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Relational Histories and the Production of Difference on Sulawesi's Upland Frontier

TANIA MURRAY LI

> What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus.
>
> Doreen Massey (1993, 66)

Introduction

In place of the distinct peoples and cultures that once formed the object of ethnographic inquiry, anthropologists have for some time been emphasizing the political and economic processes that connect people and places, and the ongoing *production* of cultural difference in contexts of unequal power.[1] This trend in scholarly analysis contrasts with assumptions about primordial difference that inspire indigenous rights activists to defend the autonomy of culturally distinct communities from state and market processes intruding on them *from the outside*.[2] It contrasts also with the emphasis on difference and isolation in official discourses that cast "development" as a program to bring change to people without history, stalled at an earlier point in an evolutionary process.

In Indonesia, it is the interior of the larger islands and the smaller islands of the eastern part of the archipelago that are usually characterized as culturally distinct

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[1]See, for example, Wolf (1982), O'Brien and Roseberry (1991), Wilmsen (1995), Gupta and Ferguson (1992), and Li (1999b).

[2]For examples of this approach in the Southeast Asian context, see Lynch and Talbot (1995), Lim (1990), and others discussed in Li (1999b).

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frontiers incompletely inscribed by civilization, world religions, and the power of governing regimes. These regions are currently the focus of bitter struggles that pit promoters of state-directed "development" (in the form of mining, logging, export-oriented agriculture, transmigration) against rural people and their supporters, who emphasize the attendant ecological devastation and the loss of livelihoods and customary resource rights. Locked in their own confrontation, both sides tend to overlook long histories of connection between the interior (upland or upriver, according to the topography) and the systems of trade and government emanating from, or channeled through, the coast. Yet these relations have had deeply formative effects on interior domains, shaping peoples' responses to contemporary development agendas.

My goal in this article is to expose the economic and political relations that have linked coast and hills in different periods, and to consider how cultural difference is produced and deployed in these exchanges. Elsewhere, I have reviewed the literature on Indonesia's upland regions and explored government and non-government interventions from a comparative perspective (Li 1999a, 1999b, 2000). Here, I seek to deepen these discussions through a detailed examination of a particular place: the Tinombo-Tomini district of Central Sulawesi. I base my study both on published sources and on my ethnographic research in the area, totaling nine months over the period 1990–98.

The Tinombo-Tomini district is home to about thirty thousand Lauje, roughly divided between the hills and the narrow coastal strip. The spatial configuration is unusually compressed, since the hills rise steeply only a kilometer or two from the sea. There are no navigable rivers or plateaus, and the valleys are narrow. Most coastal dwellers have never set foot in the hills, which are accessible only by steep, winding, unmarked foot trails. The land is nevertheless fairly densely settled and swidden cultivation under fallow cycles of three to ten years extends almost to the center of the peninsula, about thirty kilometers as the crow flies. A social boundary separates the people of hills and coast, although, unusually for Indonesia, there is no ethnic divide. The residents of the two zones acknowledge that they descend from a single source, and they speak the same language. The coastal Lauje and those living in the foothills are Muslim, while many of those farther inland have become Christian under mission influence in the past two decades. Very few of the hill-dwellers speak any Indonesian or go to school. Among them, one might expect to find united communities of proud and perhaps defiant mountaineers, indigenous cultures and institutions intact, but my findings indicate otherwise. One might also expect to find self-sufficient economies, but, in fact, food production is vulnerable to failure during periods of drought, illness, or political disruption, and hill people have long sold forest and farm products, as well as labor, on the coast. Local officials emphasize difference and separation rather than connections when discussing plans for hillside development. This is the case whether they elect to describe the hills as empty (barring a few inconsequential tribesmen) and available for commercial plantations, or acknowledge the density of the hillside population while stressing their unruly, backward nature and the need for government intervention to transform them into "normal" citizens.

In the precolonial period, and extending into the colonial period in areas like this where rule was light and indirect, coastal chiefdoms sought control over people rather than territory. More specifically, they sought to monopolize trade to and from the interior, and some exacted tribute or corvée labor. These goals could be difficult to realize where land was sufficiently abundant for people to abandon trade altogether

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or remove to the hinterland of another, more accommodating, coastal regime. But there is mounting evidence that interior groups positioned themselves within the orbit of coastal powers for reasons of their own. These included the push factors (disease, famine, feuding) already noted and the attractions of trade goods, the freedom to visit coastal markets, and participation in ritual complexes led by coastal chiefs with spiritual powers.[3] They also included—and still include—the perceived benefits of order, security, and belonging that derive from forms of rule backed by external authorities, from stranger-kings to colonial or national bureaucrats. In its contemporary configuration, the goal of connecting to coastal powers may be public infrastructure and "development." Their own in one sense, such desires are nevertheless formed historically and relationally in and through processes of interaction. Thus, as Robert Hefner observed in mountain Java, economic relations are intimately bound up with "community, morality, and power" (1990, 2) and with the question of "what sort of person to be" as identities shift and commitments are reconfigured in a changing world (1990, 242). By peeling away at the layers of political, economic, and cultural formation, my account illuminates how this question has been framed and addressed in this particular corner of Sulawesi.

I begin by drawing some conceptual leads from two recent, broadly provocative discussions of upland-lowland dynamics in the region offered by political scientist James Scott and historian Anthony Reid, and relating them to historical conditions around the Gulf of Tomini. In the next two sections, I examine the formative effects of rule and market relations on the people of the Lauje hills. Finally, I explore the ways in which difference is configured and deployed in everyday encounters and in the envisioning of hillside "development."

Interrogating Upland Formations

In a recent study, James Scott (1998) highlights the contrast between "state space" in the cities and rice-producing lowlands of Southeast Asia, where people and places are rendered "legible," or bureaucratically visible, through technologies such as maps and census, and "nonstate space" in the interior. In the latter, governing regimes from the pre- to the postcolonial have confronted "patterns of settlement, social relations, and production, not to mention a natural environment, that have evolved largely independent of state plans" (Scott 1998, 183–84). This contrast, drawn in bold strokes on a grand scale, invites more refined analysis and raises a series of further questions. Areas such as the Lauje hills fit Scott's "nonstate" category from the standpoint of legibility. There is no indication that maps, lists, or headcounts were generated in the precolonial or colonial period, and those prepared in recent years are grossly inaccurate, as local officials readily admit. There is still no consistent monitoring of the spatial mobility of individuals, households, or the clusters of households one might

[3]For insightful studies along these lines in Kalimantan, see Healey (1985), Knapen (1997), and Dove (1997). For Sumatra, see Barbara Andaya (1993a). For Maluku, see Leonard Andaya (1993b). Other pan-Indonesian sources cited in Nourse (1999, 197) confirm that "those on the periphery . . . embrace outsiders and external forces," while those in court centers assert boundaries. See David Henley (1997; n.d.) on the push factors (disease, famine, warfare) that forced uplanders to engage with coastal powers in northern Sulawesi in the precolonial period. See also his discussion of Minahasans' perspectives on relations with the Dutch as reciprocal (1996, 94–99).

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loosely call neighborhoods. Yet the hills have not been unaffected by external powers.[4] Indeed, as I will show, the authority of rulers and regimes of rule emanating from or channeled through the small towns along the Lauje coast have shaped hillside economies and identities. If not by means of legibility, then, what are the forms through which power over the interior has been exercised? What are the implicit forms of knowledge and practice on which this power depends? Where the mechanisms of rule are—like the people and terrain—largely undocumented, how can we uncover their effects on modes of life in the hills, past and present? Further, since the extraction of produce from the hills and hinterlands has been one of the main incentives for the involvement of precolonial chiefdoms and subsequent colonial and national regimes, how has this process been instituted and sustained in the absence of legibility?

Besides indicating illegibility, Scott uses the term "nonstate" to highlight resistance, suggesting that the inhabitants of "nonstate" spaces have fled or evaded debt bondage, conscription, taxation, and other forms of discipline imposed by central authorities (Scott 1998, 187). While this scenario fits some upland locales, I would argue that it does not apply universally. Even the Meratus Dayak of Kalimantan, as described by Anna Tsing (1993), who exemplify "nonstate" for Scott, require a more complex interpretation. Like the Lauje, the Meratus practice shifting cultivation and continue to live and move about in ways that are illegible to the government administrators nominally responsible for them. Yet they are not an autonomous group resisting outside authority. Rather, according to Tsing, Meratus "have lived on the border of state power and Banjar regionalism for centuries and have elaborated a marginality that has developed in dialogue with state policies and regional politics" (1993, 29). They recognize their local "traditional culture" to be an extension of state administration (Tsing 1993, 31). Their leaders "require state rhetoric to build their authority and gather communities" (Tsing 1993, 27). Thus, their lifeways are formed not outside state agendas but relationally, in and through them. Ironically, "it is this elaboration of marginality that regional officials mistake for an isolated, primitive tradition" (1993, 29). Even in illegible spaces, it appears, one cannot assume resistance and a desire for isolation.

