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# Precolonial citizenship in South Sulawesi

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## ABSTRACT

Citizenship is a difficult concept to apply to non-Western societies. The idea of citizenship has its origins in Ancient Athens and Republican Rome, its modern form having been shaped by the French Revolution and the nationalisms of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. Yet the idea of a social contract between members of a society and their leaders is also found in non-Western societies. The notion of integrated rights and duties of free individuals has existed for centuries among the Bugis and Makasar peoples of South Sulawesi, Indonesia. In this paper, concepts and practices developed by the Bugis and Makasar are compared against Classical Greek and Roman citizenship, and the status of Bugis women is briefly examined. In conclusion, it is argued that an important *contractual* principle that has its origins in patron-client relations was fundamental to the foundation of the South Sulawesi states and to their economic and social well-being.

The framing of 'citizenship' as a field of academic research in relation to *contemporary* Indonesia – and, we suspect, in relation to most other Asian countries today – is problematic, for at least three reasons. The first is that the term (Indonesian: *kewarganegaraan*, citizenship, civics) is simply not an important theme or concept in contemporary Indonesian public life and debate. To some extent the same can actually be said of most countries, even in Europe: the frequent occurrence of the word citizenship in public and academic discourse in recent years probably reflects concerns about migration and naturalization – that is, banal nationalism – more than it does interest in the nature of citizenship and the rights and duties of citizens.

A second problem with citizenship is that it is not a sharp analytical tool, but a *vague* concept, the definition and implications of which are much debated even by specialists. All of the themes and relationships it may be said to encompass can also be approached using different, and arguably more straightforward, terminologies: that of law, for example, or rights, or equality, or democracy, or trust, or civility. Or if, as often seems to be the case in practice, the aim is essentially to study how Indonesians interact with the Indonesian state and its employees, then the toolkit of social and political science surely includes sharper and more exact conceptual instruments than 'citizenship' with which to tackle that job: clientelism, for instance, or social networks, or interest groups.

A third, and perhaps most serious, difficulty with citizenship as a way of under-standing contemporary Indonesia is that it is not only a vague concept, but also a *normative* one. Whatever people mean by citizenship, they always mean something positive, and usually something epitomized by a Western model of some kind. This makes it almost inevitable that research on citizenship in Indonesia today will conclude *either* (1) that the country and its citizens *should* be understanding and practising citizenship better than they do; or (2) that forms and practices of citizenship in Indonesia are *different* from those that 'we' know in the West: more 'informal,' for instance, or more 'mediated' by 'personal social networks.' The result, in other words, must be either condescension, or something akin to orientalism, in essence a more subtle and sophisticated form of condescension.

This combination of societal irrelevance, intellectual vagueness, and moral baggage makes us skeptical about 'citizenship studies' as a field of enquiry as far as contempor-ary Indonesian society and politics is concerned. In relation to the precolonial and premodern past, however, we see some potential in the enterprise. Of course, the very use of the term 'citizenship' in the anachronistic context of precolonial Indonesia involves a questionable retrojection. But the fact that similarities can be identified between certain indigenous Indonesian political systems on the one hand, and the classical European polities that provide the archetypes of Western citizenship on the other, makes premodern comparisons in this genre interesting. They have the potential to call into question precisely the triumphalism and orientalism that modern compar-isons tend to fertilize.

This is not to suggest that the parallel between classical European and precolonial Indonesian polities is an exact one. What is attractive about making such a comparison is that the precolonial Indonesian systems of 'proto-citizenship' sketched below cannot be characterized as imperfect copies of Western models, in need either of conforming more closely to those models, or of judging by radically different standards. Rather, they reflect independent, indigenous, self-referential historical developments that, while owing noth-ing to Western inspiration, proceeded in surprisingly familiar directions. Conversely, to reflect on the historical origins of Western citizenship is to understand that the egalitarian concept we know today actually has its roots in European societies that were more, not less, saturated with clientelism and inequality than contemporary Indonesia is.

## Classical prototypes of western citizenship

It was with the French Revolution that citizenship became a common currency of political thought and action in Europe. But citizenship's roots, or at least its persistent inspiration, lie much further back in history, in classical Greece, especially the Athenian democracy, and Rome, especially the mid- to late Roman Republic (circa 300–30 BCE). For our purposes it is worth beginning by summarizing the main features of both of these political systems. The following sketches draw in particular on the outlines by Thorley (2004) and Mouritsen (2015).

Originally a monarchy, by the seventh century BCE the city-state (*polis*) of Athens was governed by a council of nine rulers or *arkhon*, drawn from the leading noble families of the four 'tribes' into which the population of the city's hinterland was divided. There was also a general assembly of the free (non-slave) populace, although

its role and powers at this date are unclear. In 694 BCE the office of *arkhon* was opened to non-noble Athenians, within a certain property class, and a new court system was introduced in which members of all propertied classes potentially acted as jurors, and through which any citizen could in principle contest a decision made by an *arkhon*.

