Land, children and cross-siblingship: a note on symbolic studies of kinship in Oceania

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Introduction

"Blood" and land are fundamental constructs of Oceanian kinship. Since Goodenough (1955) and Firth (1957) pointed out the importance of land rights in descent group formation, anthropologists working in Oceanian societies cannot fail to recognize the significance of land not only in descent group formation but also in kinship recognition as well. In the 1960's, the importance of land rights was interpreted as a component of the flexibility of cognatic descent systems. Although the flexibility of cognatic descent systems is assumed to be adaptive in island ecosystems, the cognatic descent reckoning by itself is not able to provide the exclusive group boundary. Residence and land rights are taken to maintain the boundary and continuity of corporate descent groups. Recent studies of Oceanian societies,

which focus on symbolic and ideational aspects of kinship, also note the significance of land in the cultural definition of Oceanian kinship, although they see the dynamics of kin reckoning at the level of interacting symbols (cf. Schneider 1968).

In most Oceanian societies, land and consanguinity are conceptually merged. The fusion of consanguinity and land rights into a single system provides dynamic dimensions to Oceanian kinship. As Howard notes (n.d.), "individuals who share food (or its symbolic equivalent) from the same source are acting like kinsmen, while persons related by "blood" who refuse to share such resources are acting like they are unrelated" (ibid.: 25). Behavior, here, is treated as an index of kinship, and becomes grounds for recognition or nonrecognition of kin relationship. Behavior also provides a basis for the transformation of unrelated persons into kinsmen.

The high frequency of adoptions among kinsmen is another feature which is a long noted aspect of the flexibility of Oceanian kinship systems. Carroll (1970a) has suggested the possible contribution of studies of adoption to the cultural theory of kinship. He notes that "the answer to question about the nature of kinship can only be determined on the basis of investigations into the precise extent to which adoptive relation

are construed as tantamount to "biological" relationships... We shall understand what consanguinity means when we understand the ways in which ties that are not consanguineal can never become ties" (ibid.: 14-15).

In this paper, some common themes in studies of adoption and land tenure in Polynesia and Micronesia are reviewed. Many researchers have noted the significance of interaction between the code and substance features in Oceanian kinship. Also, the exchanges of land and children are examined in the context of Oceanian siblingship. It is generally argued that the distinction between parallel- and cross-siblingship is in terms of contrast between competition and cooperation, and that between symmetry and complimentarity. Some scholars, furthermore, have exclusively assigned parallel- and cross-siblingship to public and domestic domain. However, it is important to specify the interactive process between "genealogical" constructs and kinship behaviors as the studies on land tenure and adoption suggests. Cross-siblingship has certainly public implications depending on contexts.

Sharing of Children

The high frequency of adoptions among the kinsmen has been claimed to have adaptive significance in island environment.

Adoptions are able to reestablish balance between population and resources (Alkire 1978). Nevertheless, adoptive practices can not simply be reduced to differential fertility among kinsmen (Fisher 1963, R.Goodenough 1970, Marshall 1976). In terms of function, adoption is a multifunctional institution, so that it is important to distinguish levels at which adoptions are studied.

Brady (1976a) summarizes the function of Oceanian adoptions. According to him, adoption is a socio-cultural means for; (1) assisting indigent persons or groups by placing disadvantaged persons in more advantageous socioeconomic positions; (2) providing childless couples with social offspring, thereby at least partially validating their adult statuses; (3) securing estate and descent group continuity by providing formal heirs; (4) filling vacant domestic work roles in the household; (5) satisfying affective demands for close association among persons; (6) absorbing 'outsiders' into local kin groups and communities; (7) extending the range of hospitality and kinship obligation as survival insurance among persons and groups who would otherwise be regarded as 'non-kinsmen'; and (8) consolidating and actualizing existing kinship obligations (ibid.: 23-24). For the present purpose, it may be useful to see adoption as transactions of children among kinsmen. However, it is important to note that the motivation for adoptions are varied and that the reason

for maintaining an adoptive bond may change completely in the course of person's life.

It is often argued that adoptions are understood as an expression of obligation of sharing among kinsmen (Marshall 1976). On the other hand, the adoption of non-kinsmen may lead to the disruption of kinship solidarity. In the northern Gilberts, if transfer of property in the context of adoption takes place within the family, it simply serves to consolidate an ancestral estate and reaffirm reciprocal obligations between kinsmen. On the other hand, the adoption of a non-relative, particularly if the adoption involves the transfer of land rights, is commonly regarded as a direct slap in the face to one's consanguineal kinsmen and leads to fragmentation of an ancestral estate and weakening of reciprocal obligations within the corporate kin group (Lundsgaarde 1970: 256-258).

