also domestic consumption (boiled is the best)
2	Simanimpi	Soft and light skin; solid; tastier; tall and broad leaves	Forest garden; home garden	Only for adults. Infant would have stomachache after consuming this variety
3	Gettek roti	Red-purple leaves; solid and hard tubers tastier and crumbly after boiled.	Sago gardens; riverbank	Introduced variety; good to boil and for staple
5	Sikalagatna	Tall-purple limb; broad leaves, just one tuber	Riverbank, sago garden; forest garden	Mainly for sale but also domestic consumption
6	Gette' sareu	Red limb, red and big tuber; just one tuber	Riverbank, sago garden; forest garden	Mainly for sale but also domestic consumption
7	Simukopna	Green leaves, white tubers; just one tuber	Riverbank, sago garden; forest garden	Domestic consumption
8	Silakku'	Red limb, red tubers, lot of tubers around the main tuber	Riverbank; sago gardens	For a ritual and domestic consumption
9	Galalak saibina	Purple limb; yellow tubers; many tubers	Riverbank, sago garden	For subbet in a ritual and domestic consumption
10	Puleleklek	Pale limb; white and clean tuber; one tuber one plant	Riverbank, sago garden; forest garden	Mashed and given to infant. Domestic consumption but also for sale—especially as a gift.
11	Keladi bawang	Small and white tuber; pale limb; lots of tubers; tasty	Dry and sandy soil	For sale and domestic consumption
12	Lakkiniu	Purple limb; white tuber; many tubers	Riverbank, sago garden; forest garden	For subbet in a ritual; Domestic consumption
13	Deretmainong	Small and white tubers; broad leaves	Home garden; sago garden	For subbet in a ritual
14	Beuungat	Small tuber; tall limb; fibrous	Home garden; riverbank; sago gardens	Rarely eaten by humans. Tubers too small. Given to livestock.
15	Simagurik lappaet	Stripped limb; small leaves	Riverbank, sago garden; forest garden	Domestic consumption

16	Sapsap	Pale limb, fibrous tubers	Home garden; sago gardens	Chickens' and pigs' food—not for humans
17	Bio/lutti	Tall limb, broad leaves; flat and wide tubers	Home gardens	Domestic consumption
18	Birai	Pale tubers; pale and branched limb	Sandy and dry soil	Domestic consumption
19	Sususru	Tall-pale limb; broad leaves, just one tuber mirip	Home gardens; forest garden; sago gardens	Domestic consumption
20	Gette' lutti	Small and white tuber; purple limb; lots of tubers	Home gardens; forest garden; sago gardens	Boiled for daily meal
21	Tappeina	Soft texture, white and round tuber. Do not produce mucus. Wide leaves	Riverbank; sandy and dry soil buggei,	Mashed for infant; for subbet in a ritual
22	Laggaita	Big white-yellow tubers but flavorless; green and medium-size leaves; lots of tubers	riverbank	Mashed for subbet in a ritual put in bamboo tube
23	Simareirei	Red-head tubers; lots of tubers; dry tuber	Forest garden, sandy soil	Fried is the best.
24	Kabei	Solid and brown.	Riverbank; sago garden	Boiled for breakfast
25	Sususru	Tastier; white-yellow tubers; red frond	Sandy soil	Mashed and given to infant

3. List of Local Varieties of Cassava (Manihot utilisima), Yams and Sweet Potatoes (Ipomoea batatas) Consumed by Muntei People

No	Local Name	Characteristics	Suitable Places	Use
Cassava				
1	Gobik sipadang	Exuberant leaves, small trees; plenty of tubers from one tree	Home gardens	Leaves for vegetables, tubers are boiled
2	Gobik sipukajuk	Big and crumbly tubers; tall and hardwood trees; few tubers from one tree	Forest garden	Fried for breakfast
3	Paranci	Small trees; few tubers from one tree	Home gardens	Leaves for vegetables, tubers are fried
4	Gobik simatiet	Bitter tubers; tall trees; a few tubers from one tree	Forest garden	Not eaten; for pigs
Yams and Sweet Potatoes				
5	Tetekket simakotkot	Big and crumbly tuber,	Forest gardens; home garden	Fried for breakfast
6	Tetekket simakiniu	Yellow, tender, and sweet tuber	Home garden	Boiled for staple
7	Tetekket simabo	Red and compact tubers; tasty.	Home garden; forest garden	Fried for breakfast
8	Tetekket simaekket	Small tubers, exuberant leaves	Taro garden; home garden; planted under cacao trees	Leaves for vegetables; Boiled; used as a mark of a garden
9	Tetekket siboitok	Small tubers		Rarely eaten
10	Laiket	Green-yellow and tender; not tasty	Forest garden	Fried

4. List of Local Varieties of Edible Banana and Plantain Consumed by Muntei people

No.	Vernacular Name	Description	Suitable Places
1	Tairok simarei-rei	The most popular and cultivated plantain; solid, pungent not easily rotten fruits. Can be eaten raw when rippen. The trees contains a lot of bunch. Consumed, mainly for staple—boiled for dinner. Fried for breakfast. Mashed with taro for subbet. It is sold to the mainland	Home gardens; taro gardens; forest garden
2	Tairok simabulau	Solid, pungent, not easily rotten plantain. A bit sour and paler than the first variety. Consumed mainly as staple—boiled for dinner. Can be eaten rawi when is rippen. Exported to the mainland.	Home gardens; taro gardens; forest garden
3	Janang	Sweet, soft, and aromatic banana; ripen and rooten easily. Can be eaten raw but mostly boiled, mixed with taro for subbet. It is given to baby. The most popular but not exported to the mainland. Local sale.	Taro gardens; bank of the river
4	Kelak ngattai (Sarereiket), balot saibi (Sasabirut)	Solid, tastier banana; yellow purple. Boiled for staple. A good fit for meat. Can be consumed with other fringes. Favourite banana but not abundance; required intensive attention.	Suk-suk, bebet leleu, bebet onaja
5	Tak sopo (Sarereiket), sitabak (Sasabirut)	Big and pungent banana; less aromatic and have soury taste. Boiled for staple. Rarely fried or eaten raw.	Forest gardens
6	Tagguili simaingo	Sweet, softer and aromatic. Sale to local market. Boiled and mashed as baby food.	Taro gardens; home gardens
7	Tagguili simabulau	Pale, softer and sweet banana. Boiled and mashed as baby food. Sale to local market. Can be eaten raw.	Taro gardens; home gardens
8	Tagguili siatetek	Shorter trees; yellow pale with black dots if it is rippen. Eaten raw; rarely boiled or processed.	Home gardens; forest garden
9	Pukpuk	Sweet, fresh, and fruity taste; Eaten raw but can be boiled for breakfast.	Taro garden, home garden; forest garden.
10	Tak teunung	Big but soury fruits. Rarely consumed raw. Roasted or fried is the best way to consume.	Taro gardens; forest garden
11	Ngeng-ngeng	Green when it raws but but bright yellow when it rippen; Small but long fruits. Eaten raw (ngalitet); the heart of the tree used as gaud againts bad spirits.	Home gardens; taro gardens
12	Bikklu	Small, yellow bright banana. Snack in the gardens; rarely brought home.	Forest garden
13	Lidi	Small, soft but tasteless. Eaten raw as a snack in the garden	Forest gardens

