

Kinship, Networks, and Exchange. THOMAS SCHWEIZER and DOUGLAS WHITE, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. vii + 337 pp., contributors, references, index. Review: **American Ethnologist** 27: 243-244. 1999.

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This collection, aiming to revitalize anthropological approaches to kinship and exchange from a social network perspective, contains 15 original essays organized into four parts: the first part deals with kinship and the economy, the second with the issue of individual embeddedness in larger kinship and exchange networks, the third with bridewealth and dowry, and the final part with the dynamic problems of development and transformation of kin-based systems. Ten of the chapters report original ethnographic material, two reanalyze old material, and two deal with comparative/formal issues. An introductory essay by the editors, Thomas Schweizer and Douglas White, outlines what they consider to be novel elements in the network paradigm used by the contributing authors. The editors also provide useful introductions to each of the four parts.

This book is part of the Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences series, and, befittingly, Lévi Strauss's theories provide the theoretical starting point for most of the essays; network analysis is used to develop his ideas. The most interesting, novel feature of the book is the use of a new method of kinship representation: out go the triangles and circles, in comes PGRAPH, a computer generated representation developed by White and Jorion (see p. 58). The programs of PGRAPH enable a user to handle large data sets. PGRAPH also simplifies the visual representation of a kinship chart by inverting the standard system: marriages are represented as a solid dot, male descent by a solid line, and female descent by broken lines. Other data, such as property transmission, can be superimposed on the basic graph. When this method is applied to data on kinship, property transmission, and stratification in Javanese villages, as White and Schweizer have done, the result is a confusing mass of lines and dots. So natural has the traditional form of representation become that it takes much effort to learn to see kinship in this way; but it is obviously worth the effort if one wants to exploit opportunities presented by new computer technology.

But where does this new analytical method get us? The answer—a classic structuralist one—is that it enables the anthropologist to get a better grasp on the hidden order in the apparent chaos. White and Schweizer note, for example, that Javanese kinship is often seen as "loose," "unorganized," and "insignificant" (p. 42). They claim that there is more pattern than recognized hitherto and that their method enables them to detect this pattern as well as its concomitant variations. Houseman and White demonstrate a similar thesis in their reanalysis of Leach's Pul Eliya data. They argue that the marriage network plays a fundamental role in the emergence of a hitherto unrecognized statistical order in the society. The demonstration in both cases is impressively rigorous, and it moves readers from an insider's normative viewpoint to an outsider viewpoint focusing on emergent patterns of behavior.

Some essays in the collection use formalized graph theory to analyze their own data (Milicic on kinship, status, and wealth in Selo Croatia) or other people's data (Hage and Harary on the graph theoretic model implicit in the ethnography of the lau islands of Fiji). One chapter deals with purely formal aspects of sister exchange (Tjon Sie Fat), but a majority of them are free of mathematical formalism. Much quantitative material is presented, but the authors analyze this in a readily accessible way using a variety of theoretical perspectives. Rao, for example, reports the interesting case of a traditional dowry-giving group in the Western Himalayas who are increasingly demanding large sums as bridewealth. This contradicts the general trends from bridewealth to dowry, and the author accounts for it in terms of a neo-Darwinian theory of reproductive interest. Gorlich, on the other hand, analyzes the distinction between gifts and commodities

Reviews

243

among the Kobon of Papua New Guinea using a game-theoretic approach. Other papers in the collection include articles by Barnes on boat corporations and by Dietrich on "daughter selling" in Indonesia. Bock offers a chapter on the flexibility of cultural models in Meghalaya, India; Bollig and Gobel write on the pastoral economies of Kenya and the Andean highlands, respectively; Wiessner and Tumu discuss the Tee gift exchange system of Papua New Guinea; and Bell analyzes marriage transfers in comparative context.

Will this diverse but well-edited collection of essays revitalize the study of kinship? It is the latest of a number of recent books that have announced this intention. Kinship, it seems, is back on the agenda; but, given that the theoretical and methodological approach of this collection presents a sharp contrast with its competitors, the revitalization debate promises to be a hotly contested one.