

Two Forms of Iroquois Cousin Terminology and Their Functions

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This paper deals with two forms of Iroquois terminology. The Iroquois type of kinship system is generally regarded as a relatively stable type. Nevertheless, it is a type which is transitional to a mature or more highly developed form of kinship organization. The two forms of Iroquois terminology referred to are represented among two dialectically closely related Wintun societies in central California. One society has what may be called the normal or relatively stable Iroquois terminology. The other society also possesses Iroquois organization but utilizes kinship terms which makes it possible for the kinship system to change readily into either of two other types of kinship systems.

Iroquois cousin terminology is one of the six possible types of kinship systems or ways by which cousins can be classified in any society. Although the Iroquois type of cousin terminology is present among the Iroquois tribes, it is also found among many other societies throughout the world. Thus the name of a particular type of cousin terminology is derived from societies which were studied first, most intensively studied, or from areas over which a type is widely distributed. The type names are those defined by Murdock (1949) which are Eskimo, Hawaiian, Iroquois, Sudanese, Omaha and Crow. The presence of a specific type of terminology among widely separated societies does not imply historic connection or association of any kind.

Present day American society classifies its kindred in accordance with principles which place it within the Eskimo type of kinship system. Each type of cousin regardless of whether it is father's brother's children (Fa Br Ch), father's sister's children (Fa Si Ch), mother's brother's children (Mo Br Ch), or mother's sister's children (Mo Si Ch) are all classified together by utilizing the common English term "cousin." In the Hawaiian system all cousins are classified together as in the Eskimo system but each is also classified with and called by the same terms utilized for brother and sister. In Iroquois terminology a distinction is made between cross and parallel relatives. Cross cousins would be Mo Br Ch and Fa Si Ch since the relationship of mother to mother's brother and father to father's sister crosses or changes the sex line in the parent generation. Fa Br Ch and Mo Si Ch are termed parallel cousins because there is no cross or change of sex line. Iroquois cousin terminology can be defined as a type of kinship classification system in which cross cousins are classified together but they are not classified with parallel cousin or brother and sister. Distinction of sex may be made so that father's sister's daughter (Fa Si Da) is called by a different term than father's sister's son (Fa Si So). Yet, in so far as cross cousins, according to sex, are classified together in accordance with the definition, the system is termed Iroquois. In the Sudanese type of cousin terminology each cross cousin, such as Fa Si Da and Mo Br Da, is called by a distinct term and neither term is classified with any other relative. Sudanese terminology is frequently descriptive so that Fa Si So would be called simply father's-sister's-son.

The Omaha system like the Sudanese differentiate the two cross cousin and neither term utilized for a cross cousin is classified with parallel cousin or brother or sister. The Omaha kinship system differs from the Sudanese by classifying the cross cousin with certain other relatives. In the Omaha system Mo Br Da is terminologically classed with Mo Si and/or Fa Si Da with Si Da. When male relatives are classified in the Omaha system, Mo Br So is classed with Mo Br and Fa Si So is classed with Si So. The Crow system of classifying relatives is in essence the opposite or reciprocal of the Omaha system. In the Crow kinship system, cross cousins are called by different terms and neither are linked with parallel cousins or brothers and sisters. Fa Si Da is classed with and called by the same term as Fa Si and/or Mo Br Da with Br Da. Fa Si So is classified with Fa Br and/or Mo Br So with Br So.

Using only female terms each type of cousin terminology may be briefly outlined as follows:

Eskimo: Cross and parallel cousins classified together but they are differentiated from sisters.

Hawaiian: Cross and parallel cousins are classified together and they are classed with and called by the same term as sister.

Iroquois: Both cross cousins classed together but they are differentiated from parallel cousins and sisters.

Sudanese: Cross cousins are differentiated from each other and neither are classified with any other relative.

Omaha: Cross cousins are differentiated from each other and other relatives except Mo Br Da is classified with Mo Si and/or Fa Si Da with Si Da.

Crow: Cross cousins are differentiated from each other and from other relatives except Fa Si Da is classed with Fa Si and/or Mo Br Da is classed with Br Da.