14	Rojong	Tastier, aromatic, and small fruits. Eaten raw but also boiled for staple and subbet	Taro garden, home garden, forest garden
15	Pisang bawang	Small, light skin; sweet. Eaten raw; sale to local restaurant.	Home gardens; forest garden; the bank of the river
16	Sinong-nong (Sasabirut), beu tabbaut (Sarereiket)	Sweet, pungent bananas; not many bunch. Raw fruit is boiled for staple. Rippen one for subbet.	River bank; taro garden
17	Tolat rarangen (Sabirut), kelak ratangen (Sarereiket)	Sweet, aromatic, hard texture. Red bright if it is rippen. Raw fruit is boiled; fried for breakfast; mashed with taro for subbet	River bank; taro garden
18	Rappo	Big, fat and pungent banana; few fruits. Boiled for staple; fried for snack; mashed with taro for subbet	Forest garden; taro gardens; home gardens
19	Ngancat	Red, long but bland taste. Boiled for staple; it is fit for meal with meat.	Home gardens; forest garden
20	Pisang sarai	Sugary and honey-like taste but bristly and bitter when it is not rippen uet. Eaten raw as snack	River bank; taro gardens; forest garden
21	Boji	A round fruit; odourless. Eaten raw.	Forest garden; river bank; taro gardens
22	Sibook	Red, long and sweet-sour banana. Eaten raw for snack.	Taro gardens; river bank.
23	Bulu	Pale banana but become purple when it is boiled. Mostly boiled for staple.	Forest garden
24	Sara laggok	A sweet and pungen banana. Boiled for staple; mixed with taro for subbet.	Forest garden; river bank.
25	Pisang medan simaingo	Big, and lot fruits but tasteless. Gigantic trees and leaves. A recently introduced variety of plantain from the mainland; an important current commodity, exclusiely for a sale. Rarely consumed.	Intercropped with cacao trees in forest gardens
26	Pisang medan simabulau	Big pale fruits but tasteless plantain. Gigantic trees and leaves. Recently brought from mainland. a newly commodity for export.	Intercropped with cacao trees in forest gardens
27	Pisang barangan	Savourless and solid plantain but watery when it is rippen. Recently introduced from the mainland. people consume it occasionaly but main export it to the mainland	Intercropped with cacao trees in forest gardens

APPENDIX 3

List of Animal Food (*Iba*) Known by Muntei People

1. List of freshwater species of fish and shrimps

	Vernacular Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed/ Presented in Food Intake Data
Fish				
1	Putcek	Sharp-belly barb	*Oxygaster anomalur*	Yes
2	Kalajat	Spotted barb	*Puntius binonatus*	Yes
3	Ilek/lojo	Swampy eel	*Monopterus albus*	Yes
4	Tomina	Eel	*Anguilla bicolor*	Yes
5	Siteppek	Seluang	*Glosssobiagus giurus*	No
6	Tuk-tuk	Freshwater goby	*Stigmatogobius borneensis*	Yes
7	Golak	Spotted flagtail	*Kuhlia marginata*	Yes
8	Bulu bailat	Estuarine mullet	*Mugil dussumieri*	Yes
9	Butek baga	Fringelip mullet	*Crenimugil heterocheilos*	Yes
10	Kelak utek	Waspfish	*Tetraroga barbata*	No
11	Potcot	Silver rasbora	*Rasbora argyrotaenia*	Yes
12	Gaik-gaik	Spangled gudgeon	*Ophiocara porocephala*	Yes
13	Sikapla	Forest snakehead	*Channa lucius*	Yes
14	Tuik	Cat fish	*Clarias Batracus*	Yes
15	Tuik sareu	King cat fish	*Clarias gariepinus*	Yes
16	Ikan mas	Common carps	*Cyprinus carpio*	No
17	Nila	Nile tilapia	*Oreochromis niloticus*	Yes
Shrimps				
18	Aggep ka monga	Rough river prawn	*Macrobrachium equidens*	Yes
19	Aggep	Mangrove prawns	*Palaemon concinnus*	Yes
20	Muinut	Riceland prawn	*Macrobrachium lancestrii*	Yes
21	Loloinan	Giant river prawn	*Macrobrachium rosenberghii*	Yes
22	Marou	Greasyback shrimps	*Metapenaeus ensis*	Yes

2. List of species of salt-water fish known and consumed by Muntei people

No	Local Names	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed in Food Intake
1	Sogga	Indo-pacific tarpon	*Megalop cyprionides*	Yes
2	Baggui	Longjaw bonefish	*Albula forsteri*	Yes
3	Tuingat	Seale's moray	*Gymnothorax dorsalis*	Yes
4	Tamban keru	Spotted sardinella	*Amblygaster sirm*	Yes
5	Pagpag mata	Blacksaddle herring	*Herklitsichthys dispilontus*	Yes
6	Tamban licin	Bluestripe herring	*Herklitsichthys quadrimaculatus*	Yes
7	Pagpag mata	Kelee shad	*Hilsa kelee*	Yes
8	Pagpag mata	Hairback herring	*Nematolosa come*	Yes
9	Tamban	White sardinella	*Sardinella albella*	Yes
10	Tamban	Fringescale sardinella	*Sardinella fimbriata*	Yes
11	Tamban	Goldstripe sardinella	*Sardinella gibbosa*	Yes
12	Tamban	Bali sardinella	*Sarinella lemuru*	Yes
13	Pagpag mata	Indian ilisha	*Ilisha melastoma*	Yes
14	Tamban	Banded ilisha	*Ilisha striatula*	Yes
15	Pagpag mata	Tardoore	*Opisthopterus tardoore*	Yes
16	Kaliliklik	Buccaneer anchovy	*Encrashicholina punctifer*	Yes
17	Pagpag mata	Common hairfin anchovy	*Setipinna tenuifilis*	Yes
18	Kaliliklik	Indian anchovy	*Stolephorus indicus*	Yes
19	Kaliliklik	Spotty-face anchovy	*Stolephorus waitei*	Yes
20	Tamban	Baelama anchovy	*Thryssa baelama*	Yes
21	Tamban licin	Moustached thyrssa	*Thryssa mystax*	Yes
22	Peddeman	Longjaw yhyrssa	*Thryssa setirostris*	Yes
23	Peddeman	Indonesian longjaw thryssa	*Thryssa cf setirostris*	Yes
24	Baggui	Milkfish	*Chanos chanos*	Yes
25	Poroi poroi	Indonesia threadsail	*Hime sp*	Yes
26	Poroi poroi	Bombay duck	*Harpadon nehereus*	Yes
27	Poroi poroi	Longdin lizardfish	*Sauredia longimanus*	Yes
28	Turubbek (Sabirut)	Skinnycheek lanternfish	*Benthosoma pterotum*	Yes
29	Golak koat	Goatsbeard brotula	*Brotula multibarbata*	Yes
30	Butek baga	Tade mullet	*Chelon planiceps*	Yes
31	Butek baga	Greenback mullet	*Chelon subviridis*	Yes
32	Pupplu	Squaretail mullet	*Ellechelon vaigiensis*	Yes
33	Butek baga	Bluespot mullet	*Moolgarda seheli*	Yes
34	Toropipi	Bearhead flying fish	*Cheilopogon arcticeps*	No
35	Matsasa, taggak	Blackbarred halfbeak	*Hemiramphis far*	Yes

