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on interpreting gender in Bugis society

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the invention of Bugis gender

When the Bugis of Indonesia interact in public the men are generally treated with deference by the women. For example, after spending many hours cooking for life-crisis rituals, the women respectfully serve an elaborate meal to the men, who convene just in time to eat. After no more than half an hour the men disperse, leaving the women to clean up and reset the serving area for their own meal. As a new fieldworker I assumed that such displays of deference manifested implicit Bugis conceptions that men are socially dominant. After a couple of months I noticed that neither Bugis men nor women ever expressed opinions that would suggest that conceptions of sexual stratification were of any importance to them. Many months later I became aware that gender relations in Bugis society are almost entirely subordinate to a cultural preoccupation with hierarchical social location. Social location is an attribute of each individual and has far less to do with gender than with individual characteristics distributed without reference to gender. In such a cultural context, patterns of gender differentiation merely comprise general paths—different for men, women, and *calabai* (a Bugis term for male transvestites)—that individuals follow in their respective quests to know their social locations. I finally realized that it is inappropriate to think of the Bugis in terms of Western constructions of gender that assume that sexual stratification is inevitable.[1]

I present this understanding by formulating a culturally constructed gender system for the Bugis. Following Whitehead (1981:83), I take the culturally constructed gender system of a given society to be the cluster of defining ideas

> that give social meaning to physical differences between the sexes, rendering two biological classes, male and female, into two social classes, men and women, and making the social relationships in which men and women stand toward each other appear reasonable and appropriate.

This paper considers gender behavior in terms of the social and symbolic dynamics of Bugis society. The Bugis possess a gender system that is formally elaborated but does not comprise a primary organizational principle of their culture. Instead, women and men are absorbed equally in a preoccupation with social location. For both sexes hierarchical distinctions are differentiated in the same social continuum on the basis of what appears to be individual ascription and achievement. Patterns of gender differentiation merely comprise general paths—different for men, women, and calabai *(male transvestites)—that in-*dividuals follow in their respective quests to know their social locations. [marriage customs, gender systems, South Sulawesi, interpretive anthropology]

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The paper also presents my observations of patterned gender behaviors in Bugis society. I assume these behaviors are the result of the daily moment-by-moment decisions people make in light of both their gender and other conceptual systems. As Ortner and Whitehead (1981:6) stress in their recent introduction to a collection of articles concerned with articulating the meaning of gender and sexuality in other cultures, gender meanings must be understood in terms of other constructed systems.

Ortner and Whitehead (1981:2) also note that "the degree to which cultures have formal, highly elaborated notions of gender and sexuality is itself variable," implying that societies may be placed along a hypothetical continuum according to the degree to which their gender systems are elaborated. They go on to state that in those societies having highly elaborated gender systems, the systems operate as "master organizing principles"; whereas in those societies in which ideas of gender and sexuality are less elaborated, the gender systems do not operate in this primary organizational manner (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:6). To analyze Bugis society I suggest a variation on the Ortner-Whitehead model. In Bugis society the gender system is highly elaborated and formal yet not a master organizational principle; it is only a supporting parameter of what we may view as their "primary organizational system"—the Bugis preoccupation with establishing and maintaining hierarchical social location. I therefore posit that for the Bugis we think of one continuum for the degree to which gender ideas are elaborated and formalized, and another continuum for the degree to which the gender system operates as a master organizing principle. Thus we obtain an image of the Bugis as possessing an elaborate and formal gender system entirely subsumed within a larger, fundamentally religious system.

Bugis "persons": social location and *lahireng/bateng* balances

The Bugis, an Islamic group with a population of over three million,[2] are known among Indonesians as a strongly hierarchical and strongly competitive people. Although in 1957 they consented to the abolition of the noble-dominated kingdoms of their past, the Bugis have remained notably preoccupied with ascriptive rank. At the same time they have developed well-defined "modern" strategies for competing among themselves and with other Indonesian ethnic groups for status in modern Indonesian society. Elsewhere I explain that the effective manner in which the Bugis have adapted to changes in their society since Indonesian Independence in 1945 is consistent with an apparently time-honored cultural preoccupation with "social location" (knowing one's hierarchical position with respect to all other individuals). I express this preoccupation in terms of a dynamic tension between ascriptive and achieved status (Millar 1981).

It is not adequate, however, to view the Bugis preoccupation with social location simply as a tension between ascribed and achieved status. These conceptions depend for their meaning on a post-Rousseauian conception that the human being is the creative locus of culture embedded within an "objective" environment. We conceive of ourselves as having the biological capacity for acquiring—indeed, constructing or inventing—language, meaning, and culture. The active center, or "self," that constructs, judges, and creates is the last bastion of what simply is; it is assumed to be part of the "unconstructed." As a corollary to this creative "self" is a conception of an essentially inert, secularized "empirical reality" (nature) in which the cultural inventions of humans can be reliably constructed.

The Bugis do not talk of a "self" as an unconstructed creative center of awareness that directs an individual's encounters with the world. If we want to invent a Bugis conception of person, it must be one that is articulated in terms of a different epistemology. How do Bugis talk about what we might refer to as personhood? What might we imagine to be the

unconstructed condition of a person that informs his/her behavior and language?[3] In A. L. Becker's (1979:216) terms, what "kinds of coherence," unexploited in our epistemological system, do they assume to be the ontological condition of things?

The more thoughtful and experienced of the reformist Moslem Bugis among whom I lived in the Kabupaten of Soppeng explained that the real aim of a person's life is to perfect his/her *bateng* (continuously changing state of inner experience), to perfect his/her *lahireng* (socially manifest behavior and accomplishments), and to achieve a balance between the *lahireng* and *bateng*. Bugis informants, regardless of personal development or Islamic orientation, frequently spoke of relative "highness" or "lowness" among individuals, associating this relative social location with the Indonesian conception of *harga diri* (self-esteem). People say someone has a high *harga diri,* or "knows his/her *harga diri,*" when she/he behaves in a manner appropriate to his/her social level or social location. The real reason the Bugis individual desires to "know his/her *harga diri*" is not to improve his/her social location but to attain and maintain a proper *lahireng/bateng* balance; a person who does so has a proper relationship to God and experiences a sense of true satisfaction. The way the Bugis experience *harga diri, lahireng,* and *bateng* are fundamental to the Bugis conception of the ontological condition of things—to the Bugis type of coherence.