Similarly, Howard (1970) points to the parallel in the adoptive and the affinal relations in Rotuma. There is the tendency for children to stay with the mother in cases of divorce, and these children tend to be taken over by a grandmother or aunt rather than a stepmother even in the event of their mother's death. Here, the transaction of children creates a bind between the affines. However, the willingness of widowers to place their children with their wives' relative is in

marked contrast to the claim they exercise in cases of separation. Giving children up in adoption is an obvious way to keep the affinal tie alive while removing children is an important part of severing relations. Sharing children is an important element in the code for conduct among kinsmen.

As noted above, Carroll (1970a) has suggested that adoptive transactions may reveal the nature of kinship as a cultural system in a given society. For example, Carroll (1970b) and Levy (1970) have suggested the very opposite nature of kinship in their interpretation of Nukuoro and Tahitian adoption respectively. Concerning the Tahitian adoption, Levy (1970) argues that adoption constitutes a message that kinship is contingent. Children are kept by their parent, not because of the naturally given order of things, but because the parents happen to wish to, and are allowed to by others in the community. Thus, all parent-children relationships tend to be seen as contingent, i.e. social reality must be created.

On the contrary, Carroll (1970b) notes that adoption reinforces the irreversibility of kinship on Nukuoro. While adoption is understood as the ideology of sharing among kinsmen, the practice often falls short of the ideology. The sharing among the kinsmen are not often realized because of the competition among the kinsmen. According to Carroll, this

discrepancy between the ideology and behavior of kinsmen results in the implicitness and ambiguity of adoptive transaction on Nukuoro. Frequently adoptions do not bring about the desired effects and adoptions are sometimes canceled. According to Carroll, the ambiguity surrounding the adoptive transaction, in turn, emphasizes the irreversibility of "natural" parenthood.

Although the contingency and the irreversibility of kinship may result from the difference in kinship as cultural systems between Nukuoro and Tahiti themselves, it is possible that the contingency and the irreversibility may be found in different kin relations in a single system. Labby (1976) and Smith (1983) argue that while matrilineal descent is given in Yapese and Palauan kinship systems, the patrifiliation is open to the contingency dependent on the exchange relationship of persons involved.

The relationship between the aspects of contingency and irreversibility shapes Samoan adoption and social stratification (Shore 1976). The adoptive kin's place in the Samoan kinship system rests entirely on a shared code for conduct, with no reinforcement from shared substance. However, in most adoptive relationships, there is some genealogical link between adoptee and adopting group. Such polysemic relations make possible the situational definition of kin status, because either the adoptive

or genealogical nature of the relationship can be invoked in different contexts. According to Shore, each actor continually reassesses his priorities according to the demand of social context, maximizing his social mobility and prestige.

There are two kinds of criteria for claim to titles: those emphasizing achievement and those defining ascriptive base for title succession. The former includes aptitude in learning lore and services to the chief. The latter includes sex, primogeniture, patri-filiation, seniority, and membership in brother's line, although a membership in a high-ranking descent line is the most important. According to Shore,

> The two classes of ascribed and achieved criteria for title succession have as their bases the substance and code features that define the parameters of Samoan kinship. ...The ideal successor to a political title is the one who has both "proper" genealogical connections as well as a record of faithful services to the chiefs. The conjunction of those two criteria is identical with the conjunction of 'one blood' and 'one body'---that is, the substance and code feature that define the model kinsmen in Samoa (Ibid.:183).

The term tautua means both the service which an adopted child makes to a kin group and the service a person makes to chief for political claim. Shore claims that adoption and marriage transform alliance into 'descent'. The adoption of an outsider into a kin group as a 'transferred child' transforms

simple alliance into an idiom of descent. Descent in this sense is derived from adoption as an alliance mechanism. Furthermore, when an adoption involves a child already linked genealogically to the adoptive kin group, descent and alliance can be viewed as a logical alternative rather than as sequential status. Either descent or alliance can be invoked by this kind of transaction on any occasion to justify the adoptee's right to political power. Finally, adoption has an additional merit for political manipulations. According to Shore, there is an inevitable tension between the vertical transfer of political power through descent links and the horizontal transfer through marital ties in Samoa. Adoption of a child already related by blood solves both problems at once.