In 508 BCE Athenian democracy reached its classical form when the political functions of the ancestral tribes were abolished, and the power to make state policy was formally vested in the general assembly (*ekklesia*) of citizens, or members of the political community (*politai*). A new executive council, the *boule*, was also established. This consisted of 500 representatives of the propertied classes, chosen by lot, and each limited to a one-year term of office. Within the *boule* there was a standing committee of 50 men, rotating monthly, with a new chairman chosen by lot every day. Concurrently with these political reforms the legal system was also further developed, with a pool of 6,000 citizen jurors now being chosen by lot each year. The *arkhons*, however, retained important judicial functions.

Citizens were divided into four property classes, the boundaries between which were nominally determined by how much wheat a man's estate produced annually. Members of the lowest free class, the *thetes*, who made up at least half of the citizenry, were not eligible to become members of the *boule*. The general assembly was by definition open to all citizens, but it appears that only about 6,000 of them could have participated in any one meeting, out of a citizen population of between 30,000 and 50,000. Because women, slaves, and resident foreigners were excluded from citizenship, citizens probably made up no more than 30 per cent of the total adult population. From 450 BCE onward, Athenian citizenship was confined to men of whom *both* parents were Athenians.

Rome too was at first a monarchy. At the end of the sixth century BCE this was replaced by a republic, initially under the rule of a council of noble families, which was to become a senate of roughly 300 members. Later, a separate Plebian Assembly, led by people's representatives or tribunes, was added to protect, and legislate on behalf of, the lower classes. Election of the twin heads of state (consuls), however, remained in the hands of a third group, the Centuriate Assembly, a predominantly aristocratic institution based originally on the contribution to the Republic of military services of various kinds. This assembly was organized in a plutocratic way, such that the votes of rich members carried systematically more weight than others. A persistent feature of the Roman political process was block voting, with citizens (*cives*) acting in groups of various kinds – territorial or 'tribal' as well as military and class-based – to approve or (occasionally) disapprove the election of new officials and the adoption of new laws and policies.

As in Athens, a leading principle of citizen politics was direct participation in the public assemblies. However, there was also an indirect component, involving the election of representatives, that differentiated it strongly from Classical Greece. Practical constraints, most obviously the size of the venues used for political meetings, meant that no more than a fraction of Roman citizens – probably 25,000 at most, out of a citizen population of more than a million in the late republican period – could take part in any one public decision. Meetings of the various assemblies, moreover, were much less regular than in the Athenian case, and the officials who convened them seem to have played a stronger and more predictable role in shaping their outcomes. Roman

politics in this period was much influenced by relationships of *clientela*, or patronage, between individual power-holders and their clients or dependents among the citizenry, who could be relied upon to support their political endeavors. As a result, Republican Rome has been characterized as 'an oligarchy characterized by deference and dependence' (Balot 2017, 6).

Roman citizens nevertheless possessed well-defined rights, including the right to vote (subject, as explained, to property qualifications) in one or more of the Roman assemblies (*ius suffragiorum*), the right to stand for public office (*ius honorum*), and the right to hold property and conclude commercial contracts (*ius commercii*) under Roman law, access to which was fundamental to citizenship. Other legal rights of citizens included the right of appeal against a magistrate's decision. Formally speaking Roman citizenship included women, although female citizens had no political rights. Slaves, as in Greece, were excluded from citizenship, although it was possible for a slave to be freed and thereby enter the political community. Quite early in the Republic, Roman citizenship came to be granted to people whose parents had not been citizens; this applied firstly in Italy and eventually across the Empire – the possibility of foreigners becoming Roman citizens is an important difference from the Greek view. Roman citizenship was thus more open in character than its Athenian counterpart and became progressively more so, but also less participatory in character, as the Roman state expanded geographically and into the Imperial age.

Although in some ways quite different, the Athenian and Roman polities as described above displayed a number of common features. Their systems of government were collective and in theory participatory, especially in Athens with its radical democracy of rapidly rotating citizen office-holders. In Rome the system of block voting by class and region in multiple assemblies, the infrequency of meetings and elections, and the prevalence of clientelism, made for much less direct citizen control. In both cases the political community (*polis, civitas*), despite its democratic aspects, was exclusive of a large part of the population: slaves, women, and to a greater or lesser extent, resident foreigners. Even among citizens, political rights in both Athens and Rome varied according to class and wealth. In both cases, finally, government was based on, and in principle bound by, law, the relation between citizen and state being legal or contractual in character and providing the citizen with statutory freedoms.

