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Shared responsibility
Some aspects of gender and authority in Makassar society

A long time ago, a bamboo cane came floating down the Jeneberang river from Mount Bawakaraeng. A beautiful woman emerged from the bamboo. She went ashore near our village and sat down on a big red stone. There some people from the village found her and asked her to follow them to their houses. There was no ruler in the village at that time, and continuous quarreling and disputing prevailed among the inhabitants. They called the woman Bombong Koasa and asked her to become their ruler, since she was a divine being. Bombong Koasa married a man from our village, and they had children. Ever since, all our rulers have been descendants of Bombong Koasa. She ruled for many years, but one day she died, and her body went back to the sacred mountain from which she had come. Her spirit, however, has remained on earth, living in an object she had left in the village before ascending again to Mount Bawakaraeng. This object is our *kalompoang*.

This version of a myth, which is spread throughout many parts of South Sulawesi, was recorded in Bontoloe, a Makassarese village in highland Goa.[1] Paralleling many other local versions of this myth – including the one referring to the former kingdom of Goa – the first divine ruler (*tu manurung*) of Bontoloe is said to have been a woman. The political authority of village rulers in highland Goa, each of whom must trace his descent back to a *tu manurung*, is legitimated by certain objects that are regarded as sacred, since they are believed to have been left by the divine being before she ascended back to the sacred peak of Mount Bawakaraeng.

The shape of these sacred heirlooms, which in the local language are called *kalompoang* ('greatness') or *kalabbirang* ('magnificence') varies. In the area under investigation, *kalompoang* include different kinds of swords or daggers as well as ancient bells, porcelain plates, and, as in the case of

1 Besides this myth, there are still others concerning the origin of village leadership, which, however, do not refer to a *tu manurung*. Nevertheless, the version cited in the text is the most widely accepted myth explaining the origin of the local government.

Bontoloe, flags. In all cases, a sacred heirloom constitutes the nodal symbol of the sociopolitical and religious structure of the respective village community.

The myth cited above reveals that these symbols imply a fusion of social, political, territorial, and religious features, which may be discussed separately only for analytical purposes. While the role of *kalompoang* with respect to political and territorial dimensions in highland Goa is treated in Martin Rössler's contribution to this volume, the present paper deals with the significance of sacred heirlooms for the socio-religious organization, as well as with the domain of individual belief in their supernatural powers. Since prominent roles within these domains are in particular occupied by women, a major focus will be the attempt to analyse the involvement of gender relations in the local patterns of leadership and authority.

The setting

Bontoloe, the village under investigation, is located in the highlands east of Ujungpandang.[2] Formerly, it was a part of the principality of Kasepekang, which nowadays is incorporated into the administrative unit of *kecamatan* Tabbingkassi, including a *desa* named Kasepekang.[3]

The 160 households of the village comprise about 800 persons, with the average domestic unit consisting of a nuclear family and in many cases other relatives, such as spouses of adult children or grandparents. Except for a few *pegawai*, all inhabitants are peasants cultivating wet rice, vegetables, and coffee.

The majority of the population (99%) belongs to the social stratum of the commoners (*tu maradeka*). Traditionally, Makassarese society was divided into three main social strata, namely nobility (*anaq karaeng*), commoners, and slaves (*ata*). While the distinction between nobles and commoners still is of paramount importance in everyday life, the former stratum of the slaves has been – at least officially – incorporated into the stratum of commoners.[4] Traditionally, village leadership in Bontoloe was exercised by a council composed of four offices. These included: 1. the *karaeng*, the village ruler, who

2 Fieldwork was conducted in collaboration with Martin Rössler from April 1984 until March 1985 under the auspices of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), and sponsored by Universitas Hasanuddin, Ujungpandang.

3 The names of all persons and locations within the area under investigation have been replaced by pseudonyms.

4 It can, nevertheless, be observed that in Bontoloe all persons whose ancestors had been slaves are stil identified as being 'of slave descent'. Such knowledge is used in particular to deprecate these individuals, for example in gossip. For details of the structure of stratification, see Röttger-Rössler (1989).

must trace his descent back to the divine ruler Bombong Koasa; 2. the *gallarang*, who functions as a representative of the *karaeng*; 3. the *anaq karaeng*, a kind of adviser to the *karaeng*; and 4. the *pinati*, who was responsible for all matters relating to agriculture, as well as for the rituals concerning this domain.[5] The members of this village or *adaq*-council (Indonesian: *adat*) no longer perform formal, government-sanctioned functions, but nevertheless, their political authority is still considerably respected by the village inhabitants.[6]

In Makassarese society, descent is traced bilaterally. Usually the core of a kin group (*pammanakang*) constitutes the population of one village. Each of these village kin groups comprises several overlapping bilateral descent groups, some of which focus upon the offices of *adaq* mentioned above. The indigenous term for these descent groups is *pattola*, designating the potential 'successors' to the respective office. The four *pattola adaq* descent groups in Bontoloe are of crucial importance for social differentiation within the village community. A person who belongs to one or more of these groups is regarded as higher in social standing than somebody who does not possess any genealogical ties to *pattola adaq*. These latter people, who are usually referred to as *tu samaraq* ('common, low people') constitute the lowest layer of the social hierarchy. On the other hand, the top of the pyramid is occupied by the members of the *pattola karaeng*, comprising the descendants of Bombong Koasa, the first divine ruler of Bontoloe. Only a member of this descent group is entitled to succession to the traditional office of the *karaeng*. Normatively, the other three *pattola adaq* groups are subordinate to the *pattola karaeng* as regards social rank, while in regard to one another they are considered to be of roughly equal social standing.

