

## THE ESKIMO TRADING PARTNERSHIP IN NORTH ALASKA:

A STUDY IN "BALANCED RECIPROCITY" <sup>1</sup>

by

Ernest S. Burch, Jr.

University of Manitoba

The notion of "reciprocity," while not necessarily the oldest or best established concept in the social sciences, is one which has been around for quite awhile, and it is one which has received the attention of a number of noted scholars. Among the names associated with the subject are Becker (1956), Blau (1964), Gouldner (1960), Homans (1958), Levi-Strauss (1949), Malinowski (1922, 1926), Mauss (1966), and Polanyi (1944, 1959). It is a topic which is attracting increasingly widespread interest among both sociologists and anthropologists.

In a recent paper, Marshall Sahlins (1965) attempted to reformulate the whole study of "reciprocity." He points out (1965:144) that there is a "popular tendency to view reciprocity as balance, as unconditional one-for-one

- 
1. The material obtained in 1960-61 was collected while I was a Research Assistant in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alaska in conjunction with Human Ecological Investigations at Kivalina (U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, Project Chariot). The work in 1964 and 1965 was supported in part by the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago. The 1967 research was carried out while returning from the Working Party Conference on Human Adaptability Studies of Eskimos at Barrow, Alaska. Travel funds for that conference were provided by the National Research Council of Canada. Additional transportation was generously provided by Dr. Max Brewer, Director, Naval Arctic Research Laboratory, Barrow, Alaska. The Northern Studies Committee and the Research Board of the University of Manitoba provided funds to assist in the preparation of this material for publication.

An early draft of this paper was read by David Damas, Marshal Sahlins, and Robert Spencer, and their comments were most useful. They are in no way responsible for the positions presented here.

The support and assistance of the above individuals and organizations is gratefully acknowledged.

exchange.” Following Blau (1964) and Gouldner (1960), Sahlins (*Ibid.*) argues that “considered as material transfer, reciprocity is often not that at all.” Reciprocity may be *in* or *out* of balance; it is a “whole class of exchanges, a continuum of forms.” This conception, he says (1965:139), “developed out of a dialogue with ethnographic materials,” and he offers his conclusions “as a plea to ethnography rather than a contribution to theory, if those are not . . . the same things.”

The purpose of the present study is to respond to Sahlins’ plea by examining in detail a particular relationship which is especially appropriate for consideration under the heading of “reciprocity” because of its predominant “exchange” orientation. It is also one of the examples that Sahlins (1965:190) mentions in the appendix to his paper. The analysis is intended primarily as a contribution to ethnography. Indeed, I fear that it may contribute to a theoretical regression since the relationship I am about to describe is a nearly stereotypical case of “reciprocity” in the most classic sense of that term.<sup>2</sup>

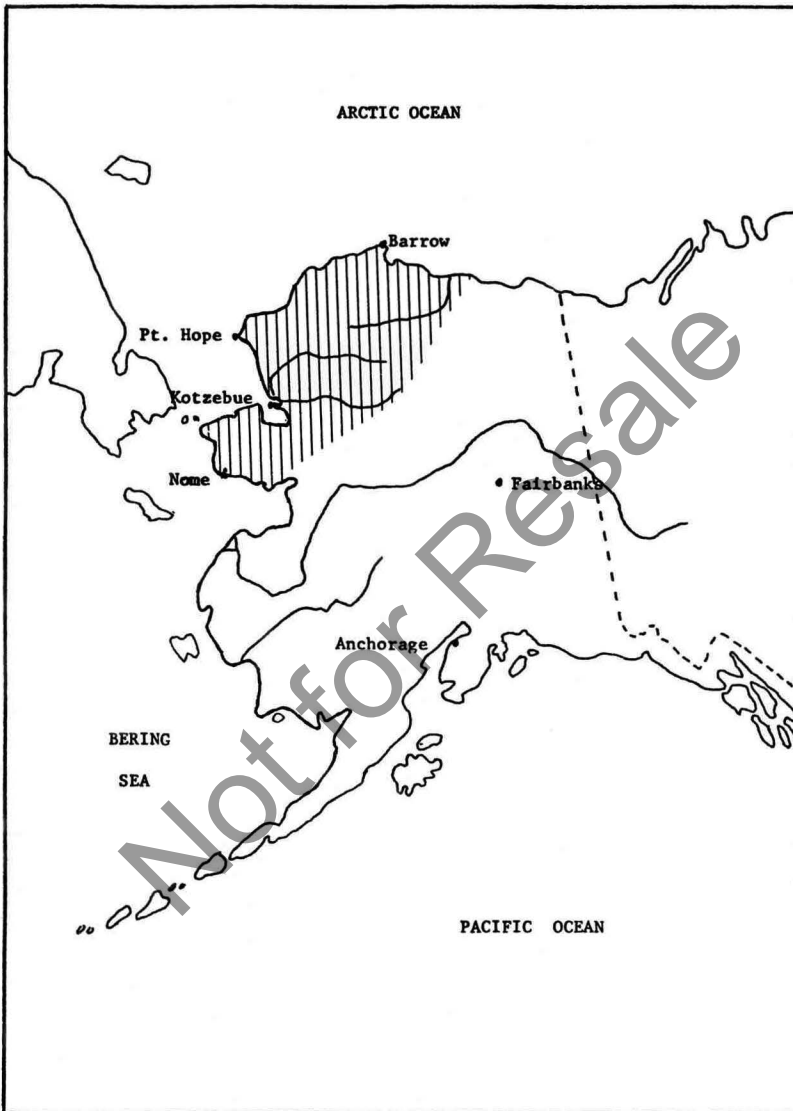
## THE TRADING PARTNERSHIP

The relationship under consideration is generally known in English as “trading partnership” of the North Alaskan Eskimos. In the native language, it is referred to as the association of *niuviriik* (dual). It is a relationship voluntarily established between two individuals who are not related on a kinship basis and in terms of which action is primarily oriented to the exchange of goods and/or services. It was not the only nonkin relationship in the traditional society, nor was it one of only two such relationships, as R. F. Spencer (1959:83) suggests. It was, however, one of only a very small number of nonkin bonds that were distinguished in North Alaska in traditional times, and it was almost surely the one with the greatest strength.

The present analysis focuses on the trading partnership as it is and was manifested among the North Alaskan Eskimos. In traditional times, the people covered by this label lived in

2. The approach employed in this paper has been adapted from the work of M. J. Levy, Jr. (1952: Chapters VI and VII; 1966: 133-174, 220-230). Explicit definitions of the technical terms included in this paper can be found in the works cited.

# ALASKA



Hatching indicates territorial focus of paper

northwestern Alaska between (roughly) the mouth of the Colville River, on the northeast, and the southern coast of the Seward Peninsula on the southwest.<sup>3</sup> Between those two points, the Eskimos operated in terms of the same general social system, in both inland and coastal areas. Whether or not the trading partnership, or something like it, occurred elsewhere in the Eskimo world is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice to say that I have not seen or heard of it occurring anywhere in Canada or Greenland, although in former times it, or something like it, may have been common in southwestern Alaska (Correll 1968).