When the Bugis speak of *lahireng* they refer to the observable social effectiveness of individuals. *Lahireng* is associated with *akal* (Indonesian: the capacity of human reason). Some individuals are lacking in *akal;* and some do not use the *akal* they have because they are poorly educated or are distracted. People who use their *akal* and thus develop their *lahireng* behave in socially acceptable ways and usually succeed in acquiring wealth, education, position, and a variety of physical and mental self-defense capabilities.

The Bugis idea of *bateng* is not a prior, unconstructed principle of the human self. It is instead a domain of human experience that is parallel to the *lahireng* domain.[4] The Bugis sometimes associate the *bateng* with a metaphor of heat or fuel.[5] I have chosen to refer to the total sum of *bateng* energy, regardless of the extent to which it is focused, as the *amplitude* of *bateng*. Individuals possess different amplitudes of *bateng,* here considered to be more or less well formed as a partial function of the condition of a person's *lahireng*.

The *bateng,* being an inner condition, is not accessible to others. Although it is not possible for one person to truly know the condition of another's *bateng,* a person who conveys a quality of deep contentment and of sustained equanimity is generally assumed to have a perfect, or near perfect, *bateng*. A noble excellence and calm *(malebbi)* effortlessly clings to such people.

Insight into the way the *bateng* condition is a partial function of the *lahireng* can be gleaned by considering the Bugis conceptions of *tau malise'* and *tau massissi lalo*. People who have well-developed self-defense capabilities are known as *tau malise'* (literally, "persons densely filled up"). By virtue of the employment of *akal* and self-discipline, the *bateng* of a *tau malise'* (whatever its amplitude) is impervious to the intrusions of malevolent supernatural spirits and resistant to the dispersion of *bateng* heat, which inevitably afflicts undisciplined people. *Tau malise'* can summon great physical strength in dangerous situations and also inspire the fear and admiration of their consociates.[6] In contrast to a *tau malise'* is a *tau massissi lalo* (literally, "person who it runs out of, even through a skin of scales"), a person who is not "densely filled up." *Tau massissi lalo* are people who have few defenses of the *lahireng,* whether against natural or supernatural dangers. Such people always have a low level of *bateng;* the "heat" of their *bateng* is not conserved or protected because their *lahireng* is not disciplined and their *bateng* is not focused.

If the *tau massissi lalo* is at the lowest end of the *lahireng/bateng* hierarchy, the noble *tau matoa* is at the highest. A *tau matoa* (elder person) may be as young as 25 and must have the

following qualities: a high fated *bateng* amplitude (see below) that has been perfectly focused; a *lahireng* that has been developed to such a degree that it is in balance with the *bateng;* a quality of noble excellence *(malebbi);* and authority. The authority of a *tau matoa* is based partially on her/his superior ability to gauge the amplitude and focus of other people's *bateng.* The proof that a person is a *tau matoa* is that she/he has *tau monro onro* (literally, "people located in the space"). *Tau monro onro* are followers who locate themselves under the influence of a *tau matoa,* where they can enjoy the certainty generated by the *tau matoa's* superior ability to gauge the *bateng* of others and to know what is appropriate in all situations.

This Bugis conception of the relationship between *tau matoa* and *tau monro onro* suggests B. O'G. Anderson's (1972) well-known analysis of the historical relationship between the Javanese people and their rulers. The Javanese ruler is capable of absorbing energy (in Anderson's terms, "Power") from outside and concentrating it so effectively that even the ruler's enemies are absorbed into a peaceful and cooperative following. Anderson likens the ruler to a point source of light that casts a cone of light; he suggests that followers are drawn to this radiant ruler in search of the order, peace, prosperity, and good fortune that a well-focused ruler ensures (Anderson 1972:13ff.). In his analysis Anderson emphasizes that for the Javanese the central problem is not to exercise Power but to accumulate it.

Similarly, for the Bugis, attaining a higher social location is not the central problem. Rather, it is finding and maintaining a balance between the *lahireng* and *bateng,* the complexity of which lies in the fact that different people achieve their *lahireng/bateng* balances at different levels. This is partially because it is fate, as dictated by God's will (*takdir,* Indonesian adopted from Arabic), that individuals possess different amplitudes of *bateng* energy and are therefore limited in the intensity of personal focus they variously may attain. This fated *bateng* amplitude is indicated by ascription or descent, such that a person's fated *bateng* amplitude will be as high or higher than the level expected for a person of her/his descent rank. Although it is impossible to know precisely how much higher than the expected level a person's fated *bateng* amplitude might be, *tau matoa* are better able to gauge it than are others.

There is also an expected level for a person's *lahireng,* which like *bateng* is indicated by descent. By contrast to *bateng,* however, there is no upper limit fated by God beyond which an individual may not develop his/her *lahireng.* It is, in fact, common for people to develop their *lahireng* to levels that exceed social expectation for people of their descent rank. In the Bugis view, it is theoretically possible for any person to acquire education, wealth, official position, and a reputation as a *tau malise',* given the advantages of a good environment and through the proper use of *akal* (reason) and self-discipline.

The process of achieving a *lahireng/bateng* balance is very complex and only a brief description can be provided here. As children the Bugis learn about their *lahireng* and *bateng* by observing how others respond to them. As youths they engage in the process of perfecting the focus of their *bateng* and developing their *lahireng.* A proper balance is most likely to be achieved if the *bateng* and *lahireng* are developed in a mutually reinforcing, stepwise manner. A slight improvement in the *lahireng* makes possible an improvement in the *bateng,* which encourages further development in the *lahireng* and subsequent further perfection of the *bateng.* In the ideal case this process levels off when a person's fated *bateng* amplitude has been perfectly focused. People with a talent for establishing a balance may achieve it early in adulthood (around the age of 25), while others, sometimes despite great effort, never achieve it.