In general, an individual possessing the strongest genealogical ties to his or her mythical predecessor is favoured as a successor to a vacant *adaq* office. On the other hand, however, personal qualifications and willingness to take over an office are further important factors often leading to the selection of a person of lower descent rank.

Gender and leadership

Women are not entitled to hold traditional offices, but female members of *pattola adaq* groups may transfer their genealogically defined right of succession

5 All members of the *adaq* council are commoners. On the village level, terms such as *karaeng* or *anaq karaeng* do not indicate noble rank, but rather refer to functions within the traditional village government. (see Yatim 1983:84-6; Cense 1979:298)

6 The nature and scope of social conflict arising from these circumstances is discussed in Rössler (1987 and this volume).

to their husbands, even if the latter do not possess any kinship ties to the respective village kin group. In such a case, a man would have to resign from his office if his wife died, if they were divorced, or if divorce was likely because of frequent disputes between husband and wife. Regardless of whether the holder of a traditional office himself or his wife possesses kin ties to the respective *pattola adaq*, any member of the *adaq* council may be officially represented by his wife, if he is prevented for any reason from participating in a ritual, litigation, or any similar occasion. Accordingly, the wives of the members of the *adaq* council are referred to as the 'female *adaq*' (*adaq baine*). In addition, three particular rituals require the participation of both the members of the council and their wives. If one of the female or male representatives of *adaq* was missing on these occasions, the council would be considered incomplete. The rituals in which the male members of the council as well as their wives are obliged to take part are directly related to the political organization of the community. Two of these rituals, namely the *acceraq kalompoang* and the *ajjaga* (see Rössler, this volume), focus upon the sacred heirloom, whereas the third one is a particular sequence of the funerary rituals (see Rössler 1987:278-99).

All of them require a ritual meal called *kanre lompo* ('great meal'), which is consumed collectively by the members of the *adaq* council and their wives, and which symbolizes the religious and social coherence of the village community.[7] Furthermore, women functioning as *adaq baine* are commonly considered 'wise advisers' (*tu paingaq*), which means people whose advice is requested in cases of dispute and manifest conflict. They are consulted not only by women, but also by men. Accordingly, in this respect women function as mediators between the village inhabitants and the members of the traditional government council.

In Bontoloe, *adaq baine* are always married to holders of traditional offices, except for the office of the *karaeng*. The village ruler's 'female *adaq*' is the woman who is in charge of the *kalompoang* and whose duty is to perform the rituals focusing on the sacred heirloom. Like the *karaeng*, she must trace her descent back to the mythical ruler, Bombong Koasa. Though she need not be married to the *karaeng*, her descent rank within the *pattola karaeng* group is supposed to be high. Thus, the woman who at present is in charge of the sacred heirloom in Bontoloe has held this function for some thirty years, while during the same period of time the office of the *karaeng* has been held by four men. The woman guarding the *kalompoang*, who must not be replaced during her lifetime, occupies the highest office of *adaq* in the village. She is regarded as ultimately representing *adaq*, including spiritual and political

7 The implications of this ritual meal, which according to many informants constitutes the major sequence of the mentioned rituals, are discussed in Rössler (1987:197, 287-9).

leadership, while the *karaeng* merely executes the political power that is legitimated by the sacred heirloom. Sinong, the old woman who is in charge of the *kalompoang* of Bontoloe, is at the same time considered to possess the profoundest knowledge of *adaq* and traditional religion.

In the course of a sorting method test which I carried out with some informants in Bontoloe in order to discover the cognitive principles underlying social ranking, Sinong was by all informants designated as the highest ranking individual in the village, exceeding all other male and female representatives of *adaq* as well as the (male) holders of formal offices.[8] Considering all factors hitherto mentioned, the structure of traditional political leadership does not appear to be exclusively dominated by men. In contrast to the traditional system, however, present patterns of leadership, focusing on administrative offices in the nationally imposed bureaucracy, do not provide many opportunities for women to participate in political responsibility and authority, as they traditionally did.[9]

The representatives of the official administration do not accept traditional offices as legitimate, and due to a growing decline in the extent of authority they can exercise, *adaq* councils and *adaq baine* will probably vanish in the near future. Since the average educational level of women is very low in comparison with that of men, women rarely have the chance to hold formal offices. Future developments will show if the declining participation of women in political leadership, as induced by the coming of modern administration, will continue.