36	Taggak	Red-tipped halfbeak	*Hyporhampus xanthopterus*	Yes
37	Tairousou	Flat needlefish	*Ablennes hians*	Yes
38	Jojoujou	Barred needlefish	*Ablennes sp*	Yes
39	Tairousou	Reed needlefish	*Strongylura incisa*	Yes
40	Tairousou	Yellowfin needlefish	*Strongylura leiura*	Yes
41	Tairousou	Spottail needlefish	*Strongylura strongylura*	No
42	Tairousou	Hound needlefish	*Tylosurus crocodilus*	Yes
43	Butek tengah	Imperador	*Beryx decadactylus*	Yes
44	Toglo	Alfonsino	*Beryx splendens*	Yes
45	Beretcit (Sabirut)	Shadowfin soldierfish	*Myriristis adusta*	Yes
46	Kemut	Volitan lionfish	*Pterois volitans*	Yes
47	Nappot	Javan lionfish	*Neomerinthe sp*	Yes
48	Puaileppet	Redmouth grouper	*Aethaloperca rogaa*	Yes
49	Beilua	Slender grouper	*Anyperodon leucogrammicus*	Yes
50	Kerapu minyak	Whitespotted grouper	*Epinephelus coeruleopunctatus*	Yes
51	Kobut	Orangespotted grouper	*Epinephelus coioides*	Yes
52	Sawai	Lyretail grouper	*Variola albimarginata*	Yes
53	Sawai	Coronation grouper	*Variola louti*	Yes
54	Toglo toglo	Black cardinalfish	*Apogonichthyioides melas*	Yes
55	Toglo toglo	Bleker's cardinal fish	*Archamia bleekeri*	Yes
56	Butek engah	Japanese bigeye	*Cookeolus japonicus*	Yes
57	Pasesengau	Threadfin trevally	*Alectis ciliaris*	Yes
58	Pasesengau	Indian threadfish	*Alectis indica*	Yes
59	Gurigak	Oxeye scad	*Selar boops*	Yes
60	Gurigak	Bigeye scat	*Selar crumenophthalmus*	Yes
61	Tatajak	Moonfish	*Mene maculata*	Yes
62	Capa	Rusty jobfish	*Aphareus rutilans*	Yes
63	Labo	Mangrove jack	*Lutjanus argentimaculatus*	Yes
64	Ramung	Bengal snapper	*Lutjanus bengalensis*	Yes
65	Ramung	Twospot snapper	*Lutjanus biguttatus*	Yes
66	Surat takep	Spanish flag snapper	*Lutjanus carponotatus*	Yes
67	Surat takep	Chequered snapper	*Lutjanus decussatus*	Yes
68	Kaliou (Sabirut)	Ehrenberg's snapper	*Lutjanus ehrenbergii*	Yes
69	Gulamba	Crimson snapper	*Lutjanus erythropterus*	Yes
70	Tottot bebek	Blackspot snapper	*Lutjanus fulviflamma*	Yes
71	Simakiniu	Blacktail snapper	*Lutjanus fulvus*	Yes
72	Soddok	Paddletail snipper	*Lutjanus gibbus*	Yes
73	Simakiniu	Golden snapper	*Lutjanus johnii*	Yes
74	Soddok	Darktail snapper	*Lutjanus lemnicatus*	Yes

75	Soddok	Lunartail snapper	*Lutjanus lunulatus*	No
76	Simakiniu, Ramung	Bigeye snapper	*Lutjanus lutjanus*	Yes
77	Simakiniu ka keru	Indian snapper	*Lutjanus madras*	Yes
78	Soddok ka keru	Malabar snapper	*Lutjanus malabaricus*	No
79	Labbo kaliou	Onespot snapper	*Lutjanus monostigma*	Yes
80	Simakiniu ka kapik	Papuan snapper	*Lutjanus papuensis*	Yes
81	Simakiniu	Fivelined snapper	*Lutjanus quinquelineatus*	Yes
82	Sikappla	Speckled snapper	*Lutjanus rivulatus*	Yes
83	Simakiniu	Goldenlined snapper	*Lutjanus rugfolineatus*	Yes
84	Simakiniu	Russel's snapper	*Lutjanus russelii*	Yes
85	Gulamba	Red emperor	*Lutjanus sebae*	
86	Soddok simakiniu	Brownstripe snapper	*Lutjanus vitta*	Yes
87	Roddot	Midnight snapper	*Macolor macularis*	Yes
88	Capa	Smallmouth snapper	*Paracaesio brevidentata*	Yes
89	Capa	Japanese snapper	*Paracaesio caerulea*	Yes
90	Bela poupou	Crimson jobfish	*Pristipomoides filamentosus*	No
91	Sikappla ka bugei	Sailfin snapper	*Symphoricthys spilurus*	Yes
92	Surat sabuk	Chinamanfish	*Symphorus nematophorus*	Yes
93	Jumbo	Scissortail fusilier	*Caesio caerulaurea*	Yes
94	Roddot bugei	Blacktip sweetlips	*Diagramma melanacrum*	Yes
95	Roddot bugei	Painted sweetlips	*Diagramma pictum*	Yes
96	Roddot	Harlequin sweetlips	*Plectorhinchus chaetodonoides*	
97	Roddot	Goldlined sweetlips	*Plectorhinchus chrysotaenia*	Yes
98	Roddot	Yellowspotted sweetlips	*Plectorhinchus flavomaculatus*	Yes
99	Roddot bugei	Humpback sweetlips	*Plectorhinchus gibbosus*	Yes
100	Sogat koat	Silver grunt	*Pomadasys argenteus*	Yes
101	Baracuang	Ambon emperor	*Lethrinus amboinensis*	Yes
102	Ladduk	Bigeye bream	*Monotaxis grandoculis*	Yes
103	Matat kotkot	Redfin bream	*Monotaxis heterodon*	Yes
104	Bela poupou	Balinese threadfin bream	*Nemipterus balinensis*	Yes
105	Simaikkre	Yellowstriped whiptail	*Pentapodus aureofasciatus*	Yes
106	Simuinek	Fourfinger threadfin	*Eleutheronema tetradactylum*	Yes
107	Matcuit	Yellowstripe goatfish	*Mulloidichthys flavolineatus*	Yes
108	Pirikpik	Curved bullseye	*Pempheris adusta*	Yes
109	Lajo	Silver mono	*Monodactylus argenteus*	Yes
110	Lajo	Sicklefish	*Drepane longimana*	No
111	Lajo	Spotted sicklefish	*Drepane punctata*	No
112	Buei (Sabirut)	Banded archerfish	*Toxotes jaculatrix*	Yes
113	Silainge	Threadfin butterflyfish	*Chaetodon auriga*	Yes