The great variety of possible resolutions of the effort to achieve a *lahireng/bateng* balance, and the constant ambiguity with regard to the *lahireng/bateng* balances of others,

gives to Bugis society the remarkable dynamism for which it is well known throughout Indonesia. A number of paradigmatic types are described to indicate the range of variations.

Highest in social location and fewest in number are *tau matoa* (elder persons). There is a hierarchy of *tau matoa* gauged in accordance with their descent rank and the size and importance of their networks of followers. There are also a few nobles who achieve high *lahireng/bateng* balances but do not have the authority of *tau matoa*. These people are located slightly lower than *tau matoa* with equivalent *lahireng/bateng* levels. Next comes the majority of the nobles—people who achieve *lahireng/bateng* balances at levels lower than their fated *bateng* amplitudes. Possessing imperfectly realized *lahireng/bateng* balances, these people behave with deferential respect toward those descent-rank equals who, possessing perfected *lahireng/bateng* balances, are of higher social location. It is by behaving in this fashion that the people constituting this larger group maintain *lahireng* conditions that are balanced with their less perfectly focused *bateng* states. In so doing, they also maintain high self-esteem *(harga diri)* for behaving appropriately.

It is a different matter if a person with a high fated *bateng* amplitude develops his/her *lahireng* and attempts to use his/her *bateng* energy, however well focused, to make claims to *tau matoa*ship. Such a person, exemplified by an arrogant and rude noble, earns considerable censure from the community, even though people continue to treat that person with the formal respect due someone of noble descent. It is said of such people that they "do not know their *harga diri.*" Because they behave in a manner inappropriate to their social location, it is assumed that their *lahireng/bateng* balance is further impaired. This Bugis response to people who make such claims to respect and power on mere *lahireng* achievements reminds us again of Anderson's (1972:17ff.) explanation that the Javanese assume the appearance of natural and social disorders to indicate that the ruler has begun to lose his concentration and is using his fund of focused energy for personal indulgence.

Of interest are those commoners who possess fated *bateng* amplitudes that are actually higher than indicated by their descent. If such people develop their *lahireng* and also focus their *bateng* so as to establish a balance at the level of their fated *bateng* amplitudes, then they acquire high social locations. If they also have a quality of authority, so that followers are drawn to them, then they become *tau matoa*. If for some reason commoners with such high fated *bateng* amplitudes are prevented from improving their *lahireng,* then they go unnoticed.

Commoners who achieve great wealth, high levels of education, and good positions, yet lack personal contentment and followers, are assumed to have achieved *lahireng* that are superior to their *bateng*. Despite their superior *lahireng,* their social locations cannot be higher than those of people who possess *bateng* conditions which, while no more intense, are appropriately balanced with their less well developed *lahireng*. If the "unbalanced" people do not try to assume social locations higher than the levels of their *bateng,* they may achieve respectable positions in the community. If, however, they "do not know their *harga diri*" and act as if they have a higher *bateng,* then they are likely to be censured by the local *tau matoa*. Commoners who "do not know their *harga diri*" only evoke disdain, whereas nobles who waste their extraordinary potential by developing only their *lahireng* evoke resentment as well as disdain.

Most commoners have low fated *bateng* amplitudes; nevertheless, many achieve good *lahireng/bateng* balances. Although they have only average social locations, they are spoken of as people who have high *harga diri* (people who know how to behave appropriately). Other commoners who do not achieve good *lahireng/bateng* balances have the lowest social locations.

gender in Bugis social life

In the following seven subsections I describe various aspects of the Bugis gender system and patterns of male-female behavior in Bugis social life, explaining how these make sense in terms of the Bugis conception of person. In general we find that the gender system is constructed, and patterns of male-female behavior function, in accord with the overarching concern of the Bugis to learn and maintain their social locations. Crucial to the locations are the concepts *lahireng* and *bateng*.

the system of ascriptive descent and marriage formation Ascriptive differentiations among individuals are made on the basis of descent from mysterious ancestral rulers *(tomanurung)* associated with the inception, in the 15th century, of the former Bugis-Makassar kingdoms. Initially there were only *tomanurung* (the first rajas) and commoners, but as a result of intermarriage over many generations, descent-rank gradations (numbering between 9 and 12, depending on the kingdom) developed. There is a linear ranking from the highest level (raja) to the lowest level (commoner). The dilution of a person's rank compared with the highest level increases as the proportion of that person's blood derived from commoners increases. Nobles are those people whose ascribed rank remains above a predetermined level (which varies according to kingdom). The members of each noble descent level in each kingdom are assigned the same title.

The upper descent levels are finely distinguished and are maintained with great care. To ensure that they make appropriate matches the high nobles frequently arrange first-cousin marriages, a practice that has the effect of reconsolidating powerful family networks and preventing family land from being too widely dispersed, both of which are secondary concerns from the Bugis perspective. Because individuals of high descent rank have high fated *bateng* amplitudes, they are considered much more likely to obtain high *bateng/lahireng* balances and thus be *tau matoa*. They are also tied into already large and influential kin networks.[7] It is noteworthy that the people who are most likely to be *tau matoa* keep written genealogies; it is important for *tau matoa* to know exactly who is related to them and how.

The lower noble descent ranks are less finely distinguished and first-cousin marriages are not as common. For these people descent rank is sufficiently low that the achieved characteristics of potential mates weigh relatively heavily in making decisions as to appropriate matches. Because they are less likely to become *tau matoa,* lower-ranking people have less need of recorded genealogies and seldom keep them. The only distant relatives they need to remember are the one or two *tau matoa* within whose networks they locate themselves.