In view of the extensive literature on North Alaska, it is surprising how little has been written about the trading partnership. To my knowledge, the first publication to even mention it by name was Spencer's (1959) monograph on the region. His study contains its first description, as well as a relatively thorough analysis of its place in the larger social setting of at least part of what I am calling "North Alaskan Eskimo Society." Beyond that, Gubser's (1965) volume on the people of Anaktuvuk Pass is the only one that devotes more than a few lines to the subject. Giddings (1961) mentions it in passing, as does VanStone (1962). Unfortunately, the latter author confused it with the "exchange sibling" (*qatangun*) relationship, from which it is quite distinct in the Eskimo scheme of things. Beyond that, only Pospisil (1964) seems to have been more aware of partnerships. Although he comments on its general importance in the society, he doesn't do more than that.

The present account is based on a combination of my own research in North Alaska and on the literary sources

---

3. This is a much broader definition of the notion of "North Alaskan Eskimo" than that used by R. F. Spencer in his (1959) monograph bearing that title. He restricts the label to the people living only in the northern half of the area, considered here (i.e., north of the Continental Divide in the Brooks Range).



cited above.<sup>4</sup> Of the latter, Spencer's (1959) account was by far the most useful. In many respects, the present study can be regarded as an elaboration on and extension of his work on the same subject. Primary reliance in writing this article, however, was placed on my own material.<sup>5</sup> The data was obtained in 1960-61, 1964, 1965, and 1967, primarily in Kivalina, but to a limited extent also in Barrow, Point Hope, Noatak and Kotzebue. Information was acquired through a combination of formal and informal interviews, observation of partnerships in operation, and personal participation in one such relationship. My wife also has a "trading partner" in the area.

## NORTH ALASKAN ESKIMO SOCIETY

Compared with Eskimo societies in Canada and Greenland, North Alaskan Eskimo society was both relatively large (at least 15,000 members), and complex, although it may have ranked lower in both respects than the Eskimo societies in southwestern Alaska. Within the area there was considerable regional variation in many aspects of life. In general, three major patterns of yearly cycle were involved (cf. Oswalt 1967: 118ff., and Spencer 1959: 126ff.). Most numerous were the people who spent virtually the entire year at or near the coast, living in permanent villages which

4. In an effort to keep separate the sources of the material presented in this paper, I have included "see" references where my own data are supplemented by those of the author cited. Other references follow conventional procedure. They indicate either that the author cited was the sole source of my information, or that my information conflicts with that of the author involved. It should be noted that the literary sources disagree with one another on various points, and that the present account will differ to a certain extent from all those published so far. Areas of disagreement vary from matters of little significance to those of some importance. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these, it is only fair to warn the reader of their existence. It is worth mentioning in this research among full-time coast dwellers, Gubser (1965) lived among the full-time inlanders, and I worked primarily among a group that, traditionally, was intermediate between the two extremes. No doubt many of the discrepancies between our accounts can be explained on this basis.
5. Although this paper is intended as a contribution to ethnography, it does not consist of a recitation of raw data. Rather, the analysis is a descriptive summary of the information in my field notes and in the references cited.

sometimes had several hundred inhabitants. These year-round coast dwellers lived primarily on sea mammal products, fish, and caribou, with distinct seasonal and regional emphasis on one or the other. The third pattern involved those individuals, relatively few in number, who lived in small camps far inland. They subsisted primarily on caribou products, with some regional emphasis on trout and/or salmon. These “true inlanders,” if they got to the coast at all, did so only for a few weeks in summer when they attended the summer “trade fairs.”

The trade fairs, which were centralized annual markets, brought together a substantial proportion of the entire society at one of two major locations each summer. One was held at the mouth of the Colville River, and the other, a much larger one, was held on Kotzebue Sound. Representatives of all areas of North Alaska met at these events. The Kotzebue fair also drew people from Siberia and Southwest Alaska, and the Colville River fair sometimes attracted people from the MacKenzie delta region in Canada. In addition to being one of the very few contexts in which complete strangers could associate with one another peacefully in the traditional society, the fairs provided the primary opportunity for trading partners who lived in different regions within the general North Alaskan area to come together. Often, this was the only time that they could meet during the year.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, it was only at the fairs that many partners could effect the exchanges appropriate to the relationship. Much of the interchange of goods that went on at the fairs, if not most of it, was carried out in terms of partner relationships.

North Alaskan Eskimo society is no longer in existence, having been subsumed some seventy or eighty years ago by the United States. The trading partnership has continued to

---

6. It is probably for this reason that the concept of the trading partnership has been so intimately associated with the annual fairs by the few who have written about it. My own data suggest that those partnerships which were activated only at the fairs represented an end point in a continuum whose other terminus involved partners who were in almost daily contact throughout much of the year. It is true, however, that partnerships were most numerous at the former end of the line, probably by a substantial margin.

persist in essentially its traditional form, however, at least on a general level,<sup>7</sup> but its place in the overall social system has changed drastically. No longer one of the requisite structures of the society, it is now little more than part of the traditional frosting on what is a rapidly modernizing cake. Nonetheless, most adult Eskimos in North Alaska are members of at least one trading partnership, and many are involved in several. New partnerships continue to be established, although probably not at the rate that members of old ones are passing away.

## MEMBERSHIP

The "membership" of any relationship is the "who" of that relationship. Given a particular relationship, who may belong to it, and who may not? These factors are never random, but are structured along with the other characteristics of the relationship concerned. The analysis of the membership of Eskimo trading partnerships in North Alaska will thus include the following areas of consideration: membership criteria, recruitment procedures, and termination procedures.

## MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

The underlying concern in the establishment of most partnerships, especially in traditional times, but often still today, is that of *need* as perceived by the individuals involved. When one has need of particular goods and/or services, and for some reason he cannot obtain them through the operation of the kinship units of which he is a member, he seeks to institute a partnership with someone from whom he can. When one is seeking a partner, therefore, he must always demonstrate two things: first, that he has a need which the other person can satisfy, and second, that the other person has a need which the first can resolve, both on a continuing

---

7. For this reason, most of the account which forms the body of the paper will be placed in the present. Except where indicated otherwise, this should be taken to mean that the same general patterns pertain to both the traditional and the contemporary periods in North Alaska. Where there is a difference between the two, it will be specified.

basis. To the extent that these conditions are not met, either partnerships are not likely to be established in the first place, or they are likely to be unstable if they are.

