Kinship structures and social cohesion

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Kinship networks in modern society

- Are they relevant?
- Contemporary society presents new problems
- Modern systems considered 'complex'; 'open' not 'closed'.
- Yet forms of structural endogamy or cohesion prevail; connections are more than expected in random marriage market
- Does not form closed social compartments, but open structures
- Kinship and social networks – anthropological/sociological questions, ideas crucial

What is kinship?

- The field of blood and marriage relationships and those recognized as 'kinship' relations

- Adoptive kinship; step relations; effective kinship; practical kinship; important relations; fictive kinship

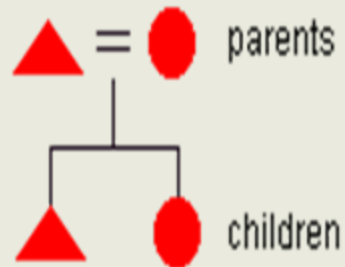# Preliminary uses of kinship network study

- Marriage and conjugal ties
- Group placement and social identity
- Inheritance and succession
- Resource distribution
- Authority and power
- Migration patterns
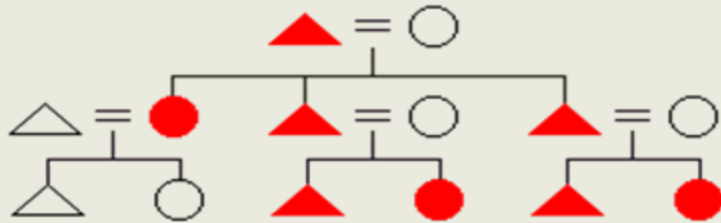- Support systems (natural crisis, conflict, poverty, dislocation)

Genealogies

- The chain of kinship relations across generations is mapped onto a genealogical grid
- The grid is a schemata or a skeleton on which can be hung
  - Life histories and group histories
  - Resource histories
  - Studies of succession and inheritance
  - The formation of closed or open systems of affinity and allocation
  - The overlap of kinship and other ties to form strong/weak networks
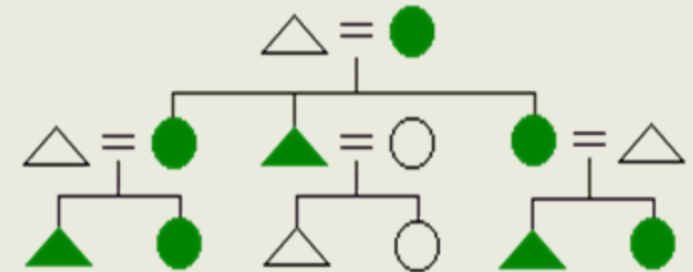
The basic symbols of kinship

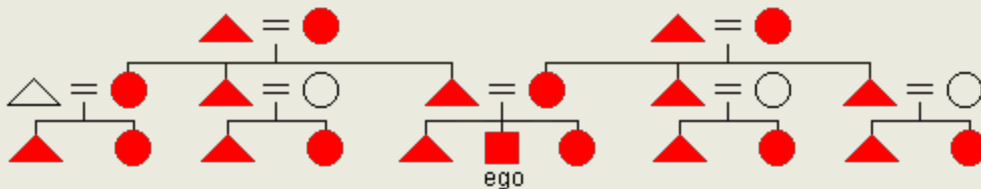▲ male   ● female

= marriage bond

| descent bond

— codescent bond

▲ = ● parents

▲ ● children

▲ male

● female

■ male or female

▲ = ●
Fa Mo

▲ ■ ●
Br ego Si

Descent

Patrilineal Descent

Trace descent in one line only. Ego belongs to either father's or mother's family.

Matrilineal Descent

Bilateral Descent

Trace descent from male and female ancestors. Children are members of both their father's and mother's families.