Marriage formation is regulated by a formally articulated sanction against a woman (and this applies particularly to noble women) marrying below her own descent rank, except when in the opinion of the local *tau matoa* a man has a higher social location than indicated by his descent rank. In such cases the groom is perceived as having a fated *bateng* amplitude higher than expected for his descent rank, as well as having achieved a good *lahireng/bateng* balance. In practice, however, no family would agree to a marriage between their son and a woman who was less than his equal in social location, unless the man already had a "primary wife" of equal social location. Once a man has married a primary wife of equal social location, it is not considered necessary for any subsequent wives to have social locations equal to his own because these wives and their families are considered to be his *tau monro onro* (people located in the space). The interesting aspect of this system is how it incorporates the uncertainties of the *bateng* condition of both men and

women as a dynamic factor in the selection of spouses—the primary event for determining social location in Bugis society (see Millar 1981).

A man who marries above his descent rank in an approved match is usually addressed in terms indicating that his marriage to a higher-ranking woman was approved by a *tau matoa*. For instance, he might be addressed by the term *pettanna* (used for the parents of nobles), followed by the name of his eldest child by his noble wife. A man who marries above his rank in an unapproved match (i.e., a man who is not perceived as having a high *lahireng/bateng* balance) is merely addressed by name. The rank and title assigned to the children of any irregular marriage reflect the perceived *lahireng/bateng* balance of their father and, to some extent, of the children as well. Children of an approved match generally are assimilated into the nobility, while those of unapproved matches are not.

The formal sanction against women marrying below their rank is reflected in the complex norms regulating the payment of brideprice. One portion of the bipartite brideprice is, like noble titles, determined according to descent rank. This portion, called "rank price" *(sompa),* is always given in special monetary units that now have insignificant general exchange value (Millar 1981:146–153). The number of these special units given for a particular marriage is determined by traditional (adat) codes. The general rule is that a bride's parents will not accept a lower rank price than was paid for the bride's mother. When the bride's father's descent rank is higher than the bride's mother's, the family requires a higher brideprice for their daughter. The rank price for a bride is used as a formal measure of the ascribed rank, and thus the lower limit of the fated *bateng* amplitude, of her full brothers.

The other portion of the brideprice, glossed here as "celebration expenses" *(duit menre,* "money taken up"; Indonesian: *uang belanja,* "spending money"), reflects a different aspect of social location—the *lahireng/bateng* balance (or the achieved standing) of the bride's parents, the groom's parents, the groom, and the bride. It generally constitutes a substantial proportion of the groom's family's financial resources. A groom who only has a highly developed *lahireng* should not be accepted, regardless of the amount of "celebration expenses" offered. If such a marriage were to occur, the social location of the bride's family would be seriously compromised and the local *tau matoa* would censure such a family for falling prey to the risky promises of mere *lahireng* achievements and the lure of money.

In my analysis the approved incidents of individuals marrying above their level of ascribed rank are at the heart of the dynamic tension in Bugis society. These marriages allow families of high social location to absorb personally effective members (individuals perceived as having high *lahireng/bateng* balances) without actually sacrificing social location in perpetuity, represented by the ascriptive rank of the daughters. Of course, the Bugis do not see it this way; if they did, such marriages would not be effective.

The rules of this system of ascriptive descent indicate that although the ranks of both parents are taken into account in determining the level of an individual's nobility, descent from males is treated differently than descent from females. Noble descent is determined by the number of times a person's descent from a noble ancestor has been diluted by unions between noble men and lower-ranking women, not between noble women and lower-ranking men. This discrepancy suggests that it is less prestigious to be the child of a noble woman and a commoner man than of a noble man and a commoner woman. However, from a Bugis perspective the issue is maintenance of descent rank, which in turn is closely tied to concern about *lahireng* and *bateng*. People behave in a manner deemed inappropriate to their social location if they allow their children or younger siblings to marry down. Because the lower limit of a man's fated *bateng* amplitude is gauged by the rank price received by his sister, it is especially important that appropriate matches are made for the women in a family.

Siri' A key term in Bugis culture is *siri'* (honor/shame). In the 1940s, contact—even a glance—between a young, unmarried Bugis-Makassar[8] woman and a man, if discovered, made the woman's male relatives *siri'*. In such circumstances the men who were *siri'*, especially the father and brothers of the woman causing the offense, felt great anger and shame and were expected to kill the woman and the man or else lose their own honor and self-respect. A woman who found herself in a situation that made her male relatives *siri'* was therefore in such danger that she was forced to run away and secretly marry the man with whom she was found in forbidden contact. This is a form of elopement called *silariang* (literally, "having run away together").

A runaway couple would immediately seek refuge in the home of a person of higher social location, who would provide sanctuary while the *siri'* emotions cooled, after which the protector would take the couple to an imam to perform the Islamic marriage ceremony. Since consent of a woman's *wali* (Indonesian: father or other guardian) is required by Islamic law before she is married, when asked by a messenger for his consent, the *wali* of a runaway woman would only say, "Do with her what you please," thus denying his ties with the offending woman and giving the imam the right to act as *wali*. The rank price paid for such a bride, regardless of her descent rank, was always the price paid for commoners. Later, the person providing sanctuary would ask the woman's father or guardian to make a reconciliation. Such an offer by a person of high social location gave the father an opportunity to free himself of *siri'* in a sanctioned manner. The elopement process therefore allowed a *siri'* man to act *siri'* (by formally repudiating his sister or daughter) and to release himself of *siri'* (at the behest of a person of higher social location) without actually killing his unlucky kinswoman.

A person shares *siri'* with his or her sisters, brothers, parents, spouse, and children, and in diminishing degree with those she/he is less closely related to by birth. In this respect *siri'* is ascriptive and cannot be altered. It is interesting that the Bugis talk about "knowing one's *siri'* " in much the same way that they talk about "knowing one's *harga diri*," even though *harga diri* can change. To know *harga diri* implies particularly one's personal responsibility to behave in accordance with his/her social location, whereas to know *siri'* implies one's responsibility to preserve and protect his/her ties to family members. These are closely related because *harga diri* is based on, but not limited by, family descent.

