Sociality, Value, and Symbolic Complexes among the Makassar of Indonesia*

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Abstract: This paper explores the concepts of value and sociality in the lives of human subjects living in the village of Ara, South Sulawesi, Indonesia in the 1980s. Every individual engaged in several forms of sociality that were associated with different sets of values. As members of noble houses and kingdoms they interacted with nonhuman subjects such as ancestor spirits and valued their ascribed social rank. As Muslims living in a cosmos structured as a great chain of being, they interacted with nonhuman subjects such as God, angels, jinn, and the spirits of dead mystics and valued individual salvation. As citizens of Indonesia they interacted only with other human subjects and as citizens of a nation that valued modernity and development. Individual social actors maneuvered among these symbolic complexes in accordance with the values they were pursuing at any one point in time, and were often able to strategically convert the symbolic capital they accumulated in one field of activity into a form of symbolic capital valued in another.

Keywords: Sociality, Values, Indonesia, Islam, Makassar, Colonialism, Modernism

Introduction

In this paper, I will argue that the inhabitants of the village of Ara, South Sulawesi were engaged in a number of distinct forms of sociality during the periods I conducted fieldwork among them in 1988, 1989, and 2000. Each form of sociality was associated with a distinctive set of values that helped actors to interpret the intentions of those with whom they were interacting within the frameworks of distinct symbolic complexes. These symbolic complexes can be traced back to Austronesian, Islamic, and Dutch colonial origins, but they have coexisted with one another for generations. The values that governed one type of social interaction were not necessarily the same as those that governed other types, and were often incompatible with them. The tensions among these competing models of sociality and value bore the traces of political and religious upheavals that had taken place over the preceding centuries. I have previously analysed the way the co-existence of these different forms of sociality had long generated competing models of legitimate authority, which in turn enabled individuals to contemplate both revolutionary and reactionary transformations of the political system (Gibson 2005, 2007).

The point that is relevant to this paper is that the forms of sociality and value associated with the noble house, the Islamic mosque, and the national school were in a rough balance with one another in the 1980s. Individual actors were able to shift from one to the other depending on the social situation, and usually did so without apparent difficulty. This was due in part to the role played by apprenticeship in the Austronesian and Islamic traditions. In the 1980s, 75% of the men in Ara were still employed as highly skilled boat

builders, a craft they learned through long apprenticeship to master builders in which

concrete bodily experience formed the basis of a kind of knowledge that was not

transferable to other contexts. The same was true of spirit mediums and Sufi mystics:

knowledge of the nonvisible world was acquired through direct experience under the

guidance of a master. The coexistence of incompatible values did not cause undue

cognitive dissonance for individuals trained in this way because they were deployed in

different types of social situation. A relatively stable complementary opposition had

developed over the centuries between Austronesian practices such as the noble house and

the cult of the royal ancestors, which came to associated with noble women, and Islamic

institutions such as the enforcement of Islamic law, *shariah,* and the pursuit of mystical

knowledge, *tarekat*.

With the introduction of school-based education over the last century, however,

consciousness of the incompatibility of the three value systems became more apparent to

those who had received the most formal education. This was due in part to the emphasis

placed on decontextualized reasoning and the importance attached to consistency in

modern schools. Many of the villagers who were the first to receive a formal education in

the 1930s and 1940s joined the revolutionary Darul Islam movement in the 1950s, which

sought to establish an Islamic state. In the areas that it controlled between 1953 and 1965,

it tried to eliminate any ritual whose practice contravened their scripturally based

understanding of Islam.

The central government reestablished control over Ara in 1965, and since that time an uneasy truce had been observed among the proponents of these forms of socialities. When I arrived in 1988, the former Darul Islam militants were in their fifties and sixties. They had come to tolerate many Austronesian and Sufi practices as superstitious survivals or harmless expressions of local culture. They had even begun to sponsor lavish life cycle rituals themselves as a means of enhancing their social status, while carefully avoiding any interaction with the spirits traditionally invoked during the performance of these rituals. After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, Islamic militants were free again to advocate the imposition of shariah law. In 2003, former Darul Islam militants in Ara strongly supported measures by the Regent of Bulukumba to institute a number of shariah by-laws, including the regulation of women's dress and the collection of alms by the state (Buehler 2008). When the government actually tried to collect these alms from local government employees, however, thousands of schoolteachers protested and the district heads had to back off (Buehler and Muhtada 2016, 277). The situation thus remains in a state of flux as of this writing.

