

KINSHIP SYSTEM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY FROM WESTERN BISAYAS, PHILIPPINES¹

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Introduction

Leading students of social change have recently focused much of their analytical attention on roles of individuals as entrepreneurs, savers of capital, and consumers of goods in society as the key to understanding the process of economic development [1]. The institutional base of individual behavior has been disregarded or when considered, it is treated as a side issue. Many of these students seem to have overlooked the fact that, in actual life situations, it is not the individual or person who is important but the kind of behavior he performs or action he engages in. This behavior or action is largely dependent upon the support of the group to which the individual belongs. That is why it is also important that an inquiry into the relationship between the individual and the group be made before programs of development are drawn and implemented. The nature of the people's patterns of choice and decision-making are often influenced by group norms and value-orientation. Thus, if a climate for change has to be created so that programs of development might be implemented with maximum effect at a minimum expense, the relationship between the individual, his behavior and the norms of his society must first be rightly understood.

¹Fieldwork among the farmers of Malitbog was supported by a research grant from the Community Development Research Council of the University of the Philippines. I wish to thank the Council for permission to publish this portion of my progress report. Malitbog is one of the three communities I intend to study in detail.

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The primary aim of this paper is to provide a case study why knowledge about the institutional matrix of group life is important to any program of economic development and social change. My model for this purpose is Malitbog, a small barrio in central Panay, and my institutional frame of reference in the analysis is the kinship system. Two questions underlie the *rationale* of my discussion: How does kinship function as a determinant of social behavior? How does it serve as guide for people in making their choices and arriving at their decisions?

The Barrio

Malitbog is one of the many small communities located at the foot of the mountain range which cuts across the island of Panay from north to south. It is likewise one among those which are strategically situated at the boundary of the municipalities of Tapaz, Capiz and Calinog, Iloilo. It is about fifteen kilometers away from the town of Calinog and about fifty kilometers from the poblacion of Tapaz, under which jurisdiction the barrio belongs.

Malitbog has a population of about 608 people. Culturally, it is marginal to both the highland Sulod of the mountains, the lowland Christian inhabitants of Tapaz and Calinog. It is this unique cultural and geographical position of Malitbog which gives it a dual personality. The mountain Sulod consider Malitbog a lowland village but the neighboring barrios in the lowland consider it a mountain community. This is perhaps due to the fact that the barrio is located on the shoulder of the highest hill and can be seen from the plains below.

Kinship System

The basic element in Malitbog social structure is kinship. It is through this structural unit of society that much local authority, rights and obligations and modes of