The type of kinship terminology by which a society classifies its kindred is not arbitrary but is dependent upon or associated with specific types of social organization. In societies whose social organization is organized around bilateral principles, the type of cousin terminology usually associated with bilateralism is either Eskimo or Hawaiian. An Omaha kinship system is generally associated with patrilineal organization while Crow terminology is the matrilineal equivalent. Sudanese cousin terminology is functionally in equilibrium with unilinear organization, but its limited and localized distribution results in its almost exclusive association with patrilineal societies. Iroquois terminology is found among societies which have either matrilineal or patrilineal organization. White (1939) has suggested that the Iroquois kinship system is generalized type and that Omaha and Crow are mature or more highly developed forms of Patri or Matri-organization. Murdock (1949) confirmed White's hypothesis by demonstrating the following:

1. Societies with Iroquois terminology had more traits which were not in harmony with matri—or patri—organization than did societies with Crow or Omaha organization.
2. Initial or early forms of matri—or patri—structure, such as

matri—or patri—clans or families, were more often found in societies with Iroquois terminology than with Omaha or Crow.

3. Mature or late developing structures such as moieties were more often present in societies with Crow or Omaha kinship terminology than with Iroquois.

Although Iroquois terminology can be considered as a transitional form, it is also a relatively stable form of organization. Murdock's sample of societies confirm the stability of Iroquois terminology. In his sample there are more patrilineal tribes with Iroquois terminology than with Omaha. In a similar manner there are more matrilineal tribes with Iroquois terminology than with Crow. Among most societies with Iroquois terminology the shift from Iroquois to Crow or Omaha requires considerable modification of the kinship system. However under certain circumstances the shift may be made quite easily. One means of making this shift is present if a society with an Iroquois type of terminology has the terms aligned in such a manner that Crow and Omaha linkages are present. The stable form and the transitional form of Iroquois terminology are present among two closely related north Wintun dialects.

The following Table I taken from Gifford (1922) indicates the terms used by the Northwestern, Northern and Northeastern Wintun dialects

TABLE I. Kinship terms utilized by the Northwestern, Northern and Northeastern Wintun which indicates Omaha and Crow Relationship.

<i>Relative</i>	<i>N. W.</i>	<i>N.</i>	<i>N. E.</i>	<i>Linkages</i>
Fa Si	Puta	Puta	Puta	Crow
Fa Ol Si Da	?	Puta	Nene	
Fa Yr Si Da	?	tcami	Nene	Omaha
Si Da	tea	tcami	tcami	
Mo Si	Nene	Nene	Latelbet	Omaha
Mo Ol Br Da	Nene	Puta	Nene	
Mo Yr Br Da	Nene	tcami	Nene	Crow
Br Da	Bitcende	Pukwi	Pukwi	

for various relatives critical to the classification of cousin terminology type.

Table I indicates that the Northwestern Wintun have an Omaha linkage in that Mo Br Da is classified with Mo Si. Since Gifford did not list a term for Fa Si Da the type of cousin terminology possessed by the Northwestern Wintun cannot be determined with certainty from the data available.

The Northeastern Wintun has a typical or stable form of Iroquois terminology. Mo Br Da, termed "nene" is classified with Fa Si Da and neither are classified with any other critical classificatory relative. To make the shift to the Crow or Omaha system, the cross cousin must be differentiated and the proper link with another critical relative be established.

Among the Northern Wintun the cross cousins are classified together which makes the classification of the system Iroquois but two terms rather

than one are used. The Northern Wintun makes a distinction between the older and younger sibling of the parents. Thus "Putu" is the term used to indicate mother's older brother's daughter and father's older sister's daughter. While "tcami" is used to indicate father's younger sister's daughter and mother's younger brother's daughter, the use of these terms for cross cousins give the Northern Wintun both Crow and Omaha linkages. Fa Ol Si Da, "Putu," is classified with Fa Si which is a crow linkage and Fa Yr Si Da, "Tcami," is classified with Si Da which is an Omaha linkage. Since the linkages are already present, the Northern Wintun could shift to either Crow or Omaha terminology by a simple process of loss of terms. In this situation it would involve only the loss of the distinction between the relative ages of the parent's siblings. By retaining the terms used to designate Fa Ol Si Da and Mo Yr Br Da and by dropping the terms used to indicate Fa Yr Si Da and Mo Ol Br Da the Northern Wintun could shift out of Iroquois into the Crow system. In a similar fashion by retaining the terms for Fa Yr Si Da and Mo Ol Br Da and dropping the terms for Fa Ol Si Da and Mo Yr Br Da, the shift from Iroquois to Omaha terminology could be made.