Examining the stance of interior people towards coastal people and authorities has become even more crucial in the light of a recent paradigm-shifting synthesis of historical sources by Anthony Reid (1997). Reid shows that the interiors of all of Indonesia's major islands were not idle or sparsely-populated backwaters but rather the focus of population concentration, production, and, in some cases, elaborate forms of social organization in the precolonial period. Historians, Reid argues, have been "misled by the glitter of states . . . in written sources both external and internal, and the silence of these same sources about the populous interior . . . [thus] we continue to write histories in which [highlanders] are extremely marginal actors, at best the people of the *ulu* who occasionally sent their goods, tribute, and slaves down to the rulers of the river-ports" (Reid 1997, 67).[5] Rather than a coastal population expanding

[4]I find Scott's label "nonstate" unfortunate since it falls too easily into a series with other negatives, such as undeveloped and backward, conveying the impression of "people without history" (Wolf 1982), suspended in time (Fabien 1983). Moreover, it seems to suggest spaces outside the reach of power, thus repeating, on a larger spatial canvass, arguments Scott has made previously about everyday forms of resistance being generated and performed by autonomous "actors" offstage. See Moore (1998) and Mitchell (1990) for critiques along these lines.

[5]Anthropologists have generally avoided this mistake, although their responsibility for the "savage slot" has produced its share of distortions (Trouillot 1991). On the effects of the academic division of labor that assigns court centers to historians and commoners, peasants and hill tribes to anthropologists, see Atkinson (1989, 258) and Errington (1989, 29).

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(or escaping) into the interior, where they might encounter a few isolated tribesmen, Reid's re-examination of Indonesia's historical demography indicates the reverse.

Although the Austronesians who spread out from southern China to people the archipelago four thousand years ago must have arrived by sea (Bellwood 1997), until the twentieth century, according to Reid, coastal zones were sparsely settled.[6] The reasons for this pattern were the coastal regions' low productivity for agriculture (the forest hard to burn and land prone to flood); exposure to disease (malaria, endemic below six hundred meters, smallpox repeatedly imported, typhoid, cholera); risk of attack by raiders and slavers; and the unpredictable demands of court centers. The interior, by contrast, offered more security. Livelihoods derived from the swidden rice techniques the Austronesians already knew and the taro and wild sago they found in place (Bellwood 1997, 241–54). The resilient and productive New World crops corn and cassava, imported via the Philippines early in the seventeenth century, spread rapidly across the uplands of the archipelago from east to west, supporting denser populations (Boomgaard 1999). Only with the changed political conditions brought about by the Pax Neerlandica as the Empire was "rounded out" early in the twentieth century, and with investments in smallpox vaccination, drainage, and irrigation, did people begin to move in large numbers from the crowded and impoverished interior towards the coastal cities and plains (Reid 1997, 78–82). A mundane but significant correlate of all this, noted by Reid, is that "cities such as Palembang and Jambi were fed almost entirely with rice from the headwaters of the rivers of which they controlled the outlet" (1997, 69). That is, they were not fed by lowland rice producers pinned down in legible spaces by the exercise of power, but rather by the unruly and uncivilized interior populations they so thoroughly despised.

Reid's analysis, like Scott's, is rather general and does not apply to the same extent in every case. The dense interior populations of Sumatra described by Reid were concentrated in upland valleys and fertile plateaus, a very different scenario from Sulawesi's steep and rugged slopes.[7] Yet the questions it raises are important. Where populations have historically been concentrated in the uplands, as they have in the Lauje case, we need to ask not what drove them there or kept them in isolation, but what attracted so many people out and down to the coasts and plains in the twentieth century? We also need to re-evaluate the trajectories through which some people come to be defined as different. Those who moved out to the coast and adopted new ways, including Islam, would have a significant interest in the construction of rigid social boundaries to confirm their difference from the still-backward interior. People who remained behind, on the other hand, might develop oppositional identities or, just as likely, they might see themselves as essentially the same as coastal folk, differing only in their assessment of the costs and benefits of intensifying relations with coastal powers.

Around the Gulf of Tomini, the area to which I now turn, the Netherlands East Indies Company (VOC) contended for control with Ternate and Spain in the

[6]The exception is Java, where the population shifted to the coast a century earlier (Reid 1997).

[7]According to David Henley (personal communication, 1 January 2000), Dutch visitors to highland areas in Sumatra and Sulawesi often overestimated populations due to a "Shangri La" effect, especially where remote, fertile upland valleys were concerned. In northern Sulawesi, Tinombo-Tomini, Mongondow, and Minahasa had substantial highland populations in the precolonial period, but so too did the low-lying Sangir and Talaud islands. In central Sulawesi the population was evenly distributed between upland basins and lowland concentrations like Banggai and the Palu valley.

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seventeenth century (Henley 1994, 22) and built outposts in the mid-eighteenth century, although these were abandoned by the century's end (Henley 1996, 42). Forest products were exported, and coastal chiefdoms, to profit from this trade, found it neither necessary nor desirable to confine the movements of the interior populations. According to Velthoen (1997, 369, 377–78), trade in its violent variants was enforced and protected by bands of armed men, especially in the period 1780–1850 when Sulu became the center of a network of long-distance raiders responding to international pressures to increase the supply of commodities and slaves. Enforcement and protection were necessary because trade goods were given out some months in advance of forest-product delivery. Relations between coastal and inland groups "varied from loose tributary relations that facilitated economic exchange to mutual hostile attacks of headhunting and raiding groups" (Velthoen 1997, 370). Faced with coercion, inland groups had two options: withdraw to the forests, dealing with the hardships imposed by disrupted agricultural production, or ally with a leader or ruler with a reputation for military strength, protected by the armed men who were raiding other areas (Velthoen 1997, 371).

The Wana people in the hills on the southern side of the Gulf of Tomini probably represent the limit of the withdrawal option, yet even they have a history of connection that influences the present. According to Jane Atkinson's account, the hike across the peninsula inhabited by the Wana takes eight to nine days in good weather (1989, 2). Wana describe themselves as cowardly, the victims rather than the perpetrators of headhunting attacks in the past, prone to take to the forest when threatened, and determined avoiders of Dutch resettlement schemes (Atkinson 1989, 262–63). But the now-dispersed and egalitarian Wana were, in the nineteenth century, part of a political system centered on the coast, complete with named ranks and debt slaves. Wana chiefs in this hierarchy played a role in the instigation and blessing of headhunting raids, the negotiation of peace and the mediation of disputes (Atkinson 1989, 304). Recognizing that the Wana could not have been coerced into submission to the Raja of Bungko, Atkinson argues that some Wana—perhaps not all—elected to form such ties to benefit from the promise of ritually enhanced fertility, prosperity, and security during a period of chronic regional warfare. The coastal Raja was also the source of insecurity: Wana were enslaved when they could not pay their debts under the *adat* (customary) dispute settlement system the Raja had instituted (Atkinson 1989, 309–11). Be that as it may, Wana whose settlements became fragmented with the waning of chiefly power under the Pax Neerlandica look back nostalgically not to an original condition of autonomy but to the period when they were included in the Raja's realm. Their rejection of Dutch efforts to settle them down in the twentieth century was shaped by these experiences (Atkinson 1989, 299, 312). It reflects their assessment of what the Dutch had to offer, rather than a rejection of rule as such.

Mediation in disputes in the interior was a prominent element of precolonial relations of rule in this region (Velthoen 1997, 371), obliging us to rethink the model that views coastal authority as an intrusion upon interior communities that were already formed. Though the intensity varied, feuding, fragmentation, and flight were widespread in the interior in previous centuries, and it was, in many areas, external authority that enabled people to form the stable sets of relations we think of as community.