The majority of an Eskimo's material needs are likely to be met through the operation of kinship units. But given the normally limited geographic scope of effectively operating kinship units, and given the diversity of various regions in North Alaska, it is more or less inevitable that some "needs" have less chance than others of being fulfilled by kin organizations. These unfulfilled requirements, in turn, form the basis of the predominant type of partnership, which involve full-time coast dwellers, on the one hand, and full-time inlanders on the other (see Gubser 1965: 1331, 160, 179; Pospisil 1964: 408; Spencer 1959: 146, 168, 170, 194, 450). The former have the smallest supply of caribou skins, and the latter are capable of meeting the resulting demand. The inlanders, however, have the smallest supply of seal oil and skins, and the coast dwellers have the greatest ability to provide them. Since in traditional times both types of goods were considered basic necessities by the Eskimos, their absence constituted a definite need. Furthermore, it was one which was normally not resolved through the operation of kinship units. It was *readily* alleviated through partnerships involving individuals from different ecological zones. The third category of people, i.e., those who spend half the year inland and the other half on the coast, were able to look after themselves reasonably well with respect to both caribou and sea mammal products. At the same time, they did not generally have sufficient surpluses of either to serve as the basis for effective partnerships. The search for partners living in ecological zones different from one's own was a widespread practice in traditional times.<sup>8</sup> It still is today, although the matter of "need" is more for luxuries (e.g., muskrat skins for fancy parkas in return for whitened sealskins for fancy mukluks) than for basic necessities. Any perceived need can serve as the basis for an effective partnership, however, and those mentioned above are simply the most common. They were especially so in traditional times.

---

8. Similar situations seem to occur in many regions where there is a significant volume of interaction between inhabitants of different ecological zones. See Malinowski (1926:23) on the Trobrianders and Eidheim (1966) on the Lapps for purposes of comparison.

The categories of kinsmen (*ilagiit*) and trading partners (*niuviriik*) were and are considered mutually exclusive (see Pospisil 1964: 408; Spencer 1959: 85, 167, 179, 172, but cf. Spencer 1965: 144). When informants were confronted with the hypothetical possibility of relatives becoming partners, they pointed out that such a situation would be ridiculous: why "make partners" with a kinsman when, by virtue of the kinship tie, one has stronger claims on a wider variety of goods and services than is remotely conceivable in terms of *any* sort of nonkin bond? Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that individuals known to be relatives establish a partnership. Such an occurrence is a sure sign that the particular kinship tie which connected them in the first place was so insignificant to the people concerned as to be virtually nonexistent for all practical purposes (see Spencer 1959: 170). Cases of this sort were regarded by informants as a bit odd, though, since a better way to achieve the same objective would be to replace a weak kinship connection with a stronger one, a relatively easy thing for Eskimos to do (Burch 1966: 90ff.).

Theoretically, sex is irrelevant in the choice of a partner. Partnerships can be established between two men, two women, or between a man and a woman. Numerous instances of all three possibilities have been attested in both the traditional and contemporary periods in North Alaska (see Gubser 1965: 160; Spencer 1969: 177). As a result of the extreme division of labor along sex lines in the traditional society, however, sex was usually a germane consideration in the choice of a partner. If a man wanted a new pair of boots, for example, he could get them from his wife; he did not need a partner. But, his wife would need raw skins from which to make the boots, and it was her husband's responsibility to get them for her. Therefore, if a man lived in a locality where seals could not be obtained, it behooved him to have as a partner someone who could provide them. Such an individual was most likely to be another hunter, i.e., another man. Since lack of raw materials constitutes the "need" element in most partnerships, and given the fact that the direct exploitation of natural resources is primarily the responsibility of men, the chances of men requiring partnership connections with other men are and were much greater than those of the other two sexual combinations. The

Eskimos are fully aware of these and other related factors, and they seek partners accordingly. The result of the various possibilities is that partnerships involving two men are (and were) the most common, those involving two women are (and were) next in frequency, and those involving a man and a woman were (and are) least common.

Age characteristics too are theoretically irrelevant in the choice of a partner, but there are certain obvious practical limitations. Infants, for example, are physically incapable of entering into an effective partnership with anybody, as are the very aged, although neither category is ideally excluded from partnership associations. Within those practical limits, virtually all possible combinations occur: youngsters become partners with other youngsters, adults become partners with other adults, and youngsters become partners with adults.

Most frequently, partnerships are established between adults of more or less the same age. Adults are capable of fulfilling the obligations of partnership more satisfactorily than either youngsters or the aged, and they also have a greater "need" for partners. Furthermore the choice of a partner of approximately the same age avoids a number of potential pitfalls which would almost certainly arise between individuals of clearly disparate ages. For example, the partnership is institutionalized as being an egalitarian one. In most areas of North Alaskan Eskimo life there is a pronounced differential allocation of authority on the basis of both absolute and relative age. The rule of "older over younger" permeates virtually all areas of an Eskimo's existence. The pattern is so pervasive, and so strongly institutionalized, that it is quite difficult for individuals of significantly different ages to act as equals even on those rare occasions when they wish to do so. The Eskimos are fully aware of this, and avoiding such situations is obviously a germane consideration when looking for a partner. The few exceptions that have come to my attention are all characterized by very limited content, and are usually very weak.

The selection of a partner is further limited by the problem of how much one can give in return for the goods and services provided by the partner. Although the partnership is institutionalized as being highly altruistic in nature, the giving is supposed to be mutually beneficial, not

Eskimos are fully aware of these and other related factors, and they seek partners accordingly. The result of the various possibilities is that partnerships involving two men are (and were) the most common, those involving two women are (and were) next in frequency, and those involving a man and a woman were (and are) least common.

Age characteristics too are theoretically irrelevant in the choice of a partner, but there are certain obvious practical limitations. Infants, for example, are physically incapable of entering into an effective partnership with anybody, as are the very aged, although neither category is ideally excluded from partnership associations. Within those practical limits, virtually all possible combinations occur: youngsters become partners with other youngsters, adults become partners with other adults, and youngsters become partners with adults.

Most frequently, partnerships are established between adults of more or less the same age. Adults are capable of fulfilling the obligations of partnership more satisfactorily than either youngsters or the aged, and they also have a greater "need" for partners. Furthermore the choice of a partner of approximately the same age avoids a number of potential pitfalls which would almost certainly arise between individuals of clearly disparate ages. For example, the partnership is institutionalized as being an egalitarian one. In most areas of North Alaskan Eskimo life there is a pronounced differential allocation of authority on the basis of both absolute and relative age. The rule of "older over younger" permeates virtually all areas of an Eskimo's existence. The pattern is so pervasive, and so strongly institutionalized, that it is quite difficult for individuals of significantly different ages to act as equals even on those rare occasions when they wish to do so. The Eskimos are fully aware of this, and avoiding such situations is obviously a germane consideration when looking for a partner. The few exceptions that have come to my attention are all characterized by very limited content, and are usually very weak.

The selection of a partner is further limited by the problem of how much one can give in return for the goods and services provided by the partner. Although the partnership is institutionalized as being highly altruistic in nature, the giving is supposed to be mutually beneficial, not

One is for the children of partners to become partners in their own right (see Spencer 1959: 169). This is not regarded as inheritance. Such cases are the result of a desire on the part of the children to maintain a tradition which has proven satisfactory. It frequently happens too that individuals become partners of their spouse's partner's spouse. For example, two women might establish a partnership with each other simply because their husbands are partners, the motives again being the desire to maintain or strengthen already existing connections. A third situation occurs when two friends (*tuaqatigiik*) decide to "make partners." By doing so, they make it possible to operate in terms of a relationship which is distinctly stronger than the original, hence it is one that received substantially more institutional support. It is my impression that, in recent years, the majority of partnerships established in Northwest Alaska are of this last type; in traditional times, they seem to have been uncommon.

