

PATTERNS OF PREFERENTIAL MARRIAGE AMONG THE ALASKAN HAIDAS¹

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In recent years kinship studies have taken some new turns. Concern is no longer primarily with the tracing of origins or distributions—the significance of the general social function of the total kinship organization, apart from the mere terminological system, has come to be emphasized. Students of kinship in this country (Eggan, Schmitt, Opler) as well as in England (Evans-Pritchard, Fortes) have concerned themselves with the place of the kinship units in the functioning society and even with the effects of acculturative influences upon the dynamic, changing kinship system (Spoehr, Schapera). Also in recent years, more precision in stating the actual incidence of various social behaviors has come with the anthropologists' interest in sociological statistical methods, and the growing emphasis upon the range of behaviors in standard situations among as many members of a society as can be ascertained, rather than the concentration upon the ideal (and idealized) pattern as obtained from the statements of a select few informants. (Lewis, 1953; Spoehr, 1947).

Since this statistical documentation of generalizing statements has not been appreciable in earlier works, we encounter the usual problem of new methods of investigation—little comparative data. This latter aspect of the problem can be surmounted, I feel, for kinship studies, by a careful analysis of genealogical material. This is possible because of the nature of the data—it consists essentially of records of individual overt acts, marriages between members of the culture under study which can be dated relative to the age of the informant who is a member of the genealogical record. When this is tied to knowledge of the culture during the time through which genealogical information may be ascertained, we can analyze the relations of the changing ranges of standard behavior to aspects of the changing cultural scene. In exemplification of this method, I have attempted here to give precise numerical documentation to trends observable in an acculturation situation and in one aspect of the kinship system—marriage patterns and the presence and absence of various culturally defined preferential mates.

In the Crow type kinship system of the Haidas, there is a special emphasis placed upon the mother's brother and the father's sister and their lines, both sets of cross cousins being distinguished from each other and from the parallel cousins who are classed with siblings. In the actual social organization of the Haidas, the father's sister (and her female lineal descendents) were ceremonially important, and the mother's brother was the most important figure in the actual household group to which the individual belonged. Murdock (1934, pp. 368-9) points out the importance of the father's clan, singled out with a special

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term and characterized by a joking relationship which was also a feature of the close bond between members of the same moiety whose fathers were clansmen (Allen, n.d.). It is these features, plus the organization of the aboriginal society into exogamous moieties and matriclans, loosely associated with specific villages (de Laguna, 1952) that are the important underlying factors affecting the aboriginal kinship patterns.

I would like to examine here the evidence of certain marriage patterns among the Alaskan Haidas, as recoverable from genealogies collected at Hydaburg, the last Alaskan Haida community, in 1952, with special emphasis upon marriages into clans already related by blood or marriage to the individual, and the tendencies to marry individuals standing in certain real or classificatory relationships to each other. Since I will roughly group the individual marriages into three chronological groups, certain trends associated with periods of acculturation will be uncovered.

In Group I, I have placed those individuals who were not yet born or were still under twenty when the communities of Howkan and Klinkwan were merged and the "progressive Christian community" of Hydaburg established in 1911. In Group II, I have placed individuals who were no more than twenty when Rev. Gould established the first permanent mission at Howkan in 1883, setting up church, boarding school and sawmill, and initiating a period of intense and directed acculturation to American middle class Protestant culture. This was also the period of the establishment and growth of the commercial salteries and canneries which made a cash crop out of the aboriginal basis of subsistence. The community houses were deserted as the individual family became economically independent and the religious importance of the father's sister and the economic and educational primacy of the mother's brother were made less important. In Group III are those earlier, as far back as the informants could remember, for all of these fell into the same earlier period of acculturation—when the main contact agents were the men of the maritime fur vessels and the traders who established posts in the territories of the Northwest Coast tribes without attempting to direct the acculturation of the Indians except toward an acceptance of, and desire for, the new trade goods. Individuals of unknown age were placed with their siblings of known age.

I have recorded 159 marriages in Group I; 162 in Group II and 178 in Group III for a total of 499 recorded Kaigani Haida marriages. This includes, of course, in each group a few marriages where the clan of one or both parties was unknown, but this remained constant in each period and forms only 10.4% of the total.

The information, presented in Tables I and II, tells us something about three classes of marriages: into related and unrelated clans; into forbidden clans; into non-Haida groups. It also gives us information about marriages with specific clans, such as that of the father, marriages into affinally related clans, and some information regarding the identification of the father's sister's daughter and the mother's brother's daughter.

TABLE I. TOTAL MARRIAGES AMONG THE ALASKAN HAIDAS

	Group III		Group II		Group I	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Marriages into related clans ¹	10	31	33	25	10	10
Marriage into own moiety	1	1	5	5	9	7
Marriage into own clan	—	—	1	—	7	5
Marriage into unrelated clan ²	62	48	34	38	29	35
Total no. of marriages to Haidas	73	80	73	68	55	57
Total marriages to other natives	6	2	3	12	6	13
Total marriages to whites	—	17	2	4	5	23
TOTALS	79	99	78	84	66	93
	178		162		159	

¹into clans mentioned in same genealogy in ascending generations or older siblings.