Belief in the power of sacred heirlooms

In general, women occupy leading positions as regards the daily practice of traditional religion. They are considered experts in religious knowledge, which is corroborated by the fact that in some villages women perform the function of the traditional priest (*sanro*). During the performance of rituals, women prepare and arrange the various kinds of offerings, and they ensure that all ritual sequences are performed in accordance with the precepts of tra-

[8] The informants were given 160 cards showing the names of 80 male and 80 female villagers. They were then asked to put these cards into any kind of hierarchical order, according to their personal judgement. See Silverman (1966) and Hubbell (1976), who also used this method for the purpose of discovering indigenous concepts of social ranking and prestige differentiation.

[9] Over a hundred years ago, Wilken (1883:725) indicated that compared to other Indonesian societies, women occupied extraordinarily high social positions among the Makassarese (see Millar 1981:45; Chabot 1967:209; Mangemba 1975).

ditional religion and *adaq*.[10] In addition, women are responsible for all kinds of 'secular' aspects of ritual performances, such as cooking and serving meals for participants from the village, as well as from other locations. In modern terms we might say that the management of traditional religion is assigned to women, while men usually dominate the actual performances of rituals, including the burning of incense, recitation of formulas (*baca-baca*), and purifying with water or oil. This is particularly the case with rituals implying a symbolic relationship between religion and the political structure of the community. On the other hand, women carry out most rituals or ritual sequences relating to the personal or family domain, for instance rites of passage.[11]

The dominance of women in the organization and performance of rituals is most clearly revealed by analysing those rituals which pertain to the making or redemption of an individual vow in front of the *kalompoang*. In the remainder of this paper I shall therefore deal with the scope of female authority with respect to these particular rituals.

Traditionally, three categories of rituals concerning sacred heirlooms were directly related to the political domain, namely those performed on the occasion of warfare, the inauguration of a *karaeng*, and the purification of the sacred object (see Rössler, this volume). Because of far-reaching political changes and the rise of modern administration, leading to a decline of the significance of *kalompoang* for political leadership, these rituals are now of minor importance, even if they have not altogether vanished. On the contrary, a fourth category of rituals still is of extraordinary importance for everyday life in the highland villages, namely those rituals which are performed in order to make or to redeem a personal vow.[12]

Hence, the present role of *kalompoang* is largely determined by the making and redemption of vows, which are commonly referred to as *hajat* (Arabic/Indonesian) or *tinjaq* (Makassar)[13]. On the average, three times a week small groups of people (for the most part members of an extended family) come to the house of the *kalompoang* in Bontoloe in order to make or to

10 During rituals that are performed comparatively rarely, men commonly ask (especially older) women about the correct order of ritual details. When asking why this was so, I was told that 'such things only women know about.' On the role of women in traditional religion, see Chabot (1950:63).

11 In this paper, the division of ritual tasks according to gender cannot be discussed in detail, in particular because doing so would require a thorough analysis of how this sphere is influenced by Islam.

12 I cannot draw any definite conclusion as to whether the rituals belonging to this last mentioned category nowadays are performed more often than formerly, since no precise information exists on the frequency of such rituals some decades ago. Without any doubt, however, the present significance of these rituals has not resulted from recent changes.

13 The intentions of the Makassar *tinjaq* differ from those implied in the Islamic *nadhr* (Indonesian *nazar*). See note 22 below.

redeem a vow in the presence of the sacred heirloom. The making of vows is by no means confined to *kalompoang*, even though the latter are regarded as the most powerful intermediaries between humanity and the deities. Since an offering to a *kalompoang* usually requires more expenses than offerings to minor objects or places of supernatural power, economic factors are also taken into consideration in the intention to make a vow. Vows taken in the presence of a given *kalompoang* will have to be redeemed some day at this very place.

In addition to vows that are uttered in such a way that another person can testify to them, there are also vows made inwardly, which nobody else knows about. Such vows are most likely to be 'forgotten', which inevitably calls forth misfortune, illness, or even the death of close relatives.

In addition to goats and water buffaloes,[14] there are many kinds of smaller offerings, which, depending on the words of the vow, may comprise just a few chickens (usually four) or some bunches of bananas. In general such minor rituals are performed in the house of the *kalompoang* in Bontoloe without being previously announced to other people. The woman who is in charge of the sacred heirloom will be called, and after she has been told the contents of the vow, she will perform a rather short ritual in front of the sacred object.

Besides the person who once uttered it, and one or two members of his or her family, usually only the keeper of the *kalompoang* knows about the contents of the vow. Furthermore, the guardian of the sacred object may not refuse the performance of a ritual demanded by any person who has made a vow. The words of the vow are then transmitted to the spirit through incense, which is also brought into contact with the various kinds of offerings that will be collectively consumed by all participants after the performance of the core ritual.

The village inhabitants on a general level differentiate between three kinds of situations in which they would make a vow: 1. a state of happiness; 2. illness or misfortune; and 3. the desire for material or ideal wealth.