To state that a transfer of cousin terminology system could be made need not necessarily imply that such a transfer will be made. Yet the presence of both Crow and Omaha lineages gives the Northern Wintun a system of cousin terminology which is functionally out of balance with other elements of social organization. There are no social forces present which would tend to cause the alignment of Mo Br Da with either Fa Si or Si Da. Among the Northern Wintun there would be pressure to dissociate these relatives either by equating Mo Br Da with Mo Si or Br Da. The tendency to link Mo Br Da with Mo Si would arise as a result of patrilineal ties or Mo Br Da with Br Da would develop from matrilineal association. If the forces present were bilateral instead of unilateral, there would be a tendency to drop Omaha and Crow alignments and to equate Fa Si with Mo Si and Si Da with Br Da.

Whether the forces operating upon the kinship system are bilateral or unilateral can not be determined. It seems clear that the forces present are causing a trend away from the Omaha type of organization. In the central California area Omaha cousin terminology is quite common but many societies appear to have moved out of it. Among the six Pomo dialects, four have Omaha organization but evidence suggests that the Southwestern Pomo has shifted from Omaha to Hawaiian terminology and the Southern Pomo has made the shift from Omaha to Crow. The Wappo which has Crow organization has several Omaha survivals in their kinship system indicative of former Omaha organization. Among six of the Yokuts' dialects, three have Omaha organization and three have Hawaiian. Evidence suggests that the Hawaiian type developed from former Omaha structure. It is also clear that the Iroquois terminology of the Northern and Northeastern Wintun is derived from former Omaha organization.

The Northern and Northeastern Wintun are closely related dialects. Their dialect relationship to the Northwestern Wintun is more distant. Yet the Northern and Northwestern Wintun have terms in common for Mo Si "nene" while the Northeastern Wintun has a unique term "Latci-

bet." Also the Northeastern and Northwestern Wintun utilize the same terms for Mo Br Da "nene" while the Northern Wintun utilize two terms "Putá" and "tcamí." The two different types of Iroquois terminology indicate that the Iroquois terminology is of recent origin and did not develop until after the two closely related dialects had diverged. It is also apparent that the former system was Omaha. The Northwestern Wintun are still Omaha since they classify Mo Br Da with Mo Si by utilizing the common terms "nene." Since "nene" is Mo Si in Northern Wintun and Mo Br Da in Northeastern Wintun it indicates that these are old terms for these relatives and that each would have formerly been Omaha. "Latcibet" which is Mo Si among the Northeastern Wintun and "Putá" and "Tcamí" which is Mo Ol Br Da and Mo Yr Br Da respectively are recent innovations which developed as a result of the movement out of Omaha organization.

Although the Northern Wintun could move toward a bilateral type of organization instead of toward Crow organization, the Northern Wintun form of Iroquois terminology at least indicates a means whereby the transition from Omaha to Crow structure or vice versa could take place easily and rapidly. With the Northern Wintun form of terminology, a society could change from one system to another with only loss or substitution of terms which would not involve the more difficult process of invention. Since a rapid change is possible, one might question the validity of White's hypothesis that Crow or Omaha represents exclusively the mature forms of matri- or patri-organization. How valid this criticism may be cannot at present be determined because the frequency of a rapid change from Omaha to Crow or vice versa is not known.

The Northern Wintun form of Iroquois terminology also casts doubt upon one of Murdock's hypotheses. Murdock has postulated that the change from matri to patri-organization can occur very rapidly but that the change from patri to matri is an exceedingly difficult process. The Northern Wintun form of terminology would make one shift as easy as the other. One central California group, the Southern Pomo, seems to have made the shift from Omaha to Crow in an exceedingly short period of time.

In summary we can state that the Iroquois type of terminology is one of six possible types and that each type results from forces which are present in a society's social organization. Normally, Iroquois terminology is relatively stable and the transition to Crow or Omaha terminology involves a considerable amount of modification of the kinship system. The Northern Wintun form or variant of Iroquois terminology represents one means whereby the transition to Crow or Omaha can be made easily. Thus normal Iroquois terminology functions as a stable system while the Northern Wintun form functions as a transitional type.

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