By "symbolic complex" I mean a heterogeneous set of conceptual schemes, symbolic vehicles, embodied skills, social practices, constructed objects, nonhuman beings, and things encountered in the world. The component parts of a symbolic complex operate together to generate distinctive kinds of subjects, both human and nonhuman; distinctive forms of sociality and their associated values; and distinctive kinds of knowledge of those subjects and objects (Gibson 2007, 15-16). The relations among the components of a symbolic complex understood in this way are the external relations that exist among the

material and conceptual parts of a functioning apparatus, not the internal relations characteristic of purely symbolic systems (DeLanda 2016, 19-21). It is thus possible for human agents to move among multiple symbolic complexes without either subsuming them into a coherent cognitive whole or experiencing cognitive dissonance under normal conditions. When political, economic, technological, or environmental developments disrupt established relationships among the symbolic complexes, actors may become conscious of the incompatibility between the forms of sociality and the values associated with each of them, and of the need to make a definitive choice among them.

If sociality concerns the propensity of human subjects to engage in social interaction with other subjects, the form of sociality enacted in any concrete situation depends on what kinds of subjects are experienced as potentially or actually existing in that situation. The ability to interact with many kinds of nonhuman subject in each symbolic complex was acquired through participation in spirit séances, life-cycle rituals, the practice of mystical austerities, and the performance of obligatory religious and secular rituals. The presence of a subject could only be inferred by interpreting the behaviour of a material object as the external expression of an internal subject's intentions, or by interpreting certain purely internal intuitions as caused by an external spiritual agency (Remme 2016).

Stable subjects are formed out of the flux of raw experience through the creation of intelligible narratives about the way the memorable pasts are linked to the present and to valued future outcomes. Social interaction can occur only when two or more subjects share a common understanding of what the other remembers and desires in this way.

Understood in this way, the concept of "value" refers to the desired goals of social action. I will show that in the case of Ara, three distinct sets of values were associated with the three distinct forms of sociality mentioned above. These sets of values were at one level incommensurable with one another. At another level, however, the symbolic capital accumulated through the pursuit of goals valued within one symbolic complex could sometimes be converted into symbolic capital that was valued in another.

The ultimate value in the Austronesian symbolic complex was the pursuit of higher social rank by a corporate descent group, or noble house. The characteristic form of sociality was the interaction among collective subjects in the social and political domain: the rank of a noble house depended on its pursuit of strategic marriage alliances with noble houses of similar rank over many generations. The reproduction of the symbolic complex also required continual social interaction with the metahuman subjects that had once descended to earth to found the local royal dynasty before returning to the Upper World. Interaction with these metahumans took place during rituals in which their spirits were induced to descend and possess the bodies of human spirit mediums or certain sacred heirlooms. Strategies organised in terms of the value of hereditary noble rank played out over the course of multiple generations. In Ara, this symbolic complex also included human interactions with a variety of nonhuman subjects. For many centuries, the men of Ara had specialised in the building of large wooden boats. In 1988, seventy-five percent of them still spent their days in building boats, while most women spent their days in textile production and gardening. Wood for boats and houses came from trees that were inhabited by nonhuman subjects who had to be persuaded to leave before the tree was cut

down. Once they were assembled, boats and houses acquired animating spirits of their own with whom the human inhabitants of these structures regularly interacted. Agricultural fields and the seeds that were planted in them also possessed nonhuman subjects that women had to treat with great care and respect. The ability to interact with these sorts of being was acquired only in the course of protracted apprenticeships under the guidance of master male artisans called *oragi* and master female experts called *sanro*.

The ultimate value pursued within the Islamic symbolic complex was the salvation of the individual soul, a goal that reduced life on earth to a series of trials in preparation for the afterlife. The characteristic form of sociality was the interaction of individual human subjects on the basis of equality under the divine law, and interaction with metahuman subjects who occupied unequal positions within a hierarchical cosmos. Human souls were born into material bodies that could only perceive the lowest level of a cosmos composed of seven Grades of Being. The soul had to acquire knowledge of higher levels of being by incorporating religious teachings into their bodies in the same way that craft apprentices had to learn through practice under the guidance of a master. In order to acquire the outer forms of religious knowledge, *sharia*, one had to incorporate a sacred text such as the Qur'an through memorisation under the guidance of a master *'alim* (Messick 1993). In order to achieve direct intuition of higher Grades of Being, *hakekat*, one had to engage in mystical practices, *tarekat*, under the guidance of a master *sheikh*. Individuals who valued eternal salvation over social status sometimes pursued a life of ascetic renunciation and married only late in life. This strategy played out over the course of a single generation.