²into clans not mentioned elsewhere in same genealogy in ascending generations or among older siblings.

Firstly, there appears to be a sharp reduction in the number and percentage of marriages into related clans, from 41 cases in Group III to 20 in Group I; from 32% of all marriages in Group III to only 20% of all marriages in Group I. (Better knowledge of the immediate ascending generations on the part of the informants and hence more accurate records, could be responsible for the increase shown in Group II—58 marriages, over 48% of all marriages.) Assuming any form of preferential marriage and interclan relations reflected in preferential marriages, this would indicate a breakdown in such sentiments and practices in the present era of acculturation.

Another indication of the breaking down of the older associations related to clan and moiety membership can be seen in the statistics for marriages into the same moiety, prohibited when aboriginal ideas of clan and moiety exogamy prevailed. There has been a steady increase of marriages into the same moiety from 2 in Group III to 10 in Group II and 16 in Group I. There were no marriages between members of the same clan in Group III and only 1 in Group II, but 12 in Group I. In fact, over 17% of all marriages in the youngest group—the group which is losing the use of sibling terminology for fellow clansmen—are with members of the same clan or moiety.

I feel that the apparent increase in marriages to members of other tribes is probably more apparent than real: some marriages of lineal ancestors in Group III to members of tribes of less prestige, or under suspicious circumstances such as possible captivity and slavery, have been 'forgotten'—there are indications of this in certain discrepancies in some genealogies. In view of the past history of inter-tribal visitings, trade and marriages in this culture area, the only significant statement that can be made on this subject today appears to be in the way that social contact between members of various tribes are made—today the young people marry members of tribes met at government school or privately operated church schools, and this has led to marriages not only with other coast Indian tribes, but also with Athapascans, Eskimos

TABLE II. MARRIAGE INTO RELATED (HAIDA) CLANS

	GROUP III						GROUP II						GROUP I					
	% of M	% of T ²	% of F	% of T ²	% of F	% of T ²	% of M	% of T ²	% of F	% of T ²	% of F	% of T ²	% of M	% of T ²	% of F	% of T ²	% of F	% of T ²
consanguinal—																		
Fa clan	8	10.1	4	4.0	12	6.6	8	10.4	4	4.8	12	7.4	4	6.1	7	7.5	11	6.9
MoFa clan	-	-	3	3.0	3	1.6	2	2.6	4	4.8	6	3.7	1	1.5	3	3.2	4	2.5
MoMoFa clan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4.8	4	2.6	2	3.0	2	2.1	4	2.5
MoHus clan	-	-	1	1.0	1	0.5	5	5.9	1	1.1	6	3.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
FaFa clan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.5	-	-	1	0.6
affinal—																		
Spouse's clan	3	3.8	3	3.0	6	3.2	2	2.6	2	2.4	4	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
SisHus clan	8	10.1	13	13.1	21	11.7	7	9.1	6	7.1	13	8.0	-	-	2	2.1	2	1.3
Browi clan	5	6.3	7	7.1	12	6.6	6	7.8	5	5.9	11	6.9	2	3.0	-	-	2	1.3
Browi clan	1	1.3	1	1.0	2	1.0	3	3.8	3	3.6	6	3.7	-	-	2	2.1	2	1.3
MoMoBrowi clan	-	-	1	1.0	1	0.5	-	-	1	1.1	1	0.6	1	1.5	1	1.1	2	1.3
MoSisHus clan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3.6	3	2.0	2	3.0	1	1.1	3	1.8
other individuals	1	1.3	-	-	1	0.5	-	-	12	14.3	12	7.4	2	3.0	1	1.1	3	1.8
total no. relationships T	26	32.9	33	33.3	59	32.2	33	42.3	45	53.5	78	48.6	15	22.5	19	20.3	34	21.3
marriages to related clans T ¹	10		31	41			33		25	58			10		10		20	
actual no. of marriages T ²	79		99	178			78		84	162			66		93		159	

and "State Indians." Of course, cultural resemblances are getting more widespread as aboriginal culture patterns lose ground to the overriding white ways.

There has been a decided change, however, in the nature and amount of inter-marriage with whites. After forming 9.6% of all marriages in Group III, and all of these being Haida women and white men, marriages with whites dropped to less than 4%, two thirds Haida women, in Group II and rose to 18% of all marriages in Group I, with one-sixth of these being marriages of white women to Haida men. (There is no significant difference in the pattern allowing for the size of the sample, when Group I is broken down into those resident in Hydaburg and those living elsewhere in Alaska or the United States).