Following Shore, Brady (1976b) has attempted a preliminary generalization concerning the functions of adoption in Oceanian societies. According to him, adoption parallels birth as a recruitment principle. On the other hand, adoption is functionally equivalent to marriage in some contexts. Furthermore, adoption can also cover a domain of intergroup alliance where marriage is prohibited. Both adoption and marriage transform alliance relations into 'descent' links, and can ally unrelated groups in new and solidary relationship.

Thus, the contingency and the irreversibility of kinship

may be better understood in terms of a process rather than in terms of an opposition in Oceanian kinship systems. Similarly, sharing of land and blood may be better understood in terms of process rather than in terms of the opposition between the contingency and the irreversibility of kinship.

Sharing of Land

Lieber (1974) has proposed that land is important for action and thought for the Kapingamarangi because, as symbol, it represents sets of propositions by which the Kapingamarangi define themselves and their interpersonal relationships. According to him, the essence of Kapingamarangi kinship consists in the sharing and continuity of "life substance" which is transmitted in the procreative process. As the shared life substance decreases, the feeling of sharing decreases. Land is part of life substance *and as such land sustains life substance.* Kinsmen are fed from the shared land where the ancestors once lived and are buried. "Since kinship is sharing of and continuity of life substance, and two or more persons who consider themselves kinsmen must necessarily share land...It follows that any social relationship *involving land is a transaction between kinsmen or has* implications of consanguineal kinship" (Ibid.: 77).

Shared land as well as shared blood may mark a personal

kin universe. Brady (1974), following Silverman (1970, 1971), claims that the cultural constructs underlying the Ellice kinship can be formalized in terms of "in nature" and "in law" distinction, which parallels our distinction between contingency and irreversibility of kinship. According to Brady, the culturally posited 'fact' of biogenetic relatedness constitutes in kinship "in nature". This is symbolized by the sharing of blood and assigned specific code for conduct which entails the sharing of land. This combination of shared "blood" and shared land results in a kinship identity that obtain "in nature" and "in law". Persons with whom one shares consanguinity, land and code for conduct theoretically represent the main body of one's kinsmen.

Persons with whom one shares appropriate behavior and only blood or land, but not both are structurally more peripheral 'kin'. An estate division within a kindred creates persons with blood and appropriate behavior, while formal allocation of land to persons outside kindred produces persons with shared land and appropriate behavior. Affines and purely adoptive kinsmen are kinsmen "in law" as opposed to persons who are kinsmen "in nature" and "in law".

The concept of shared land understood as substance mediates this opposition. Formal adoption obligates the adopters to provide land for their adoptees. Furthermore, as a

result of pre-existing relationships, adoptees also may share blood. Similarly, affines may pool land with their residential sponsors at marriage. If land is not pooled, then affinal identity obtains only "in law" and can be differentiated from both formal adoption and other affinal bonds that include shared land. Kinship identities that are predicated on sharing both land and blood are believed to be pilatu "closer" and maalosiatu "stronger" than those based on sharing only one of these elements.

We can see the significance of land in the areas of group definition as well. For example, on Kapingamarangi, as long as a cognatic descent group maintains its corporate ownership of land, it maintains its identity as an ongoing social entity (Leiber 1974). When groups are too large to coordinate land use properly, the groups tend to divide their land. Then, several new descent groups emerge from the division. A similar process is reported in a matrilineal descent system in Micronesia. On Palau, a matrilineage begins with the acquisition of land from others. When all the land is lost, the lineage ceases to exist as a discrete entity. Its members are absorbed into other landholding units, remaining in low ranking positions (Smith 1981: 243).

However, one cannot simply say that those who share land

and residence are descent group members. It is because the configurations of land rights as well as the patterns of the distribution of land rights among the kinsmen are different from one societies to another. Furthermore, a person may have usufruct right over lands to which he does not have ownership rights. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to what kinds of rights are recognized over what kinds of lands and to consider how these rights are distributed and transferred among what kinds of kinsmen.

Crocombe (1974) has suggested that the distribution of land rights may be studied in terms of relationships between right holders. While some relationships are hierarchical with certain categories of right holder having superior rights to others, other relationships may involve no hierarchical relations. Alkire and Leiber show contrasting approaches to the hierarchical relation.