The ultimate value pursued within the "modern" symbolic complex was the open-ended development of the nation and of its citizens (Foucault 1977, 160). The characteristic form of sociality was the interaction with human individuals who were trained to compete with one another in standardised examinations and to serve as interchangeable components of the state bureaucracy. Schools and the military also trained individuals to serve as components of the nation state, a collective subject that competed with other such collective subjects in the international arena. This strategy is oriented toward an indefinite future, as there are no predetermined limits to national development.

These symbolic complexes tended to reproduce themselves through time by producing certain kinds of subjectivities that are oriented toward the achievement of certain kinds of values. The successful achievement of valued goals can be thought of as the accumulation of symbolic capital within a particular symbolic complex (Bourdieu 1977). The coexistence of competing symbolic complexes that produce different forms of sociality and value creates the possibility that individual actors may at times be forced to choose one set of values over another. It also raises the possibility of converting symbolic capital accumulated in the pursuit of one set of values into symbolic capital that is valued within a different symbolic complex.

In the 1980s, the symbolic complex based on the noble house often seemed to occupy a dominant place within the village because so many people attempted to convert the symbolic capital they had acquired in the Islamic or modern symbolic complexes into

higher social rank. Makassar conventional wisdom was quite explicit about this: the religious knowledge, economic wealth, or martial prowess that a man acquired might all be used to persuade a prospective father-in-law of higher rank to approve a match with his daughter. More recently, the acquisition of higher degrees in the educational system and higher offices in the state bureaucracy have largely replaced the older routes to individual success, and may also be used to acquire a wife of a higher ascribed status.

In the 1950s and 2000s, however, a hybrid of the Islamic and modern symbolic complexes appeared to have achieved a dominant position. The first generation of villagers in Ara that acquired a modern education in the 1930s were attracted to reformist versions of Islam that condemned the hierarchical rituals characteristic of the noble house symbolic complex as "feudal" and the ascetic practices of the traditional mystical symbolic complex as idolatrous. Both sets of practices were also condemned as inimical to the rational development of the individual and to the economic development of the nation.

Austronesian sociality: collectivism and social rank as ultimate values
During the 1980s, the Makassar of Ara engaged in social interactions with subjects that inhabited a variety of physical bodies. These spirits included those that inhabited human bodies; ancestral relics, regalia and shrines; topographic features such as boulders, springs, mountain peaks, and capes; wild and domesticated plants, animals, and sea creatures; and manufactured objects such as houses, boats, weapons, royal regalia, and elaborate ritual tableaux. None of these spirits were firmly attached to their bodies, but

could move more or less freely between them. Spirit mediums often began their careers

by being involuntarily possessed by a benevolent ancestor spirit and only gradually

learned how to confine such possession within the bounds of a formal séance. Possession

by a malevolent spirit required an exorcism ritual conducted by a ritual expert.

The cosmos

According to a number of myths, ritual performances and technical practices, the

Makassar cosmos was experienced as being animated by a pair of complementary male

and female forces or principles, and structured on a vertical axis composed of three

levels. The Middle World was occupied by mortal life forms and was situated between an

Upper World and an Under World occupied by immortal divinities. The Middle World

was structured by a weaker vertical opposition between the wild spaces of the forested

mountains above and the open sea below, mediated by human settlements along the

coasts.

The realm

The coastal region was divided into realms that were ruled by the local descendants of

otherworldly beings who provided a continuing link to the Upper World and Under

World. All along the Makassar coast, royal origin myths recounted the way a prince from

a distant overseas empire discovered a divine princess who had descended from the

Upper World in a bamboo internode. The site of this encounter was marked by a sacred

stone situated at the centre of the polity. Representatives of the local human community

recognised the otherworldly nature of this couple and asked them to become their rulers.

These representatives formed the original royal council (*hadat*) and swore a mutual oath

with the royal couple (*karaeng*) according to which the *hadat* agreed to feed and serve

the *karaeng* in return for the latter's protection and blessings. All subsequent rulers were installed by standing on the installation rock (*palantikan*) and repeating the original oath with the current *hadat*. Another rock near the center of each realm linked it to the Under World, and was called the "navel of the earth" (*possi tana*). In 1989 I attended a ritual held at the *possi tana* of the realm of Tanaberu, which was located in a meadow where the water table lay just beneath the soil. The founding royal ancestors were induced to descend into the royal regalia, which were carried to the *possi tana* from their shrine in the attic of the current *karaeng*. The regalia were daubed with the blood of an animal sacrifice and a group of maidens and youths performed dances and martial arts in their honour.