Authority and the performance of rituals

A typical example of the first instance would be a vow made by a mother after she had given birth to a healthy child. In such a case she would, for instance, utter the following words: 'When you [her child] will have grown

[14] Without a doubt, the nature of offerings has changed during the last decades. While today water buffaloes are rare (compared to cattle) in the area under investigation, goats, which are important for all Islamic feasts, are virtually absent and have to be bought in the lowlands.

up and become strong some day, I shall take you to your *kalompoang* and offer a goat.' In other instances, such a vow implies an initiation ritual that will be performed after the child has reached the age of puberty. This kind of ritual, which traditionally was considered obligatory for everyone, is called *anrunrung baju* ('the display of the shirt').[15] The performance of this ritual is based upon the conviction that the spirit of the sacred heirloom has contributed considerably to the growing up of the child, and therefore has to be offered the animal that had once been promised. It should be stressed that such vows do not imply any kind of 'thankfulness', but rather aim at attaining something, such as in this case the protection of the child's health. Today the *anrunrung baju* is no longer considered obligatory, and therefore few of the vows relating to this ritual are made in a state of happiness immediately after the birth of a healthy child. Most vows of this kind are made if a child has fallen ill soon after birth, although the expenses arising from such a ritual are comparatively small.

Hence, most *anrunrung baju* rituals also relate to the second kind of vows, namely those prompted by misfortune or illness. In such a case, someone would make a vow, for instance, after a member of her/his family had fallen ill. According to several informants, the spirit of the *kalompoang* will then help to redress the illness within three days, even though it was at the same time stressed that a healer (*sanro tu garring*) also had to be consulted, because the spirit could only eliminate the cause of the illness, but could not cure the physical symptoms.[16]

Case 1

When Saripati fell ill at the age of 18 months, her parents Sugi and Sapar made a vow to perform an *anrunrung baju* ritual in front of the *kalompoang* after Saripati had recovered. One year later, when the little girl was well again, her parents agreed to redeem their vow. Accompanied by some close relatives and neighbours, they went to the house of the *kalompoang*, where they met with Sinong, the guardian of the sacred heirloom. They gave Sinong the four chickens that were going to be offered, and then the small group split up: Saripati and her parents, Sugi's mother and one of her aunts, as well as two female neighbours, followed Sinong into the chamber in which the *kalompoang* is kept. This small room is only accessible from the kitchen. The other persons, including Sugi's father and

15 For a detailed description of this ritual, see Rössler (1987:221-6). Among the nobility, a ritual implying an equivalent intention, though requiring considerably higher expenses, is the *ajjaga* (see Rössler this volume).

16 In most cases of illness, a traditional healer, or – among the wealthy – a trained physician is consulted. Only if they cannot cure the illness is a seer (*boto* or *panrita*) asked to discover the causes of the illness. It is believed that after the causes have been abolished by following the seer's advice, the physical symptoms may be cured by the knowledge of either a healer or physician.

brother, as well as male neighbours, sat down in the main room of the house, where they were joined by two other men (who just happened to drop in) and Ngalle, the husband of Sinong's niece Binto, who will probably succeed Sinong in office some day. Ngalle is the owner of the house in which the *kalompoang* is kept.

While the men were smoking and having some coffee in the main room, the *anrunrung baju* ritual was performed in the chamber of the sacred heirloom. Sinong, together with Saripati (dressed in the traditional female shirt *baju bodo*) and her mother sitting in front of the small bed in which the *kalompoang* is stored, consecrated the offerings through the burning of incense, applied some chicken blood to the box of the sacred object, and finally put some consecrated oil on the temples of all participants.

Then the group entered the adjacent kitchen, where they consumed the chickens and other offerings together with Binto and her daughters. The men waiting in the main room were not offered any part of this ritual meal. Instead, they were served ordinary dishes consisting of rice and dried fish, which before consumption were consecrated by Sugi's father. After having finished their meals, both groups went home together.

During the performance of this *anrunrung baju* ritual, which was linked to the redemption of a vow, the dominance of women – especially during those sequences which were carried out in front of the sacred object – is obvious. The only male individual participating in the central sequences was Saripati's father Sapar, who had made the original vow in agreement with his wife one year ago. Besides Saripati and her parents as the main persons involved in the ritual, only women joined those ritual actions which were performed in the chamber of the *kalompoang*.

The exclusion of male relatives and neighbours from the ritual did not happen by chance, but rather forms a recurrent pattern that can be observed in all comparable situations. Participation in these rituals does not correlate with membership in descent groups, even though members of the *pattola karaeng* enjoy some privileges as regards the *kalompoang*, such as being allowed to touch the sacred flag. Instead, gender seems to constitute a main determinant for participation in that men are only allowed to take part in the main sequences if they are directly concerned with the relevant vow. In this respect it does not matter whether a man uttered a vow himself or is only indirectly affected by another person's vow. An example of the latter case would be the recovery of a man who has fallen seriously ill due to the making of a vow.

Comparable patterns can be discovered with respect to those people who participate in a ritual performance without being invited, or without possessing closer kinship ties to the initiators. Among such people (who may either drop in by chance or are invited as they pass by the house), only women participate in the main ritual sequences and in the consumption of the offerings presented to the *kalompoang*, while men are served ordinary dishes in the main room.

However, not all of the women participating in the *tinjaq*-ritual join the collective consumption of the offerings. In this regard only those women who are directly concerned with the vow occupy prominent positions. The other female guests' participation in the ritual meal depends on their genealogical relationship to the initiator, as well as on whether they were invited or not.