According to Alkire (1974), localized martilineages are the most important landholding and land working groups in "Woleai", the Caroline Island. Nevertheless, an individual does have some right to lands of his father's matrilineage. Transfer of rights from one generation to another primarily occurs within the matrilineage. When the transfer of land occurs across clan or subclan boundaries in marriages and adoptions, the donor retains

residual rights to reclaim the land and the recipient group acknowledges this right symbolically by presenting certain gifts to the former on significant ceremonial occasions. Alkire reconstructed 'the original holding' through his analysis of the gift exchange, assuming that interclan transfers of land require continued prestation. Comparing the present and 'original' holdings, he has concluded that there is a close relationship between chiefly status and the amount of land held and that political status and landholding are related to the total population of clans.

On the contrary, Lieber (1974) claims that the relationship between the land-title holders on Kapingamarangi may be understood at an ideational level. The relation between an owner and a usufruct holder is expressed as "a parent" and "a child" since the owner is feeding the usufruct holder. On the owner's part, consistent denials of exercise of usufruct will result in strained relations with involved kinsmen. On the other hand, being overtly generous, the owner will be considered foolish because he puts himself into the position of incurring land shortage through overindulgence of his generosity. On the usufruct holder's part, overexercise of his use rights puts him publicly in a position of dependency since one always exercises his usufructs as "a child" with respect to "a parent". On the

other hand, failure to exercise one's use rights can be taken by an owner as denial of kin relation. According to Lieber,

> The most important rewards the atoll society confers upon individuals, those of esteem and prestige, are acquired only in proportion to the responsibility which people are able to assume for the welfare of others. ... It is in the context of responsibility that we are able to understand the concept of wealth and why wealth should be measured only in land. ...Wealth means a set of social relations between a person and many others for whom he is responsible and over whom he is superordinate (Ibid.:91-92).

Exchange and Cross-siblingship

We have seen that sharing is a fundamental construct in Oceanian kinship systems not only in differentiation of the kin universe but also in group formation (Marshall 1977). Furthermore, kinship systems in Oceania are not merely the nomenclature for groups and kinsmen but the dynamic process where the sharing of substance and behaviors are constantly in dialectic. Lands are seen as an effective symbol which mediates the opposition between the substance and code features of kinship, while at the same time they differentiate groups and kinsmen. Similarly, the adoptive transaction may be taken as a message illuminating kinrelations between person involved, while at the same time it may transform an existing relationship into

new one.

Thus, our review of land tenure and adoption has pointed to the necessity to specify the interaction of 'genealogical' relation and kinship behaviors in the study of Oceanian kinship, even at an ideational level. Then, it is possible to suggest that the interaction of 'genealogy' and kinship behaviors at an ideational level may be restated as dialectic between the system's and actors' terms in a process of definition of kin relation.

Recent developments in studies of Oceanian social systems show the concern for sibling relations. Siblingship has been classified into parallel-siblingship and cross-siblingship. Generally speaking, parallel- and cross-siblings are seen as similar and complementary respectively. In addition, parallel-siblings, especially brothers, are looked upon as likely to compete and quarrel with one another in contrast to cross-siblings which are seen to cooperate for their mutual benefit and welfare (Marshall 1981, Huntsman 1981).

Goldman (1970) sees the sibling relation, especially the brother-sister relationship, as a key to understanding Polynesian kinship systems in general. He distinguishes parallel- and cross-sibling relations in terms of seniority and gender (dualism in Goldman's term). At the same time, he differentiates the status

system into the domestic and the public status system, both of which are regarded as extensions of the common and comprehensive status concern of Oceanian societies. The public status systems use kinship as a means of entry into still higher categories of honor and power. The domestic status refers to the family office and stands as an end of kinship itself. In associating gender relations to the domestic status system and seniority to the public status system, Goldman's formulation parallels the assertion of some feminist anthropologists, i.e. male to female as public to domestic. Although Goldman does not deny the coexistence of both principles, seniority and dualism are fundamentally opposing principles in his paradigm.

Inspired by Goldman, Ortner (1981) further explores the prestige implication of gender relation. It may be noted while Goldman examines rank in terms of the system itself, Ortner emphasizes the actor's point of view of the system. According to Ortner, while the terminological distinction of rank is in terms of seniority, the question of who falls into what category is extremely variable. In terms of system, status is fixed by birth, but a "hidden" mechanism of status advancement is available. According to Ortner, this mechanism hinges centrally on the manipulation of women, and on the manipulation of men through women, by senior males in position of authority. Here,

cross-siblingship is crucial to status advancement.