Additional links between the royal ancestors and their living descendants were provided by the sacred regalia they left behind and the priests who guarded it; by the written chronicles that recorded their deeds; and by the spirit mediums through whom they spoke. The regalia, priests, and mediums that mediated between the three worlds in this way all possessed both male and female qualities in equal amounts (Davies 2007). Relations between houses in a realm were structured by the principle of hereditary rank. The ruler stood at the top of the ranking system. His status derived from his genealogical descent from the otherworldly founding royal ancestors. Rulers took multiple wives of lower rank and a chief wife of high rank whose children had the best claim to the throne. The rank of a ruler's offspring was intermediate between that of their father and their mother. A finely graded hierarchy was thus generated that depended on the rank of all of one's ancestors. In principle, women were able to marry men of equal or higher rank, but could never marry a man of lower rank. In practice, a man who exhibited great prowess

in the battle, in the accumulation of wealth, or in the acquisition of esoteric knowledge could marry above his station and ensure that his children had a higher rank at birth than he did. Within the Austronesian symbolic complex of ranked noble houses, men were motivated to achieve higher status while women were motivated to preserve the status ascribed to them at birth.

The house

In common with many other societies in Southeast Asia, the house constituted a privileged level of symbolic meaning, in that it condensed and organised symbolic structures that operated in many different domains of human experience, from the human body to the cosmos as a whole (Cunningham 1964; Tambiah 1969; Fox 1993; Gibson 1995; see also Bourdieu 1977). Houses were constructed on three levels that corresponded to the three cosmic worlds: an attic that was the place of the ancestor shrine and the household's grain; a middle level that was the place of living humans; and the area beneath the house that was the place of the domesticated animals and of future generations of humans. Houses were inherited by the eldest daughter at the moment when her marriage was consummated. Access to the attic, the place of the ancestors, was via a ladder attached to the female post. Only the direct female descendants of a house's founding ancestors were allowed to enter the attic to make offerings on the shrine to the ancestors and to fetch grain, which in this area was mostly maize.

Master carpenters had to know how to persuade the spirits who resided in the trees they wish to cut down to depart so they could use their bodies to build houses and boats. The most important components of the house were the two central posts which were related as

elder brother and younger sister, although they in certain contexts they were treated as husband and wife. The house acquired a spirit of its own called the *balapati* at the moment during its construction when the male and female posts were linked by a cross-beam inserted through slots chiselled into the centre of each one. Small offerings to the house spirit were regularly placed in a small hole chiseled into the male post, which served as the navel of the house. Shavings from this navel were treated as analogous to the human umbilical cord, and preserved for use in later rituals.

New life was formed in the womb of a woman as a result of sexual intercourse that took place in the space between the male and female posts and beneath the ancestor shrine. A new house was only fully completed when it had accomplished its purpose, which was to generate a new set of three siblings that contained at least one male and one female, thus reproducing the parental generation with a supplement. A large-scale ritual would then be performed in which the brother and sister pair were dressed and honoured in the same way as a bride and groom were during a wedding ceremony.

The body

The cosmic oppositions were replicated at the level of each human being. In the womb, the fetus was conceptualised as one of seven spirit siblings, each of which had its own material substrate, including the amniotic fluid, the blood of childbirth, the placenta, the caul, the umbilicus, the flesh, and the body itself. The amniotic fluid was allowed to seep into the earth after birth and associated the child with the Under World. The blood was carefully collected and placed in a container open to the sky to absorb blessings that descended from the Upper World. The placenta was stored in the attic near the shrine of

the ancestors. The umbilical cord was dried and preserved for use in healing rituals later in life.

The fractal nesting of embodied spirits

The human body was itself composed of organs such as the head, the heart and the liver, each of which had its own spiritual attributes and capacities, and each of which found its analogue in the structure of the house. One mystic explained to me that both houses and human bodies were composed of four sections. The room for guests at the front of the house and the human head are refined, *halus*. The area behind the front room where the married couple sleeps and the human chest are pure, *halal*. The area at the back of the house where food is cleaned and cooked and the human abdomen where food is digested are impure, *haram*. And the area furthest from the front where unmarried girls and the elderly sleep and human legs are coarse, *kasar*. When this mystic fed the *balapati* spirits of a house, he placed offerings on the soil beneath the house because that is where food grows, on the threshold of the house, because that is where it enters, in the attic, because that is where it is stored, and on the hearth, because that is where it is cooked. He thus regarded the house as possessing a digestive system analogous to that of their human inhabitants.