## Indigenous political organization in South Sulawesi

South Sulawesi, home of the Bugis and Makasar ethnic groups, has a history of political and economic autonomy somewhat unusual in the Indonesian context. Although its main port city, Makassar,[1] in the early seventeenth century one of the most important in Southeast Asia, was captured and brought under Dutch rule in 1669, most of the peninsula remained substantially independent from European power until the beginning of the twentieth century. During this period, and to some extent up to the present, its peoples became known as dynamic maritime traders and adventurers, forming commercial, cultural and political diasporas that spanned the whole Indonesian archipelago and beyond. One Bugis subgroup, that of Wajo, developed and implemented its own written code of commercial law, valid throughout its overseas diaspora. Nevertheless, the majority of Bugis and Makasar

people remained farmers, cultivating wet rice in valleys and dry-field crops on the intervening hills.

From the fifteenth century or earlier, the lowlands of South Sulawesi were divided into political and territorial units which historians have conventionally called kingdoms. By the seventeenth century, the six largest of these were Luwu, Soppeng, Sidenreng, Bone, Wajo, and the twin polity of Goa-Tallo, the port of which was Makassar. Each was about the size of an English county and comprised some tens of thousands of inhabitants. The following sketch of the development and institutions of these states draws in particular on the work of Caldwell (1995), Druce (2009), Pelras (1971, 1996), Reid (1998, 2000), and Wellen (2014).

Like ancient Greece and Rome in earlier periods, South Sulawesi developed its institutions of state on the basis of local social structures and indigenous religious traditions, and from a starting point of local, decentralized political organization. In contrast to Java and the Malay world, the kingdoms of South Sulawesi were uninfluenced by Indic models of sacral, universal kingship. Islamic influence came relatively late, the first significant conversions taking place in the early seventeenth century, some four hundred years after the earliest evidence of state formation. When the first Portuguese visitors observed them in the sixteenth century, the Bugis and Makasar kingdoms were 'rooted in an animist culture still in full vigour' (Reid 2000, 440). Again, like Greece and Rome, those states developed under conditions of considerable economic openness and freedom, as reflected in the international commercial importance of Makassar before the Dutch conquest, and in the success of the Wajo Bugis as maritime traders from the eighteenth century onward. Evidence of earlier trade relations is provided by the widespread distribution in South Sulawesi of Chinese and Southeast Asian ceramic tradewares dating from the thirteenth century onward (Hadimuljono and Macknight 1983) and by rarer finds of Indian block-print textiles dating from the fourteenth century onwards (Guy 1998).

A further parallel with ancient Greece and Rome lies in the fact that despite their decentralized political organization, the societies of South Sulawesi were strongly stratified. Very broadly speaking, there were three social classes. At the top of the hierarchy was a small aristocracy that laid claim to its eminence through an ancient Austronesian myth of divine origin (Caldwell and Wellen 2015). This noble group was subdivided internally into status ranks according to degrees of 'white blood,' or purity of descent from divine founding ancestors. As in early Athens and Rome, nobles monopolized the most important positions of power. Below the nobles were the freemen (Bugis: *tomaradéka*). As with plebian citizens in republican Rome, the freedom of the *tomaradéka* was constrained to a varying extent by their involvement in clientelistic relationships with individual members of the noble class. Asymmetrical patron-client relationships between nobles and freemen were based on an unequal exchange of services, in which the former provided the latter with physical protection and monetary (or other) credit, in return for political support and (paid or unpaid) labour (Pelras 2000, 394). In circumstances of heavy indebtedness, such relationships could lead to the degradation of a free person to slavery (Sutherland 1983: 275, 280). Slaves (Bugis: *ata*) made up the third and lowest social class. Sutherland (1983, 263) describes them as 'those who "belonged" to someone, who had limited social and legal rights, and could be bought and sold.'

Despite – or perhaps precisely because of – the porousness of the boundary between the free and slave classes, it would appear that among the Bugis the existence of that boundary gave rise to a strong collective interest in defining the rights and liberties of members of the free population vis-à-vis the servility of the non-free. One Bugis kingdom in particular – Wajo, on which much of the following analysis is based – acquired a reputation as a stronghold of personal liberty. The contrast in this respect with Java, where both the institution of slavery and the idea of individual freedom were much less developed than in South Sulawesi, has led Reid (1998, 141) to argue that in Indonesian as well as European history, 'freedom is most valued where it is most denied.'

