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Hierarchy in symmetric alliance systems

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HIERARCHY IN SYMMETRIC ALLIANCE SYSTEMS

Whereas in asymmetric alliance systems hierarchical differences can be expressed by the relationship between wifegiver's and wifetaker's groups, this kind of hierarchy is more difficult to establish where sister exchange exists.¹

It is my contention that in Peru and Brazil the alliance systems are of basically symmetrical form; that hierarchy can be expressed by the degree of endogamy allowed to persons of different ranks or ages; that all solutions to the problem are conditioned by the existence of only two basic forms of bilateral marriage: i.e., to the primary cross-cousin (in which $W = MBd = FZd$) and to the secondary cross-cousin (in which $W = MMBdd = MFZdd = FMBsd = FFZsd$ and $W \neq MBd$ or $WF \neq MB$ etc.); and finally, that a kin model cannot always be built on the basis of one marriage type, allowing perhaps for certain secondary marriages, but that a hierarchical model must be built that includes all the marriage forms used.

As an Andean example I want to indicate first the Inca theory about kinship and marriage. The model they used to explain not only their kinship system, but also their social, political and religious hierarchy was as follows (see also Zuidema and Quispe 1968: 27-87):

¹ Paper read for the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Seattle, November 1968.

for a man; but according to Inca theory, all non-prohibited candidates were lumped together into the class of secondary cross-cousins; and so we can say that in this sense Inca marriage belonged to the Aranda type.

This model also had a hierarchical kin function. Then the position of A1 was occupied by the Inca king and his wife (the Coya) who was also his full sister. In the ideal model their descendants descended one rank in each succeeding generation, so that the great-great-grandchildren were considered as 'nobles of the common people'. To the intermediate ranks belonged different possibilities of marriage endogamy, and these permit us to understand how the system could function in practice. Whereas the Inca king married his full sister as his single primary wife, in order to maintain the same rank for his successor and his wife-sister, his other sons and daughters had to take as a primary wife their half sister by a different mother in order to keep their rank for their primary sons. Still lower nobility married their primary cross-cousins for the same reason. So the basic distinction was one between primary and secondary children: the first keeping their parents' ranks and the others losing it and slipping down to the next rank.

Basically, the Inca tribe of Cuzco was an endogamic group, and so was, within this tribe, each of the different ranks that kept to the prescription of their primary marriage form. Besides this endogamic "caste" aspect, the ranks also presented an exogamic feature by means of institutionalized secondary marriages and it was these that preserved the hierarchial differences between the endogamic groups—differences that also cross-cut individual families.

Finally, the ranks also had an age class character. Not only the sons of primary and (various ranks of) secondary wives were ranked, but also those of the same mother. Only one son — and generally the eldest — of the primary wife could inherit the full rank of his father. It depended on the rank of a person how many age classes he could actually pass through.

This hierarchical kinship system explains also certain problems of kin nomenclature in Quechua, the Inca language. For instance, most chroniclers and older dictionaries translate the term *caca* by MB = WF. However, in most cases, i.e. of the common people, a man could not marry his MBd. Our oldest Quechua dictionary states on the other hand that *caca* means grandfather of the wife. This is her MF or FF and so the term can also indicate the marriage of a man to his bilateral secondary cross-cousin, (i.e. to his MMBdd, or FMBsd). My conclusion therefore is that the term *caca* was used differentially by the

noble and the common classes, but both within a single hierarchical system.²

I will now turn to the Brazilian systems. Here we find in the first place with many tribes a kinship nomenclature in accordance with bilateral primary cross-cousin marriage. As has been pointed out recently by Lave (1966), Riviere (1966a; 1966b) and Shapiro (1966; 1968), in many cases there occur kin equations indicating the possibility of marriage with the Zd.³ For gerontocratic people like the Tupinamba and the Mundurucu we know that especially the chiefs applied this marriage form, as for them it had special advantages. In the context of bilateral primary cross-cousin marriage, Zd marriage was more endogamic. In both tribes patrilineal clans were combined with matrilocality. A chief, however, was allowed to stay patrilocal and to keep with him his married daughters and sons. This we would consider as a material expression of the fact that, by marrying his Zd, a chief's lineage was matrilineal *and* patrilineal at the *same* time!; a result that the Inca king obtained by marrying his full sister.

Bilateral *secondary* cross-cousin marriage we find suggested for certain Ge tribes. Here the more endogamic marriage form was with the FZd. Nimuendajú (1942) explicitly mentions this combination for the Sherente and implicitly for the Canella and the Apinaye. He does not say that FZd marriage was applied by the chiefs, although all these tribes have a system of inherited titles; but marriage to a FZd would have various advantages to a chief within the context of a system where $W = MMBdd$, etc. Our data for the Apinaye are however so clear that I would like to analyse them in more detail and suggest the hierarchical difference between FZd and MMBdd marriage.

The Apinaye have moieties that are said not to regulate marriage today, but their mythology and kin nomenclature do suggest they had that function.

FZ is equated to MBW and MB to FZH, but $MB \neq WF$ and $FZ \neq HM$. Maybury-Lewis, referring to the Apinaye, states that "such terminological separation of actual affines from potential ones seems to be unusual in two section systems, but it is not inconsistent with their structure. On the contrary it is characteristic of those two section systems of Central Brazil for which we have data (e.g. Sherente,

² This description of the Inca hierarchical system is based on a forthcoming study dealing with this problem.