Decision-making in family matters

Without overestimating the factors mentioned above, it can be stated that female dominance in the performance of *tinjaq*-rituals concerning the sacred objects and the exclusion of men from the consumption of offerings indicate the central role of women in this particular domain. It must be stressed again that *tinjaq*-rituals focusing on the *kalompoang* constitute an aspect of the local culture which is of paramount importance for everyday life. Since a primary goal of such rituals is the safeguarding of one's closest relatives, women must be regarded as the principal decision-makers in the family domain. The following case exemplifies those recurrent social situations which reveal that authority in the informal sphere of social life is for the most part assigned to women. The case deals with another *tinjaq*-ritual centered on the *kalompoang*, and it will be shown how the connection between illness and a vow is often established from another angle than in the case presented above. Here a vow is not made to cure somebody's illness through the supernatural power of the sacred object. Instead, illness is believed to have emerged because of a vow that had been forgotten.

If someone has fallen ill, one of his close relatives will usually consult a seer (*boto* or *panrita*) in order to find out the cause of the illness. Commonly, the seer will then discover that many years or even decades ago, another member of the family had made a vow that has not yet been redeemed. Curing the illness requires, first of all, redeeming that vow. A vow must be redeemed after the spirit of the *kalompoang* has contributed to the recovery of an individual. The basic principle underlying the vow is therefore one of direct exchange: After having supported a person or a family, the spirit of the sacred object will demand the offering that had once been promised through the vow. If the vow should be forgotten after the individual concerned has recovered, or if the members of her/his family should deny ever having made a vow, some years or even decades later the spirit will definitely cause further illness in order to remind family members of their promise.[17]

[17] It is believed that the spirit will also cause further calamities if the ritual of redemption has not been performed in accordance with *adaq*. In such a case, the offering cannot be accepted by the spirit, and hence has to be repeated as soon as possible.

Case 2

Mina is a 30-year-old woman who was born in Bontoloe. During the last few years, again and again members of her family have fallen ill. Her husband Sirajuddin, aged 35, has for years suffered from serious headaches and fever. Their elder daughter, aged four, suffers from epilepsy, while the younger has been in a weak condition ever since she was born. After having consulted several healers who could neither cure her husband nor her daughters, Mina went to a seer, asking him to discover the causes of their trouble. The seer told her that many years ago, her father-in-law, Dego, had made a vow when his little son Sirajuddin had fallen seriously ill. According to that vow, Dego had promised to offer a cow to the *kalompoang* if its spirit would help to cure his son. Furthermore, the seer said that Dego doubtless had not redeemed that vow, so that all cases of illness in her family were caused by this failure.

When Mina questioned her father-in-law about this matter, he denied ever having made such a vow. Among the members of the family, serious dispute arose, in the course of which Sirajuddin took sides with his father, while Mina was supported by Rembong, Sirajuddin's mother. Although the latter could not remember that her husband had uttered a vow aloud when little Sirajuddin had been ill, she conceded that he possibly could have made it inwardly, but was later reluctant to spend so much money for a cow to be offered to the *kalompoang*.

Now the two women decided to buy a cow at their own expense, regardless of Sirajuddin's and Dego's fierce protests. Even if Dego really had not made a vow, Mina told me, the offering of a cow would probably induce the spirit of the *kalompoang* to contribute to her husband's and her children's recovery. Rembong and Mina began with the preparations for the ritual, which was carried out in the house of the *kalompoang* four weeks later.

The performance of the ritual largely paralleled that of the ritual described in case 1, even though many more people participated, due mainly to the larger quantity of meat. Again women were dominant in the course of the ritual action: Except for Dego and Sirajuddin, who were directly concerned with the contents of the vow, all other participants in the central sequences in front of the sacred object were women.

This case exemplifies the great extent of authority that is exercised by married women in regard to family matters. It is Mina who takes the initiative to avert trouble and illness from her husband and children. Without discussing her plan with Sirajuddin beforehand, she consults a seer and then sets about following his advice. Though supported by Rembong, her mother-in-law, she has to cope with Sirajuddin's and Dego's fierce resistance.

Mina's behaviour does not entirely correspond to normative concepts as commonly formulated by the villagers when asked about patterns of conduct for both sexes. According to these data, the oldest male members of a family exercise ultimate authority in cases of dispute and conflict. The observation of everyday behaviour in social practice, however, seems rather to indicate that the significance of this normative rule is confined to the field of etiquette.

Rarely do younger people contradict older people in the course of a dispute (at least in public), thereby ignoring the latter's normatively established authority.