Within each Bugis polity the highest authority was exercised by a monarch, elected by a council of nobles, reminiscent of the Athenian *arkhon*, who chose one of their peers as head of state. This council moderated the ruler's powers and had the right to dismiss the office holder in the event of gross abuse of authority. In Wajo the council consisted of six members; in Bone and Sidenreng, seven; in Gowa, ten; and in Luwu, twelve. The composition of the council reflected the geographical structure of the polity, with each member representing one of the smaller territorial units out of which the kingdom, whether by force or threat of arms, or through voluntary confederation, had originally been constituted. In Wajo, for example, two members of the six-person ruling council (the 'Six Lords'), one a civil official and the other a military leader, came from each of three major regional divisions called *limpo*.[2]

In 1840, James Brooke, the future ruler of Sarawak, visited South Sulawesi and wrote a journal of his experiences there (later edited by naval officer Rodney Mundy) that reflects his great interest in the political constitutions of the Bugis kingdoms. Particularly striking is Brooke's first-hand account of the workings of Wajo's elective monarchy.

> This government consists of six hereditary rajahs, three civil and three military chiefs, one military chief being attached to each civil one. With these six officers rests the election of a head of the state, entitled the aru matoah [*arung matoa*], who may be considered an elective monarch, exercising during his reign all functions of the chief magistrate, checking and controlling the feudal lords, deciding cases of difference, and conducting the foreign policy of the kingdom. (Mundy 1848, 62.)

The powers of the Six Lords were further checked and balanced by a second, larger aristocratic council of state called the *arung patampulu* or 'Forty Lords.' This second council was controlled in turn by three powerful *non*-noble officials whom Brooke, in a direct reference to classical Rome, called 'tribunes of the people.'

> Below the six great chiefs, is a council, or chamber of forty arangs, or nobles of inferior rank, who further serve to modify the feudal state, and are appealed to in all cases of importance or difficulty. The rights of the freemen are guarded by three pangawas [*punggawa*], or tribunes of the people, one being attached to each department of state [*limpo*]. [..] The powers of these pangawas [..] is considerable. With them only it rests to summon a meeting of the council of forty. They possess the right of veto to the appointment of an aru matoah. Their command alone is a legal summons to war, no chief or body having right, or even authority, to call the freemen to the field. (Mundy 1848, 62–63)

This system of popular representation through tribunes was apparently formalistic as much as electoral, with descent affecting the choice of *punggawa* just as it did that of members of the two ruling councils. Nevertheless, the tribunes do seem to have had direct connections to, and lines of communications with, the free commoner population.

> The election of these pangawas rests with the people, and is generally hereditary. Each town and village has a number of freemen called the orang tuah, who administer its internal concerns, and are responsible to the chiefs for the dues in their power to exact. (Mundy 1848, 62–63)

The democratic aspect of Wajo political institutions did not end with permanent commoner representation in the councils of state. From time to time, on occasions when the Council of Forty was divided over an important issue, a general deliberative assembly was convened by the tribunes in which 'respectable' commoners were entitled to participate.

> Besides the constitution of the government here detailed, there is a general council of the people, composed of the heads of villages and all the respectable freemen, who are convened on extraordinary occasions, to state their opinions and discuss important questions, without, however, having the power of arriving at a decision. It is necessary for the council of forty to be unanimous in their decrees. Failing this, the general council is convened through the pangawas, and the ultimate decision of the question rests with the aru matoah, or chief magistrate. (Mundy 1848, 63)

Since ultimate power in such situations rested with the *arung matoa* (ruler) rather than with the assembly, the system clearly stopped short of popular sovereignty. Nevertheless, it is easy to see in this 'participatory democracy of last resort' (our expression) the spirit, if not of the Greek *ekklesia*, then at least of the Roman Plebian Assembly, convened by popular tribunes to give political voice to all those Roman citizens whose commoner status barred them from direct participation in the aristocratic assemblies. And while Wajo was probably the most democratic of all the South Sulawesi kingdoms, others also maintained institutional checks and balances, and in times of crisis tended to incorporate a system of direct popular consultation.

## Rights, freedoms, duties, contracts

Even more reminiscent of European antiquity was the system of formal rights and freedoms enjoyed in Wajo, and to a lesser extent in other Bugis and Makasar kingdoms, by all freemen. These rights were enshrined not only in political custom and oral tradition, but also in written historical texts that effectively functioned as constitutions. Another genre of writings, called *latoa* ('the ancient ones'), records the advice and wisdom of rulers and statesmen of the past. These texts, which date from the eighteenth century or earlier, contain a wealth of information on the principles and practices of Bugis society and its day-to-day governance. Noorduyn (1955, 54–55), one of the few scholars to have examined them, summarizes what the Wajo *latoa* have to say about the rights of freemen:

> The rights and freedoms of the Wadjorese are formulated quite consistently in the manuscripts [...]. According to the historical texts that mention them, they were established by the first Arung Matoa. Almost without exception, the texts list three or four provisions as constituting 'the freedom,' *amaradékang*, of the Wadjorese.