A final matter to be discussed under the heading of "membership criteria" is the number of partners that any individual might have. There are no theoretical limits, but there certainly are practical ones. In traditional times, when the relationship was quite a demanding one, one or two partners seem to have been all that the average person could cope with. While most individuals could not afford to be without partners, they could not afford to have too many of them either. An *umialiq*, on the other hand, might have as many as five or six partners (see Gubser 1965: 133, 160, 179; Pospisil 1964: 408; Spencer 1959: 169-170). In recent years, as the content of partnerships has decreased, the number of partnerships that any one individual can belong to has increased. The average still seems to be one or two partners, but the range is from zero to as many as a dozen or more. As the number of one's partners increases, the volume of activities involved in the relationships must decrease. Individuals with more than three or four partners seldom do more than send them small gifts every few years. Such relationships exist in theory, but are characterized by minimal content and strength.

## RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Given the appropriate membership criteria, a partnership is a relatively easy matter to institute. Stripped to the bare



essentials, a partnership is established once two procedural requirements are executed. The first of these is the offer of a gift on the part of one individual and its acceptance by another. The initial gift does not have to be returned immediately, although the relationship is not considered fully established until it is. The second requirement is that the individuals concerned call each other *niuviriga* ("my trading partner").<sup>9</sup> If this requirement is not met, no amount of gift giving suffices to establish a partnership. On the other hand, even a very small gift, plus the use of the term *niuviriga* is enough to establish a partnership that can last a lifetime.

In traditional times, when a partnership was a much more serious matter than it is today, the "bare essentials" outlined above were usually supplemented in various ways. In those days, a partnership was rarely entered into without at least some advance planning on the part of the individuals involved. For example, two people who had met several times, more or less by accident, at the summer trade fairs, and who perceived possibilities for a partnership, might agree to establish a partnership one year, but not actually set it into operation until the following one (Spencer 1959: 168, 169). Under such circumstances, it was customary for the potential partners to bring large quantities of goods with them to the meeting so as to get the relationship started on the right footing. The initial giving would be reciprocal, and possibly conducted in a relatively formal manner. Regardless of the details, it seems that in traditional times, an agreement to "make partners" was almost always reached some time before any goods changed hands.

In recent years the establishment of a partnership has become markedly more casual. In one case that came to my attention, for example, the members have never even seen each other, in spite of the fact that they have been partners for several years. The initial contact was made by mail, at the suggestion of a mutual acquaintance, and the relationship has been maintained ever since through postal and air freight services.

---

9. The active use of the label for a relationship is a critical factor in its establishment as a representative of an institutionalized pattern. The procedure is involved in all areas of Eskimo life, and is not unique here.

## TERMINATION PROCEDURES

Ideally, once a partnership is established, it is expected to last throughout the lifetimes of its members (see Gubser 1965: 160, 161; Spencer 1959: 172). In Eskimo theory, only death can terminate a partnership. In actual fact, a number of circumstances can produce this result.

One possibility is for partners to become kinsmen. This situation can come about in any one of three possible ways. If partners are male and female, they can get married. In such a case, the partner relationship is replaced by the husband-wife bond. Although this sort of thing is apparently uncommon, I know of at least one specific case where it occurred. A second possibility is that the *relatives* of two partners might marry, with the result that the partners automatically become “in-laws” of one sort or another. Whether or not such a situation actually results in a change depends on a number of contextual and personal factors. The third possibility is for partners to become involved in a co-marriage, or “exchange marriage” situation (Burch 1966: 81ff., 154ff.).

Both Gubser (1965: 133) and Spencer (1959: 83, 130, 172, 450; 1965: 144) claim that partnerships were “reinforced” by an exchange of spouses, and Spencer especially emphasizes this point. My own data disagrees. My informants emphatically denied any connection between partnerships, on the one hand, and exchange marriages on the other. According to them, while it is true that partners *could* become involved in an exchange marriage, such an affair would not strengthen the partnership, it would terminate it. It would strengthen the relationship between the *individuals* involved, but it would do so by replacing the partnership bond with one or another of the co-marriage relationships. All of the above possibilities are normally regarded by the Eskimos as improvements of already satisfactory situations, although they do result in the termination of partnerships.

Most often, though, partnerships are terminated through the operation of chance or personality conflicts, or as the result of a more or less rational assessment of the state of affairs of the relationship by one or both members. Chance can operate to eliminate a partner through death, or, especially in traditional times, it could find partners so far removed from one another physically that they could not meet even on an annual

basis. The latter problem has been removed in recent years as a result of United States mail services in the area. The possibilities of personality conflict are sufficiently obvious as to eliminate the need for elaboration. The matter of rational assessment needs some discussion, however.

If one's partner consistently fails to live up to the obligations of the relationship, there is considerable motivation for putting an end to it, in spite of ideal prescriptions to the contrary. An important consideration here is whether the partner concerned is simply *incapable* of being a good partner, as opposed to being *unwilling* to be one. Eskimos are quite aware of the problems of poverty, and when one's partner falls on hard times, his failure to live up to the requirements of the relationship is not usually regarded as offensive, at least for awhile. Under such circumstances, the member who is better off is under some obligation to help out his less fortunate partner. In a sense, that is what partnership is supposed to be all about. Inevitably, there is a point of diminishing returns.

What really leads to difficulties is when a person who has the means refuses outright to live up to his obligations. The refusal to act like a partner when one has the capability constitutes in and of itself the *coup de grace* to the association. Generally, partners go to considerable lengths to avoid even the merest semblance of stinginess of this sort. For example, if one's partner asks for some seal oil and none is available, it is customary to offer anything else he wants instead. This is done with the explanation, and usually the demonstration, that the initial request is literally impossible to meet. Under such circumstances, a "good" partner will ordinarily not take anything at all, preferring to let his counterpart recover financially first. If, instead, he does take something else, especially if it is a particularly valued item, the "donor" will probably let it go, but may then regard the relationship as finished. A similar result will occur if one continually makes unreasonable requests of his partner. Greed in asking is as effective in breaking the bond of partnership as is stinginess in giving. Blau's (1964: 111) observation that "overwhelming others with benefactions serves to achieve superiority over them" is also pertinent here. An imbalance through over-generosity disrupts the relationship just as much as one resulting from stinginess.

(32) *Vol. 9, no. 322, folio 487, July 10, 1832 — to the manager of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, Kolmakov.*

The general manager cancels the debts of those Aglegmiut who formerly worked for the company but have been discharged or have died.

(33) *Vol. 9, no. 388, folios 281-83, September 16, 1832 — to the Kodiak Office.*

Wrangell reports his arrangements with Kolmakov for a trip to the Kuskokwim River basin beginning in the fall of 1832.