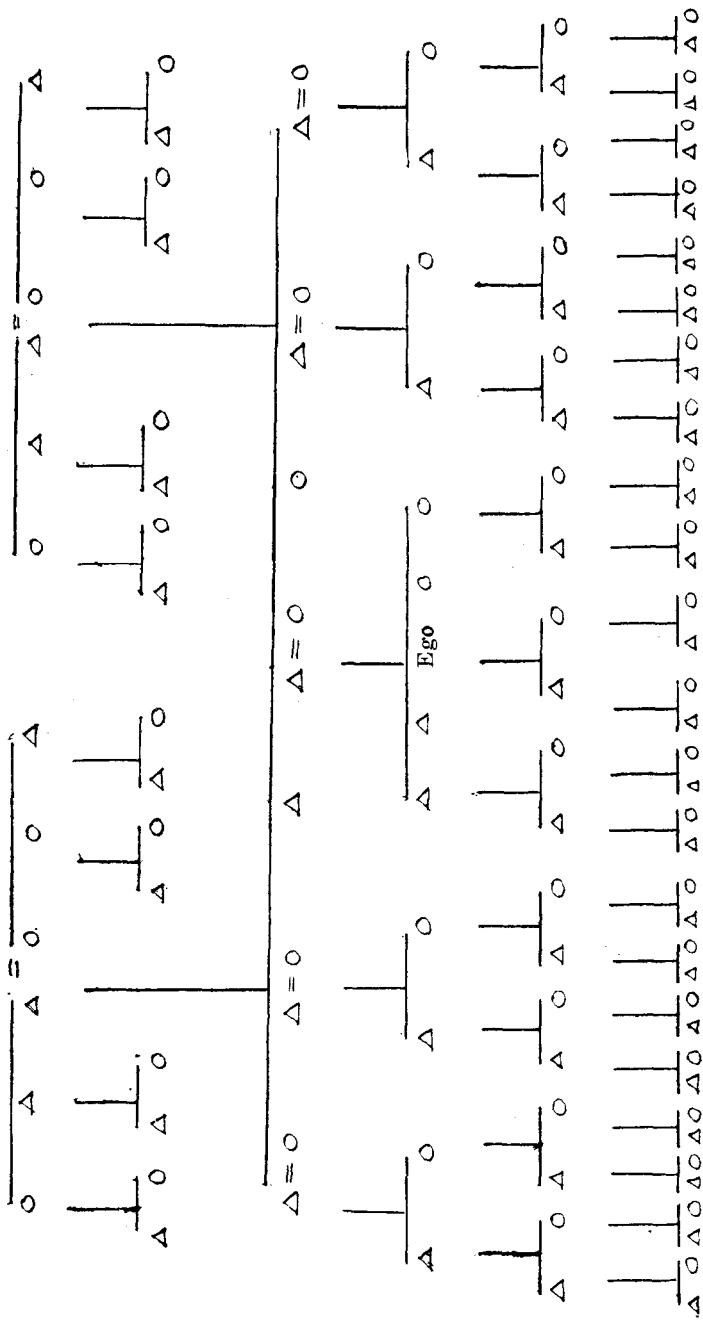


Fig. I Generalized Kinship Chart

interactions are expressed, defined, ordered and systematized. Interpersonal and inter-group movements of people or groups of people in and out of the barrio are, in fact, largely determined by kinship. Group alliances are likewise formed on this basis. Because kinship continues to have local significance and to form a system of relating people to one another, even if they live far apart, it is necessary to describe its structure. In this way, we will be able to discover the degree to which this kinship system reflects the social and cultural realities of Malitbog life. It is also through the knowledge of how this system functions that we can hope to gain deeper insights into the process of social and cultural change obtaining in the barrio.

General Characteristics

A cursory glance at the accompanying kinship chart (See Figure 1) will show that Malitbog kinship system belongs to what has been described in the literature [2] as the bilateral type. This means that, structurally, the child reckons relationship equally on both the father or the mother. This bilateral reckoning of kin encompasses an indefinite lateral range of relatives, though clear recognition of consanguinity extends only to the third (sometimes fourth) cousins of both the father and the mother.

Fundamental to this symmetrical recognition of relatives is the principle of generation. By "generation", we mean the organizational pattern inherent in the kinship system which categorically sets the members of the group apart from each other, in accordance with the order of descent, lineally or collaterally defined. It is the sociological age and often not the biological age, although this is inevitable, which is significant, insofar as society is concerned, because biological age may be ignored in actual life-situations, as in occasions requiring respect relationship. The following diagram (Fig. 2) illustrates this.

Structurally, the principle of generation groups makes

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boo grooves. Settling cases like inter-family quarrels is another incident where relationship with almost forgotten ancestors play an important role. Often these departed ancestors are associated with the supernatural beings who are invoked during the performance of various rituals or are told as alive and principal characters of legends and myths.

There is no specific term for "generation." The ascending generations are referred to, as a whole, as *linukdo* (meaning, "being carried on top of the head"). This includes the *ginikanan* (parental generation), *ulang* (grandparental generation), *laki* or *bayi* (great grandparental generation, and *apoy* (great great grandparental generation). One's own (Ego) generation is called *linangon* (meaning, "having been cut from one piece"). This includes Ego and all his lateral relatives, consanguineal and affinal. The descending generations are referred to as

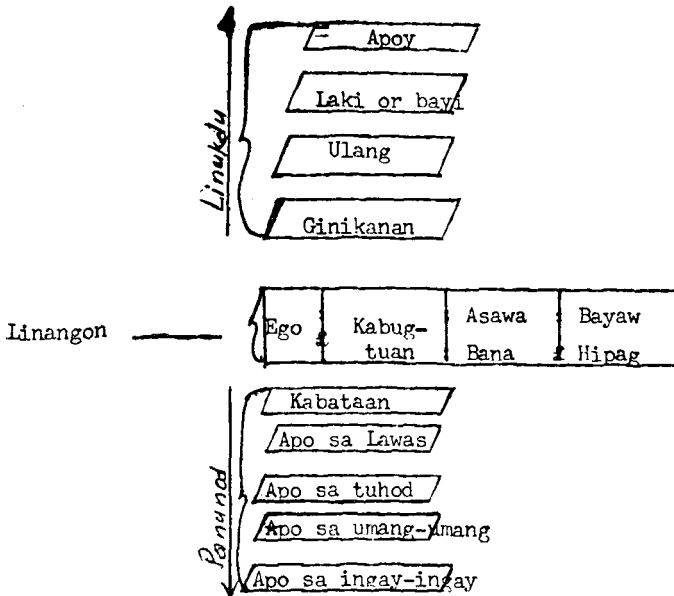


Fig. III Diagram showing the structural depth and range of Malitbog kinship reckoning, lineally defined.

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of kindred into older and younger members. Thus Ego clearly defines his rights and obligations, reciprocally, with reference to his structural position relative to his siblings. If he is older he assumes the role of "second father," in case the father dies (the same with regard to elder sisters) and he is expected to support the younger siblings; correspondingly, the younger siblings have the right to claim support from him in return for their obedience and recognition of his role as an older sibling. For lineal kin the upper generation, however, seniority is basic to Ego in that he classifies his parents' and grandparents' siblings with the parents and grandparents and calls them with the same term, sometimes compounded with nicknames or personal names. The name is true with respect to lower generations in the lineal order from Ego. For collateral kin, however, the basis for referential and vocative terms is seniority of siblings in the upper generation, and not those of the members within the same generation. For example A and B are siblings. A is older than B, but B marries ahead, thus his offsprings are older. In spite of their age, however, B's children address A with kinship terms meaning older brother or older sister, respectively. Again if A marries late as to allow B's eldest daughter C to marry and have children, then C's children address A's children with kinship terms meaning father or mother respectively, even if they are older than C's children (see diagram in Fig. 1).