The animistic symbolic complex that included the cosmos, the realm, the noble house and the human body in Ara was fractal in the sense that the same sorts of structures were replicated on larger and smaller scales (Wagner 1991; Mosko and Damon 2005). The form of sociality generated by this symbolic complex was collectivistic and hierarchical in character. From the perspective of the individual subject, this translated into a set of

values in which defending the honour of the group took priority over the life of the

individual, and the ultimate value of achieving the highest possible social rank for the

house was a collective effort pursued over many generations.

Traditional Islamic sociality: ethical individualism and salvation as ultimate values

According to Max Weber, ethical prophecy arose in the ancient Middle East because of

the relative preponderance of urban artisans and merchants in that area as compared to

the predominantly agrarian civilisations of Europe and Asia. They were predisposed to

doctrines that stressed the value of sober piety and ethical individualism because in their

occupations hard work and self-control was more likely to be rewarded with prosperity

than it was among peasants or warriors (Weber 1963). The scriptures recording the

teachings of the ethical prophets of the Arid Zone provided a coherent account of the

meaning of life, the goal of which was to achieve individual salvation in the afterlife,

where one would face a final reckoning of all of the ethical decisions one made during

one's life. This encouraged an approach to life as a constant struggle to build and

maintain a consistent ethical self, an attitude of submission and humility in relation to

higher powers, and a fundamental equality among all members of the religious

community.

The form of Islamic ontology that spread to Southeast Asia during the fourteenth century

was based on Ibn al-Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujud*). According

to this doctrine, God created the world so that He would not be alone but would have an

Other created in His image to know Him and to love Him. The telos of creation is to

produce a being capable of this; the being who achieves it is the Perfect Man (*al-Insan al-Kamil*). The version of this doctrine that became standard in seventeenth century Southeast Asia held that creation consisted of Seven Grades of Being, descending from the absolute, incomprehensible unity of God, to the phenomenal world (Johns 1965; Braginsky 1990).

As Islam spread into the agrarian empires of monsoon Asia during the Middle Ages, more hierarchical and mystical forms of the religion gained ground. They reached their acme during the sixteenth century when the adoption of gunpowder technology enabled the Ottoman and Mughal Empires to centralise power to an unprecedented degree. Rulers like Akbar in India and in Java claimed for themselves the status of the Perfect Man (Hodgson 1974; Woodward 1989). This was the form of Islam to which the Makassar rulers of converted between 1605 and 1630 (Gibson 2005, 43-53).

Ilmu ghaib: Esoteric knowledge

What differentiated this ontology from the speculations of neo-Platonic philosophy was that it was grounded in embodied practices that drew on mystical techniques developed throughout Eurasia, including fasting, meditation, controlled breathing, and Tantric yoga (Trimingham 1971; Braginsky 2004, 2017; Hadrawi 2016). For ordinary people, death was an irreversible process. Accomplished mystics could, however, ascend and descend through the Grades of Being at will, and even die and return to life. In Ara, Islamic traditionalists and modernists both agreed that there were at least two aspects to Islam: the outer form contained in the *syariat* law, and the inner meaning acquired by pursuing the mystical path, the *tarekat*. Many informants added two further stages *hakekat*, truth,

and *ma'rifat*, gnosis. The meaning of these stages was explained to me with a parable about fishing. Knowing *syariat* is like knowing that there are fish in the sea. Practicing *tarekat* is like going off in a boat to catch them. Achieving *hakekat* is like actually catching a net full of fish and being able to examine them closely and sort them into kinds. Reaching *ma'rifat* is like eating the fish and incorporating them into your own body.

In Ara, the term *ilmu* was often used to refer to a particular kind of mystical knowledge, *ilmu ghaib*, that was acquired through direct contact with beings that existed at higher Grades of Being, such as invisible beings made out of light (*malaikat*, "angels"); invisible beings made out of fire (*jinn*); and the spirits of deceased human Sufi masters (*sheikh* or *waliullah*, "friends of God"). According to some, the ability to gain access to knowledge from these beings was restricted to those who were directly descended from previous Sufi masters, although others contested this. Those who possessed this kind of knowledge were able to cure illnesses in others by ascending the Grades of Being. By transcending the level of phenomenal reality at which all human bodies were distinct, they would reach a level at which all human bodies were one. At this level, they experienced the pain and illness of the patient in their own body, and used their access to higher powers to cure themselves and thus the patient as well. Other Islamic adepts were able to treat mental disorders by exorcising the malevolent spirits that sometimes took possession of human beings.