The sibling axis is both the axis of unity and the axis of division in the system. A solidarity group of brothers is the cultural ideal while the question of succession to headship of the units divides one brother from all others. A brother who fissions off with his descendants and followers is taking the very strength of the group with him. The potential for split is situated at the point of marriage and reproduction. Thus, Ortner argues that there is a systemic "interest" in delaying the marriage of junior brothers in Polynesian kinship system. However, there is an important counterforce that favors eventual marriage and reproduction by junior siblings: the reproduction of the hierarchical structure itself. Ortner claims that Polynesian adolescence may be seen as both solidifying the sibling bond and contributing to the downward mobility of junior siblings, thus reproducing relations between brothers and their descendant.

In the first place, the marriage and (legitimate) reproduction of the junior sibling is simply delayed. At the same time, adolescent culture emphasizes the importance of large numbers of affairs with a range of girls. The effects of this emotional detachment is not only to leave the sibling bond relatively unthreatened, but also to establish a weakness in husband-wife ties after marriage as well. Furthermore, the

social organization of adolescence encourages the downward social identification and mobility of junior siblings, since the elite girls and senior elite male are removed from adolescent groups. Therefore, the elite junior boy is often a leader of an adolescent group. As such, he gains a sense of prestige and leadership in relation to his structural juniors, sifting his sense of himself from one of junior elite to senior commoner. Finally, the lower status of the wife will insure lower status of the children of junior elite.

As a counterforce to this downward mobility, cross-siblingship provides an avenue for status advancement. Although in some of the stratified societies in Goldman's terminology, the ruling class is unrelated to commoners, in most Polynesian societies, the aristocrats are senior kin to their own commoner. According to Ortner, the Polynesian chiefship simply means that he has more kinsmen, e.i., more active kin ties with more groups than other member of the group, because the chief's political authority and economic functions are a function of his kinship.

Ortner suggests a mechanism in which an extensive kinship network may be transformed into seniority. For example, if a junior line can build itself up in size, strength and wealth, it can fission off and establish an independent group of its own.

Thus, the junior line may advance in its relative position in the leadership or establish a dominant position in its own group. On the other hand, there is a built-in problem in cognatic systems. Since they allow the multiple affiliation of their members, units always have the potential for losing their members. Thus, the retention of the daughters' and sisters' loyalty remains crucial to the strategies of status maintenance among chiefs.

Goldman's formulation is essentially in terms of system, while Ortner emphasizes the actors's perspective within a system. From the actor's perspective, we can see how relations between cross-siblings may be utilized for status relations between parallel-siblings. Thus, cross-sibling relations are a component of a prestige system in the public domain as well as in the domestic domain to Ortner. Forge (1972) distinguishes exchange relations into the Potlatch type and the Kula type. In Potlatch type exchange partners are opponents. On the contrary, the Kula type is the exchange where participants on each side are opponents while the exchange partners are cooperators. It may be said cross-siblingship is an exchange relationship of the Kula type. Each pair of cross-siblings may cooperate in order to gain ascendancy over other parallel-siblings who are a part of another cross-sibling pair. As Smith (1981, 1983) shows in her analysis of Palauan siblingship, land and adoption are powerful mechanism

in this exchange relationship.

A generational hierarchy of cross-sibling sets is a basis of Palauan land-based kin units. Rights to membership are determined by descent from the apical cross-sibling dyad that originally founded the unit by obtaining land. Matrilineal descendants of the founding female constitute a matrilineal decent category termed 'children of women'. The second line is formed by those individuals who are 'children of men'. Within a matrilineage the majority of 'children of the men' are patri-filiative members. As such, a men's children form an agnatic group of workers who provide their labor and services to their father's kinsmen. The relation is based on exchange whereby children must earn the right to filiate with the father's side and to continue residence on his land.

A matrilineage begins with the acquisition of land from others. When all the land is lost, the lineage ceases to exist as a discrete entity. Access to and control over these properties are based on the generational principle. Nevertheless, it is essential to realize that this lineal authority does not adhere to strict genealogical relationships. Individuals who have won valuables or land for their matrilineage qualify for higher status than older birth-right members who have failed to do so. Sisters are in competition with each other. Each seeks to win

valuables in order to enhance her own ranking and that of her children within their lineage. Brothers are in competition with each other over rights to serve a married sister, over access to valuables and over access to land.