Siri' may be felt more or less intensely, as evident from the Bugis phrase *mate siri'* (dead to *siri'*) used to descrbe a man who is not wiling to defend the *siri'* of a close family member (see Andaya 1979). A man who is *mate siri'* does not respond to the cultural injunction to know and to behave in a manner befitting his *siri'* and social location. To behave inappropriately in a *siri'* situation is worse than being dead: it is a cessation of meaningful involvement in the world. By contrast, when a *siri'* man commands and defends the respect due him and his family, he reaffirms the meaning of family descent and social location.

Women also feel *siri'* but it is considered appropriate for them to express these feelings only by urging their male kinsmen to act. This is because a woman is conceived of as being the primary symbol of her family's *siri'*. She stands for the lower limit of the fated *bateng* amplitude of her sibling set and takes precautionary measures to protect it. She actively avoids potentially dangerous contact situations. By contrast, her brothers bear the responsibility of reacting aggressively in defense of impugned family *siri'*.

kinship Bugis kinship is bilateral. Neither partner to a marriage loses membership in his/her natal group. Terms of address and reference used for relatives on the mother's and father's side are the same. Neither male nor female babies are preferred, and children of both sexes are free to align with relatives reckoned through either parent, according to their preferences. Land is inherited according to the Islamic rule that all children inherit, but

males get two parts and females get one part. Other possessions are also partible, except houses, which are generally passed on to the child who stays on to care for aging parents.

The various terms of address and reference used for husbands and wives suggest Bugis ideas about the marital relationship. In Bugis a wife is called and referred to as *bainena* X (wife of X); the husband is called and referred to as *lakkaina* Y (husband of Y). These terms indicate that each partner equally "belongs" to the other. Alternatively, teknonymy is used with the effect of identifying the married pair as the common progenitors of a child. They are called and referred to as *indo'na* Z (mother of Z) and *ambo'na* Z (father of Z), Z being the oldest child of the couple. A third set of terms, used only for reference, is Indonesian: a husband may be referred to as *kepala rumah tangga* (head of the household) and his wife as *ibu rumah tangga* (mother of the household). Indonesian, the national language adopted after Independence in 1945, is used on official and formal occasions in all but the most remote areas.

It is noteworthy that the term associating a married male with household headship is Indonesian, whereas the terms for husbands and wives which indicate an equal complementarity between the two partners are Bugis.[9] Such usage suggests an association between male "headship," use of the more formal language, and more formal situations. This usage may also be associated with, among other things, Dutch conceptions of family "headship." Formality, in turn, is associated with public behavior. As demonstrated below, men are conceived of as the appropriate individuals to engage formally in public interactions; and as the previous section explains, women, because they are viewed as being the primary symbols of their family *siri'*, would potentially threaten their family *siri'* if they undertook actively aggressive roles in public.

marriage ties For the Bugis, it is the network of ties each partner acquires by marriage that is of primary importance. This is suggested by the readiness of people to include the spouses of relatives by descent in their *pamili* (Indonesian: distant family) and by the use of the generic kin term *ipa'* for any in-law. Another indication of the importance of the marriage tie is that although the incidence of divorce (in the District of Soppeng) is high, the incidence of remarriage is also high.[10]

Requests for divorce may be filed by either or both spouses and are granted at the discretion of officials of local branches of the Indonesian Office of Religion. The reasons for divorce listed in the marriage records follow Islamic law: economic hardship; sterility; the taking of an additional wife; moral crisis; political reasons; and, the most frequent complaint, failure to satisfy the obligations of the contract. According to Islamic law, the obligations of the marriage contract are that the wife must satisfy her husband's psychological and physical needs and that a husband must provide his wife with daily subsistence in the form of food, clothing, and housing. Stories and explanations I heard in the field suggest that "failure to satisfy the obligations of the contract" involved incompatibility, in terms of social location and temperament, between the families of the newlyweds or between the newlyweds themselves. People would say that the husband and wife "did not fit." I never heard anyone refer to what might roughly be translated as the "psychological needs" of a man, let alone to a wife's failing to satisfy such needs. Nor did I hear of women divorcing their husbands for failure to provide subsistence needs. If the couple and their families "fit," they worked together, however poor they may have been.

Ties to in-laws may also be seen as a primary factor in the Bugis practice of polygyny. Islamic law permits a man to take up to four wives at one time, yet generally only men of high social location have more than one wife.[11] People frequently told me of very high ranking and important nobles who did, and still do, take up to 15 or 20 wives during their lifetime. Although some women so disapprove of their husbands taking additional wives

that they divorce their husbands, in most cases women approve because it is desirable to be members of the extensive family networks focused on husbands of high social location. A polygynous man, in turn, accepts the burden of providing for other wives in addition to his primary wife because they are appropriate and even necessary for someone of his social location.

The importance of ties through in-laws is nowhere more apparent than in *tau matoa* networks. Although noncorporate, these networks constitute the social reality in terms of which members of different households locate themselves hierarchically. A *tau matoa,* as described earlier, is a person with a high and perfect *lahireng/bateng* balance who also possesses authority, such that *tau monro onro* (followers) voluntarily align themselves with him/her. The network focused on a *tau matoa* has a core consisting of the *tau matoa*'s bilateral kin. The higher the social location of a *tau matoa,* the greater the number of people who know that they are related, however distantly, to him/her. Unusually charismatic *tau matoa* are even able to attract followers with whom they hold no recognized kin ties.

People generally choose the children of other followers of their *tau matoa* as daughters- and sons-in-law, always consulting their *tau matoa* about these choices. In some 20 percent of cases, marriages are arranged between people who are related as second, third, or fourth cousins.[12] Field observations indicate that these cousin marriages almost always unite people in the same *tau matoa* networks—again reinforcing their social location within the cone of light focused on their *tau matoa.*[13]

The point here is that Bugis marriage is about kin ties, ties to *tau matoa,* and social location. Ideas about marriage in the Bugis gender system comprise a set of conventions as to the appropriateness of matches. Wives and husbands, and their families, must "fit" in terms of social location and temperament, and polygamy is appropriate for *tau matoa.* Patterns of behavior mirror these ideas. The gender system also formally includes Islamic rules about marriage and divorce, but the Bugis do not appear to follow these to a significant extent when making actual decisions.

gender roles and expected gender behavior traits The work roles of Bugis men and women are distinctly different but complementary. Traditionally, the work of women is centered within their households: they do most of the child care, cooking, laundry, marketing, and cleaning. In the past, women confined their efforts to earn cash income to tasks that could be accomplished within the household, such as weaving, maintaining small roadside shops, or raising silkworms. Now, significant numbers of women also work outside the household as vendors in big marketplaces, as door-to-door vendors, and as salaried personnel in schools and offices. The Bugis say it is "old-fashioned" for men to feel *siri'* when their sisters and wives come into contact with men in these formal and official situations.