The localisation of cosmopolitan religious traditions

As was common throughout the Islamic world in the premodern period, the tombs of Sufi mystics in South Sulawesi were regarded as sources of divine blessing that could be accessed by performing a ritual and making a vow. What was particular to these tombs in South Sulawesi, was that Sufi master was buried next to his wife, who was portrayed as a local princess. Sufi tombs were thus a transformation of the pre-Islamic the royal origin myths, according to which every kingdom was founded by a divine princess who descended from the heavens and a wandering prince from a distant empire. After a wedding, it was the custom for newlyweds to visit these joint tombs to ask the Sufi master to intercede for them with God so that their union might be fertile. The blessings of God flow that flowed through the tomb to the newlyweds thus came to complement those that flowed from the ancestors through the shrine in the attic of the house.

Esoteric doctrines were also gradually incorporated into the life-cycle rituals of ordinary villagers (Bowen 1993). The notion that the creation, implantation, and birth of every soul, constituted a descent through the Seven Grades of Being formed the basis for a series of rituals that included those held during the seventh month of a pregnancy, when life force in infused into the fetus; during childbirth, when the infant was protected from malevolent forces and made receptive to benevolent forces; on the seventh day after birth, when its fontanel and navel were sealed and its life force was bound to its body; and so on. A similar series of rituals on the first, third, seventh, and fortieth days following a death helped guide the *roh* along the final stages of its journey to the *barzakh*, the "place of separation" where souls gather to await the Day of Judgment and their final return to

the Godhead, and in part to reconcile the mourners to the loss of their loved one, to lift the ritual restrictions they have followed since the death and to allow them to return to their normal social lives.

Modernist sociality: individual and national development as ultimate values

What is commonly referred to in the literature as "modernity" is a distinctive social ontology that is produced within a symbolic complex of modern institutions and disciplines that includes impersonal bureaucracies, profit-making corporations, and formal schooling. This symbolic complex arose in the European nations bordering the Atlantic Ocean that organised a new division of labour on a planetary basis beginning in the sixteenth century. The Portuguese and Spanish Empires established vast bureaucracies to administer their overseas empires which produced copious objective reports for the royal archives. The East India Companies of the Netherlands and England treated the Indies as composed of objectified human and natural resources that could be exploited for profit, and developed a bureaucratic commercial apparatus that standardised the subjectivity of their agents so that they became interchangeable cogs in a vast machine.

The standardisation and objectification of knowledge that began in these mercantilist bureaucracies later became the basis for the dissemination of a modernist symbolic complex through modern schools. In the late nineteenth century, the British and Dutch colonial empires introduced new techniques of governmentality designed to transform tradition-bound peasants into rational capitalist producers and consumers. This required

an ever-growing class of native functionaries to serve as schoolteachers, civil servants, health workers, soldiers, and policemen. Traditional models of apprenticeship on a master-pupil model were too inefficient for this purpose, and new forms of mass education were developed in which a single teacher could instruct a large class of students using a vernacular language of instruction, printed textbooks, competitive examinations, and standardised certifications. The monitorial method of schooling was first developed by Christian missionaries assigned to teach native children in India and Sumatra in the years around 1800, and soon spread around the world (Foucault 1977).

Colonial subjects educated in modern schools tended to embrace a naturalistic symbolic complex in which the nonhuman world was composed of inanimate objects governed by natural laws and not of metahumans with whom social interaction was possible. They also tended to embrace the notion that political sovereignty derived from the people organised into an independent nation-state and not from metahumans occupying higher levels of the cosmos or from humans with privileged access to higher Grades of Being.

On the religious level, the introduction of this new symbolic complex via the school system and the increasing interference of the late colonial state in everyday life led to a crisis of faith in the symbolic complex of traditional Islam. It was no longer possible to ignore the accelerating shift in the balance of power between the Christian and Islamic worlds. Leading Muslim intellectuals in India and Egypt concluded that Muslim backwardness was due to the corruption of the doctrines and practices followed by the first three generations of Muslims, the *salaf*. Adherence to the clear, literal meaning of

the Quran and Hadith by the latter enabled them to establish a world empire in one generation. They argued that Muslim societies had lost their way by blindly following corrupt legal traditions (*bid'ah*), by subordinating themselves to human masters instead of God alone (*shirk*), and by engaging in the excessive pursuit of otherworldly mysticism rather than this-worldly rectitude. To combat these errors, they advocated the adoption of modern institutions and practices such as standardised education in graded schools, the translation of religious texts into local languages, and the use of print technology to make these texts available to a mass audience. The result was a shift of religious authority from the '*ulama* educated according to the traditional system of apprenticeship to a much larger group of laymen educated in modern schools (Mitchell 1988; Starrett 1998; Robinson 2000).