Alliance

- Theory of exchange:
  - restricted (sister exchange)
  - generalized exchange
    - patrilateral cross-cousin [symmetrical] marriage
    - matrilateral cross-cousin [asymmetrical] marriage)
- How is society connected in these different types of exchange?
- Hypergamy: what happens in such systems?
- Relationship between bride-givers and bride-takers
- The Rajputs (dowry) and the Kachins (bridewealth)
- Forming new networks for prestige: Bourdieu's case of preferential parallel-cousin marriage and its exceptions

Kinship and Social Network Theory

- Marriage and kinship generally approached through
  - Abstract modes of rules
  - Terminologies
  - Attitudes and norms
  - But also look at practices of kinship, effective kinship, support networks
- Social network theory has provided
  - Ideas of closed networks
  - Connectedness
  - Reachability
  - Compactness, density
  - Content of the links
    - Flow of communication, exchange content
    - Single-stranded or multiplex links
    - Interactional aspects
    - Directness versus reciprocity
    - Strength and intensity of relationships
    - Frequency of interactions

Extended Uses of networks in kinship studies

- Families operate in networks with weak and strong ties
- Networks of families use other institutions to do their work
- Studies of social and political elites; social class formations; strength of family networks in governance, ownership, trade; elite family networks in modern institutional, banking and corporate structures; corporate ownership; networks of economically dominant families; caste and kinship; corruption & nepotism studies
- Contextualized sociological/anthropological theory and direct observation/forms of fieldwork
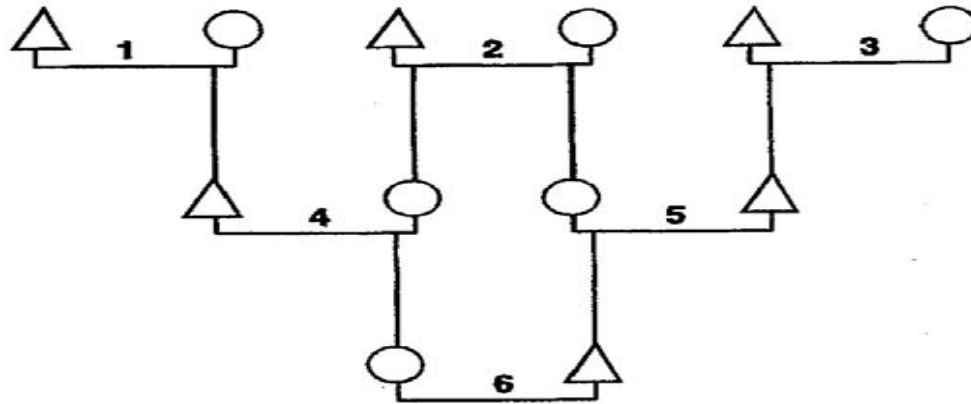
The P-Graph

- Computer-generated representation

- Can handle large data sets including multiple social ties and property flows

- To understand it, will require input of social rules, norms, cultural context

- Bring together social scientists, mathematicians, computer scientists and others
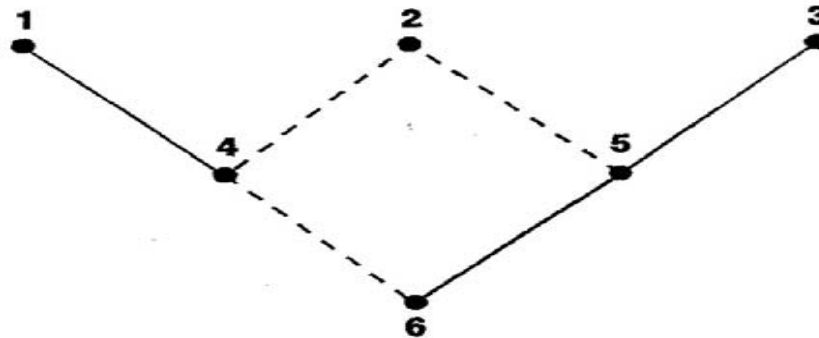
Genealogy and P-Graph

- **Genealogy constructed (Kinship as a Tree)**
  - By taking individuals as starting point
  - Noting their gender
  - Their marriage/relationship partners
  - Their children
  - Their parents

- **Network constructed**
  - Nodes/vertices in network represent states of sexual union including marriage, co-habitation or other coupled, uncoupled states of individual)
  - Lines represent individuals who connect them either as partners or offspring (Gender shown by different types of lines – broken and unbroken)
  - MS-DOS software: Ego2cpl.exe converts raw genealogy to pgraph format
  - Pgraph.exe creates graphics, does analysis and simulations

(a) Genealogical chart: individuals as points with marriage and descent lines [numbers refer to couples]