(1) Their persons, families, slaves and property cannot be confiscated [...]; nor can they be unjustly punished; if they incur punishment, then no others can be punished along with them [...]; and they cannot be subjected to the will of a tyrannical ruler.

(2) The door of Wadjo' is always open to them to enter and leave at will; they are not impeded in their movements [...].

(3) They [...] do not pull out each other's house poles, move each other's houses, except in the case of thieves or violent criminals [...].

(4) The free [Wadjorese] cannot be prevented from concluding a mutual agreement, *appadaelorĕng*, provided this is authenticated by witnesses.

The core rights of the free population, in other words, were: security of person and property; access to (individual, not collective) justice; freedom of movement and residence both inside and outside the polity; and freedom of (commercial) contract. It was to these freedoms that Brooke attributed the success of the Wajo in commerce, and their ability to establish commercial colonies as far afield as Borneo (Mundy 1848, 89).

The first of the rights specified by Noorduyn, security of person and property, was fundamental to the subsequent three. By modern standards, property ownership in precolonial Wajo was not extensive: arable land was freely available, to be cultivated against payment of a ten percent government tithe; houses – even those of nobles – were constructed of wood and nipah palm and could be dismantled and moved to a new location if required. Private wealth existed mainly in the form of money and portable valuables, as well as in slaves and followers. The protection of such capital against unlawful seizure was, however, vital to commerce. Among the Wajo diaspora, the institutional framework for long-distance trade was further elaborated in the written compendium of maritime and trade law attributed to Amanna Gappa, a seventeenth-century leader of the Wajo trading community in Makassar (Tobing 1961). The second freedom, the right to move freely from place to place, is an important element of modern citizenship. Roman citizenship also included this right, as witnessed by the ease with which St Augustine and St Paul, both Roman citizens, travelled throughout the Empire. The founding constitution of Sidenreng (*Mula tattimpanna Sidenreng*) specifies the right of freemen to move without restriction within the kingdom's boundaries.

> Now it is the custom that we eight *matoa* [chiefs] do not close our gates to the people of Sidenreng. Our people go wherever they wish and may come and go as they please. The eight gates [divisions of Sidenreng] will remain open to them. [...] If they no longer feel content in their village they may go to live with one of their other seven mothers. (Druce 1999, 45)

The third right on Noorduyn's list, the right not to have one's house dismantled or moved against one's will, appears to be an amalgam of the first two – perhaps in the context of intra-village disputes, which were required to be settled by due process.

The last and at first sight rather minor right – that to enter freely into binding legal contracts with others, with which no ruler may interfere – is particularly interesting, for two reasons. The first is that it exactly parallels the Roman *ius commercii* and reflects the importance of commerce and economic freedom in both precolonial Bugis and

classical European civilizations. The second is that it exemplifies a broader emphasis in South Sulawesi culture on mutual contract as a principle of social and political organization. Reid (2000, 442) has noted 'the readiness of Bugis and Makasarese communities to regulate their affairs by contracts between two parties, each recognizing the other's rights.' A Wajo saying emphasizes the binding nature of contractual obligation, by comparison with political decisions that could on occasion be disputed. Even the ruler was unable to contest the law of contract:

> One may contest the decision of the ruler, but not that of the [ruling] council.
> One may contest the decision of the council, but not that of the [commoner] elders.
> One may contest the decision of the elders, but not that of a mutual agreement [*appadaéloreng*]. (Pelras 1971, 174)

Like Greek, Roman, and modern citizenship, free (*maradéka*) status appears to have brought with it obligations as well as rights. The most important duty incumbent on the *tomaradéka* seems to have been the performance of military service. The sheer number of warriors that could be raised in a single muster – some ten thousand from Wajo alone in the seventeenth century – suggests that armed support of the state and its policies was obligatory on every freeman (Andaya 1981, 202). The fact that in Wajo, only the non-noble *punggawa* members of the Council of Forty (Brooke's 'tribunes of the people') had the right to summon the freemen to war implies a direct and reciprocal relationship between the duty to fight for the state, and the right to be represented in the councils of state.[3]

## Political authority and the enforcement of rights

Political authority in South Sulawesi was respected partly because relationships of power were understood as having resulted from mutual agreements made in the ancestral past between ruling lineage founders and their followers. In Western terms, the prevailing theory of state resembled not the medieval or early modern 'divine right of kings,' but rather the 'social contract' of Enlightenment political philosophy.