In households with more than one married pair, the wife of middle age who has authority over resident married daughters or daughters-in-law, as well as responsibility for resident elder women, is the central wife. Assisted by the girls and women of her household, she makes marketing decisions, manages all culinary activities, makes most of the daily decisions as to the care of the children, and makes most of the plans and preparations for minor and major life-crisis rituals and gatherings. She is criticized if she is known to rely on her husband for any of these daily household decisions; her *lahireng* is considered inadequately developed, and this has a negative effect on the social location of the entire household.

The work of men generally involves activities that bring food, money, and services into the home. Except at harvest time, when women help to cut rice, men do all the work in the fields. In addition to their agricultural labor, men work at daily tasks that take them farther from home—gathering forest products (such as lumber and palm sugar sap), engaging in

construction projects, or working as market vendors. In many cases, particularly when they are young, men also make extended trips to other areas in the archipelago in search of lucrative employment. Men of higher social location generally work as imams, teachers, businessmen, and government employees. Commoner men, in addition to their labor outside the home, are responsible for maintaining their houses and housegrounds. They may also help to carry wood and water and to open coconuts, but they have little else to do with the preparation of food. In more highly "located" households, male dependents are responsible for these domestic chores. When not working, Bugis men generally relax at home, occasionally visiting each other in groups of two or three.

Men are expected to act aggressively. As bachelors they strive to impress the community with their intelligence and accomplishments. Especially when he is being considered as a potential son-in-law, a man's ability to behave aggressively is crucial: he must compete successfully with his social peers as a sign that his *lahireng/bateng* balance is developed to a level suitable to his fated *bateng* amplitude, as indicated by descent rank. Married men formally initiate extradomestic actions to defend and assert their families' positions, for example, during *siri'* situations and interfamily marriage negotiations.

This expectation of male aggressive behavior is associated with a deeply ingrained expectation that men behave very formally. Once a man is "located" through alignment with a wife who is his social equal, he is particularly careful to maintain this social location at all times. This is one reason why the most comfortable relationships among married men are between men of distinctly different social location but of similar intelligence and cast of opinion. These are the men who on occasion may be seen chatting on the porch of the most highly located man in the assembled group, where the deference relations between them are unambiguous. Relationships among young bachelors are less constrained than those among married men because the former are in a kind of limbo with respect to their relative locations. Bachelors have not yet been "located" by being aligned with a wife and are thereby freer to joke with each other, participate in competitive sports, and generally enjoy one another's company.

Even within their own households men interact formally. They maintain a circumspect distance with all female relatives except their wives, mothers, and very young daughters. Among themselves they consistently recognize differences in age and social location. Great emphasis is placed on the fearful respect with which sons treat fathers and elder brothers. A tense formality arising from uncertainty as to who should be treated more respectfully is almost inevitable between brothers of similar age and accomplishments.

Women, by contrast, are characteristically informal in their relations with one another. Within their domestic domains their behavior is congenial and cooperative or frankly critical, depending on the circumstances. Grandmothers, mothers, daughters, aunts, nieces, and female cousins all spend many hours together, cooking, doing laundry at local wells, and stopping at each other's kitchens to borrow some item, drink coffee, and chat. During these frequent, informal interactions they exchange news and opinions on all matters of mutual interest.

Once outside their domestic domains, Bugis women are expected to exchange their informality for a circumspect caution. According to the Bugis it is inappropriate and possibly dangerous for a woman to assert herself in unregulated circumstances. Although conceptions regarding appropriate female activities had changed by the 1970s, allowing women greater movement in public life, a protective stance toward family social location is still retained. For example, the highest-ranking women frequently achieve high levels of education and positions of public importance, yet remain unmarried unless men perceived to have equivalent social locations are found. Because a woman embodies family descent rank and *siri'* associated with the lower limit of the fated *bateng* amplitude of the family

members, it is foolhardy for a woman to make aggressive extradomestic assertions of family social location.

At first glance it seems puzzling that very high ranking women occasionally reigned as rajas during the kingdom period and now hold appointments as government officers. My conjecture is that these women were able to manage formal and assertive roles as rajas because all their interactions with men were regulated by detailed and stylized deference patterns as dictated by adat. Now, assertive behavior among professional women is considered appropriate, as dictated by the emerging codes of modern Indonesian government and business. No Bugis man would consider placing such a professional woman in a position that could compromise her family's social location. In a situation in which there is no ambiguity about the woman's high rank and position, only the man could lose by interacting with her in an inappropriate manner.

It is striking to note the complete absence of the notion that gender behavior is dictated by biological propensities.[14] Women are expected to act passively, not because it is their "nature" to do so but in order to prevent threats to family *siri'*. Men are expected to act aggressively, not because of hormonal impulses but in order to correct any doubts cast upon family *siri'*. The Bugis person may be likened to a symbol of a given social location; she/he protects that social location and in the process follows the conventions appropriate to his/her gender.