³ Probably the old Tarascans in Mexico also recognized this marriage possibility (Zuidema, 1967).

the Canella, Eastern Timbira, and the Bororo)". (1960: 207). It seems to me that this is a misunderstanding of the problem. According to Nimuendajú primary cross-cousins could not marry. So the fact that $WF \neq MB$ etc. can indicate that we are dealing with a bilateral secondary cross-cousin marriage type, in which e.g. $MB = FZH$, but $MB \neq WF$.

However, some curious kin-equations cross-cut this two section alliance system and caused Maybury-Lewis a certain amount of trouble. Nimuendajú stated the marriage rule *explicitly* as a *prohibition* of marriage between relatives called *id-pigukwa* and *id-kambi*. Other data indicate the existence of another set of terms for relatives who *could* marry. As this last set has much vaguer oppositions and definitions I will here use the first one to indicate the different hierarchical marriage possibilities. Nimuendajú mentions three different relationships:

	<i>id-pigukwa</i>		<i>id-kambi</i>
1)	eB (w.s.)		yB (w.s.)
2)	MZd (m.s.)	←→	MZs (w.s.)
3)	MBd (m. and w.s.)	←→	FZch (w.s.)

The first denotata of both terms refer only to an age difference. Still they are important since it gives us to understand that the second denotata refer, and probably exclusively so, to a relationship between an older MZd and her younger MZs. Now, if these terms are really so important in regulating marriage, then we cannot just follow Nimuendajú's statement "... that an Apinaye must not wed his parents siblings' daughter" (1939). Our conclusion should be that a person *cannot* marry his MBd, but he *can* marry his FZd! She falls under the term of *id-kradu* i.e. FZch and Zch (m.s.). Elsewhere she is implicitly mentioned as marriageable to *id-kratum* (i.e. to MBs and MB). Finally from the second denotata for *id-pigukwa* and *id-kambi*, we could conclude that they did *not* apply to an older MZs and his younger MZd and that these persons *were* allowed to marry.

In conclusion, we have here a hierarchical set of four marriage possibilities: 1) to yMZd; 2) to Zd; 3) to FZd; and 4) to MMBdd. The crucial question now is: can other data support this hypothetical conclusion? I think the following data do:

The Apinaye were divided into four *kiye*, to which a man belonged patrilineally and a woman matrilineally. The *kiye* maintained an asymmetric alliance pattern, but — and this has been stressed by other authors — because of their descent system, this only led to the formation

of four endogamic groups. A result of this was, that, although the kiye were allied asymmetrically, this did *not* involve any asymmetry of marriages. On the one hand, different characteristics reveal the origin of the kiye in age classes. On the other hand, the proper names of the four kiye reveal their original hierarchical character. They are called respectively 'person of the centre', 'person of the house', 'beautiful hair of the head' and 'eaves', possibly referring to a head decoration and to the pendant thatch of a house roof. Such a hierarchical distinction of center to outside was used by the Apinaye, by other Ge people and by the Bororo (Colbacchini and Albisetti); and in the case of the Bororo I might call to mind a rite where the chiefs, belonging to two clans of one of the exogamic moieties actually stood in the center of the men's house, having around them the other two clans of the same moiety into which only they, as chiefs, could marry, thereby breaking the rule of exogamy which otherwise applied for the moieties.⁴

My reconstruction of the original social system of the Apinaye is therefore that their 4 kiye — and therefore also their 4 endogamic 'castes' — were ranked hierarchically and that they were constituted by means of the four marriage types that a chief or persons from different ranks or ages did or could apply. Formerly the Apinaye were the most populous tribe in the region with a tribal organization that united all their villages. Thus the kiye could cross-cut horizontally the whole tribal organization. The hierarchical institution of 'great names', that give a higher status to their bearers, is very important in this context. The names always form pairs, belonging respectively to the two moieties and their bearers call each other *id-kratum* and *id-kraduw*,

⁴ I am aware that according to the recent field work of Roberto da Matta there were not four kiye but only two, each having two different names, ones that in Nimuendajú's older description belonged to different kiye. Still, before I can read da Matta's description, I am not inclined to discard that of Nimuendajú, as it has too many internal inconsistencies. For instance, in the Apinaye origin myth the Sun and the Moon both create an exogamic moiety of four couples each, which couples probably represent the kiye cross-cutting the moieties. Also, in the one genealogical example that Nimuendajú gives of the kiye marriage rule, the two kiye, to which belong resp. the chief with his male relatives and affines and his wife and his female relatives and affines, are resp. the highest and the second highest kiye. But these, according to da Matta, should be only one and the same kiye. I could mention different examples from Peru and Mexico where four named and genealogically defined *ayllus* or *calpolli's* exist, each with explicit and different ceremonial functions and that still their existence sometimes is denied, reducing them to only two groups. But even if there only existed two kiye in Apinaye society I don't think it would discard my argument that they had a former hierarchical and age class character.

i.e. they can intermarry. This means that the problem of possible moiety-exogamy or endogamy is not only a statistical but also a structural one. Probably the moieties were originally exogamic for lower ranks or age-classes and endogamic for higher; a distinction now blurred in both the Canella and Apinaye cultures. Finally, Nimuendajú's only example of a marriage relationship between the kiye concerns the chief and his family. It shows that they actually belonged to the highest kiye.

According to this reconstruction, the Apinaye social system would be very close indeed to the one here described for the Incas. We do not need to be surprised about the fact that the kiye have lost most of their hierarchical character, since under Western influence this is always the first aspect of native societies to disappear. But even so, to understand what is left in these cultures, we must fully take into account this original hierarchical character and how it influenced their kinship system.

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