(34) *Vol. 9, no. 460, folios 345-51, October 31, 1832 — to the main office.*

Wrangell reports the condition of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt at the time of his visit there during the summer of 1832. He recommends the sending of a hunting detachment into the interior (see nos. 26, 30, 33) in order to increase the trade for beaver pelts. The report also contains an evaluation of the usefulness of the Aglegmiut living near the redoubt to the company and a favorable appraisal of the influence of Father Veniaminov's preaching at Aleksandrovskii. Veniaminov, who accompanied Wrangell, was making his second visit to the redoubt.

(35) *Vol. 9, no. 555, folio 444, November 16, 1832 — to the main office.*

On August 29 Kolmakov began his journey to the Kuskokwim drainage.

(36) *Vol. 10, no. 184, folios 102-103, May 9, 1833 — to the captain of the vessel going to Nushagak.*

Instructions are given concerning the channel of Nushagak Bay and the necessity of obtaining an Aglegmiut guide at the village of Ekuk. A map of the bay was apparently included with this communication but is now missing.

(37) *Vol. 10, no. 185, folio 104, May 9, 1833 — to the manager of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, Kolmakov.*

The general manager requests Kolmakov to report in detail about his trip to the Kuskokwim River in 1832-1833 and include an account of the pelts bartered.

(38) *Vol. 11, no. 27, folios 18-19, March 11, 1834 – to the Kodiak office.*

Wrangell lists the prize money awarded to Kolmakov and the members of his expedition to the Kuskokwim River and refers to a second expedition which Kolmakov led to the same area in 1833-1834.

(39) *Vol. 11, no. 58, folios 35-43, April 10, 1834 – to the main office.*

Wrangell defends his decision to send Kolmakov on two trips to the Kuskokwim River basin and points out that these expeditions were more useful to the company than those of Vasiliev.

(40) *Vol. 11, no. 72, folios 92-95, April 10, 1834 – to the main office.*

Wrangell reports concerning Kolmakov's journeys to the Kuskokwim in 1832-1834, gives an account of the furs bartered, assesses the value of future expeditions to the area, and discusses the advisability of establishing an *odinochka* on the Kuskokwim.

(41) *Vol. 11, no. 73, folios 95-97, April 10, 1834 – to the main office.*

A fairly detailed account of Kolmakov's second expedition to the Kuskokwim River basin in 1833-1834, including a report of furs bartered and a reference to a bad flood at Aleksandrovskaia Redoubt in October, 1833.

(42) *Vol. 11, no. 74, folios 97-98, April 10, 1834 – to the main office.*

Wrangell recommends that wolf and wolverine pelts be sent to Aleksandrovskaia Redoubt because Kolmakov reports that they are of value for bartering with Kuskokwim River people for beavers.

(43) *Vol. 11, no. 272, folios 251-54, May 9, 1834 – to the manager of Aleksandrovskaia Redoubt, Kolmakov.*

The general manager congratulates Kolmakov on the success of his first expedition to the Holitna and Kuskokwim rivers and informs him of the prize money he, Lukin, and other members of the party have been awarded.

(44) *Vol. 11, no. 273, folios 254-57, May 9, 1834 — to the manager of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, Kolmakov.*

Wrangell writes to Kolmakov about the possibility of shipping furs from the upper Kuskokwim River to Aleksandrovskii Redoubt by way of the mouth of the river and discusses the possibility of establishing an *odinochka* at Goodnews Bay. Meanwhile, Kolmakov is urged to proceed with plans for staffing the *odinochka* near the mouth of the Holitna River and urge more Aglegmiut to work for the company.

(45) *Vol. 12, no. 188, folios 177-79, April 30, 1835 — to the main office.*

Wrangell notes that Kolmakov has sent his assistant to the Kuskokwim and is himself staying at the redoubt.

(46) *Vol. 12, no. 256, folios 151-53, April 30, 1835 — to the main office.*

Wrangell doubts the usefulness of trips into the interior from Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, since this results in fewer pelts traded at the post itself. The number of beaver pelts taken between 1827 and 1830 are given and it is noted that an *odinochka* has been established on the Nushagak near the mouth of the Nuyakuk and on the Kuskokwim at the village of Kwigmpainagmiut.

(47) *Vol. 12, no. 266, folios 249-50, May 11, 1835 — to the manager of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, Kolmakov.*

The general manager complains that the most recent trip to the Kuskokwim River was not as profitable to the company as it should have been, but that the same amounts of prize money as before is being awarded. Kolmakov is urged on to greater efforts.

(48) *Vol. 12, no. 267, folios 250-52, May 11, 1835 — to the manager of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, Kolmakov.*

Having received Kolmakov's reports of September, 1834 and February, 1835, the general manager congratulates him on the success of his hunting expeditions and his diligent work at the redoubt. Kolmakov is further informed of the decision not to establish an *odinochka* at Goodnews Bay and to allow the "iliamnins" (Tanaina Indians of Iliamna Lake) to hunt in the Nushagak area.

institutionalized as being a highly responsible one, aid should be offered whenever possible. The service feature, especially the timing element, is extremely important in determining how good a partner one has. The North Alaskan Eskimos have (and had) a sophisticated and sensitive conception of the law of supply and demand. In addition, especially in traditional times but to some extent still today, they exist under conditions in which the supply of a given commodity can vary widely from season to season and from year to year. The demand undergoes variations accordingly. In a lean year a poke of seal blubber for example, might be worth fifty or even a hundred times its value in caribou skins in a year of abundance. In traditional times the absence or presence of a supply of blubber could mean the difference between abject poverty and relative comfort, and the Eskimos judged its worth on those grounds. Likewise, in recent times, when one has just returned from the cannery with two thousand dollars in his pocket, a five-dollar bill is worth next to nothing. But seven months later, when all the money is gone and a favorite child's birthday is approaching, a five-dollar bill is worth a great deal. The "very best" partners are those who consistently come through with help just at the time it is most needed, regardless of the value of the item involved at any other time. Even today, although survival itself is no longer a factor in such matters, the grateful response "Just when I needed it!" symbolizes the fact that however large or small the gift, the timing and the appropriateness are what really matters.

For a partnership to remain stable through time, it is essential that the goods and/or services produced by both members be equal in value, at least over the long run.<sup>10</sup> By "equal in value" I mean that the principals must consider them as such. In traditional times, when the Eskimos had no highly generalized medium of exchange, there was no objective indicator of the relative worth of any and all goods and services. Consequently, what was "equal in value" to something else involved a considerable subjective assessment of the situation. It would take into account not only the intrinsic worth of the goods but also the various considerations discussed in the preceeding paragraph. Nowadays, the Eskimos think of value in

---

10. Gouldner (1960: 171, 172, 175, 177, 178) makes a number of pertinent points about the matter of equivalence. See especially his footnote (no. 42) on page 172.

terms of United States dollars. Still, partners do not keep records of gifts given or services rendered (or received), and an impressionistic reckoning over the years remains the basis for evaluation.

