

*Cultural area and musical idioms : the variety of musical styles in Eastern Flores*

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Located in southeastern Indonesia, Eastern Indonesia is divided into two large linguistic groups (austronesian and papuan), with a great number of linguistic subgroups. These subgroups differ one from another not only on the basis of language but in other respects as well. One relatively well-known category of difference relates to weaving practices and motifs, but another category, namely musical style, has received much less attention. A striking aspect of music in Flores is the great variety in singing style found in a comparatively narrow geographical compass. This variety is particularly acute in the organization of polyphonic singing. Thus, the question arises: does the distribution of polyphonic musical styles correlate with other differential features? Would a mapping of singing styles match the mappings of linguistic subgroups or weaving zones ? If yes, why and if not, why not ?

The general aim of my paper is to describe the variety of polyphonic singing styles in relation with linguistics, weaving and the ethnohistory of settlements in Flores. It aims to describe this area through a category of perception – sound – in comparison with other fields of study. To what extent cultural areas be identified and understood through the study of musical idioms ? And how do the areas so identified correlate with areas identified by other analytical means ?

To answer this question, Eastern Flores has been taken as a field of study. Here live Lamaholot people settled from eastern Flores to Lembata. Whereas Adonara and Lembata islands sing in unison, Solor sing in big polyphonic choruses, Tanjung Bunga (eastern Flores) sing in duets. How can we explain the variety of styles ? Does it correlate with linguistic subgrouping ?