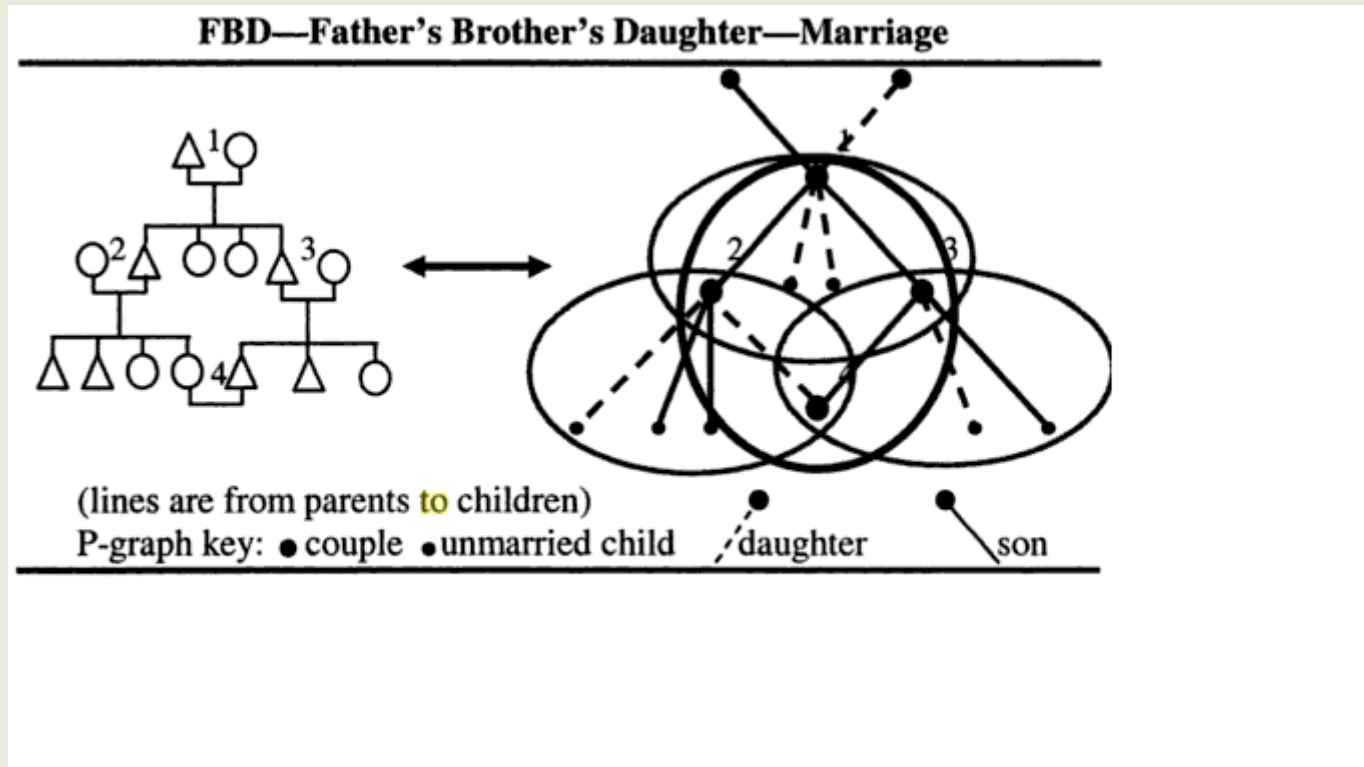(b) PGRAPH: couples as points, solid lines for males, broken lines for female descent

(c) PGRAPH data: input in vector format

couple #	1	2	3	4	5	6	0 indicates unknown ancestry
husband's parents	0	0	0	1	3	5	male descent vector
wife's parents	0	0	0	2	2	4	female descent vector

Figure 3.1 An Illustration of the Old and the New Kinship Representation

PGRAPH of closed cycle of relationships

FBD—Father's Brother's Daughter—Marriage

(lines are from parents to children)
P-graph key: ● couple ● unmarried child ╱daughter ╲son

Bicomponent is a subgraph with 3 or more vertices in which any pair is connected by 2 independent paths. (White et al. 253).

Graph Network Analysis

- Valuable with big databases
- Complex societies
- The ideas of social network theory in sociology together with the new mathematical-based network analysis can help us to
  - Study actual networks
  - Explore concrete relations in a population
  - Have a basis for examining marriage alliance theory, population structure
    - Including endogamy and exogamy
    - Inbreeding and subgroups: forms of cohesion
    - Social ordering possible in endogamic blocks
    - Social formations such as classes, strata, ethnicity