Closely related to equality in the allocation of goods and services is equality in the allocation of power and responsibility. One of the features which makes the trading partnership so satisfying an association to an Eskimo is the fact that the relationship is institutionalized as being strictly egalitarian (see Giddings 1961: 149; VanStone 1962: 93). The only power that one member has over the other results from the voluntary submission of the latter to the former, or else from the threat of withholding certain goods or services that one's partner has come to count on. The latter procedure is directly opposed to the ideals of partnership, and, although it might be effective for a brief period, it is almost certain to lead to the eventual dissolution of the relationship if maintained for long. Given the possibility of unilateral termination of the relationship, there are very narrow limits to which this sort of thing can go before one or the other partner decides to put an end to the association.

## SENTIMENT

The trading partnership is institutionalized as one involving positive affect of relatively high intensity. Partners are supposed to be good friends in the sense understood by most twentieth century North Americans. In general, a partnership begins on a more or less neutral basis, with the intensity building up gradually over time. It is inevitable that the sentiment involved be of a positive nature, since due to the lack of structural reinforcement, as soon as it veers toward the negative pole, the relationship is likely to be terminated. The only exceptions to this rule seem to come in circumstances where one has a clear-cut, and otherwise insoluble, need for the services of a particular partner. Such a relationship has a highly individualistic orientation, however, and is likely to be terminated anyway as soon as the immediate crisis is past, or as soon as another source of supply presents itself. Situations of this sort are virtually nonexistent today, since the "needs" are no longer as crucial as they once were. They appear to have been uncommon in the traditional period as well, although they did occur from time to time.



As I noted previously, a partnership of some duration is likely to be an extremely satisfying association, for a number of reasons. In the first place, a good partner can make a major contribution toward reducing the insecurity of marginal subsistence. When times get hard, one can count on the help of his partner. Second, and more significant, a partnership provides one of the very few opportunities that an Eskimo has to associate with one whom he can treat as an equal. The overwhelming majority of his relatives have to be dealt with as either superiors or inferiors (Burch 1966: 289ff.), and, among the Eskimos, one has relatively little to do with nonrelatives. This situation was much more pronounced in traditional times than it is now. Third, a partnership is likely to be satisfying because it involves individuals who associate with one another because they *want* to, not because they are forced to. Again, since the partner relationship contrasts in this respect with most kin relationships (*Ibid.*), these conditions are relatively uncommon for an Eskimo. A fourth and final element in the sentiments of partnership is the feeling of gratitude for the assistance given by one's partner. I have never observed or heard about a partnership of any duration in which each member is not obviously grateful for things that his counterpart has done for him.

The sentiment involved in partnership is expressed in various ways. Perhaps the most effective way to indicate high regard for a partner is through a strong effort to live up to the ideals of the relationship. Good partners of long standing usually make a point of giving each other presents in addition to any standard ones that might be involved in their relationship. But it is important never to give too much, and the giving of "supplemental" gifts is something that gradually develops, in small increments, over the course of several years. It is also good form to make requests of a partner — at least if they are requests that he is capable of filling. The relationship is institutionalized as being of such a highly responsible nature that one can make one's partner happy by giving him the opportunity to help in some way. The simplest way of doing this is by asking for something that one *knows* the partner can give.

In addition to the above means, partners convey their feelings for one another by a lack of restraint in one another's presence that is unusual in Eskimo relationships. Contrary to

common opinion, the North Alaskan Eskimos are not the “happy, smiling people” that they are generally pictured to be. They often are with non-Eskimos, but not among themselves. In traditional times, when they were outside their own house, the men especially tried to be restrained, if not altogether forbidding in their demeanor. But with partners, they could be — and were expected to be — quite demonstrative, smiling, laughing, and talking in a loud voice (see Gubser 1965: 160, 161). Mild joking, too, was permissible between partners, although they were not supposed to carry it to the point of a true “joking relationship” as that term is generally understood by anthropologists.

Partnerships in which the giving is one-sided, non-existent, infrequent, and/or limited to relatively useless goods or services invite emotions that are at best neutral or ambivalent, and at worst strongly negative. Partnerships in which the giving is mutual, frequent, and helpful are the source of considerable pride and pleasure to the individuals who participate in them. Although it is nearly impossible to demonstrate such things definitively, I am becoming increasingly convinced that it is the quality of the sentiment with which partnerships are often imbued that enables them to withstand the formidable set of forces which operate to dissolve them.

## STRENGTH

The strength of any relationship is the relative precedence, or lack of precedence, taken by a relationship over others of its general sort and over other obligations and commitments in the larger social sphere (Levy 1952: 350). Although it is difficult to measure such variables precisely, it appears as though in traditional times, the trading partnership was institutionalized as the strongest nonkin relationship in North Alaskan Eskimo society (see Spencer 1959: 248, 450). The relationship was weaker than every possible kinship tie, at least ideally. If the difficulties associated with maintaining an egalitarian relationship were one of the primary sources of internal trouble in partner relationships, it is this general weakness compared to kinship ties that constituted the primary source of complications from outside. Theoretically, one's obligations to *any* kinsman had to take precedence over those to a partner.

Fortunately for partners, it is (and was) uncommon for kinship and partnership obligations to conflict. It is to one's advantage not only to have good partners oneself, but to have relatives with good partners. This is the case, because within kinship circles everyone gets to share in the wealth to at least some degree. Partners are a primary source of supply of especially scarce goods; in a purely economic sense, "that is what partners are for." Consequently, one usually does anything he can to support the satisfactory partnership of a relative, from treating the relative's partner with the utmost courtesy to helping the relative keep his partner supplied with the required goods. When someone comes to town and his partner, for some reason, is away, the relatives will normally take over and treat the visitor like a king.

When conflicts arise, it is usually when the relative has an unsatisfactory partner. Relatives generally view partner relationships in a much more individualistic light than do the members themselves. They sometimes put pressure on a kinsman to breakoff a partnership which is costly but unproductive from their point of view. Due to the relative strength of the two types of relationships, it is difficult for one to resist this sort of pressure if it becomes heavy.

Rarely, a specific partner relationship will take precedence over particular kin relationships. Cases of this kind develop where the kin tie concerned is a relatively distant one genealogically, or else is an affinal one. In traditional times, opting in favor of a partner over a consanguineal kinsman was a very risky business since it could result in rejection by one's own relatives. Before the turn of the century, this usually meant disaster for the person involved. Nowadays it is not nearly so serious, but at least in the smaller villages, it could still cause a lot of trouble for anyone who tried it.

Of the relative precedence of all kin relationships, on the one hand, and the trading partnership on the other, there can be no doubt, at least as far as traditional ideals are concerned. The strength of the partnership compared to other non-kin relationships is not so clear-cut. I consider it second only to kin relationships primarily for the subjective reason that the present-day Eskimos talk about partnership associations much more frequently, and in much more emphatic terms than about any other native Eskimo relationship in the nonkin category. However, my research was carried out some sixty years or more

after the end of the traditional society as an operational system, and many of the formerly differentiated nonkin relationships are no longer in existence. Furthermore, the traditional nonkin relationships have been very poorly studied. I am beginning to suspect that there were more of them than is generally considered to have been the case. Consequently, my remarks about the strength of the trading partnership in traditional times should be regarded as more conjectural than most of the generalizations presented in this paper.