The forces leading to the disruption of the ties with the home community are probably similar to those leading, or contributing, to the marriages outside of the tribe and race—increased education and acquisition of skills enabling better competition in the white world plus loss of strong family ties. The forces bringing back the Haidas and incorporating their white wives and husbands within the community seem in most cases to be those of unusually strong and cohesive families. All three of the white women in Group I residing in Hydaburg and a third of the men are married to members of two unusually close-knit families with no members of this generation living elsewhere than in Hydaburg at the present. There is also a tendency, difficult to present statistically, toward a history of marriage to whites in certain families, from marriages recorded in Group III down to the present.

When we turn to a study of marriages into clans already related through ties of kinship, we see that the father's clan leads all other consanguinally related clans in all groups: over 6% of the total marriages in Group III, over 7% in Group II and nearly 7% in Group I. This is surpassed or closely matched in Groups III and II by marriages into clans affiliated by previous marriages of siblings, but in many cases these were also in the father's clan—the system of counting employed herein hides the relationships of any one person with the related clans in order to show the range of total relationships.

The largest proportion of marriages into affinally related clans in Group III—which persisted into Group II—was to sister's husband's clan; over 11% in Group III with 6% marrying into the brother's wife's clan in this group, and only 8% and 7% respectively in Group II. Consistent with the general lowering of percentages of marriages to related clans, less than 3% in Group I are marriages to members of clans of siblings' spouses. In Group III a larger percentage of women than men married into clans related by marriage of siblings of either same or opposite sex and in Group II there is a slight reversal, still not statistically significant.

The significance of the sex ratio of marriages into related clans is in general unexplained by any knowledge of social conditions possessed by the writer; three times as many women as men married into related clans in Group III, about a 7 to 5 ratio exists the other way in Group II and equal proportions in Group I. The only one of these that would appear significant from the size of the sample would be in

Group III, and our knowledge of the subtleties of social organization during the aboriginal and early contact periods is sadly lacking.

In both Group III and Group II, twice as many men as women married into their father's clan, which is nearly reversed from Group I. In view of the pattern of inheritance of titles and positions from the mother's brother it has been suggested or surmised that there would be a high incidence of marriage of the men to the mother's brother's daughter. Yet equal numbers of men and women married into this clan in both Groups III and II and there are actually more marriages all along, absolutely and percentage-wise, into the clan of the father's sister than into that of the mother's brother's wife—which would be the respective clans of the real and classificatory father's sister's daughters on the one hand and mother's brother's daughters on the other. Table III shows the number of actual marriages of men to these cross cousins.

TABLE III. MARRIAGES OF MALES TO CROSS COUSINS

	Fa clan	FaSisDr	MoBroWi clan	MoBroDr
Group III	8	—	1	—
Group II	8	—	3	*
Group I	4	—	1	**

* mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter

** mother's mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter

There may easily be an additional factor operative in this situation which would encourage marriage into the clan of the father's sister. This is, of course, in the matrilineal system of the Haidas, also the clan of the father. We have already noted an emphasis upon the clan of the father, expressed in a joking relationship both with members of this clan (who are members of the opposite moiety and hence potential mates) and also with those whose fathers are members of ego's father's clan (all of whom are member's of ego's moiety and hence forbidden as marriage partners). But we may venture the suggestion that the close and pleasurable association with the father's clan, the emphasis upon friendly and intimate and non-disciplinary relations, may be expressed among other ways by a preference for the women of that clan, among all the potential mates who are members of the several clans of the opposite moiety. The maintenance of a joking relationship with apparently certain relatives in both of the exogamous moieties is of great theoretical interest, and deserves further study among other peoples for whom joking relationships are reported.

When we turn to marriages to the real rather than the classificatory cross cousins, we find no marriages recorded with the true father's sister's daughter. While there are likewise no marriages recorded with the true mother's brother's daughter there are single cases in Group II and I of marriages carrying the relationship one and two generations further back, which along with the previously unreported extension of the term for mother's brother to mother's mother's brother (Allen, n. d.) indicates or suggests an overriding of generational lines complementary to the downward extension of the term for father's sister. But on the basis of these genealogies, any attempt to identify, first the mother's

brother's daughter with the father's sister's daughter; the theoretical result of symmetrical cross cousin marriage, or alternatively to show a differential relative incidence of marriage with one or the other of these cross cousins, must return the Scot's verdict of "not proven."

The application of this quantitative analysis to genealogical material shows, then, in one more way that theoretical analyses of the logical principles of kinship terminology and organization must be supported, modified, and—in effect—applied by and through sociological materials. Further, the sociological knowledge which elucidates the practices of kinship customs must be based upon studies which take into account the range of human behaviors in standard situations. A preliminary study such as this, of a people whose complex social organization has become so highly influenced by our own, is of importance mainly to indicate what should be done in more favorable circumstances. Such studies should be made of functioning non-Western societies still maintaining a major share of aboriginal social organization and also among peoples of relatively unelaborate organization, such as the Eskimo or northern Athapascans.

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