114	Silainge	Threespot angelfish	*Apolemichthys trimaculatus*	Yes
115	Purukpuk	Pearlscale angelfish	*Centropyge vrolikii*	Yes
116	Baruai	Topsail chub	*Kyphosus cinerascens*	Yes
117	Baruai	Sixline trumpeter	*Helotes sexlineatus*	No
118	Kaebbuk	Bluespotted wrasse	*Anampses caeruleopunctatus*	Yes
119	Kaebbuk	Geographic wrasse	*Anampses geographicus*	Yes
120	Satcat	Saddleback hogfish	*Bodianus bilunulatus*	Yes
121	Sangitat	Floral wrasse	*Cheilinus chlorourus*	Yes
122	Sangitat	Cigar wrasse	*Cheilio inermis*	No
123	Simaikkre	Whitestripe tuskfish	*Choerodon cf margaritiferus*	Yes
124	Sangitat	Singapore tuskfish	*Choerodon oligacanthus*	Yes
125	Luik luik	Palebarred wrasse	*Coris dorsomacula*	No
126	Satcat	Slingjaw wrasse	*Epibulus insidiator*	Yes
127	Luik luik	Nebulous wrasse	*Halichoeres nebulosus*	Yes
128	Siguiring	Bengal sergeant	*Abudefduf bengalensis*	Yes
129	Durut durut	Batuna's damselfish	*Amblyglyphidodon batunai*	Yes
130	Poroi poroi	Gulf damselfish	*Pristotis obtusirostris*	Yes
131	Durut durut	Seram blenny	*Salarias ceramensis*	Yes
132	Gatik gatik	Shadow goby	*Acentrogobius nebulosus*	Yes
133	Lajo takkek	Spadefish	*Ephippus orbis*	Yes
134	Takkek	Speckled scat	*Scatophagus sp A*	Yes
135	Sirigai	Whitespotted rabbitfish	*Siganus canaliculatus*	Yes
136	Pamemelak bukkuk	Coral rabbitfish	*Siganus corallinus*	Yes
137	Pamemelak bakat	Golden rabbitfish	*Siganus guttatus*	Yes
138	Pamemelak bukkuk	Javan rabbitfish	*Siganus javus*	Yes
139	Pamemelak bukkuk	Masked rabbitfish	*Siganus puellus*	Yes
140	Sirigai	Scribbled rabbitfish	*Siganus spinus*	Yes
141	Pamemelak ngaik	Vermiculate rabbitfish	*Siganus vermiculatus*	Yes
142	Pamemelak bukkuk	Doublebar rabbitfish	*Siganus virgatus*	Yes
143	Silainge	Moorish idol	*Zanclus cornutus*	Yes
145	Taji taji	Orangesocket surgeonfish	*Acanthurus auranticavus*	Yes
146	Pamauru	Lined surgeonfish	*Acanthurus lineatus*	No
147	Taji taji	Yellowmask surgeonfish	*Acanthurus mata*	Yes
148	Puaileppet	Mimic surgeonfish	*Acanthurus pyroferus*	Yes
149	Taji taji	Whitemargin unicornfish	*Naso annulatus*	Yes
150	Pailok	Humpback unicornfish	*Naso brachycentron*	No
151	Tajitaji	Bluetail unicornfish	*Naso caeruleacauda*	Yes

152	Sejenis pailok	Orangespine unicornfish	*Naso lituratus*	Yes
153	Taji taji	Slender unicornfish	*Naso lopezi*	Yes
156	Pailok	Bluespine unicornfish	*Naso unicornis*	Yes
157	Tajitaji	Bignose unicornfish	*Naso vlamingii*	Yes
158	Pailok	Yellowfin sawtail	*Prionurus chrysurus*	Yes
159	Attutu	Great barracuda	*Sphyraena barracuda*	Yes
160	Attutu	Snake mackerel	*Gempylus serpens*	No
161	Sirara	Escolar	*Lepidocybium flavobrunneum*	Yes
162	Buluk kole	Small eye hairtail	*Trichiurus sp A*	Yes
163	Kanasai	Bullet tuna	*Auxis rochei*	Yes
164	Ambu ambu	Mackerel tuna	*Euthynnus affinis*	Yes
165	Sirara	Double-line mackerel	*Grammatorcynus bilineatus*	Yes
166	Ambu ambu	Dogtooth tuna Skipjack tuna	*Gymnosarda unicolor* *Katsuwonus pelamis*	Yes
167	Kanasai	Short mackerel	*Rastrelliger brachysoma*	Yes
168	Sirara	Narrowbar spanish mackerel Indo–Pacific king mackerel	*Scomberomorus commerson* *Scomberomorus guttatus*	Yes
169	Sisik	Albacore Yellowfin tuna Longtail tuna	*Thunnus alalunga* *Thunnus albacares* *Thunnus tonggol*	
170	Layaran (bahasa sareu)	Black marlin Sailfish Swordfish	*Istiompax indica* *Istiophorus platypterus* *Xiphias gladius*	Yes No Yes
171	Lakkanai	Coastal cubehead Silver driftfish	*Cubiceps whiteleggii* *Psenes maculatus*	Yes No
172	Pirikpik	Silver pomfret	*Pampus argenteus*	Yes
173	Sitatcilak	Indian halibut Threespot flounder	*Psettodes erumei* *Pseudorhombus triocellatus*	Yes No
174	Puputput	Longspine tripodfish	*Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer*	Yes
175	Duddurut (Saibi), Pupuet (Sabirut)	Hairfin triggerfish Starry triggerfish	*Abalistes filamentosus* *Abalistes stellatus*	Yes Yes
176	Khusus Salakukut	Titan triggerfish	*Balistoides viridescens*	Yes
178	Umat kaira	Shortsnout boxfish	*Ostracion rhinorhynchos*	Yes
179	Umat kaira	Longhorn cowfish	*Lactoria cornuta*	Yes
180	Puputput	Silver puffer	*Chilomycterus reticulatus* *Lagocephalus sceleratus*	Yes Yes

3. List of non-fish animals from the sea consumed by Muntei people

No	Local Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed in Food Intake Data
1	Cumi bukuk	Bigfin reef squid	*Sepioteuthis lessoniana*	Yes
2	Cumi silayar	Cuttlefish	*Loligo vulgaris*	Yes
3	Gorita	Common octopus	*Octopus vulgaris*	Yes
4	Sakokok koat	Dugong	*Dugong dugon*	Yes
5	Kimak	Giant kima	*Tridacna gigas*	Yes
13	Masusurak	Green sea turtles	*Chelonian midas*	Yes
14	Masusurak	Hawksbill turtle	*Eretmcohelsy imbircata*	Yes
15	Masusurak	Leatherback turtles	*Demochelys coriacear*	Yes