The same overall position of the trading partnership that was postulated above for the traditional period seems to obtain today — at least as far as native Eskimo relationships are concerned. However, there has been a significant weakening of kin relationships in general since traditional times, in addition to the weakening of the trading partnership. This change has been brought about primarily through the introduction and establishment of a number of nonkin, and also non-Eskimo obligations and commitments during the course of the past century. Chief among these, perhaps, are those to the State of Alaska and the Federal Government of the United States. Less obvious, but increasingly significant, are the obligations to village councils, employers and the like. It may be expected that as the Eskimos become increasingly dependent on store goods and cash incomes (either through welfare or employment or both), the position of the trading partnership in the general social system will continue to deteriorate. In terms of day-to-day activities, however, especially in the smaller villages, the trading partnership may retain much of its traditional position for some time to come.

## DISCUSSION

Although this paper is presumably devoted to the phenomenon of reciprocity, the term “reciprocity” itself does not appear in the analysis. In order to properly conclude this installment in the “dialogue with ethnography” that Marshall Sahlins began, I must now return to the original concept.

Perhaps the most elementary matter that must be dealt with in the definition of concepts to be used in social analysis is whether reference is made to an organization (“membership unit” or “concrete structure”) or to an attribute (“analytic aspect” or “analytic structure”) of an organization, or to

something else altogether. When dealing with a topic as commonplace as the one under consideration here, the usual procedure is to determine the conventional definition of the central concept(s); in this case, "reciprocity." In the survey of the literature that formed part of the research for this paper, I found this fundamental issue consistently avoided.

Marshall Sahlins (1965), without defining the term anywhere in a ninety-seven page article on the subject, uses it primarily in the sense of "attribute." For example, he says (p. 149) that "reciprocity is inclined toward the generalized pole by close kinship, toward the negative extreme in proportion to kinship distance." However, he also uses the term in the sense of "organization," such as when he says (p. 145) that "a purely formal typology of reciprocities is possible . . ." On occasion, he combines the two meanings in a single sentence; thus (p. 144) "reciprocity . . . is a continuum of forms." Finally, Sahlins uses the term "reciprocity" to refer to specific events, as when he makes the following statement (p. 147): "generalized reciprocity refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic." Professor Sahlins is by no means unique in using this particular concept in importantly different ways. Confusion on this matter has vitiated the impact of a number of theoretical works on the subject, including most of those listed in the bibliography.

The problem remains. If "reciprocity" refers to an organization, then to what type of organization, and what are the attributes thereof? If "reciprocity" refers to an attribute, of what organization(s) is it characteristic? One common thread that runs through all writings on the subject is the notion of what might be called "two-wayness." But we already have a useful term to refer to a "two-way" organization, namely, "relationship structure." As defined by Levy (1952: 238), a relationship structure is "any social structure (or set of structures) that defines the actions, ideally and/or actually, that interrelate two or more individual actors." By default, then, it seems appropriate that "reciprocity" should refer to an aspect of an organization rather than to an organization itself. It seems to me that the greatest frequency of usage of "reciprocity" is, in fact, in precisely this sense.

Of what type of organization is reciprocity an attribute? If one holds to the notion of "two-wayness," then clearly it is an attribute of relationship structures. But of what significance is it

to say about a relationship structure that it is “reciprocal?” Given the above definition of relationship structure, and without qualification, such a remark would be a truism since “two-wayness” is the *defining* characteristic of this particular type of organization. If “reciprocity” is to mean anything at all, it must mean something more than mere “two-wayness,” it must tell us something about the *nature* of the “two-wayness.” I cannot help but feel that this is the basic point that Sahlins was trying to make.<sup>11</sup> To say that a relationship is reciprocal is to say nothing at all. To say that a relationship is highly responsible from the viewpoint of one member and highly individualistic from the viewpoint of the other may be to say a great deal.

So that distinctions could be made about the *nature* of the interaction between the members of a relationship, Sahlins (1965: 145 ff.) developed a so-called “scheme of reciprocities” in which he differentiates among “generalized,” “balanced,” and “negative” reciprocity. The first “type” consists of “transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions on the line of assistance given, and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned” (p. 147). In this “variety” of reciprocity, “the expectation of a direct material return is unseemly. At best it is “implicit” (*Ibid.*). “Balanced reciprocity,” on the other hand, “refers to direct exchange. In precise balance, the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay” (p. 147-148). Whereas the “pragmatic indication of generalized reciprocity is a sustained one-way flow,” that of balanced reciprocity is “an inability to tolerate one-way flows” (*Ibid.*). Sahlins’ third and final type, termed “negative reciprocity,” is the “attempt to get something for nothing with impunity” (p. 148). It “ranges through various degrees of cunning, guile, stealth, and violence to the finesse of a well conducted horse raid” (p. 149).

How would one characterize the North Alaskan Eskimo trading partnership in terms of this scheme? Clearly it is not characterized by “negative reciprocity,” because it is a highly responsible relationship. The attempt to get “something for nothing” would be totally contrary to the ideals of partnership. Less obviously, it does not seem to be characterized by

---

11. Gouldner (1960: 164) preceded Sahlins when he suggested that reciprocity is “quantitatively variable.” See also Blau (1964: 26).

"generalized reciprocity" either, because one-way flow, at least if sustained, definitely introduces elements of instability into it. This leaves only one other possibility, which, as it turns out, is a reasonable one. Although returns do not have to be made immediately in a partnership, there are limits on how much time can elapse before they are made, at least if the relationship is to remain stable. Furthermore, the exchanges made in terms of a partnership are expected to be of equal value, and that is the decisive issue. In sum, the North Alaskan Eskimo trading partnership is an organization characterized by "balanced reciprocity" in Sahlin's terms; for most writers, it is characterized by "reciprocity" pure and simple.

But what does it mean to say that a relationship is characterized by "balanced reciprocity?" Viewed in the context of relationship analysis, "balanced reciprocity" means merely that the relationship is the same from the viewpoints of both members, or in Sahlin's (p. 142) terms, of both "sides" of the relationship. For example, if the goods and/or services produced by one member are equal in value to those produced by the other, then the relationship is balanced; if they are not, it is unbalanced. From this perspective, it may be less confusing to talk about a "balanced relationship" rather than a relationship characterized by "balanced reciprocity."

But there is more to any relationship than the allocation of goods and services. What about political allocation, for example? Some allocation of power and responsibility characterizes every relationship just as surely as does an allocation of goods and services. Or, what about sentiment? Given the likelihood that no relationship is totally devoid of emotional considerations (Levy 1966: 145), sentiment too is involved in every relationship. In the case of the Eskimo trading partnership, although economic and political considerations do cover much of what is important, any analysis that ignores sentiment cannot account for the activities carried out in terms of partnerships of more than a few years' duration. And, if these additional attributes, just to name a few of the possibilities, characterize *every* relationship just as surely as does economic allocation, then presumably they too may be in or out of balance in the sense of that term suggested above. To say that a relationship is characterized by "balanced reciprocity" is to make a summary statement about a large



number of its other attributes. If that is the case, then the end of an antalysis is the only correct place to talk about it.