No direct confrontation arose between Mina and Dego. Instead of disputing with her father-in-law, Mina informed him that she was willing to redeem the vow, by bringing in a mediator, while at the same time taking into consideration the difference in age between Dego and herself.[18] The crucial point was that Dego's wife Rembong acted as a mediator, since among all persons sharing Mina's position, only Rembong was related closely enough to Dego to dispute directly with him (though she is slightly younger than her husband). Even though Rembong's behaviour did not correspond to the ideal standard of *adaq*, I frequently noticed that the hierarchical order in exercising authority, which is closely linked to age grades, is rather diffuse among older people, so that the latter are considered to possess a roughly equivalent measure of authority, irrespective of the factor of gender.[19]

Without discussing the influence of age and sex on different modes of conflict behaviour in greater detail, the case presented above reveals that the scope of authority assigned to married women is in fact considerable, and that a woman is by no means subordinate to older male members of her family. According to my data, women are the principal decision-makers in regard to matters of household and family. In this domain, they exercise far-reaching control over all of their male relatives. The example presented above does not constitute an isolated case, but rather is one of many similar cases leading to equivalent analytical conclusions. Mina's decision to redeem Dego's vow indicates that the authority exercised by women is not confined to marginal problems of household and family, since among the local population the offering of a cow involves one of the greatest expenses. That Mina could decide to spend so much money without her husband's agreement is also based upon women's economic independence from their affinal relatives. After marriage, every woman has sole right of disposal over all kinds of property that she has either inherited from her consanguineal relatives or acquired for herself.[20]

Hence, when Dego and Sirajuddin initially refused to finance the performance of the ritual, Mina told them that she was going to sell part of the crop yield of her rice fields and coffee gardens. A few days before the ritual was carried out, Dego finally agreed to pay for the cow: Since he is regarded

18 As a general rule, manifest conflict only arises between people of the same sex, while serious dispute is also rare between persons differing considerably in age.

19 The old women in the village did not seem to have respect for any other person. Instead, they even treated high ranking men, including the members of the *adaq* council, like their own sons.

20 According to the norm of *adaq*, sons and daughters inherit equally.

as one of the wealthiest men in the village, he had to do so if he did not want to risk losing much of his esteem. Mainly because most people are reluctant to spend large amounts of money unless compelled by calamities attributed to supernatural forces, the 'forgetting' or 'denying' of a vow, as in the case of Dego, occurs frequently. Since sacrifices of buffaloes have become very expensive nowadays, it is rather common that no vow concerning the offering of one or more buffaloes will be redeemed before some member of the respective family has fallen severely ill or even died. In other words, the seer (who is consulted in most cases of illness) will usually find out that the illness has been provoked by a vow yet to be redeemed. This kind of diagnosis is still accepted by the majority of the population.

For the same reason, vows referring to the *kalompoang* of one's own village – as in this case – are rather exceptional, because most people generally fear being unable to buy a buffalo in order to redeem the vow some day and as a consequence being considered poor by the members of their community. Instead, vows usually refer to heirlooms in other villages, from which at least one ancestor of the person making the vow originated. In this regard it has to be remembered that every individual has many 'villages of origin', since everybody is a member of various kin groups. Accordingly, every individual intending to make a vow can choose among several alternatives as regards 'his' or 'her' *kalompoang*. Even weak genealogical ties to a kin group will entitle the individual to appeal to the sacred object of that community. Only in the case of a vow requiring minor expenses, such as the offering of some bunches of bananas or of some chickens, do people commonly invoke the *kalompoang* of their own village. It is the spiritual power of a *kalompoang* rather than the factor of residence which above all determines the individual's choice among the various sacred objects that form the symbolic foci of all the kin groups of which he or she is a member.[21]

In contrast to the souls of the ancestors, the spirit of the *kalompoang* is able to exert its influence far beyond the boundaries of the village territory, and therefore can cause good or evil for all the members of the kin group, irrespective of their residence. In addition, those making a vow tend more often to invoke the *adaq* of matrilateral rather than of patrilateral relations. Particularly if the vow concerns the growing up of a child, it will most commonly refer to the *kalompoang* of a village from which at least one ancestor of the child's mother originated. In such a case, it is said that the child is 'taken

[21] Accordingly, most of the people making vows in the presence of the *kalompoang* of Bontoloe came from distant places, even though all of them could claim to have kin relations to the *pammanakang* of Bontoloe. It is primarily its well-known spiritual power which induces people to choose this particular object instead of others, because it has already brought 'success' to many other families.

home to his *adaq*'. Likewise a child that was born in a village other than that from which his or her mother originated is usually taken to that village for the purpose of being purified by a ritual called *appabballe-balle* ('to treat with remedy'; Rössler 1987:217-21).

Female mediation in making vows

Even though it seems to have emerged fairly recently, and still is rather rare, the third type of intention put forward by a vow, namely to acquire material or ideal wealth, also corresponds to the previously mentioned pattern of exchange between human beings and spirits. Its emergence may have resulted from such recent developments as the growing significance of material wealth, even in remote villages. While in former times the village economy had entirely been based upon the exchange of food products and other goods, and differences in standard of living had been comparatively small among group members, the recently increasing number of merchants, teachers, and other civil servants (*pegawai*), all of them living under far better financial circumstances than the farmers, has led to fundamental changes in the general attitude towards money or equivalent material wealth. Consequently, vows by which the spirit of a *kalompoang* is promised an offering for helping someone to increase her or his wealth are today regarded as ordinary.

Furthermore, modern education is another factor which has led to modifications in the contents of vows. In contrast to traditional modes of knowledge, which have been transmitted 'internally' from generation to generation, modern school education is considered 'external' knowledge, the acquisition of which may be stimulated and supported by invoking supernatural powers.