Malay-medium language schools were introduced into villages throughout the Dutch East Indies in the early twentieth century as part of the colonial state's new Ethical Policy. The Malay taught in the colonial schools was adopted by the nationalist movement and rebranded as Bahasa Indonesia, which became the official language of the Republic of Indonesia. In contemporary Indonesia, public schools are the most important component of the symbolic complex within which "modern" subjects are produced who can serve as equal citizens of the nation state. Modern schooling inculcates a conception of the self as an individual competing against other like individuals to achieve the highest marks on standardised examinations that serve as credentials for proceeding to the next level in a nation-wide system. The development of individuals and the development of the nation are closely related. The nation is in fact the individual writ large, and is conceived of as

being engaged in a competitive struggle with other like nations to accumulate knowledge, wealth and power.

The first school in Ara was opened in 1925 and consisted of only three grades until 1955. Until that time, students had to attend school in a regency capital to complete their basic six-year education. During this early period, a modernist Islamic school was opened by the Muhammadiyah organisation in the regency capital of Bulukumba. For the graduates of this school, modernist Islam was closely bound up with anti-colonial nationalism from the beginning. This association of Islam with nationalism was reinforced by the Japanese occupation authorities during World War II. Indonesia achieved independence in 1949 after a bloody war of national liberation against the Dutch effort to resurrect its colonial empire. The Republic of Indonesia was established as a secular state to the dismay of a large number of Bugis and Makassar militants who had fought to establish it as an Islamic state on modernist lines. Under the leadership of Kahar Muzakkar, they launched an armed resistance movement known as the Darul Islam against the central government that lasted from 1951 until 1965. Most of the men who were my main interlocutors in Ara in the 1980s had fought in this movement, and one of them had served in Muzakkar's personal bodyguard for ten years. Ara was under the control of the Darul Islam forces from 1954 to 1965. During that time, they banned the cult of the founding royal ancestor, destroyed tomb of the local Sufi mystic, and replaced the graduated marriage payments that were used to establish claims to hereditary social rank with a uniform payment (Gibson 2007, chapter 7).

By 1988, most of the former Darul Islam militants had made their peace with the existing regime and worked as school teachers or civil servants, occupations central to the symbolic complex that included scientific naturalism and modernist Islam. They valued the status they had achieved within the state bureaucracy more highly than ascribed noble rank; they were all committed to national development; and they were all keenly interested in the relative standing of nations in the world arena, often asking my opinion about which of two foreign nations would prevail over the other in a war. They were particularly interested in the progress of the war between the Mujahedin and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. It was fortunate for my field research that American citizens were seen at the time of fieldwork as close allies of the Mujahedin.

While it might appear that this generation of Islamic militants had fully accepted the modernist symbolic complex and imposed it on the village as a whole, the underlying reality was more complex. Soon after the central government restored its authority in 1965, the cult of the royal ancestor, the cult of the Sufi mystic, the payment of graduated marriage payments and performance of elaborate wedding ceremonies to claim high rank began to revive. In the 1990s, one of the most militant of the former Darul Islam fighters used the contacts he made through his government office to accumulate enough wealth to marry off his daughters to men of high rank (Austronesian symbolic complex), perform the hajj (Islamic symbolic complex) and send his children to university (modernist symbolic complex). He was thus able to convert the financial capital he accumulated in his practical activities into prestige, or symbolic capital, and to convert the symbolic capital he accumulated within one symbolic complex into symbolic capital in the others

(Gibson 2007, chapter 8). It remained impossible, however, to rank these symbolic complexes and their associated forms of sociality and value into a stable hierarchy, because they remained incommensurable with one another. When used to contract a better marriage, a reputation for Islamic piety and academic achievement could be used as means to the end of raising the rank of a noble house. But the pursuit of modernist Islamic knowledge in an Islamic State University in the provincial capital might well lead an individual to set their sights on a wider social world than that offered by the village, integrating them into national or even global symbolic complexes and rendering the pursuit of higher status within the system of local social ranking irrelevant.