The presence of a third gender category, composed of male transvestites called *calabai,* only reinforces this nonbiological, or strictly social, Bugis conception of gender.[15] *Calabai* are of the male sex and constitute a very small percentage of the population. From childhood *calabai* adopt many of the behavioral characteristics (dress, work roles, mannerisms) of women yet do not attempt to pass as women. In the past, *calabai,* particularly those of high descent rank, played important roles in the kingdoms as ritual specialists called *bissu,* caring for the powerful artifacts that appeared with the original *tomanurung,* advising the rajas on all ritual matters, and speaking a special *bissu* language. During the 1970s some *calabai* who were trained as *bissu* continued to perform these activities, even though the kingdoms were defunct; others were occupied as curers or ritual specialists at weddings and other life-crisis events. *Calabai* are socially esteemed if they are successful as individuals. They are evaluated not as biological peculiarities but as individuals who have fated *bateng* amplitudes and social locations, just as men and women do, and who elaborate their social locations according to *calabai* modes.

domestic life and decision making Most new couples begin married life by residing in the home of the parents of either the wife or the husband. They generally prefer to reside with the bride's parents, however, because daughters and mothers usually share close emotional ties and cooperate effectively, whereas fathers and sons do not. This preference does not indicate any tendency for brides to avoid their mothers-in-law or for mothers to avoid their daughters-in-law. Indeed, the relationship between female in-laws is often warm and supportive. Thus, when there is some specific reason preventing uxorilocal residence (e.g., overcrowding or distance to work), residence with the husband's family is a desirable alternative.

New couples establish a separate residence as soon as they can afford to do so, usually by the time their children are adolescents. As the health of elder parents begins to fail with age, one of the married children will commonly take the parents into his/her home as respected dependents. In most cases aging parents reside with a married daughter, again because the ties of cooperation and affection between mother and daughter are stronger than those between father and son.

The expected ideal is for men to remain peripheral to the daily process of domestic life.

They are incorporated as important decision makers only when questions about financial expenditures, marriages, and critical social problems arise. At such times they listen to their wives, mothers, and aunts, who usually have well-considered opinions on the social effects of various alternative choices. The men also contribute their opinions, which are based on information they have acquired in busness dealings, in occasional discussions with other men, and by their own observation. The opinions of the women are often considered more significant, but only because women constantly participate in gossip networks, exchanging information that is of great importance for making judgments as to the social locations of the people to which the family must relate in reaching decisions. The women know whose nephew failed his university course, whose daughter is arrogant and likely to be untrustworthy, and whose second cousin was just married for a higher sum of "spending money" than someone of her quality should receive.

According to the Bugis, it is the men who should enunciate final decisions on family questions that involve the opinions of both men and women. Inside the family the man of highest social location should close a discussion with a decision. Outside the family he should act as a spokesman in formal meetings (held, for example, to decide bridewealth payments to another family), confront a neighbor about a social affront, fire a fieldworker whose wife was caught stealing rice, or, at a major life-crisis ritual, perform the significant act of seating a guest who had fallen in the host family's esteem in a place reserved for people of slightly lower social location than that guest was generally presumed to possess.

This process of making and acting on family decisions is not a case of women controlling knowledge and thus covertly exercising power in order to obtain their ends in a society in which men hold legitimate authority (see Lamphere 1974). This interpretive overlay crucially distorts our understanding of how Bugis men and women interact.[16] Women play a more important role in communicating and interpreting social information, and men a more important role in publicly acting on family decisions. Far from considering this a cause for concern as to which sex has more power, the Bugis see this as the way things must be if people are to be successful in maintaining family *siri'* and achieving their appropriate individual *lahireng/bateng* balances.

To summarize the gender system and male/female behavior patterns described here, the Bugis believe it is important for men to behave aggressively and formally, reaffirming their family social location by acting on family decisions, whereas it is important for women to behave cautiously and informally, containing family rank and garnering information crucial for making family decisions. Both men and women, then, are charged with maintaining the *siri'* and social location of their family, and with making decisions in different and complementary ways.

deference patterns Rules of social comportment and deference are different for formal unofficial social circumstances, on the one hand, and for informal social and formal official circumstances, on the other. In formal unofficial situations involving men and women of comparable age and social location (people matched in terms of the respect others give them), the women defer to the men.[17] Until a couple has children, for instance, a wife calls her husband "older brother" *(daeng)*, even if she is older than he. Women tend not to interrupt or contradict men of equal social location at formal, unofficial social gatherings. When men are present as guests, they are seated in the front of the house; the women of the household generally retire to the back of the guest area or to the back of the house, where the kitchen is located. In many households men are fed in a dining area in front of the kitchen while the women, children, and men of low social location remain in the kitchen to eat. Yet in formal, official circumstances—in schools and offices—and in informal

settings—in their own kitchens—women engage in conversations as equals with men of equal social location.

This suggests that the formality of the situation and the social location of the individuals concerned are always crucial elements in decisions regarding deference behavior involving men and women. Social location, as we have seen, is a function of both descent rank and *lahireng/bateng* balance (as gauged by *tau matoa)* and constitutes a cultural preoccupation of the Bugis. I suggest that in conjunction with this preoccupation we may posit a gender system and an accepted pattern of male/female behavior constituted such that the Bugis view formality as especially characteristic of relationships involving men. Accordingly, social interactions between a man and a woman have two components: one that acknowledges distinctions based on male/female oppositions associated with formality and informality and another that expresses social location differences between individuals. When a man and a woman are of equal social location, this second component (of deference as a function of social location) is "canceled out" and the only association that operates is male:formal::female:informal.

conclusions

This paper formulates a Bugis gender system that serves to elucidate cultural conventions in terms that make Bugis society intelligible to Westerners. I suggest that in this Indonesian culture, conceptions of gender are embedded within a system of coherence in which conceptions of personhood, society, and power constitute the core. In the Bugis coherence system, this core generates a primary method for determining descent rank, knowledge of which is essential for knowing the social location of all individuals. The Bugis fear that dissipation of family rank will inevitably occur if it is not carefully preserved by the selection of grooms believed to possess social location equal to that of each family's daughters.