Case 3

At the age of 18, Ibrahim was preparing for his final examinations at senior high school (SMA) in Ujungpandang. He asked his mother Celo to bring a bunch of bananas to the *kalompoang* of Bontoloe, the village from which Celo's mother originated.

Sinong, the guardian of the sacred object, performed a ritual in the course of which Celo made a vow by promising to offer four large chickens to the *kalompoang* if it would help her son to pass his examinations. Besides Sinong and Celo, no other person participated in the ritual.

This ritual exemplifies the 'official' making of a vow, which cannot be 'forgotten' like those vows which are made inwardly, since at least Sinong witnessed the making as well as the content of the *tinjaq*. In this case, a woman's

mediating position with respect to the sacred heirloom is evident: It was not Ibrahim, but rather his mother who made the vow. After having passed his examinations successfully, Ibrahim participated in the ritual of redemption which was performed some weeks later. The performance of this ritual paralleled that described in case 1.

I could not observe a single case in which a man made a vow in front of the *kalompoang* without a female relative being involved as mediator. When asking about the reasons for the exclusion of men from such rituals, I was constantly told that there were no particular reasons: 'It has always been this way. The making of vows is assigned to women.' Only one informant expressed this aspect of everyday knowledge in concrete terms by linking it to the first divine ruler of the village: 'Surely this must be so, because Bombong Koasa also was a woman'.

Choosing to make a vow in a village in which one can trace ancestors matrilaterally rather than patrilaterally may in part result from the fact that vows are preferably made by women, and that women are, at least psychologically, closer tied to the *adaq* from which their female ancestors originated. The following case shall further elucidate the broad scope of those vows which are made in order to acquire material or ideal wealth.

Case 4

Bahniati, Syamsu, and their son Bakhtiar have made their living by dealing in used cars in Ujungpandang. One day they decided to expand their business by including the sale of new cars. Since they wanted to assure the success of their planned business, they went to Bontoloe in order to make a vow in front of the local *kalompoang*. Bahniati, who like her mother was born in Ujungpandang, is entitled to appeal to the sacred object in Bontoloe, since her mother's mother originated from this village. Bahniati's husband Syamsu, on the other hand, is of Makassarese-Chinese descent.

In the company of many other relatives, mainly from Ujungpandang, Bahniati and her family came up to Bontoloe by car. The quantity and quality of the offerings to be presented to the sacred heirloom were extraordinary and corresponded to the family's wealth. The people of Bontoloe had never seen such offerings before. They comprised some fifteen large chickens, all kinds of fruit, fresh fish and prawns, white bread, as well as enormous amounts of 'modern' sweets and cakes. The content of the vow related to equivalent expenses: Bahniati promised to offer three water buffaloes if the spirit of the *kalompoang* would help them in expanding their business.

The making of the vow followed the standard pattern: The offerings were consecrated by Sinong, before Bahniati informed her – in a low voice – about the content of the *tinjaq*. Besides the three persons directly concerned, all other participants in the central ritual sequence were women, while the men were having coffee in the main room.

As in the third case, this example shows that the significance of *tinjaq*-rituals,

as well as belief in the supernatural powers of sacred heirlooms is by no means confined to the context of rural communities. Accordingly, the intentions put forward by vows nowadays include many aspects that are not part of traditional culture, but instead are characteristics of urban life, which in turn has increasingly been influenced by Western ideas.

Many younger people, and in addition many highland people who have been residing in Ujungpandang or Sungguminasa for years, regularly go back to their 'villages of origin' in order to make vows in the presence of the local *kalompoang*. Apart from recent changes concerning the contents of vows, the rise of Islam in the highlands during the last few decades has also called forth modifications in regard to the spiritual powers that are invoked through vows. In a number of instances, it is no longer the *kalompoang* which is addressed as an intermediary between humanity and God, but rather the Prophet and, though less frequently, the spirits of Islamic saints such as Syekh Yusuf, whose tomb in Sunggaminasa is considered by many highland people a sacred place similar to the houses of *kalompoang*. Without any doubt, however, the principles underlying such vows actually originate from pre-Islamic religious patterns.[22] Future developments will show whether women will continue to play major roles in making and redeeming vows or whether the principle of the *tinjaq* will increasingly be transferred from *kalompoang* to Islamic sacred sites, if the vow becomes a feature of male religious practice.

Hence, in regard to individual belief, and particularly with respect to the phenomenon of the vow, sacred heirlooms are still of considerable significance. For this reason, the keeping of *kalompoang* as one of the last 'pillars' of pre-Islamic religion in highland Goa[23] today is severely criticized by the representatives of the local administration, since it is regarded as the strongest impediment to progress and a further spread of Islam.

Conclusion

When asking in a direct manner about gender roles in Bontoloe, I was constantly told that, according to *adaq*, the primary female domain was the household. Female activities were said mainly to center on the preparing of

22 In contrast to a Makassarese *tinjaq*, which always implies the idea of a reciprocal exchange of goods or services between humanity and a supernatural power, the Islamic vow (*nadhr*) exclusively refers to the dedication of the self, or of an animal to be offered, to the glory of God. Some Islamic theologians even deny that the will of Allah can be influenced by making a vow. Therefore, the adherents of a purified Islam do not accept the vow as being in accordance with the *Qur'an* and *hadith*. This does not mean, of course, that among the Makassarese many vows that nowadays are considered Islamic do not imply the idea of reciprocity.