> The opening section of most chronicles includes a passage in which a social pact is concluded between the ruler and the people, whose leaders declare in a formula mirrored in many texts: 'It is you that we take as our lord. Protect us from sparrows, that we be not plundered; bind [us like] rice sheaves that we be not empty; put your blanket on us that we be not cold. [..].' This is followed by a statement about reciprocal rights and duties, in which the ruler is warned about the consequences of his possible misdeeds [..]. This is a contractual relationship that can be deemed void should either side fail to observe its observations [..]. (Pelras 1996, 105–106)

Although the obligations incumbent on rulers may not always have been met or successfully enforced, they were certainly not just theoretical. The recorded histories of South Sulawesi are rich in episodes in which rulers are described as being legally deposed and punished for abusing their powers and failing to respect the rights of their free subjects (Henley and Caldwell 2008, 273–74).

The *latoa* text *Petta matinroé ri Lariang-Bangngi* ('Our lord who is buried at Lariang-Bangngi') identifies five methods by which public officials, and even apical rulers, could be held to account. The first (*mangnganro ri ade'*) was by submitting a petition to the

ruler or the ruling council. The second (*mapputane'*) was for community leaders (*ulu anang*) to organize a public gathering in front of the royal meeting hall and request an audience with the ruler or council. The third (*mallimpo ade'*) was a sit-down protest in front of the palace or meeting hall, with participants bringing food sufficient for several days. No weapons were to be carried and the protest was to be strictly peaceful. The fourth method (*mabbarata*) was a potentially violent protest by a group that felt its rights to have been violated by officials of state, by the ruler's relatives, or even by the ruler himself. This kind of protest, which carried with it an open threat of civil disobedience or war, was led by powerful and respected families, and negotiations were handled directly by the ruler. The fifth and final method of protest was the voluntary exodus of a group of people to a neighbouring country under the leadership of a powerful family. This decampment, called *mallekke' dapureng* (literally, 'to carry one's kitchen on one's head'), was the last resort in the event of a serious grievance. The ruler was forbidden from preventing such an exodus, as this would contravene the right to free movement and abode (Mattulada 1985, 448–49).

## Nascent citizenship in historical context

When considering the idea of a 'nascent citizenship' in South Sulawesi, it is salutary to recall that Bugis and Makasar kingdoms were no parvenu states. Their roots lay in territorial coalitions – coalitions based on sworn treaties, not on personal relations between leaders – forged as early as the thirteenth century (Druce 2017, 19). Archaeological evidence confirms the early sophistication of the region's social and political organization (Bulbeck 1992; Bulbeck and Caldwell 2000; Bulbeck et al. 2018; Hakim et al. 2018). By the sixteenth century the South Sulawesi states had reached a level of complexity comparable to those of Anglo-Saxon England, featuring large, stable, constitutionally organized polities with defined borders – a far cry from the volatile, borderless precolonial states of fashionable scholarly imagination (Druce 2017, passim).

European visitors to precolonial South Sulawesi spoke well of its institutions, and of the civility of its people. In 1610 an English visitor described the inhabitants of independent Makassar as 'a very good people to deal withal and to live by: and which hold good right and justice, and order after their manner' (Reid 2000, 433). At the end of the eighteenth century a Dutch admiral praised Gowa as a state in which crimes were 'punished according to laws, and not by the arbitrary will of the monarch,' who indeed was himself 'subject to the laws of the land' (Stavorinus 1798, 205). Even James Brooke, writing in a new century of European self-confidence, expressed admiration for how the government of Wajo respected what he explicitly called the 'rights of citizenship' of its people.

> We cannot fail to admire in these infant institutions the glimmer of elective government, the acknowledged rights of citizenship, and the liberal spirit which has never placed a single restriction upon foreign or domestic commerce. That a people advanced to this point would gradually progress if left to themselves [..] there is every reason to believe [..]. (Mundy 1848, 66)

Considering that in Brooke's own country the national electorate had until less than a decade earlier (up to the Great Reform Act of 1832) consisted of less than 15 percent of the adult male population, the future White Rajah's praise for Wajo's 'glimmer of

elective government' may be regarded as condescending. Indeed, with its plenary citizens' assembly, Wajo seems to have come much closer than did early nineteenth-century Britain to the classical Athenian ideal of *participatory* democracy.