The Dutch sometimes became directly involved in dispute settlement. In Minahasa in the seventeenth century, according to David Henley, VOC attempts to bring order to the fractious interior by placing one highland group in a position of

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authority over others brought disaster because the favored chiefs tried to behave like despots (1996, 36). The solution the Dutch devised was for the VOC itself to supply "a fixed external framework to hold the rivalries of the Alfurs in balance" (Henley 1996, 35). A Dutch memoir from 1682 observed: "They fight with each other over nothing, and war, once ignited, spreads through all the villages like a bush fire. Each man chooses sides according to his own notions or interests, or simply with a view to obtaining heads. . . . When such a fire breaks out we immediately send some of our own people, preferably those with knowledge of the local customs and languages, to douse it. Because the Company's judgment is regarded here as oracular, even serious conflicts can be resolved by our mediation" (quoted in Henley 1996, 35). In other parts of Sulawesi, where their presence was much less intense than in Minahasa, the Dutch were nevertheless positioned at the apex of "indigenous" hierarchies, key players in succession wars and disputes—and this during the centuries of "abstention," when the Dutch thought they were leaving indigenous processes untouched (Schrauwers 1997).

The mediating role could, of course, be manipulated. Albert Schrauwers (1997) argues that coastal powers (including the Dutch) used the tactic of divide and rule, fomenting the conflicts they were then called upon to resolve. In Toraja, in the late nineteenth century, coastal chiefs played upland chiefs against each other to generate slaves as well as to secure coffee monopolies (Bigalke 1983). There were also economic incentives embedded in the dispute-settlement process. Fines imposed by coastal chiefs or their representatives in the hills had to be paid in imported trade goods such as cloth or brass trays over which coastal chiefs held the monopoly. Thus they served to enrich coastal powers both directly and indirectly, as hill folk were incorporated into commodity circuits (Schrauwers 1997). In the Lauje area, fines (as well as bridewealth payments) had to be paid in "plates of a breakable kind."[8] The regional literature thus directs our attention to the relational histories, the particular blends of coercion and attraction, which embedded coastal authority in the formation of communities, identities, and economies in the interior.

In the nineteenth century, the Lauje occupied the hills between two sets of raiders and traders: a prominent group based at Tombuku that operated along the Gulf and another group that was based at Toli-toli on the northern coast of the peninsula until they were driven out by the Dutch in 1822, only to return a few years later (Velthoen 1997, 378). The Lauje were less isolated than the Wana, less significant pawns and players in precolonial political and economic struggles than the highlanders of Poso (Schrauwers 1997) or Toraja (Bigalke 1983) and much less deeply inscribed by the colonial regime than Minahasa (Henley 1996). Their experiences with systems of trade and rule fall somewhere within this regional array and are made more interesting by the dependence of coastal dwellers on the rice and corn that the hill folk supplied from their distant swiddens, and by their early involvement in the production of an agricultural export: tobacco. The low rainfall on the coastal belt made the dry foothills especially suited to this crop (Henley 1997, 98). Tobacco was recorded in shipments through Gorontalo in the early nineteenth century. According to a Dutch visitor, so much tobacco was grown and exported that it made Tinombo "the largest trading place in Mooeton" (Moutong) (Van Hoëvell 1892, 354).[9] Yet the intensive production

[8]On Lauje bridewealth payments and the role of imported prestige items such as brass trays and plates, see Nourse (1999, 251 n. 13).

[9]Thanks to Albert Schrauwers for accessing and translating Dutch sources. Thanks also to David Henley for data on tobacco exports through Gorontalo from 1828 to 1846. On the historical synergies between corn and tobacco, see Boomgaard (1999).

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of this New World crop seems to have flourished in the Lauje hills for almost two centuries without either people or place becoming enmeshed in routinized administrative structures by the coastal elites, who undoubtedly profited from the trade, or the Dutch, who controlled exports through their enclave at Gorontalo. What then are the relations of rule that have connected the Lauje hills to coastal centers in different periods? What are the political-economic arrangements that have enabled the extraction of forest products, agricultural commodities, food, and labor from the hills in the absence of the legibility afforded by maps, census, and related forms of discipline? Assuming that their engagements have been two-sided, if uneven, what have hill people sought to gain from their links with coastal populations and governing regimes?

Forms and Effects of Rule in the Lauje Hills

Precolonial relations of rule are difficult to reconstruct for the Lauje hills owing to the dearth of written records. There was no mission presence in the hills until 1977, and there was no Dutch official in Tinombo town except for a brief period in the 1930s. The Dutch visitor of 1892 cited earlier did not hike into the hills, but he reported on what the coastal elite told him: the hill folk were peaceable and did not hunt heads, a situation confirmed by his observation that coastal houses lacked fortification.[10] Nevertheless, the coastal dwellers feared them because of their skill with poisoned darts. The hill people were often asked for help in disputes between the coastal kingdoms, but they rarely involved themselves. They normally lived spread out in their swiddens, cultivating padi, millet, and tobacco. Van Hoëvell reported a hillside population of ten thousand, an indication that his informants considered the hills to be quite densely farmed and settled (Van Hoëvell 1892, 349–60).

Lauje origin stories declare that their ancestors emerged magically in the hills and lived there until the end of the eighteenth century, fear of pirates and slavers restricting their visits to the coast to hasty expeditions to make salt (Nourse 1999, 55, 129). The Tomini Bay was peripheral to the spice trade and its monopolies, but there may have been some connection: a story recorded in the hills by Jennifer Nourse (1999, 60) tells of traders visiting to obtain cinnamon for the Raja of Ternate, the destruction of cinnamon trees by angry enforcers, followed by a long period when traders ceased to visit their shores. Then, the offspring of the Lauje's magical mountain ancestors separated in all directions. One converted to Islam and went down to the coast at Tinombo, where she married a foreigner, probably a Kaili warrior. From this mixed union and other unions with Mandar and Bugis, a coastal trading class and self-styled Lauje aristocracy emerged.[11]

[10]This observation seems to contradict the hillside Lauje's own view of their past as violent. Perhaps the coast was rarely attacked, although I did hear of a very violent incident in the 1950s in which the entire family of a coastal trader was killed in their sleep by highlanders, presumably over a breach of trust.

[11]Nourse has traced this history in its several contested versions (1999, 46, 55, 63, 177, 236 n. 33). She concentrated her inquiries in the Siavu river area. I heard different locations for the magical origin site in the adjacent river Siang. The current density of the hillside population (about sixty per square kilometer) and their distribution throughout the interior render unlikely a single origin point or trajectory for "the Lauje" overall. Such claims indicate, rather, attempts to imagine or constitute community in the fractious interior.

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The pretensions and activities of the coastal aristocracy have been well described by Nourse (1999). Although some contemporary descendents claim that this was an autochthonous Lauje system of government that incorporated all Lauje, Nourse's careful analysis of historical sources and contemporary ritual practices suggests otherwise. First, and most obviously, the Lauje's aristocratic titles are found in Gorontalo, which in turn imported much of its political vocabulary from Ternate, indicating histories of connection rather than a pure Lauje "tradition" (Henley 1996, 28; Nourse 1999, 59, 232 n. 14). Second, the ritual knowledge of the *olongian*, the magic which enables the incumbent of this office (often a woman) to secure the health and fertility of people and crops, is acknowledged by at least some Lauje aristocrats to have been learned from the in-marrying Kaili (Nourse 1999, 141, 172, 185). Third, it is doubtful that the *olongian*'s reach penetrated all parts of the hills in any routine form. Some groups elected to send tribute or contributions to a ritual event, but it is hard to see how such tribute could have been enforced. Contemporary uplanders express their economic exchanges with former coastal chiefs in terms of the mutual obligations of siblingship—obligations that were sometimes contravened or ignored (Nourse 1999, 60–63).

Whatever the extent and depth of the *olongian*'s reach in the hills in the past, many contemporary hill folk expressed to me their enthusiasm for the *idea* of an orderly, hierarchical, and comprehensive system of government. Enthusiasm among the coastal aristocrats was to be expected since this was their golden era. But I was surprised when a group far up in the headwaters of the Siang River proudly outlined a "traditional" organizational chart that had a single *olongian* presiding at the top; a forum called the Babato comprising the sub-*olongians* who ruled in each district; the Mpangata, made up of the chiefs of customary affairs from each district; the Walaapulu, its secretariat; the Madinu, responsible for social affairs; the Wukum, responsible for customary law; the Kapitalau, chief of affairs on the coast; the Jogugu, his assistant; Tadulako, who keep the peace; the Kapitan, responsible for public health, and Pasobo, in charge of agriculture. In some versions there were also *olongians* in the hills, cooperating as co-equals with those on the coast, a construction that challenges the notion of a singular hierarchy centered on the coast but emphasizes coastal connections all the same. Notably, the descriptions I was given always included reference to contemporary, governmental equivalents: "he was like the Minister for Information," "that is like the district head," "this one was the Minister for Justice," "the Chief of Security," and so on. Thus, it was not hillside autonomy but the idea of systematic government that enabled Lauje reflecting on these matters to imagine a time when "the Lauje" were a proudly united and well-organized community. Implicitly, this version of the past expresses the embarrassment of Lauje both in the hills and on the coast about their current collective poverty, disorder, and lack of "development." It is also, again implicitly, a critique of the national government apparatus, which, many Lauje argue, should be taking a more decisive role in hillside affairs. Thus, traces of this former system of rule are active in the present, but unevenly so. Some hill folk I asked said they had never heard of an *olongian*. In their view, government began with the Dutch.