4. List of Bivalvia and Gastropoda (clams, mussels, snails) collected in rivers, coastal zones and mangrove forests known and consumed by Muntei people

No	Vernacular Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed in Food Intake
Oyster, Snail, and Clams				
1	Koddiae	Violet batissa	*Batissa violacea*	Yes
2	Menggu	Bengali geloina	*Polymesoda bengalensis*	Yes
3	Meggu	Mud clam	*Polymesoda erosa*	Yes
4	Meggu kalotik	Marsh clam	*Polymesoda expansa*	Yes
5	Biccilet	Fragile semele	*Theora fragilis*	Yes
6	Biccilet sikoira	Sunset clam	*Gari togata*	Yes
7	Sikoira	Corrugata lucine	*Austriella corrugata*	Yes
8	Tainuktuk	Chalky buttercup lucine	*Anodontia philippiana*	Yes
9	Taimeggi	Tumid venus clam	*Gafrarium tumidum*	Yes
10	Bebeleh	Blood clam	*Anadara granosa*	Yes
11	Bobokket	Slipper oyster	*Crassostrea bilineata*	Yes
12	Kosae	Saddle tree oyster	*Isognomon ephippium*	Yes
13	Robbu	Youthful venus clam	*Gafrarium puerpera*	Yes
14	Tagkai	-	*Cycladicama alata*	Yes
15	Bolaisi	Chemnitz ark clam	*Anadara jousseaumei*	Yes
16	Toddojet	Indian backwater oyster	*Crassostrea bilineata*	Yes
17	Lilit	The giant mangrove whelk	*Terebralia palustris*	Yes
18	Goirobbit	Sulcate swamp cerith	*Terebralia sulcata*	Yes
19	Labbau	Flat spired nerite	*Nerita planospira*	Yes
20	Labbau oinan	Blotched nerite	*Nerita cf. articuitlata*	Yes
21	Labbau	Dusky nerite	*Neritina pulligera*	Yes
22	Goroigoi	Zebra nerite	*Vittina turrita*	Yes
23	Lipsop	Red rimmed melania	*Melanoides rustica*	Yes
24	Gugguk	Spotted nerite	*Neritina zigzag*	No
25	Toek	Edible shipworm	*Bactronophorus thoracites*	Yes
Crabs				
26	Lagguk	Giant mud-crab	*Scylla serrata*	Yes
27	Bongaga	Violet mud-crab	*Scylla tranquebarica*	Yes
28	Beliu	Red mud-crab	*Scyllla olivacea*	Yes
29	Anggau	White mud-crab	*Scylla paramamosain*	Yes

5. List of Animal Food from Forest (Iba-t-leleu) known by people in Muntei

	Local Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed in food intake
1	Simaigi	Wild pigs	*Sus scrofa vittatus*	Yes
2	Sipangangasa	Deer	*Cervus unicolor oceanus*	No
3	Ailuluppa	Pangolin	*Manis javanica*	No
4	Silaggi-laggi boitok	The wall roosting bat	*Myotis moricila abotti*	Yes
5	Silaggi-laggi	The lesser sheath-tailed bat	*Emballonura monticura*	Yes
6	Lamusek	Siberut palm civets	*Paradoxurus hemaprhoditus siberu*	No
7	Loga	Mentawaian squirrel	*Callosciuruss melanogaster*	Yes
8	Soksak	Fraternal squirrel	*Sundasciurus lowii fraterculis*	Yes
9	Letceu	Mentawaian three-stripped squirrel	*Lariscus obsucurs*	Yes
10	Bilou	Kloss gibbon	*Hylobates Kloosi*	No
11	Simakobu	Pig-tailed langur	*Simias concolor*	No
12	Joja	Sombre-bellied Siberut langur	*Presbitis potenziani siberu*	No
13	Bokkoi	Siberut macaque	*Macacca pagensis siberu*	No
14	Leituak simakotkot	Island flying fox	*Pteropus hypomelanus enganus*	Yes
15	Leituak simabo	Large flyig fox	*Pterops vampyrus malaccenses*	Yes
16	Teiku	Siberut tree-shrew	*Tupaia glis siberu*	No

6. List of edible birds known by people in Muntei

	Local Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed in food intake
1	Kailabba	Pied hornbill	*Anthracoceros coronatus*	No
2	Nanitu	Lesser whistling duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*	No
3	Turu goukgouk	White breasted waterhen	*Amourornis phoenicurus*	No
4	Lemendeu	Thick billed green pigeon	*Treron curvirostra*	Yes
5	Ngorut	Green imperial pigeon	*Ducula aenea*	Yes
6	Keibak	Large brown cuckoo dove	*Macropygia phasianella*	No
7	Lemendeu	Emerald dove	*Chalcophaps indica*	
8	Kotkot	Chestnut breasted malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus curvirostris*	No
9	Lagi-lagi	Crested tree swift	*Hemiprocne longipennis*	No
10	Lagi-lagi boitok	Whiskered tree swift	*Hemiprocne comata*	No
11	Taktak	Black-headed bulbul	*Pycnonotus melanoleucos*	No
12	Patpat	Asian fairy bluebird	*Irena puella*	No
13	Taporao	Black naped oriole	*Oriolus chinensis*	No
14	Seggeilobba	Magpie robin	*Copsychus saularis*	No
15	Raddatnake	White rumped shama	*Copsychus malabaricus*	No

7. List of terrestrial reptiles and amphibies known and consumed by people in Muntei

	Local Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed during Food Intake
1	Taratat	South-east Asian toadlet	*Pelophyrne brevipes*	Yes
2	Teilek	Swampy toad	*Fejervaya sp*	Yes
3	Taratat simaekket	Spotted sticky frog	*Kalophyrinus punctatus*	Yes
4	Taratat	Banded bullfrog	*Kaloula pulchra*	No
5	Teilek simananam	Golden-legged bush frog	*Philautus horridus*	Yes
6	Taratat simasingin	Cinnamon tree frog	*Philautus pictus*	Yes
7	Taratat	Kuhli creek frog	*Rana kuhli*	No
8	Taratat	Hose frog	*Rana hosei*	No
9	Batek	Monitor lizard	*Varanus salvator*	No
10	Saba	Pythons	*Python curtus*	No
11	Toulu	True tortoises	*Trimeresaurus hageni*	No
12	Simabo pai-pai	Sumatran pitviper	*Trimeresaurus sumatranus*	No
13	Sikoinan	Crocodile	*Crocodilus porosus*	No

8. List of domestic animals (iba-t-punen) consumed by people in Muntei

	Local Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Consumed during Food Intake
1	Sakokkok	Eurasian pigs	*Sus scrofa*	Yes
2	Goukgouk	Chickens	*Gallus gallus*	Yes
3	Itik serati	Manila duck	*Anas luzonica*	Yes
4	Bebek	Common duck	*Anas platyrhynchos domesticus*	Yes
5	Jawi	Cow	*Bos taurus*	Yes
6	Kambing	Goat	*Capra aegagrus hircus*	No
7	Kerbau	Buffalo	*Bubalus bubalis*	No

APPENDIX 4

PEMERINTAH KABUPATEN KEPULAUAN MENTAWAI
DUSUN MUNTEI DESA MUNTEI
KECAMATAN SIBERUT SELATAN

BERITA ACARA

Nomor : 24/Kadus-Mti/2012.