Cross-siblings form a complementary team. They share the foods each produces and each has a claim on the labor of the other. A brother's gift of protein food to his sister or the starchy food she receives from his wife is considered to be a recognition of the sister's right to the land on which she was born. In return for the foods, labor and services, a man's wife expects to receive valuables from her husband and his sister. The exchange relationship remains asymmetrical. The husband and his lineage are in debt to the wife and her lineage until the marriage is broken.

Children are the final important resource that cross-siblings share. If a man is childless, he will take one of his sister's children. When this occurs, the man does not have to pay a valuable for the child because he already has a right by birth to his sisters children. On the contrary, a man who adopts a child from his wife's side is expected to pay an extra valuable in exchange for the child's labor. The only two things that cross-sibling may not share are intercourse and coresidence after puberty.

It is a man as wife's brother and a man as sister's husband who are linked through marriage. A woman as wife and a woman as husband's sister similarly are linked in a mutual relationship. Since a brother's wife is a primary source of labor and food for a woman, the sister assesses if the girl is a hard worker and obedient to her commands. And only if the sister decides the girl is a good investment, will her brother be able to obtain the valuable for the bride price. Similarly, a brother has interests in protecting his relation to his sister's husband. Because he has channeled the food and labor he and his wife have provided through his sister to her husband, he expects to be repaid in valuables when he needs them.

The death of either spouse or the termination of a marriage in divorce is the time when the father's lineage makes 'final decisions' concerning the value of the affinal/parental tie. The children may be permitted continued land use and conditional membership, or wife and children may be returned to their own lineage with valuable and/or land. When the latter occurs, alliance between the two lineages is terminated and the returned members rank higher within their own lineage, because they have earned valuables. Father's sisters hold the ultimate right to banish the wife and children without providing repayment, which makes the rank of wife and children lower in

rights to property.

The exchange which takes place between workers (W,WB) and owners (H,HZ) is one whereby the workers provide the food, labor and valuables that permit the owner to meet their own marital and cross-sibling obligation. The worker helps to maintain the lineage's lands while the 'children of the woman' members work for other lineages. The workers help to affirm the matrilineal member's rights to their own lands and in so doing they enhance their own ranking for land within their own lineage.

According to Smith, the cross-sibling set articulates two categories of membership: 'children of woman' matrilineal descent group members and 'child of the man' patri-filiative members. These two categories are in opposition at two levels of contrast: 'share' versus 'exchange' and 'owner' versus 'workers'. At another level of contrast these two categories are complementary in that both fulfill functions that nourish and sustain a lineage as a blood and land unit. Although we should be careful in comparing the Palauan case with Ortner's argument, it is clear that the brother-sister relations can be prominently a status system in the public domain, and that cooperation between cross-siblings provides a mechanism to transcend rank based on seniority.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to review recent trends in kinship studies in Polynesia and Micronesia. Although we can not distinguish the regional variations systematically, it may be useful to summarize the research areas which may be worthy of further elaboration. First, although the flexibility of Oceanian kinship has been regarded as an adaptive mechanism in island environments, it may be analyzed more meaningfully in terms of the prestige system in the context of Oceanian cultural systems.

Second, the status of persons and groups is not only defined in terms of seniority, but also in terms of the active kinship network they maintain. The more extensive network they have, the more potentials are available for their status advancement. The transaction of land and children are crucial in order to maintain the extensive kinship network.

Third, while parallel-siblingship is a dominant ideology in status definition, active cross-siblingship is essential in maintaining the rank of brothers and sisters vis-a-vis other parallel-siblings. This, in turn, leads to the fact that the perspective of the actor, especially of the female, is indispensable in order to understand the whole process of the prestige system. This is in accordance with the second point

since the the maintenance of the affinal and cross-sibling relations has potential for extensive kin network.

In his criticism against Mauss's "phenomenological" approach to gift exchange, Levi-Strauss has asserted that the cycle of reciprocity is the unconscious principle of the obligation to give, the obligation to give in return, and the obligation to receive. Bourdrieu has criticized Levi-Strauss's position, arguing that "the observer's totalizing apprehension substitutes an objective structure fundamentally defined by its reversibility for an equally objectively irreversible succession of gifts" (Bourdrieu 1977). In terms of actor's perspective, there is a significant difference in meaning between a gift delayed and a gift simultaneously returned. What is at issue here is a problem of context, rather than that of contradiction between ideology and behavior. While a study may construe the relationship among symbols as a system, it may fail short of understanding the meanings, unless the symbols are studied in on-going social contexts.

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