Conclusion

In Ara, Austronesian, Islamic, and modernist forms of sociality associated with distinct sets of values were potentially operative simultaneously in every concrete social practice. For example, a female *sanro* typically oversaw the beginning of a life cycle ritual. She interacted with the metahuman beings of the Austronesian cosmos through an appropriate code that included material symbols, bodily gestures, and verbal incantations drawn from the animistic ontology found throughout Southeast Asia (Arhem 2016). The ultimate value served by this component of the ritual was the intergenerational reproduction of a noble house that occupied a particular rank within a hierarchy of similar houses. The *sanro* would then leave and be replaced by one or more male *imams* who interacted with a different set of metahuman beings of the Islamic cosmos through the recitation of Arabic texts over a tableau of material symbols drawn from the analogistic ontology of South and Southwest Asia (Descola 2013). The ultimate value served by this component

of the ritual was connecting the soul of an individual to their Creator by means of a chain of intermediary beings. The *imams* would then leave and be replaced by the modernist Muslims who usually occupied the highest positions in the local bureaucracy and who were served the choicest dishes. These officials insisted that the elaborate displays of foods that were prepared on these occasions to facilitate social interaction with metahuman beings were nothing of the sort, but simply tasty dishes provided to entertain honoured guests. The ultimate value served by this component of the ritual was the recognition of the authority of the modern state and its local representatives.

The same social activities could thus be viewed from the first perspective as the expression of an Austronesian form of sociality based on the noble house; from the second perspective as the expression of an Islamic form of sociality based on the Seven Grades of Being; and from the third perspective as the expression of a modern form of sociality in which the only actors were fellow citizens of the nation state.

The accommodations between these symbolic complexes, socialities, and values were inherently unstable in character. As I noted in the introduction, my interlocutors were well aware that their village had experienced a long series of sudden transitions from stable to chaotic states and back again. In the twentieth century alone, these included the displacement of hereditary rulers following the introduction of direct colonial rule in the 1910s and the rise of a new set of opportunities for individual achievement; the revival of feudal Austronesian rituals by a reactionary colonial administration in the 1930s and renewed opportunities for those who could demonstrate high rank by birth; the imposition

of a Modernist/Salafi version of shariah law during the Darul Islam rebellion in the 1950s and the repression of social interaction with the spirits of both royal ancestors and deceased *wali*; the revival of feudal rituals during Suharto's New Order in the 1960s and the return of some nobles to power; open competition between rival social/political symbolic complexes following the return to democracy in the 1990s, resulting at times in violent conflict between those who upheld different values; and the implementation of a Modernist/Salafi version of shariah by-laws in the 2000s by local politicians who thought it served their interests (Gibson 2005, 2007; Buehler 2008).

In each historical period, the socialities and values that were components of different symbolic complexes came to the fore, while the others receded into the background. From the perspective of the individual actor, these heterogeneous symbolic complexes appeared as alternative models for how to live one's life in association with others in ways that were both meaningful and valuable. The moments in which one felt the need to rank them in relation to one another might be fleeting, but they created the opportunity for the development of a higher state of meta-consciousness, of a form of subjectivity that goes beyond the simple reproduction of a symbolic complex and opens the door to the creation of novel ways of life.

I have confined my argument in this paper to the analysis of a particular social formation at a particular moment in its history. It is possible, however, to draw more general conclusions from this analysis. Anthropologists working among the inhabitants of coastal regions all around the Indian Ocean have long recognised the coexistence within a single

social formation of multiple forms of sociality and their associated values. The concepts

used may differ, but the reality being described is the same. Sixty years ago, Clifford

Geertz described the religion of Java at that time as composed of three main cultural

streams – *abangan, santri,* and *priyayi* – although he described individual actors as

adhering to only one or another stream at a time (Geertz 1960). More recently, authors

have recognised that individuals shift from one symbolic complex to another depending

on the task at hand. Michael Lambek has described the people living on the island of

Mayotte as simultaneously employing three incommensurable epistemologies based on

spirit possession, Islam, and astrology, respectively (Lambek 1993). Janet McIntosh has

described the Giriama of the Swahili coast of East Africa as employing conflicting Bantu

and Islamic ontologies depending on the situation (McIntosh 2009).

Similar observations have been made in long-colonized parts of the Americas. Marisol de

la Cadena has described the long-colonised peoples of the Andes as living in a pluriverse

made up of indigenous, Catholic, and modernist complexes (Cadena 2010). Mario Blaser

has described the Innu people of Canada as engaged in a cosmopolitical struggle with

Canadian environmentalists over the nature of the *atiku/*caribou beings about whose

survival they are both concerned for different reasons (Blaser 2016).

I conclude from this brief survey of recent ethnography that the situation I encountered in

Ara in 1988-1989 may well be more the rule than the exception in the post-colonial

world. Social actors have at their disposal multiple forms of sociality and systems of

value with which they pursue their projects. It is this multiplicity that makes genuine political creativity and radical historical transformation possible.

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