Pada Hari ini Minggu,Tanggal Dua Pulu Sembilan Bulan Tujuh Tahun Dua Ribu Dua Belas,Jam Empat Belas(14.00)waktu Indonesia Barat ,bertempat di Kantor Desa Muntei Kecamatan Siberut Selatan Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai, telah diadakan Rapat Musyawarah antara Masyarakat Desa Muntei,Maileppet dan Ma.Siberut.Dalam Rapat Musyawarah tersebut yang di bicarakan mengenai keberadaan **BABI di lokasi Perladangan Masyarakat di Bat Mara** danke Dua belah pihak telah kami Sepakati dan Putuskan bersama adalah **Pemindahan BABI** yang berada di **LOKASI PERLADANGAN di BAT MARA** tersebut, dengan Renggang **waktu 4 (Empat) bulan**.

Untuk itu kami bersedia menandatangani Surat Berita Acara ini yang kami buat Pada hari Minggu Tanggal Dua Pulu Sembilan Bulan Tujuh Tahun Dua Ribu Dua Belas dan Berita Acara ini berlaku sejak ditandatangani bersama.

Demikian Surat Berita Acara ini kami buat dengan sebenarnya,untuk dapat di pedomani sebagai mana mestinya,

Dibuat di : m u n t e i
Pada Tanggal : 29 Juli 2012

TOKOH MASYARAKAT

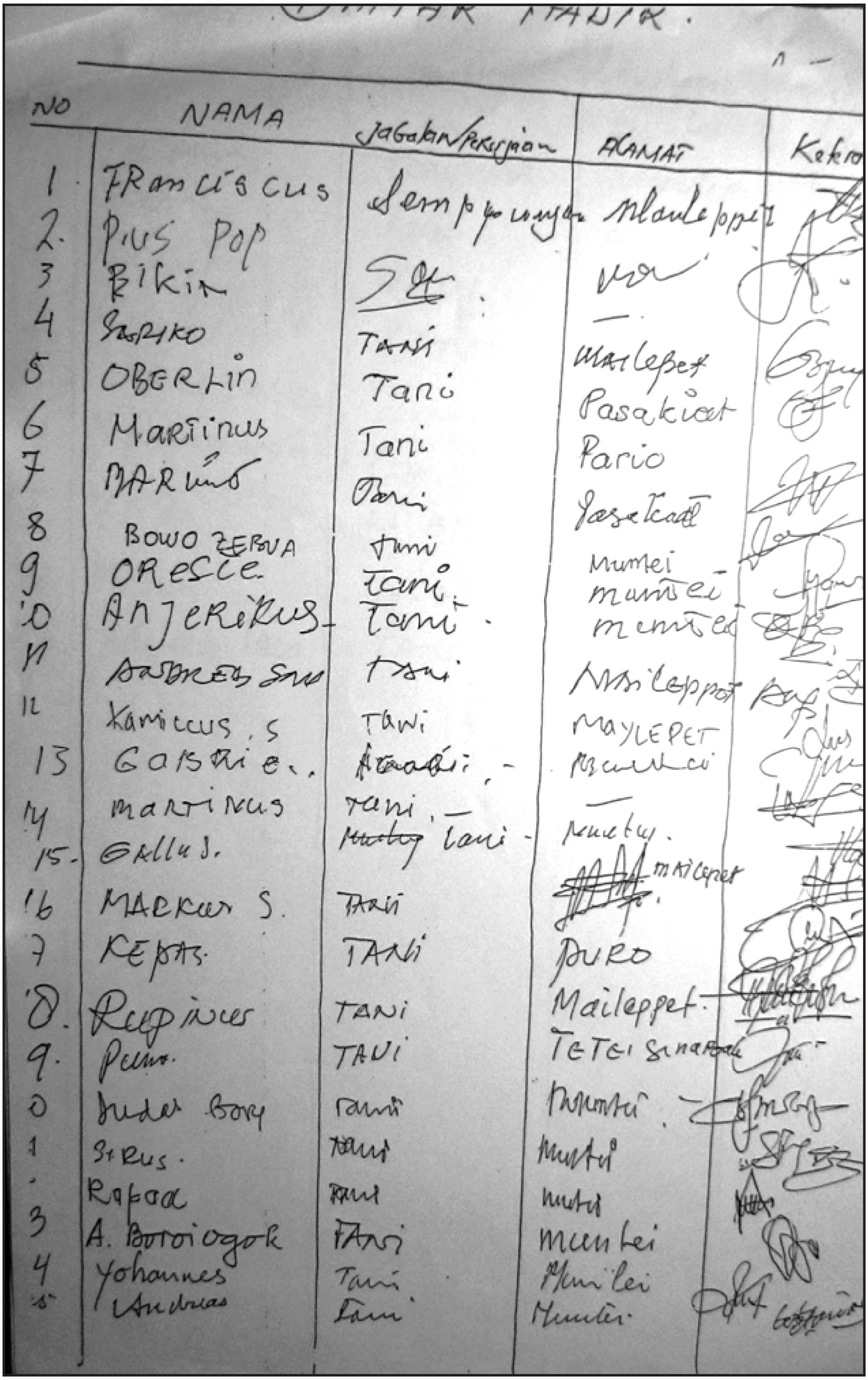
MATIAS SAGARI

KEPALA DUSUN MUNTEI

KEPALA DUSUN MUNTEI

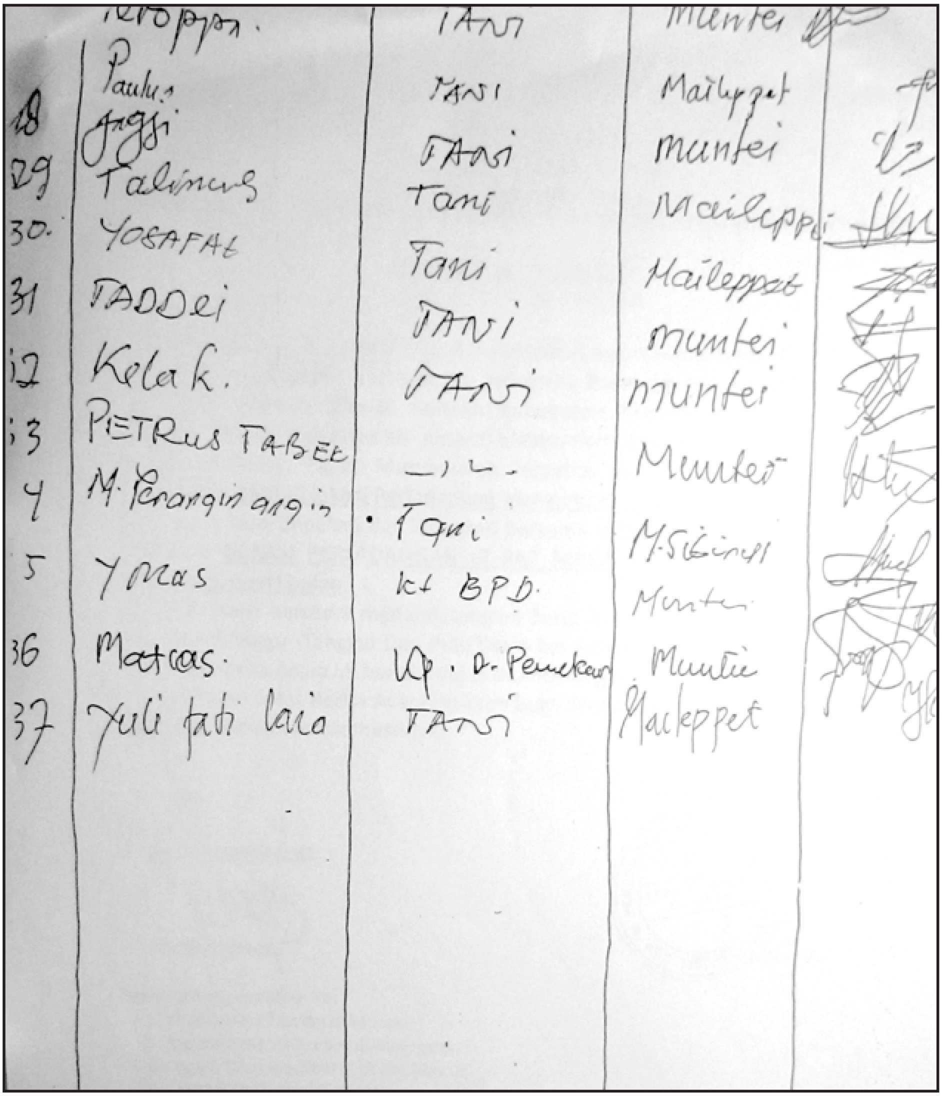
SAVERIANUS SAL.

Tembusan disampaikan Yth :
1. Kepala Desa Muntei di Muntei
2. Kepala Desa Maileppet di Maileppet
3. kepala Desa Ma.Siberut di Ma.Siberut
4. Ketua BPD muntei di Muntei
5. Ketua BPD Maileppet di Maileppet
6. Ketua BPD Ma.Siberut di Ma.Siberut
7. Arsip.....



DAFTAR HADIR.

NO	NAMA	Jabatan/Pekerjaan	Alamat	Keterangan
1	Franciscus	Sempungan		
2	Pius Pop		Mauleppet	
3	Bikin			
4	Sariko	Tani		
5	Oberlin	Tani	Mailepet	
6	Martinus	Tani	Pasakiat	
7	Marinus	Tani	Pario	
8	Bowo Zebua	Tani	Pasakiat	
9	Oreste	Tani	Muntei	
10	Anjerikus	Tani	Muntei	
11	Andreas Sa[illegible]	Tani	Mailepet	
12	Kamilus S	Tani	Maylepet	
13	Gabriel	[illegible]	Muntei	
14	Martinus	Tani		
15	Gallus	Tani	Muntei	