Until 1905 colonial rule in the Lauje area was light and indirect. Lauje aristocrats were vassals of the Raja of Moutong, who was vassal to the Raja of Gorontalo, who in turn paid tribute to the Dutch based in Gorontalo city (Nourse 1999, 237 n. 4, 241 n. 16). Then, to intensify administration as part of the "rounding out of empire," the Dutch appointed a Bugis from Moutong as Raja and installed him in a palace in

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Tinombo town.[12] In so doing, the Dutch overlooked the Lauje *olongian* and other aristocrats who lived in the coastal village of Dusunan across the river from Tinombo (Nourse 1999, 55–57). Soon after the first Raja was appointed, an attempt was made to resettle Lauje from the hills to the dry, narrow coastal plain. Those who obeyed this command were devastated by malaria and by hunger as food production was disrupted. After a few years, the survivors were permitted to return to the hills (Nourse 1999, 65–66). Thereafter, the Raja had two main responsibilities in relation to the hill population. He was to facilitate the extraction of labor, taxes, and forest products (discussed in the next section), and he was to keep the peace. It was the latter, apparently mundane task that embedded government authority in the everyday lives of people in the interior and transformed the way they conducted their affairs.

Why should peace and order be so significant in the hills? There is no record or recollection that Lauje have ever formed stable, bounded communities. They live scattered in their swiddens and are loosely associated in neighborhoods formed around clusters of kin.[13] Households move every three years or so, roughly the life of a swidden and the small bamboo and thatch or bark and plank house built upon it. If they plan to grow rice, people try to coordinate the timing with their neighbors and clear adjacent plots in order to "share the birds" and other pests, and they cooperate in labor exchange. But in some parts of the hills the land is too poor or the people too scattered or preoccupied with other activities for rice production, and corn and root crops are the staples, produced by individual households according to their own idiosyncratic rhythms and preferences. Rain in the hills is erratic, and prolonged droughts force farmers to retreat to the forest to prepare wild sago, rely on the wild *ondot* root (*Diascorea Hispida*), or go down to the coast to find work. Harvest festivals and collective rites for the protection of people and crops are not routine and seem to be difficult to organize owing to a marked diffidence about leadership. Of course, one cannot determine whether productive activities and community relations of the past were more coherent, but hill people describing to me the difficulties of gathering people together and channeling collective action did not make this case. They argued, on the contrary, that the authority of government was necessary to make hill folk cooperate and conform.[14]

Far from emphasizing stability, tales told to me about the past referred frequently to tensions and feuds within or between kin clusters. These were settled by violence or flight. Lauje from the headwaters of the river Siavu described the time of their ancestors as one dominated by fear. There was feuding within the hills, restricting travel. They were at war with the people in the headwaters of the Siang, and still have little to do with them. From the Siang side, I was told about "troublemakers" from

[12]Raja Kuti Tombolotutu, who ruled from 1927 to 1963, was considered by many hill folk to have supernatural powers. Nourse's informants readily transferred their loyalty to him when he fulfilled sibling obligations the *olongian* neglected, notably by sharing access to Islam, hitherto a coastal secret, and including hillside leaders in rattan extraction ventures (Nourse 1999, 31, 60, 64), a topic I discuss later.

[13]Kinship is cognatic, sometimes with a patrilineal bias (Nourse 1999, 82, 88), and post-marital residence flexible. Neighborhood clusters form around sibling sets, and ties within and between neighborhoods are consolidated by cousin marriage.

[14]More solid groups of the past may have dispersed when Pax Neerlandica undermined hierarchies associated with violence and protection. If so, it was a perverse outcome of Dutch initiatives intended to bring people within a structure of orderly hierarchical relations. Dispersal occurred in parts of the interior of Borneo (Boomgaard 1997, 13, citing Rousseau 1990, 120, 137) but Knapen (1997) argues conversely that *Dayak* dispersed when insecure, while peace enabled a more settled life and greater concentrations of population.

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the Siavu. One man described in detail the multiple moves made by his family to avoid confrontation by living in isolation in the forest, later moving on to find kin support. These were times of hardship for his family, when they were forced to depend on sago and beg or barter for corn from kin who were settled enough to farm consistently. According to the New Tribes missionaries, when they began their work in the hills in 1977 people were afraid to move freely and preferred to be accompanied by a local representative of "government." Disputes between, but also within, neighborhoods arose over women (adultery, failed marriage proposals), over dogs, over forest resources (rattan, resin trees), and over threats or insults.

Dutch rule, in the rather mild form that it took in these hills, offered a partial solution to these problems. Hill folk recalled: "In the old days there was fighting because people were not afraid of the government. Now it is safe because the government is strong;" "Before there was government, people did not gather to discuss things, they just fought it out." Conditions of violence are still said to prevail in the more distant headwaters, where government is weak, and people express a fear that violence will re-emerge. For these reasons, some say "whatever comes from the government, we follow it. Government cannot be opposed. We are under their leadership. That is why we have people appointed as representatives of the government, to keep things peaceful." Thus, a conception of themselves as headstrong people who prefer to go their separate ways, and who need outside authority if they are to form communities and live at peace with one another, is deeply embedded in hillside identities and configures the practices of everyday life. Note that the capacity to provide "peace and order" to warring tribes and those suffering in the hands of indigenous despots was central to the way the Dutch colonial government justified its rule, and New Order was the name of Suharto's regime. Similarly, the New Tribes Mission sees the creation of harmonious communities as a central goal. This neither confirms feuding as primordial Lauje tradition nor does it mean that outsiders' images of their past have colonized the Lauje imagination. It does point, however, to the relational histories through which identities are formed and ideas about community take shape.

The system of rule imposed by the Dutch via the Raja worked by selecting hillside Lauje of renown and appointing them to the position of ward head (*kepala jaga)* over the interior. The ward head's task was to mediate between coast and hills, to convey government instructions and demands to hillside locales, and also, perhaps even more important, to bring the weight of government to dispute-settlement processes, if necessary marching recalcitrants down to the coast for formal arrest. Tales are told about famous ward heads who were brave enough to mediate between warring factions or to travel deep into the hills to arrest men accused of murder (sometimes murder of close kin). Charisma, magic, stamina, knowledge of the terrain, and wider-than-usual social networks were important qualifications for this task, but most crucial of all was the backing of coastal authorities, the sense that they were the appointed vehicles for an external power.

Past and present-day administrative divisions cross-cut from the coast to the hills. Today each *desa* (a unit of about two to five thousand people under a headman) includes a slice of the coastal strip and a slice of the hills. In some cases, the *desa* extends to the center of the peninsula, although the interior borders are vague, and many uplanders continue to define their *desa* membership in terms of loyalties to particular *desa* headmen. The ward head has been replaced by the heads of the *desa* subdivisions (*dusun* and RT), but to communicate with people in the headwaters and to help resolve serious disputes, *desa* headmen still rely upon individuals of renown, disregarding the

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nominal territorial subdivisions as well as the literate but generally less effective official appointees. Below the ward head in the older governmental hierarchy, and now below the head of the *desa* subdivision, is the *kepala adat*, chief of customary affairs, responsible for everyday dispute settlement. This position continues to be important but not because it embodies unchanging, autochthonous Lauje custom. *Kepala adat* emphasize that outside power is necessary for them to solve local problems. Although they take pride in their mediating and oratorical skills and their capacity to resolve cases without referring them to higher authorities, the existence of a hierarchy above them is crucial to their efforts. "If we cannot resolve it here, we go to the RT head, then to the *dusun* head, then if that fails, straight down to the *desa* headman—then to the police and the jail—that is for the really hard-headed cases—those who don't want to listen."