23 In contrast to most *kalompoang*, the minor sacred objects forming symbolic foci of descent groups other than those of *karaeng* have today lost almost all of their former significance.

meals and the upbringing of children, while the sphere of male activities was said to begin right beyond the borders of the house and yard. According to the ideal patterns of conduct, as commonly defined both by male and female informants, only men are supposed to engage in activities outside the house or in locations other than their own village.[24] If such information is viewed against the background of the strict separation of the sexes in Makassarese society, it appears as if only men were playing leading roles in regard to 'formal' leadership and authority, while the scope of women's autonomy was confined to the 'informal' sphere comprising socialization and household matters. Such a conclusion is seemingly corroborated by the fact that in everyday practice men dominate all kinds of public political events, where they commonly act as the principal speakers.

Below the surface, however, it is apparent that this picture of rules of conduct in everyday life is misleading. Female authority is by no means restricted to the domain of household and family. Hence, on the one hand, considerable authority is assigned to women in the political sphere, which becomes most evident in the institution of the 'female *adaq*' (*adaq baine*), who function as female counterparts of the members of the traditional governmental council, and who are regarded as mediators between the village population and their leaders. Another factor indicating the significance of women in this domain is a man's ability to acquire the right of holding a traditional office through his wife, if she belongs to a descent group the members of which are entitled to succession to an office of *adaq*. Since in these cases, the right of holding an office expires as soon as the respective functionary is divorced from his wife, the scope of informal female control in this realm proves to be considerable.

On the other hand, female positions of authority are even more evident in the religious domain. The leading roles of women in this sphere are most clearly revealed with respect to the sacred heirlooms, which constitute the nodal symbols of the local sociopolitical and religious organization. In many villages of highland Goa, women are the guardians of *kalompoang*. This office is generally considered as the highest rank within the traditional government structure. This position can probably be explained by the linkage of the ori-

[24] It is interesting to note that in this context no reference is commonly made to the agricultural domain, which is to a great extent dominated by women (both as regards physical labour and ritual performances), and which as a general rule involves staying, even for weeks, far away from the house and yard. Formerly, only men could run errands at the market, while this was strictly prohibited for women (Chabot 1950:145). Despite fundamental differences in wider social organisation, some aspects of Minangkabau gender relations seem to correspond to those found among the Makassarese. Apparently, however, the contrast between men's mobility and women's stability is much more striking in West Sumatra, where the seeking of commercial success in the *rantau* is most important for the definition of men's roles, while women are left in the homeland (see Postel-Coster 1987:230-3; F.K. Errington 1984:9-10; Kato 1982).

gin of these sacred objects to mythical rulers, who are said to have been women. Among the rituals centering on *kalompoang*, the female guardian of the sacred object performs in cooperation with male *adaq* leaders or traditional priests only those that are immediately related to the political organization of the village community. In contrast, men are excluded from all *kalompoang* rituals that refer to the domain of individual belief and family matters. Female dominance in these rituals not only refers to the actual ritual performance (case 1), but also to mediation (cases 3 and 4) in regard to the transfer of human intentions and wishes to the spirit of the sacred object.

Since the institutionalized dominance of women in the religious sphere is most clearly manifested in matters of individual belief and the safeguarding of close relatives (rituals relating to vows, rites of passage, etc.), it does not contradict the normative standard according to which female tasks center around household and family. As exemplified by case 2, the range of female authority in this respect is by no means confined to problems of secondary importance. On the contrary, women are the principal decision-makers in regard to most family matters. This becomes most evident when in cases of conflict, including litigation, men often submit themselves to the decisions made by women. Furthermore, these conclusions reveal that the application of terminological oppositions such as 'formal versus informal', 'public versus private', or 'domestic versus extra-domestic' is misleading and inappropriate for the analysis of gender relations, at least in Makassarese society. For, all of these terms are biased in that they in most discussions – despite profound criticism, as, for example, put forward by S. Rogers (1975) – still imply the notion that only those decisions which are made in formal positions were of utmost importance and public relevance. Since formal positions are commonly supposed to be occupied by the male members of a society, such arguments lead to the simplified conclusion that men were invariably dominant in terms of power and authority.

That in Makassarese society women are mainly concerned with matters of household and family does not mean that female activities are of subordinate importance. Particularly in a society whose traditional political organization is largely based on kinship and, therefore, personal kin networks, women's institutionalized competence in decision-making is a tool by which they can exercise a far-reaching influence which even affects the political realm. In addition, the leading role of women in *tinjaq*-rituals focusing on sacred heirlooms – a most significant aspect of local culture – reveals that attributions of male dominance with respect to leadership and authority are quite misleading. Instead, rights, obligations, and the scope of authority must be considered evenly distributed between the sexes. Between man and woman in Makassarese society, responsibility is shared.