16	Markus S.	Tani	Mailepet	
17	Kepas	Tani	Puro	
18	Rufinus	Tani	Maileppet	
19	Pius	Tani	Tetei Sinabulak	
20	Judas Boroy	Tani	Muntei	
21	Sirus	Tani	Muntei	
22	Rafael	Tani	Muntei	
23	A. Boroiogok	Tani	Muntei	
24	Yohannes	Tani	Muntei	
25	Andreas	Tani	Muntei	



	Keroppa.	TANI	Muntei	[signature]
	Paulus	TANI	Maileppet	[signature]
28	Jaggi	TANI	muntei	[signature]
29	Talinung	Tani	Maileppet	[signature]
30.	YOSAFAT	Tani	Maileppet	[signature]
31	TADDEI	TANI	muntei	[signature]
32	Kelak.	TANI	muntei	[signature]
33	PETRUS TABEE	—//—	Muntei	[signature]
34	M. Perangin angin	Tani	M. Siberut	[signature]
35	Ymas	Kt BPD.	Muntei	[signature]
36	Matias.	Kp. D. Pemekaran	Muntei	[signature]
37	Yuli fati laia	TANI	Maileppet	[signature]

PEMERINTAH KABUPATEN KEPULAUAN MENTAWAI
KECAMATAN SIBERUT SELATAN
DESA MUNTEI – DUSUN MUNTEI

Nomor : 25/KADUS/MTI/2012

Lamp : -.....

Perihal : **Menindak lanjuti Surat berita acara**
Pemindahan babi di lokasi perladangan
Masyarakat di bat.mara

Muntei, 23 Nopember 2012

Kepada Yth :

Bapak Marius Saurei

Di

Tempat

Dengan hormat

Sehubungan dengan berakhirnya masa waktu yang telah di sepakati oleh kedua belah pihak bertempat di kantor Kepala Desa Muntei, tentang pemindahan babi di lokasi perladangan masyarakat di bat,mara, maka kami Pemerintah Dusun Muntei mengundang Bapak –Bapak yang Namanya tersebut di bawah ini :

1. **Kelak Seppungan**
2. **Hendrikus sakukuret**
3. **Marius Saurei**
4. **Lutcius djadji satotoake**
5. **Oreste sakakadut**
6. **Markus sagari**

Yang diadakan pada :

Hari :**Minggu**

Tanggal :**25 Nopember 2012**

Jam :**14.00 WIB – Selesai**

Tempat : **Kantor Desa Muntei**

Apabila Bapak tidak hadir pada waktu yang telah ditentukan maka segala hasil keputusan rapat saat itu, di anggap SEPAKAT / SAH BERLAKU.

Demikianlah surat undangan ini kami sampaikan untuk dapat di pedomani, atas kerjasamanya kami ucapkan terima kasih.