In terms of the Bugis gender system, women are viewed as being the primary symbols of family social location. This results in a formally articulated sanction against women marrying down, which in turn dictates that descending rank levels are reckoned in terms of the number of times male ancestors have married down. In practice it is no less important for men not to marry down (except in the special circumstances of *tau matoa* taking additional wives as *tau monro onro).* Were a groom's parents to sanction his marrying down, it would be tantamount to an acknowledgment of a lower social location for the whole family. Thus, both brides and grooms are constrained from marrying down; the brides, by formal sanctions, and the grooms, in practice. Each constraint arises from the importance of social location to both sexes, not the "superiority of men over women." For the Bugis there is no question of which sex, or gender, is more highly valued. People in any Bugis gender category are instead completely absorbed in the concern about social location, which in turn is tied to their conception of *lahireng/bateng* balance.

notes

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[1] See Rosaldo (1980), Strathern (1980), MacCormack (1980), and Ortner and Whitehead (1981) for critical discussions of the social scientific use of implicit Western assumptions as a metasystem for embedding cross-cultural assumptions about sex and gender.

[2] The Bugis share the southwestern peninsula of Celebes with various other peoples, notably the Makassar, Mandar, and Toraja. Although increasing numbers of Bugis are drawn to live and work in Ujung Pandang, the urban capital of the Province of South Celebes, most live in villages amidst extensive wet-rice fields or in the coastal fishing villages. Except for the most remote mountain settlements, paved and dirt roads connect all the villages, tying them to Ujung Pandang and beyond and thus bringing the Bugis into an increasingly "Indonesianized" cultural context.

[3] By this last remark I do not intend to imply that they imagine in this fashion. Such imagining is probably strictly our invention. As Foucault (1972) has so deftly pointed out, it is Westerners who assume that perceptible forms are the manifestations of the inner principles of things and that the "natural" human response is to observe and decode the manifestations of these unseen yet altogether primary principles of reality.

[4] See Geertz's (1977) interpretation of the Javanese *batin* and *lahir*.

[5] This "heat" has two aspects: energy/passion (*napessu;* Indonesian: *nafsu*) and spiritedness (*sumange';* Indonesian: *semangat*).

[6] The Bugis believe that it is generally not the nature of women to become *tau malise',* although women of certain descent lines have been known to do so. Instead of developing bodily self-defense techniques, a woman may cultivate various types of supernatural techniques that provide protection from supernatural spirits and assure her of the devotion of a *tau malise'* who will protect her from physical dangers.

[7] Westerners would say that the psychological and social advantages enjoyed by high-ranking people help to create individuals who are likely to become *tau matoa,* whereas the Bugis would say that it is because high-ranking people *are* superior that they are more likely to be prominent.

[8] The information in this paragraph is based on Chabot (1950:211–223). The Makassar are often classed together with the Bugis as one ethnic group.

[9] It is suggestive in this context to consider the word for a married pair, *malaibinengeng*—from *malai* (to take) and *bine* (seed), with an *eng* suffix indicating "the occurrence or location of an action." The term does not imply that an active male takes a passive female (seed), because the verb "to marry" is expressed as *siala*—from *si* (to mutually do something) and *ala* (take). Rather, *malaibinengeng* suggests the conjunction of a reaffirming activity and a retentive substance—a peculiar combination that reminds us of the duality of the Bugis view of men and women.

[10] The statistics from the 1974 and 1975 marriage records in Kabupaten Soppeng indicate that 18 percent of the individuals who married during those two years were not marrying for the first time. Over the period from 1970 to 1975 the ratio of divorces obtained to marriages contracted was one to five. This information is drawn from compilations made by members of the Departemen Agama, Kabupaten Soppeng, who kindly provided me with access to their records.

[11] Fewer than two percent of the marriages performed each year involve a man taking an additional wife. This figure is taken from compilations made by the Departemen Agama, Kabupaten Soppeng.

[12] This information is drawn from compilations made by members of the Departemen Agama, Kabupaten Soppeng, who kindly provided me with access to their records.

[13] The importance of the bilateral kinship structure to the formation of these *tau matoa* networks can be interpreted as having functional significance—in the sense of contributing to the formulation of an effective "political" structure. It provides a broad spectrum of kin with whom a leader may establish ties of allegiance, because each individual is related to so many others it affords a remarkable range of potential kin-related leaders with whom an individual may align. If it is assumed that we obtain an adequate explanation of Bugis society by asserting that the Bugis preoccupation with social location is an ideological component complementing the functioning of social institutions (kinship and political systems), we fail to incorporate important Bugis conceptions of personhood. Because a structural-functional analysis is generally satisfying in terms of Western cultural preoccupations, we must be especially careful to recall that Bugis conceptions of personhood are such that power-seeking behavior is negatively sanctioned (Millar 1983). Thus, while a functional analysis of Bugis society may appear to be consistent, it cannot explain the "nonfunctional" values implicit in Bugis conceptions of personhood.

[14] See Jordanova (1980) and M. Bloch and J. H. Bloch (1980) for sophisticated analyses of, among other things, how 18th- and 19th-century European conceptions related biology to gender behavior and how Western social science has selected some of these specifically Western conceptions as universal human traits.

[15] See Martin and Voorhies (1975:84–107) for a discussion of third (supernumerary) gender categories as a cross-cultural phenomenon and Whitehead (1981) for a superb analysis of North American berdache as a third gender. For further information about the Bugis *calabai,* especially the *bissu,* see Hamonic (1975).

[16] A related point is that the Bugis concept of home (*ribolae;* of or in the home) should not, therefore, be equated with the Western concept of "private," as understood in opposition to "public." This equivalence is assumed to be a universal association by many of the anthropologists who agree

with the use of universal frameworks for analyzing "sexual stratification" (e.g., Ortner 1974; Lamphere 1974; Chodorow 1974; Rosaldo 1974). The social world of the Bugis is not disenchanted. It is not perceived as a construct "out there." Individuals are not considered to have a private interior world in which they formulate the ideas that constitute their society. Instead, the world is a real continuum, a complex of hierarchical relations that have an ontological, not a fictional or constructed, quality. The idea that the Bugis domestic sphere is "private" suggests a concept of the individual and society that does not exist for the Bugis.

[17] Greater age gives household members of either sex more status up to the point at which an elder loses interest and active standing in the community. In such cases the elders continue to be treated with great respect but they retire to the back of the house, where they quietly go about their business.

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