The content of the judgments made by *kepala adat* is a mixture of precedent and improvisation, but the labels used to classify various types of offense (wrong step, wrong speech, wrong hand, and so on) and the system of fines are said to have originated with the coastal authorities.[15] Some *kepala adat* are autocratic and permit no one in the assembled crowd to speak during a case or publicly dispute their ruling. Others operate more as *primus inter pares*, gathering senior men to hear cases with them and asking the assembled crowd to acclaim the resolution devised. In this, as in many other matters, there is no fixed Lauje way of doing things. There is only a minimal structure, of which the all-important feature is that it is externally imposed.

Coercion and Desire in Market Relations

Scott's argument that ruling regimes intent on the extraction of labor and produce must devise ways to reduce and monitor people's mobility builds on the argument made by Michael Dove (1985). According to Dove, only after uplanders have been forced to occupy reduced areas of land, excluded from access to forest resources, relocated to alien locales, or marshaled into debt bondage, corvée, or tax obligations, can their labor be systematically exploited. For many areas of Southeast Asia, including parts of the northern arm of Sulawesi under consideration here, this argument is correct. In the precolonial period, it was the need for labor that caused the rajas of Gorontalo to conduct slave raids in the hills along the Gulf of Tomini and to concentrate a substantial population in the Limboto depression, where they were forced to work irrigated rice (Henley 1994, 42, citing Van Hoëvell 1891, 32). In the territory that became Minahasa, the Dutch found the mediation of coastal chiefs an inefficient means to secure rice for their garrisons and so began to intervene directly in the interior, beginning in the seventeenth century (Henley 1996, 31–32). They set about reordering people and territory in precisely the way Scott describes. With the introduction of coffee to the highlands as a compulsory crop in 1822, Minahasa was subjected to an "unprecedented level of colonial surveillance and control" (Henley

[15]The Meratus make a similar claim (Tsing 1993). Wana say their *adat* was given to them by the Raja of Bungku to prevent people from killing each other and to enable disputes to be settled peacefully (Atkinson 1989, 267–68). The names of the Lauje *adat* offenses match those of Poso, suggesting that Lauje may have been included in Dutch efforts to amalgamate Central Sulawesi peoples into a single "Toraja" *volk* (Schrauwers, personal communication). Whether the Dutch via the Raja introduced *adat* to the Lauje for the first time or built upon earlier efforts by the Lauje aristocracy is unclear.

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1996, 38) and became "the most intensive colonial administration anywhere in the Dutch Indies" (1996, 50). In the Lauje area, however, significant quantities of labor and produce have been mobilized from the hills over a period of two centuries without displacing the residents from their land or enmeshing them in a systematic administrative regime. Given that the possibility of flight to the inner hills still remains, coercion cannot be the whole story. Economic relations are also shaped by desire or, more specifically, considerations of community and identity tied up in the question of "what sort of person to be." Thus, I examine the roles of both coercion and desire in the extraction of forest products, labor, the cash crop tobacco, and the staples rice and corn.

For coastal chiefs or merchants to profit from forest products, the confinement of the collectors or their adoption of coastal religions and lifestyles would be counterproductive (Healey 1985). Instead, patterns of production and exchange tend to construct and accentuate cultural difference. The Lauje who collect forest products live deep in the interior, and the cultural gap between them and the coastal Lauje is extreme. Unlike the Penan, who perform this work in Borneo, the Lauje of the headwaters are not considered ethnically distinct—only grossly uncivilized. They are labeled *bela*, which can mean friend or trading partner but is generally used as a term of derision. From the 1930s, according to the recollection of a merchant's clerk, *bela* would hike down to the coast and contract with a merchant to collect a particular product (e.g., *damar* resin) at an agreed price. They used the money to pay their taxes and to buy other basics, such as salt, knife blades, and clothing.

The imposition of taxes when Dutch rule was established in 1905 certainly stimulated the extraction of forest products. Seen another way, it was the possibility of obtaining cash from the sale of forest products that enabled hill folk to pay their taxes and thereby place themselves within the orbit of the new governmental system—if they so desired.[16] Once they had paid up they were "free to go down to the market." Those who refused to pay risked harassment if they ventured to the coast, and so they conducted their market transactions through intermediaries. *Desa* headmen took advantage of the hill peoples' respect for their authority, including their role in tax collection, to draw highlanders within their sphere of influence and to instigate profitable trade relations. As one member of the coastal elite explained:

> You couldn't make the *bela* work—they are like wild chickens of the forest. We were afraid to go up there. Some died up there without ever paying tax. The former headman used to coax them, gently . . . In 1934 he went up into the farthest interior with a ward head respected by the *bela*. After that, many came down for the first time. They stayed at the headman's house. It was full of people. Fifty or sixty came down at a time. He told them to bring rattan, cinnamon, and *damar*. That way he had all of them within his realm. He was the one who tamed them. Before that, some of them had never brought down *damar* and they had never seen the sea.

[16]Boomgaard (1997, 14) argues that forest-product collection was undertaken only when crops had failed or there was a need to finance a life-cycle ceremony, although it became more common and more commercialized after about 1870. Knapen (1997) emphasizes pull factors, arguing that Kalimantan *Dayak* made continuous assessments of the benefits of trade and contact with coastal powers versus the risks of disease, violence, or entrapment. As my Lauje material shows, desire shades into compulsion when cash advances create a cycle of debt in which the ability to reassess the merits of market involvement is suspended. Henley confirms the existence in precolonial northern Sulawesi of a monopolistic advance/debt system for cotton, gold, and forest products (1994; 1996).

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The extraction of labor from the hills depends upon similarly intricate collaborations between *desa* headmen and their representatives in the interior, blurring the boundary between the official and private roles of government functionaries and drawing on the authority of government to lubricate commerce and channel profits. Since there is little paid work available for hill folk in their own *desa*, those seeking significant sums to pay taxes, accumulate funds for bridewealth, or meet other needs must leave home for a period of months to work for large enterprises, mainly in forest extraction. Rattan and wood came down from the hills on a sufficient scale early this century for a Dutch freighter company to send two of its largest ships monthly through the Gulf of Tomini, and a German company also kept ships there. Not all the workers were local: a Dutch source observed that some of the men came from the hills around Palu (Van Heerdt 1914, 752). Nevertheless, between 1920 and 1980 hundreds of Lauje men were employed in ebony camps, where they worked in large, highly supervised labor crews and were accommodated in barracks, fed a daily ration, and paid a daily wage. Rattan extraction employed thousands in the 1980s, and, from the time the rattan became exhausted, the work of hauling building timber out from the forest has taken its place, both of these on a piecework basis. Men have also been recruited as labor for the burgeoning tree-crop sector, both in the region and as far away as Kalimantan.

Cash advances have been the key mechanism used to recruit hillside labor. The prospective employer seeks workers through an agent, enticing them with an immediate payment commonly amounting to one or two months' pay. From the moment the advance is received (the bait), the worker is, according to local metaphor, "hooked:" caught like a fish on a line. Some still obtain cash at the end of their period of wage labor, while others return with debts that can only be redeemed by further work. The local expression for this condition is to be "tied down," or, more graphically, "tied at the throat." In many cases, the money is spent within a few days of receipt, sometimes through gambling binges organized by the labor recruiters themselves.[17] Yet despite its recognized disadvantages, hillside Lauje consider this system "customary" and rarely leave home without an advance.

The risks of giving cash advances to mobile hill folk are mitigated by the close relationship between labor recruiters and *desa* officials: often they are the same people. Entrepreneurs prefer to use labor recruiters who are part of the local administrative structure: the *desa* headman or secretary, or someone closely related to them. The recruiters, in turn, give advances to their representatives in the interior—the ward head or equivalent. This approach reduces the risk of default by the recruiters themselves, who handle large sums of cash as advances, and also by the hill folk, who fear to cross officials and prefer to be under their protection. The coercive dimension of the official connection is direct. Men who had not paid their taxes were reportedly forced by *desa* officials to work in the ebony camps. Until recently, *desa* residents needed a letter from the headman in order to travel in search of work. Those who do not have valid identity cards and who speak little or no Indonesian are still vulnerable to harassment by police, army, and other officials. But the role of desire, specifically desire for incorporation as members of a team led or authorized by a *desa* official, and desire to be free to "go down to the market" rather than hide in the hills, is equally

[17]The use of gambling as a labor-enticing strategy has been recorded in the Philippines (Aguilar 1994). Gambling at market places was an important factor in enslavement in nineteenth-century Toraja, where "Bugis moneylenders called in their loans without permitting Torajans to redeem their debts with forest products" (Bigalke 1983, 350).