We may add that in one important respect, namely the rights of women, the South Sulawesi states stood well above either Greece, or Rome, or the Great Britain of Brooke's day. Crawfurd (1820, I, 74), writing twenty years before Brooke's visit, observed that among 'the nations of Celebes,' women 'take an active concern in all the business of life; they are consulted by the men on all public affairs, and frequently raised to the throne, and that too when the monarchy is elective.' Brooke himself records of Wajo:

> All the offices of state, including even that of aru matoah [ruler], are open to women; and they actually fill the important post[s] of government, *four out of the six great chiefs of Wajo being at present females* [our emphasis]. These ladies appear in public like the men; ride, rule, and visit even foreigners, without the knowledge or consent of their husbands. (Mundy 1848, 75)

Similar accounts of Bugis women in positions of political power can be found from other periods. The earliest historically attested ruler of a South Sulawesi kingdom is a woman: Wé Tékkéwanua, who 'broke the long and split the broad' and married out her six children to important neighbouring settlements. Her rule in the early fifteenth century is recalled as a time of peace and prosperity (Caldwell 1995, 408), and oral traditions of her role in the expansion of agriculture in Soppeng persist to this day. The phenomenon of Bugis female authority is addressed by Millar (1983), who argues that in South Sulawesi, ascriptive status, acquired by both sexes equally from their parents, was more important than gender in selection for political office.

The fact that women in South Sulawesi could hold high state office reflected a more general equality of rights between the sexes. 'The Wajo women,' Brooke wrote, 'enjoy perfect liberty, and are free from all the restraints usually imposed by the Mahomedan religion' (Mundy 1848, 89). One might add that they were free also from the restraints suffered by women in nineteenth-century Britain, where a married woman had little means of divorce and her property (and earnings if she had any) belonged to her husband. By contrast, Bugis women retained their own property, enjoyed a right to divorce, and could head their own households (Mundy 1848, 74–75). However closely or distantly nineteenth-century South Sulawesi proto-citizenship approximated classical European models, it is clear that women shared in it much more completely than women did in any Western system of citizenship earlier than the twentieth century.

## Comparisons, caveats and conclusions

The comparison between precolonial South Sulawesi and European antiquity should not be overstretched. The terminology of citizenship – or at least, what is retrospectively identified as such – was more explicit in Greece and Rome than it ever became in Sulawesi prior to the rise of Indonesian nationalism. Bugis and Makasar texts do not seem to include a concept of integral political community comparable to the Athenian *polis* or Roman *civitas*, encompassing both nobles and free commoners. At most they refer vaguely to the *pa'banua* or 'people of the land,' a term which usually appears to

include only 'the ordinary members of the local community' (Pelras 1996, 105). Nor did the *pa'banua* have quite the same ideological role and importance as the Roman *populus* or 'people,' described by Mouritsen (2015, 155) as 'the only true source of legitimacy in the Roman state.' It must also be noted that while the statutory freedoms of Wajo as enumerated by Noorduyn include judicial rights, they do not explicitly include the right to political participation that is often regarded as the essence of classical citizenship in Athens and the pre-Imperial Roman Republic.

Other contrasts between precolonial Sulawesi and classical Europe can be found in the domain of law and justice. Rule of law was arguably just as important a principle for the Bugis and Makasar peoples as it was in Greece or Rome. But in Sulawesi it was *ade'* or customary law (albeit recorded in written as well as oral form) rather than *hukum* or statutory law that was important. The *latoa*, which itself contains a large body of customary law, emphasizes that knowledge of *ade'* is a basic requirement for administrative office. The legislative function of the assemblies of state was less developed than in European antiquity, and the judicial apparatus was less independent of the executive and less rooted in the political community as a whole. In Athens the legal system involved citizen jurors on such a scale that the law courts 'played a dominant role in the life of the state' and were 'a way of life for many, perhaps most of the elderly citizens' (Thorley 2004, 38). In Republican Rome, where criminal disputes were initially held in the Centuriate Assembly, separate public courts were later introduced with magistrates likewise presiding over citizen jurors (albeit all from the propertied classes). In South Sulawesi there is no evidence of such a participatory jury system, and although there were senior officials known as *pa'bicara* with specialized judicial functions, these operated very much within, rather than alongside of, the political hierarchy. As the founding constitution of Sidenreng states: 'If a *pa'bicara* rejects what has been decided by our lords of Sidenreng [the ruling council] then he may be executed by the law' (Druce 1999, 42).

The above-mentioned points of difference notwithstanding, we hope to have shown that to compare the political institutions of precolonial South Sulawesi with those of ancient Athens and Rome – that is, the historical models that have most strongly inspired *modern* ideals and concepts of citizenship – is by no means an absurd enterprise. As in Athens and Rome, government in South Sulawesi was collective or collegial, decisions being taken and power exercised by councils of (near-) equals rather than by autocrats. As in Athens and Rome, every non-slave in the polity effectively enjoyed some right of participation in the political process, albeit not necessarily an explicitly codified right, and in most cases exercised only occasionally (as in the case of the plenary assemblies convened at times of elite disunity) or indirectly, via popular representation in state councils. The system, in other words, was more like the Roman Republic, with its representative and communal elements, than like Athenian democracy with its uncompromising emphasis on direct citizen participation. The parallel with Rome – and indeed, it might be argued, with the 'oligarchic democracy' of twenty-first century Indonesia – is particularly strong with regard to the role of popular assemblies in South Sulawesi as arbiters of intra-elite conflict.