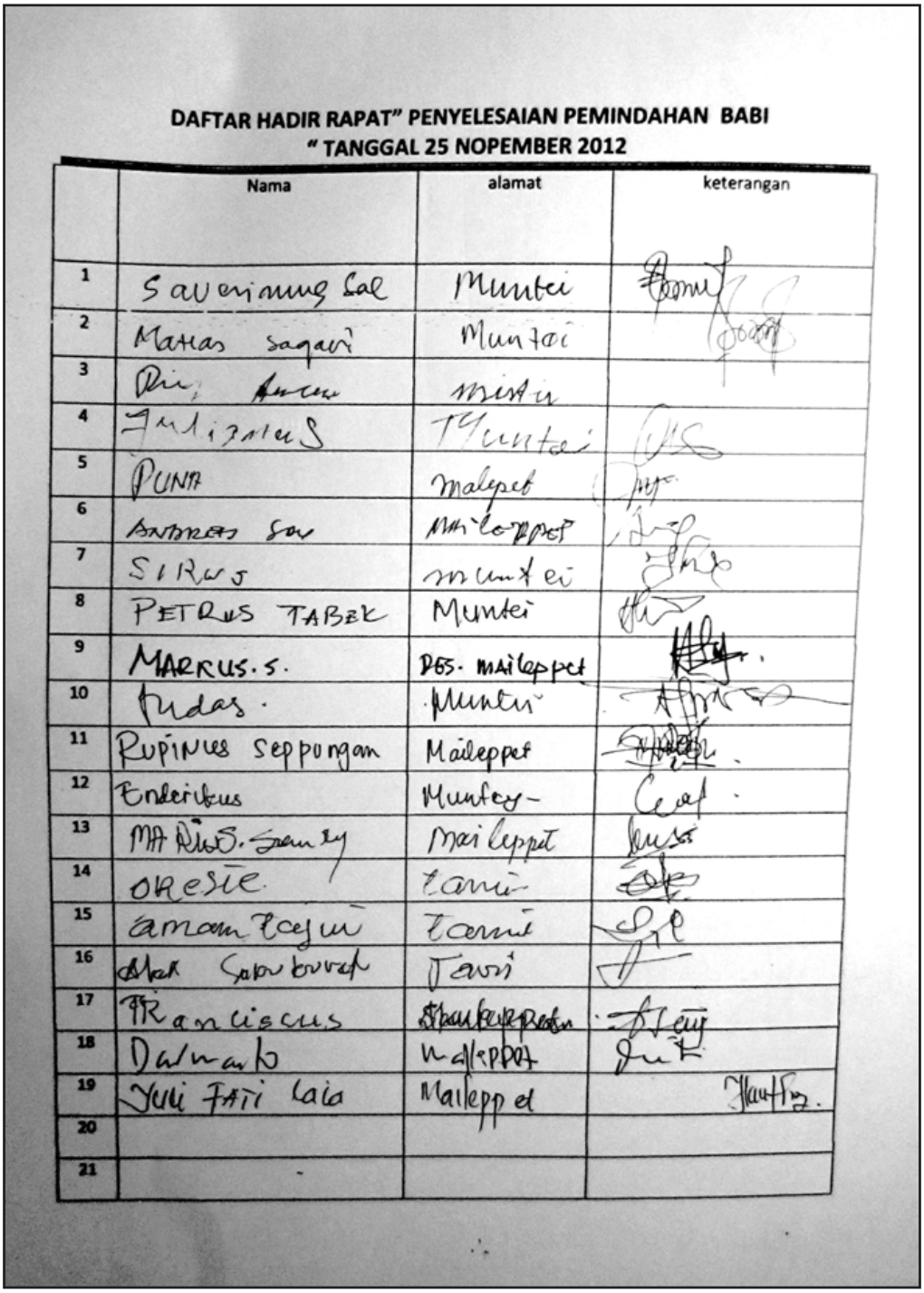
Hormat Kami

KEPALA DUSUN PEMEKARAN

MATIAS SAGARI

KEPALA DUSUN MUNTEI

SAVERIANUS SALAKOPAK



DAFTAR HADIR RAPAT" PENYELESAIAN PEMINDAHAN BABI
" TANGGAL 25 NOPEMBER 2012

	Nama	alamat	keterangan
1	Saverianus Sal	Muntei	
2	Matias sagavi	Muntei	
3			
4		Muntei	
5	PUNA	Malepet	
6		Maileppet	
7	SIRUS	muntei	
8	PETRUS TABEK	Muntei	
9	MARKUS. S.	DES. Maileppet	
10	Judas.	Muntei	
11	Rupinus Seppongan	Maileppet	
12	Enderikus	Muntey-	
13		Maileppet	
14	ORESIE	Tami	
15		Tami	
16		Tavi	
17			
18		Maileppet	
19		Maileppet	
20			
21			

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Curriculum Vitae

Darmanto was born in Lamongan, a small district in East Java on 21 April 1980. He attended Public Secondary School in a small town of Babat and graduated in 1998. He then studied at Faculty of Biology, Gadjah Mada University (Yogyakarta) and received a B.Sc. in Conservation Biology in 2005. He earned a postgraduate diploma in Asian Studies Department and MA in Environmental Anthropology at Murdoch University (Australia) in 2016. He has been researching and working with the Mentawaians on Siberut Island for almost two decades. His engagement with the Mentawaians begun since he researched ecological aspects of Mentawaian shifting cultivation in 2003 for his undergraduate thesis. The thesis won the Man and Biosphere (MaB) Award for young researchers and environmentalists and earned him a job for UNESCO Jakarta Office's Siberut Biosphere Project (2006-2011). During his years in Siberut, he established Perkumpulan Siberut Hijau (PASIH), a Siberut-based environmental NGO, and coordinated it for the periods of 2006 to 2008. The result of a long engagement with Siberut, he published a book entitled "*Berebut Hutan Siberut: Orang Mentawai, Kekuasaan dan Politik Ekologi*" (KPG, 2012). In the same year he produced the first major publication about Siberut, he secured a scholarship from the Australian Award Scholarship (AAS) and the Louwes Fund for Research on Water and Food through Leiden University and pursued Master degree at Murdoch University and Ph.D. research at the Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University respectively. Both the scholarships provided fund for this dissertation. Darmanto scholarly trajectory is broadly situated in the human dimensions of environmental transformation. In particular, he is specialized in the multidisciplinary study of food, nature conservation, indigeneity, and development. His other research interests include property relations, agrarian transition, and social transformation in the upland setting. Beyond research and academic-related activities, he has been engaged with social movements for agrarian and environmental justice in Indonesia and has had a significant amount of experience working in various international development projects. He is also interested in the socio-politic aspects of football, the sport that he loves to play and watch.

Through producing and sharing food, the Mentawaians construct personhood, generate social values, and reproduce social institutions rather than merely producing material substances. This dissertation is an in-depth anthropological study that focuses on a contemporary Mentawai Community in the southeast of the island of Siberut (West Sumatra, Indonesia), teasing out the local notions of foodways, kinship, autonomy, and equality/egalitarianism. It analyses altogether the importance of food's materiality and the logic underlying food-related-activities (gardening, gathering, exchanging, feeding, cooking, distributing, eating, and sharing). Intrigued by the claim of 'being hungry' (*malaje*) in a land of food abundance, the dissertation adds a distinct case to discuss the dialectical production of social values and sheds new light onto the conventional anthropological themes of food, hunger, and the culture of relatedness in an egalitarian society.