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important. These forms of discipline do not appear as an external force but are built into everyday understandings of community, identity, and labor deployment.

Taxes were less important in the extraction of labor for the rattan boom of the 1980s, but *desa* officials and their hillside intermediaries were still deeply involved as labor recruiters and traders. As soon as advances were paid, gambling was organized under the protection of the local police and army officers, each taking their cut. Paying high prices for the supplies they needed while in the forest and gambling along the way, many men went home after months of rattan collection with serious debts and soon returned to tied labor. Even when clear of debt, they often recommitted themselves to traders through new advances. One reason they gave, apart from the desirability of the cash, was the logic of gravity: rattan that has come down "will not go back up again." Without a commitment from a rattan "boss" to purchase the load at a given price, a person would encounter some very low offers for the rattan so laboriously hauled to the collection point.

Tobacco production, so significant in the Lauje area in the period 1800–1970, was subject to another configuration of coercion and desire. Tobacco can only be grown in the dry foothills, a circumstance that facilitates the collection of taxes, but the main mechanism of extraction was monopolistic trade enforced by debt. Although tobacco is a "cash crop," former tobacco farmers recall that they seldom saw cash. As soon as the new tobacco plants were in the ground, the family would begin to take rice, sugar, and clothing on credit from their tobacco trader. This continued throughout one growing cycle and was carried over to the next. The family tried to keep the debt down by growing corn higher in the hills where rainfall is more abundant, but conflicting labor demands and the necessity of staying close to the tobacco precluded adequate food production. Dependence on credit was therefore routine, and a "good" trader would also help out in special circumstances such as illness, death, or crop failure. Many tobacco farmers gambled with cash they did not have, increasing their debts to the trader who bailed them out (and who may have organized the gambling). As one farmer wryly observed: "so many people down there became rich from our tobacco, I know that for a fact." Why then did farmers stay in place to keep producing this crop? The ecological limitations have been noted: a farmer who fled to the interior could no longer grow tobacco. Questions of identity and difference also figured importantly. Tobacco farmers lived perforce in the hills, since their crop required continuous attention, but their social orientation was towards the coast and Islam. Escape to a life in the heathen headwaters, far from mosque and market, held little attraction for them. It was these relational considerations that served to keep people in their place.[18]

Food is the other significant export from the hills. As far as I can tell, the food trade was not regulated by *desa* authorities or subject to monopoly, extortion, or other forms of entrapment, and it has left no bureaucratic traces. Nevertheless, it underpinned the entire set of relations linking coast and hills for the past two centuries and continues to be significant. From the time the first Lauje began to live permanently on the coast, trading and producing copra, and in the dry foothills where they produced tobacco, they must have relied upon food from the interior to meet their subsistence needs for at least part of the year. Imports of rice were not routine until the 1950s and, even then, most coastal dwellers could not afford to purchase it.

[18]Shallot production replaced tobacco in the 1950s, and former tobacco farmers moved farther inland, closing the physical gap—but not the social or religious gap—between themselves and the people farther inland they call *bela*.

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Thus, hillside food production both enabled the development of specialized commodity niches and made the trade in commodities more profitable, since the producers were fed from other sources.

Difference and desire figure in the food trade in complex ways, and the terms under which it should be conducted are the subject of debate.[19] Some hillsiders argue that food may be bartered with people who have hiked into the hills for this purpose but should not be sold for cash, since this is taboo or would, at the very least, cause the seller to regret transforming the product of their labor into such a base medium. Others say it is fine to sell food, even rice, so long as the appropriate harvest ritual has been completed. Some emphasize that the price should be modest, since the purchaser is probably needy. Food is sometimes given as a gift, but even among close kin generosity has limits. Normally, a person looking for food expects to pay for it in cash or barter with dried fish and coconuts purchased at the coastal market or other goods they have to hand: a chicken, some used clothing, a knife blade, a new sarong.[20] Whatever the terms of trade, those who have produced a bumper crop of corn welcome purchasers, since the price it could fetch at the market would barely cover the porterage fee and the surplus would only rot.

Food transactions are equally complex from the purchasers' viewpoint. On the one hand, the groups of thirty or more who hike up from the coast and foothills in search of food are clearly supplicants: if they had enough food themselves, or the money to purchase it at the market, they would not venture so far from home. Use of the cheap option displays a degree of desperation. On the other hand, it displays market savvy: striking a good bargain is evidence of their skill and influence over backward hill folk who do not know the true value of goods. Profiting from this imputed ignorance, but also putting in hard labor as porters, some resell the corn they have acquired in the hills when they reach the coast. Thus, from a coastal perspective, dependence on hill folk for food may still be tinged with derision. The experience is colored by the long and difficult hike and by fear of people who live so differently, especially *bela*, whose dress, demeanor, and food do not conform to coastal styles. Friendly relationships may also be formed or confirmed through these trading expeditions as people go back to a place where they are known from previous encounters.

In lieu of legibility, the relations of production and exchange forged between the Lauje hills and coast are built upon shifting configurations of coercion and desire. Hill farmers retain the capacity to enter and exit the wage labor force and expand or reduce cash-crop production as demands and opportunities present themselves, although the mechanisms of entrapment are formidable. Employers can call upon a reserve army of labor when needed, but the price is relatively high: Rp3–5000 was the daily male wage in Central Sulawesi in 1996, compared to Rp1–2000 in labor-abundant Java. Coastal profits are enhanced by the subsidy hillside food production supplies. It would be wrong, however, to attribute a singular logic or functionalist design to sets of

[19]Nourse (1999, 64, 66) notes that the food trade is hierarchical: the party trading higher status foods, namely rice and corn, for taro and forest products is superior. I encountered no examples of trade in rice, and corn seems to travel between hillside neighborhoods according to the varied production schedules caused by microclimates. Taro and cassava are heavy to carry and more quickly consumed by a hungry family, but a supplicant will readily accept these foods if corn is unavailable or too expensive.

[20]Labor may also be mortgaged in return for food, and some people become bonded to their neighbors in this way, although the relationship is portrayed as reciprocal assistance.

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exchanges that have formed historically through such diverse, culturally mediated engagements.

Producing Difference and Imagining Development

Questions of identity and difference have already arisen in my discussion of relations between coast and hills. I argued that hill folk have constructed their identities and communities in and through the configurations of authority emanating from or channeled through the coastal elites. They have supplied forest products, cash crops, food, and labor to the coastal market, paying taxes to secure market access while retaining their ecological niche in the hills and the marginal social status that derives from it. Tobacco farmers' inclusion in the religious and social sphere of Islam discouraged flight and tied them to the foothills, where they remained for multiple generations despite their impoverishment. For those still in the interior, the attraction of moving farther inland to access better swidden and forest resources is balanced by the desire to maintain convenient access to the coastal market. Cultural difference is produced in and through these relations, even as it appears to precede them. In this section, I further examine the ways in which cultural difference is produced, experienced, and deployed. Needless to say, the situation looks very different from hill and coastal perspectives. It is also subject to reassessment, as I will demonstrate by examining recent moves to promote hillside "development."

From the hills, my main focus so far, the field of cultural differences in which people locate themselves is quite nuanced. Hill folk describe themselves first and foremost as farmers. Several people told me they could not live on the coast because it is too hot and nothing grows there. Some fear illness caused by bad water or witchcraft, vestiges perhaps of the epidemics that came by sea in decades past. If they had the money, they would like to build small houses there for use on market days and to show the coastal folk that they too have resources. They know the coastal people despise them for living in the hills in flimsy bamboo houses; but they compare their own situation favorably to that of laborers on the coast who must hustle daily for wages to pay for every bit of food and who live in equally flimsy houses built under coconut trees belonging to others.[21] Hill people also judge each other by a set of standards derived from, and centered on, the coast. The farther inland people live, the more backward they are considered to be. In many of the hillside neighborhoods I visited, I was warned that the people farther inland were primitive, unpredictable, and prone to violence, especially if scared, threatened, or insulted. I was discouraged from visiting: "There will be no one home, they have all gone hunting." "They will be too scared and will run away." "The path to the house is too steep and overgrown; they have dogs that bite." These tales were repeated far inland, well beyond the boundary that separates Muslims of the foothills from those who eat pork. I was told that high in the headwaters, in the very center of the peninsula, there are people who wear no clothes and have never heard about government or are, perhaps, obstinately

[21]Coastal coconut trees and the surrounding land have become concentrated in very few hands. When coastal copra and hill products were plentiful, some coastal dwellers worked full-time as stevedores at Tinombo's port and were members of a major trade union. This proletarian phase has since receded, and coastal laboring opportunities are indeed scarce.