The foregoing considerations suggest three conclusions. First, they indicate that the primary issue confronting the analysis of “reciprocity” is not whether it is “generalized,” “balanced,” or “negative,” but whether it is balanced or unbalanced — for whatever reason, and in whatever respects. Given this revision of Sahlins’ scheme, his “generalized” and “negative” categories become sub-classes of “unbalanced reciprocity” as determined on the basis of goal orientation. I am sure that at least part of my own interest in the North Alaskan Eskimo trading partnership was stimulated by the striking “balance of flow” which characterized every example of a stable partnership that came to my attention. I strongly suspect that similar motives have led to much of the fascination that “reciprocity” in its traditional sense (i.e., “balanced” only) has had for many anthropological theorists (e.g., Malinowski 1926: 25, 26).

The second conclusion suggested by the above considerations is that a major question concerns the extent to which a relationship can be balanced in terms of one characteristic but unbalanced in terms of another. For example, can a relationship be balanced economically but not politically and still be viable? Theoretical considerations (Levy 1952: 490 ff.) suggest that it cannot, and the empirical case of the trading partnership supports this conclusion. It is almost impossible for one to increase his power over a partner without withholding some particularly scarce good; yet the withholding itself introduces an economic imbalance which radically alters the nature of the relationship.

These considerations indicate that a whole series of further questions could be — and should be — posed regarding the nature and limits of co-variation in the analytic attributes of relationship structures. This, it seems to me, is the basic theoretical question posed by Sahlins’ restatement of what is interesting about “reciprocity.” For example, can a relationship continue to persist if it involves equal power and responsibility on the part of both members (political balance), but is responsible from the viewpoint of one member and individualistic from the viewpoint of another (goal orientation imbalance). I doubt it, for the individualistic orientation of the one would surely lead him to seek to increase his power over



the other so as to attain the desired objectives. Or, can a relationship take equal precedence from the viewpoints of both members (balance of strength) yet be imbued with intense negative affect by one member and intense positive affect by the other (imbalance of sentiment)? Again, it seems unlikely, for the emotional imbalance would almost surely destroy the strength of the relationship, at least from the viewpoint of the member who regarded it with negative emotions.

To answer questions like those just mentioned in any definitive sense is beyond the scope of this paper; to pose them is to make my own plea to ethnography and to theory to pursue them further. The empirical case of the North Alaskan Eskimo trading partnership suggests the tentative answer that, in the sense of "balance" being used here, a relationship cannot, in fact, be balanced in terms of *any one* attribute and be unbalanced in terms of any of the others. If this is true, then relationships characterized by balanced reciprocity must be very fragile affairs. All factors must be lined up precisely all of the time if the relationship is to retain its balance. With respect to the trading partnership, the North Alaskan Eskimos seem to be quite aware of this. They make every effort to create partnerships that are balanced at the outset, and they work hard to make sure that they stay that way. If they become unbalanced in any respect at any time, they are usually terminated in short order. I suspect that in these respects, the trading partnership is representative of all relationships characterized by this particular attribute. Cases of balance which last for any length of time must be uncommon in human affairs.

The third and final conclusion is that the economic aspect of a relationship, so often the heart and soul of discussions of reciprocity, is only one of several attributes that should be dealt with under the heading of "reciprocity." It is time that anthropologists cease thinking about reciprocity in primarily economic terms. In a sense, this is the conclusion reached by Sahlins (1965: 225, n.3) on this point, but he did not go nearly far enough. He raised the issue in a paper on economics, and he focused his attention on the economic aspect of relationships to such an extent that all the other characteristics of the very same relationships ended up being "exogenous factors." Students of the subject seem to be fascinated by "exchanges" and "transactions" to a point that frequently verges on economic

determinism.<sup>12</sup> Even when dealing with a relatively specialized, primarily economically oriented relationship such as the North Alaskan Eskimo trading partnership, economic considerations must be supplemented by others in the analysis if the relevant behavior is to be understood. With respect to unspecialized relationships, for the analyst to focus attention on economic factors at the expense of all others means leaving out the most interesting part of the story.

## REFERENCES USED

- Becker, Howard  
1956 *Man in Reciprocity*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.
- Blau, Peter M.  
1964 *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: John Wiley & Sons
- Burch, Ernest S., Jr.  
1966 "Authority, Aid and Affection: The Structure of Eskimo Kin Relationships." Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago.
- Correll, Thomas C.  
1968 Personal communication regarding partnerships in southwestern Alaska.
- Eidheim, Harald  
1966 "Lappish Guest Relationships under Conditions of Cultural Change." *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 68, No. 2, pp. 426-437.
- Giddings, J. L.  
1961 *Kobuk River People*. University of Alaska Studies of Northern Peoples. No. 1. College, Alaska.
- Gouldner, A. W.  
1960 "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 161-178.
- Gubser, Nicholas J.  
1965 *The Nunamiut Eskimos: Hunters of Caribou*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Homans, George  
1958 "Social Behavior as Exchange." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 63, No. 6, pp. 597-606.

---

12. Homans (1958: 606) goes so far as to state that "social behavior is an exchange of goods . . ." (italics mine).

- Levi-Strauss, Claude  
1949 "Le Principe de Reciprocite." In Claude Levi-Strauss, *Les Structures Elementaires de la Parente*, Chapt. 5. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Levy, Marion J., Jr.  
1952 *The Structure of Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 1966 *Modernization and the Structure of Societies: A Setting for International Affairs*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw  
1922 *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 1926 *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
- Mauss, Marcel  
1966 *The Gift*. London: Cohen and West.
- Oswalt, Wendell  
1967 *The Alaskan Eskimo*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co.
- Polanyi, Karl  
1944 *The Great Transformation*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc.
- 1959 "Anthropology and Economic Theory." In Morton Fried (ed.) *Readings in Anthropology* Vol. II, pp. 161-184. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- Pospisil, Leopold  
1964 "Law and Societal Structure Among the Nunamiut Eskimo." In Ward H. Goodenough, (ed.) *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology. Essays in Honor of George Peter Murdock*, pp. 295-431. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Sahlins, Marshall D.  
1965 "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange." In M. Banton (ed.), *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, pp. 139-236. A. S. A. Monographs No. 1. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Spencer, Robert F.  
1959 *The North Alaskan Eskimo. A Study in Ecology and Society*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 171. Washington: U. S. Govt. Printing Office.

Spencer, Robert F.

1965 "Arctic and Sub-Arctic in Native America." In Robert F. Spencer, Jesse D. Jennings, *et. al.*, *The Native Americans*, pp. 119-167. New York: Harper & Row.

VanStone, James W.

1962 *Pt. Hope. An Eskimo Village in Transition*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Not for Resale