> The popular will of the Roman people found expression in the context [..] of divisions within the oligarchy. Democratic politics in Rome was consequently a function of the degree and type of competition in progress between oligarchic families, groups or

individuals. It is simply a fact that the ruling class accepted the arbitration of popular voting in certain extremely important circumstances [..]. (North 1990, 18)

As in both Athens and Rome, the democratic aspects of the South Sulawesi polity went hand in hand with strong and institutionalized social stratification, with the outright exclusion of slaves from the political community paradoxically heightening public awareness of the value of liberty. As in both Athens and Rome, government was contractual, legal, and constitutional in character, providing the (proto-) citizen with clearly defined rights and freedoms.

As we noted at the outset, such a system of institutionalized rights and freedoms was unusual in precolonial Indonesia. Brooke went so far as to claim that 'amid all the nations of the East [..] the Bugis alone have arrived at the threshold of recognized rights, and have alone emancipated themselves from despotism' (Mundy 1848, 65–66). If Brooke's claim may have been an exaggeration, there were undoubtedly aspects of the history and geography of the region that were unusually conducive to the development of institutionalized rights and freedoms. A brief, comparative glance at South Sulawesi and the classical Mediterranean, where it can be argued that similar preconditions were present, helps to illuminate these.

First, the regions in question were not (yet) conquered by foreign empires and subjected to forcible political centralization. Nor were they (yet) influenced by prestigious foreign religions or civilizations that provided ideological support for political centralization – for instance by associating it, via divinely ordained kingship, with important new supernatural benefits. Instead, in both regions the institutions of state developed on the basis of existing, decentralized local interests, a process that favoured contractual and constitutional arrangements. Secondly, in both cases, agricultural resources were rich enough to give rise to strongly stratified societies, yet a maritime geography, featuring narrow peninsulas and long coastlines, prevented particular elite groups and polities from dominating others to an inescapable extent by controlling natural choke points of commerce, such as the mouths of major rivers. This preserved an element of pluralism, and indeed sometimes armed conflict, among the emergent states that seems to have been important to the evolution of their institutions. In precolonial South Sulawesi as in classical Europe, the state's constant need for the motivated military manpower which the common people could provide gave the latter an important point of political leverage over elites. In Wajo, as noted, it was only the 'people's tribunes' who had the power to summon the freemen to war; in early Rome, the institution of the *tribuni plebis* seems to have been the result of an episode in which commoners refused to enroll in the army, leaving the city defenceless against enemies (Balot 2017, 5). Finally, both regions, again partly due to their maritime geography, were commercial in economic orientation, as reflected in the inclusion of *ius commercii* as a key right of freemen both in Rome and in Wajo.

Pelras (2000, 430) suggests that the prototype for the formal 'social contracts' which developed under these conditions to underpin state formation among the Bugis was provided by the informal, individual contract which, both then and in recent times, unites leader and follower in a classic patron-client relationship, whereby a patron provides various forms of protection and insurance to a client in return for service and

obedience. In the relatively decentralized and competitive environment of precolonial South Sulawesi, the *voluntary* element in such relationships was always strong.

> The relationship between lord and follower was voluntary and could be ended at any time; the lord could drop his follower if the latter was insufficiently obedient or if he did not comply in his obligations towards him; conversely, a follower could move to another lord if he felt that the previous one did not give him enough protection. (Pelras 2000, 398)

It was arguably this clientelistic principle of contractual power and hierarchy that, transposed into a formal, collective agreement, provided the constitutional foundation of the South Sulawesi states. The role of another indigenous institution, slavery, in shaping that constitution has already been noted: the necessarily unfree status of the slaves made it useful to define the freedoms of the free, and possible to see the free population as a collectivity united by its common rights. It is interesting to conclude by underlining the paradox that the pre-existing local institutions that the peoples of South Sulawesi built on when they 'emancipated themselves from despotism' and created 'acknowledged rights of citizenship' (Brooke's words again), included two institutions, clientelism and slavery, which from a modern perspective appear fundamentally at odds both with freedom and with citizenship.

## Notes

1. The official spelling of the provincial capital of South Sulawesi.
2. There were minor variations in these matters between the kingdoms and over time. For example, it is not clear that in early Bone the *arupitu* (seven lords) had the power to elect the *arumpone* (ruler).
3. Taxation, the other main duty usually incumbent upon citizens, appears to have been light or non-existent (Mundy 1848, 64). However, a chronicle of Wajo describes the people of Boli abandoning their village and fleeing the tax collectors of Luwu, a neighbouring kingdom (Zainal Abidin. 1985, 64).

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