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resisting rule.[22] Yet however far I walked, the wild folk I was supposed to encounter never materialized. I came to interpret the stories about them as indicators of the hegemony of cultural standards defined on the coast in hill people's assessments of social worth.

There are no pristine primitives or antigovernment rebels in the hills, not at least in any of the thirty or so hillside neighborhoods I have visited.[23] Nor do people see themselves in the terms supplied by the indigenous peoples' movement, proudly autonomous communities interested in "alternative" development paths.[24] The goal consistently expressed is for a closer relationship with government authorities and access to facilities currently available only on the coast. Hill folk reject resettlement on practical grounds: there is no land available on the coast, and they must live close to their swiddens to guard them from the wild pigs. Nevertheless, they would like to be on official maps, included in the *desa* population counts, and made the beneficiaries of "development" hand-outs. To this end, some neighborhoods have begun to consolidate their settlement pattern and build more permanent houses in the hope of attracting government attention to their locale. They imagine a future that includes a school, a road, electricity, and routine consumption in a coastal style. Near the New Tribes mission, where Christian converts are showing a new confidence in their relations with Muslims who have long despised them, people aspire to form a *desa* of their own so that they can interact directly with the subdistrict head and other officials, bypassing a *desa* headman they seriously distrust. Thus, they too seek to enmesh themselves more firmly, and more advantageously, within the government administrative system.

From a coastal perspective, the view is quite different. I have already mentioned the fear and discomfort of those who have hiked up to the hills under the duress of food-seeking expeditions and their anxieties about encountering people they classify as *bela*. For the majority of coastal folk who never set foot in the hills, uplanders are typified by the people who come down from the hills for one annual event: Idul Fitri. This is the Muslim holiday marking the end of the fasting month and the occasion on which coastal people wear their best clothes, new if possible, assemble in unusually large numbers at the mosque, and eat special, expensive foods such as cookies and cakes. By some logic—perhaps deeply symbolic, perhaps simply perverse—groups of twenty or thirty men, women, and children come down to the coast from the farthest hills for this occasion. They go from house to house, asking for treats. Everything

[22]The wild people include some called *dampelau* (Lauje for "naked") supposedly living in hills adjacent to the Lauje area. Some claim to have met *dampelau* while on rattan-collecting expeditions and report with amazement that they speak coastal languages such as Malay and Bugis. This linguistic ability might indicate that these were once coastal people, an interpretation I heard on a few occasions. More likely, it stems from the long-standing but generally underestimated involvement of hill folk in trade and wage labor. Nourse (1999, 39–43) describes Muslim hill folks' fear of the people they call *bela* and the claim that *bela* do not farm, are lazy, dirty, and possibly cannibalistic. The group she encountered refused to move to the coast on Dutch command and were forced to move about and hide in the forest, impeding food production (Nourse 1999, 65–66). Other Lauje farther inland or in adjacent watersheds simply did not hear or respond to the Dutch request and were deemed timid rather than rebellious.

[23]There might be some at Paladunduan, a tributary of the Siang with a population reputedly so fierce that even the most powerful ward heads and shamans replete with protective magic have never dared to go there. This could also be another wild-folk story.

[24]The resonance of the indigenous peoples' platform in some parts of Indonesia but not others is explored in Li (2000).

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about their etiquette is problematic from a coastal point of view. They clutch blowpipes and bush knives. They are dirty and ragged, and they are not invited in to sit down like guests. Rather than taking just one or two cookies, they empty the whole jar into their cloth bundles, where wet and dry varieties glue together in a sticky mess. Some coastal dwellers close doors and windows when they see a band headed in their direction. Others prepare a plate of treats but reserve the rest indoors. Children taunt them, "there go the *bela*, like chickens afraid of the road." They also trick them: "no *bela*, we do not have any cookies here yet because it is not the right day, but we hear they already have cookies in Palasa, so you had better go there." These are the people about whom stories are told and amplified, the ultimate Others who exemplify and embody extreme difference. Their presence renders invisible the Muslims from the foothills, the people from the inner hills who have nice clothes, and the many thousands who do not come down to collect cookies and expose themselves to ridicule. Their presence also obscures the relations of labor and trade that tie hills and coast together.

Consumption is another contact zone, a point at which extreme images of difference are enacted and reconfirmed. *Bela* are said to spend their money foolishly on gaudy items: a false gold tooth, a hair perm, bright dresses and lipstick, monster cassette players, or watches. They do not consume, that is, according to the priorities, styles, and tastes of the coast, although they seem to want (and indeed can sometimes afford) expensive consumer goods—hence the absurdity. Connected to flashy forms of spending are the anxieties provoked by inordinate and erratic cash flows. The economic standing of a family on the coast is more or less fixed by the range of livelihood sources to which their capital endowment gives them access. People either do or do not own coconut trees. They trade at the high end or the low end. They employ labor, or they work for others. There are few surprises. What coastal people see coming down from the hills bewilders them: a pathetic, ragged group comes down to buy a few packs of salt; another comes down and spends millions. The ebb and flow of upland commodity production, which respond to national and international prices as well as climatic cycles and crop disease, are here writ small and confusingly on a human terrain. The space is filled with generalizations and stereotypes that simplify diversity and locate the hill people firmly in the savage slot.

Contact at the point of trade also reinforces difference. Coastal people say *bela* cannot count or are easily cheated unless someone looks out for them. One man from the foothills who had hiked up to the headwaters in 1959 to trade for garlic and corn described how the people he met there later came down to the coast and asked for his help in selling their garlic in Tinombo town: "So I went along. They all stayed together, twenty-one of them. Wherever I went, they followed me, all in a line. I was like the group leader. So I arranged the sale. Then I suggested they buy food and we cooked fish by the river before returning, still in a line." His story has a double edge: the people were smart enough to ask him for help, and paid for it generously, but they paraded along the road behind him like cattle, looking ridiculous. One man close to the mission bought himself a calculator and checks the total with the shallot trader: "So now the others won't sell until he arrives to check the price; if they do sell elsewhere they recheck with him, so they will know for sure." Sensible enough, one might say, but it is taken here as a sign of deficit—dependent folk have to wait around or walk in lines behind the clever one. There is some annoyance with the missionaries for making their followers too smart, so they can no longer be cheated, but this too is turned around to amplify the tale: smartness becomes a source of disparagement.

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Official knowledge about the hills, even when presented in the standardized formats of national data collection, builds upon the knowledge generated through the everyday encounters between hills and coast already described. While the authority of coastal powers over the hills has been secured in the modest forms outlined, without benefit of "legibility" and with minimal monitoring of upland lives and livelihoods, ambitious goals such as national development require more detailed information (Scott 1998, 184). *Desa* officials are now responsible for producing a *desa* map and completing the standard *desa* profile with demographic and economic data that can be aggregated into national statistics. The results are wildly inaccurate, but as Scott (1998, 3) points out, official data-collection systems always filter and simplify complex local realities, here perhaps no more or less than in Indonesia's teeming cities. What might be distinctive in each locale are the particular, mediated ways in which official information is obtained and deployed. The *desa* officials responsible for generating data and supplying it to their superiors are members of the coastal Lauje elite. They lack a panoptic vision, or even a basic topographic map, and some of them have never hiked into the hills. Their sources of information are as mediated and as fragmentary as those of other coastal dwellers. But when they are called upon to speak "authoritatively" to development planners and other visitors, their selections from this common stock of knowledge have especially far-reaching effects.

The maps produced by *desa* headmen show in detail the neatly aligned houses, mosque, *desa* office, marketplace, and other facilities of the coast, while the huge *desa* interior is represented in spatially compressed form with a few vague strokes of the pen. Such maps seldom record the hills, rivers, and other named places by which the interior population could be recognized and made to count in *desa* plans. In the early days of my research, I was shown these maps and told by *desa* headmen that the interior populations were sparse, semiclothed, prone to use poisoned blowpipes against strangers, living in trees and under rocks in a densely forested terrain. Several headmen attempted to dissuade me from venturing inland. They may actually have believed this characterization of the hills. More likely, however, they were concerned that I would fall on the trail or blame them for the primitive conditions and lack of orderly development. Or they may have preferred to maintain their monopoly over the data supplied to district and provincial administrators, development planners, and visiting anthropologists.

Now, as in the past, it is important for *desa* headmen to lay claim to large populations, since numbers are the basis on which government resources such as primary schools are distributed. But there are very few schools and no other facilities in the hills. There are several empty school buildings on the coast, conveniently located for those who built them but useless to the largely illiterate upland population. In the ten *desas* where Lauje predominate, somewhere between 40 and 70 percent of the *desa* population live permanently in the hills, but the spatial distribution of the *desa*'s population was never mentioned to me by *desa* officials. They were surprised—and pleased—when my data from the hills indicated that the total *desa* population was larger than they thought, opening up the possibility of increased *desa* funding. But it is not only numbers that matter here. Meanings are equally important. When provincial officials visit, *desa* authorities are quick to classify and describe the population of the hills as primitive. They stress that the people are ever-mobile and impossible to control. They use the term *Dayak*, imported from Kalimantan, connoting in this context a generic condition of backwardness. They also use the term *masyarakat terasing*, the official designation for isolated, tribal communities. They confess to the inadequacies of their maps and lists but argue that they can do no

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better with limited resources. Data problems only emphasize the difficulties involved in regulating a dispersed and recalcitrant population and the need to rearrange them.[25]

Uplanders fare miserably in struggles over meaning. Coastal elites brand them lazy when they are not producing commercial crops or when they are unavailable for wage labor, and feckless when they are trapped in the attendant debt relations. They criticize uplanders for living in the hills and failing to build compact settlements more convenient for government visitors, but they overlook the fact that such arrangements would close down production (and coastal profit). A *desa* headman informed me that uplanders "produce nothing, just rice and corn," ignoring the significance of this "nothing" to uplanders' own nourishment and to the food supply of the coastal zone. Food eaten or exchanged in the ways I described earlier is "nothing" in the sense that it is not weighed by the ton, a visible, countable, profitable commodity. After I came to know the hills better and could not be put off by tales of backwardness, I would point out these contradictions to *desa* officials. They readily acknowledged my point, but it was the usual set of stereotypes about the hills that prevailed in discussions among themselves or when they were talking to visitors from the provincial capital, Palu.

Recall that officials who make the six- to ten-hour journey by paved road from Palu to the small subdistrict administrative centers of Tinombo and Palasa could easily be convinced that no one lives in the hills that loom to their left as they drive along the narrow coastal strip. Since the foothills are dry and barren, the hill population is concentrated inland, well out of sight. Unless these officials hike into the hills themselves (a very rare event), they are dependent on *desa* officials to identify the needs that should be addressed through state-directed development plans.[26] Visiting officials from the city cannot know, and in my experience seldom question, the filters applied to the facts upon which they must base their decisions. It was in fora such as the annual subdistrict development planning meetings attended by *desa* headmen and officials from Palu that I heard the most stark and derogatory stereotypes about the hills. These included the need to socialize (*masyarakatkan*) or, more extreme, to humanize (*manusiakan*) the wild people of the interior. The emphasis on poverty alleviation in national and donor funding initiatives encourages *desa* officials to remind visitors that their *desa* interiors are populated by very needy people, urgently requiring assistance. Usually, development for hill folk is envisaged in terms of new settlements with houses neatly aligned, surrounded by productive tree crops in compact gardens, connected by roads to the coast so that officials can provide "guidance." It commences, that is, from ground zero rather than from the livelihoods, spatial arrangements, and cultural configurations already in place. Here is one vision of the hills, built on tales of wild people and forests, but it is not the only vision.

The image generated by *desa* headmen of the hills as empty space inhabited only by a few wandering tribesmen has been modified in the decade since I began my

[25]I have explored data troubles in the context of Indonesia's resettlement program in Li (1999a).

[26]Government officials from Palu who hiked with me into the hills had predictably negative reactions to the people, terrain, and farming practices, and declared that government efforts to supervise and bring development should be increased. More interestingly, some were disappointed that the people were so unremarkable and unexotic, without feathers and fancy gear. They purchased their blowpipes, and their tiny houses were without carvings or other decor. The more intrepid officials nevertheless discovered culture by seeking out old people to tell creation stories, and they found an elderly woman shaman who gave them a special bath to enhance their virility.

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forays into the hills, reflecting changes in the field of interests and power caused by the introduction of tree crops, notably cacao. Tree crops have drawn coastal elites (including *desa* officials and their kin) into the hills as would-be farmers and Muslims from the foothills farther inland to the terrain of the *bela*. New proximity is causing some stereotypes to be reinforced, while others are revised or perhaps only muted: offended neighbors may accidentally set fire to a garden. Besides their personal interest, *desa* officials consider the prospect of extensive tree-crop production in the hills to be the great source of hope for *desa* development. Consequently, their relative valuation of spaces and their inhabitants has altered. The landless coconut workers of the coast may live in the prescribed settlement form, but they now find themselves criticized by *desa* officials for being in the wrong place: they should take some initiative and go up to the hills to plant cacao. They are accused of being static and backward. Industrious and successful hill folk are held up to them as examples. Confidence in the capabilities of (some) hill folk to innovate and farm productively is offset by the recognition that the results would be uneven and difficult to monitor. Large-scale initiatives still hold their attraction, especially for *desa* officials who expect to profit from contracts and their "facilitating" role. When higher-level officials, including district heads and experts from the tree-crop department, visit the *desa* to discuss the economic potential of the hills, *desa* headmen conveniently ignore hill population and production, stressing the "emptiness" of the hills and the thousands of hectares available for government schemes or commercial investment.

All of the above scenarios draw upon well-established repertoires of meaning, inflecting them in new ways rather than inventing them *ex nihilo*. The fields of knowledge and power set up by divergent development agendas coexist uneasily, their contradictions unresolved. Thus, even when planning appears to demand legibility, there is no singular and coherent government vision determining and ordering the relevant information but rather multiple, mediated visions built up over time into particular configurations. Here, attempts to bring about planned change have been rendered complex not because information is lacking or because the targets of intervention are rebellious or culturally different, but because government officials and those they would constitute as clients are already enmeshed in sets of economic and political relationships in which their own identities, desires, and practices are deeply implicated. Such contradictions account, in part at least, for the desultory implementation of legibility projects from statistics to resettlement and for the amplification of difference, rather than its diminishment, in the context of development planning.[27]

Conclusion

> Culture does not stand apart from the socially organized forms of inequality, domination, exploitation, and power that exist in society but is implicated in and inscribed by these practices, which are maintained and contested symbolically as well as instrumentally, discursively as well as forcefully.
>
> (Coombe 1991, 191)

[27]On this point, see Ferguson (1994) and Li (1999a). For a rich discussion of the cultural politics of development and related struggles over meanings and resources, see Moore (2000). In comparison to the Zimbabwe case Moore describes, topography and the relational history of this particular place severely limit the capacity of Lauje hill folk to insist on their own versions of their past and present and to participate in planning their future.

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I began this article by citing Doreen Massey on the relational histories through which difference and the specificity of people and places is constructed "out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus." In Southeast Asia, I argued, the distinction between coast and interior is the product of centuries of interaction. There are no spaces or people outside the reach of power, but neither is there a uniform saturation. Rather, power works in and through the production of differences inscribed in space and built up through time, as new layers form upon the old. Cultural difference is one of the expressions of historically sedimented relations of power, hence it does not stand apart from "socially organized forms of inequality." It is, rather, formed and inscribed "symbolically as well as instrumentally, discursively as well as forcefully" in the relations of rule, trade, and everyday interaction that I have explored. Thus, when governing regimes and other powerful groups classify populations, impute boundaries, and, in the case of the uplands, emphasize cultural difference and isolation, they are building on social classifications and moral cartographies that have deep histories and diverse roots. The occlusion of connections is not a mere oversight, but neither is it anything as simple as a coordinated plot.

I have focused on the relational formation of upland communities and identities, but a similar case could be made about the role of the uplands in the fashioning of lowlands and coast, the self-proclaimed centers of authority and style, and the arbiters of civilization. In the national arena, too, concepts of development depend upon images of backward people in remote places apparently without history. The category thus constructed must then be filled, and people such as the Lauje seem to fill it, offering planners the satisfaction of beginning from scratch—or so it would appear. Like development planners, but for different reasons, activists who support indigenous peoples in their struggles to defend their resource rights also tend to take cultural difference as the starting point for their efforts, in this case because they hope to restore the autonomy and self-sufficiency of upland communities. Well-meaning though they may be, there is a certain hubris in both these versions of the uplands that needs to be dispelled, giving way to more robust conceptual frameworks and richer, more relational accounts capable of reflecting the particular dilemmas of "what sort of person to be" in various corners of this vast archipelago.

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