Another important principle in Malitbog kinship system, as I have already indicated, is the sex of the individual occupying certain structural position, lineally or collaterally defined. Except for grandparents, for which the referential terms *ulang* or *uwaw* are used regardless of sex, all other generational categories are clearly distinguished from each other by sex or the referent. Thus the term for father (m) is *tatay* referentially and "tay" vocatively. Extension of this term to male siblings of both the father and mother includes specifying the personal

name. Father's or mother's male siblings are *tay* + personal name as in *tay* + *Amon* or *tay* + *Claro*. The same principle is obtaining with regard to mother's and father's female siblings. The use of vocative term "nay + personal or nickname" of the person referred or spoken to is the rule. Sex-defining names (i.e. Juan vs. Maria) are used vocatively to distinguish each individual person in the lower generations.

Referentially, male spouse is *bana* and female spouse is *asawa*. Vocatively, the terminology is idiosyncratic in that husbands may be called by their wives "totoy", "no-noy," or any other term of endearment, and in turn, husbands may call their wives "nene", "inday," "neneng" "day" or any other nicknames such as *pakha* for one who looks like a Chinese girl, *ambok* for one who is stout and so forth. In some instances, husbands and wives do not call each other's names. A third person statement is normally used to refer to each other.

Older brother's wife and elder sister's husband are differentiated for each other, although categorized with the sibling, by the use of "nang + personal name" and "nong + personal name" respectively. Younger sibling's wife or husband is addressed by their first name. Referentially, sister's spouse is *bayaw* and brother's wife is *hipag*. Sister's husband and brother's wife are *biras* to each other. There is no generic term for "in-law". Parents-in-law are sexually differentiated by the use of terms like *ugangang-laki* (male parent-in-law) and *ugangang-bayi* (female parent-in-law). The terms are extended to the siblings of the parents-in-law. The alternative term for *manulang* (children-in-law) is *umagad*.

These four principles—bilateral, generation, seniority, and sex—are significant in understanding the fundamental pattern of Malitbog kinship system. It sometimes overrides such other important principles of social organization as spatial and temporal distances, in that regardless of residence and length of time an individual has been away from the barrio, remembrance of him is based on

his structural position in the kinship system and on whether he is senior or junior to the one speaking, and distinction is made on the basis of his sex.

This inadequacy of kinship terminology to define clearly categories of distance, as in other societies, may be understood in terms of emphasis made on the importance of the nuclear family, as a defining point on whether the individual is a kin or a non-kin. Where doubts exist, the kinship term meaning father/mother or older sister/brother is used; correction is made when kinship is discovered. But for non-kin the use of familial terms remains. This brings us to other basic characteristics of the Malitbog kinship system—and that is, respect versus familiarity.

Respect (*taha*) and familiarity (*kilala*) are based on an individual's membership to significant groupings of relatives. Respect is an element in every social situation in Malitbog. An individual who is in disagreement with older members of the barrio seldom shows such feeling verbally. He may sulk or nod in assent. Any verbal clash with older folks in public is a show of disrespect. Or any sign of extreme familiarity with members of higher official status in public meetings is also a sign of disrespect. On the other hand, familiarity or *kilala* describes relationship between siblings, one's generation, or those below them. This is reciprocal only insofar as the referents are within one generation but not so when they are from different generations. Those in generations below, even if they are in familiar relationships, show respect to those who are above.

Kinship Terminology

Thus far we have described the structure of Malitbog kinship system and have pointed out a number of basic principles inherent in this structure. These principles become more clearly defined through a set or related sets of kinship terms used by the individual—"occupant" of the

different structural position just mentioned. Kinship terms may be described as indicators of social relations between persons in the community in that each term symbolizes certain conventional usages which guide the performance of normative behavior. For example, when two persons call each other "husband and wife", or "uncle" and "nephew" reciprocally, they are in effect performing actions indicating that they have certain specific reciprocal rights and obligations to each other.

From this standpoint, we can speak of kinship system as a *system* of social relations expressed in the context of genealogical, affinal, and ritual connections. By *system*, as used in this report, is meant the arrangement of mutually interdependent and regularly interacting units of action into an integrated, distinct, and operative pattern of behavior, defined in terms of social and cultural processes. The prerequisite of this configuration of mutually interdependent units of human action is organization. The principle refers to the

.... functional correlations and coordination of differentiated but interdependent parts or entities according to certain principles, rules, and limits and by means of certain specialized agents and sequential processes, so that they function together as a whole and in a synchronized manner and produce a collective result not obtainable otherwise. [4]

Looked at from this perspective, it is evident that, as Talcott Parsons has stated, "it is the structure of the *relations* between the actors as involved in the interactive process which is essentially the structure of the social system" [5]. And the key to an understanding of this structure is kinship as exemplified and used by terminologies speakers in their dyadic and group relationships. It is indeed in the manner in which such terms are used in Malitbog that one can evaluate "the significance of various kinds of conventional behavior that would otherwise seem meaningless" [6].

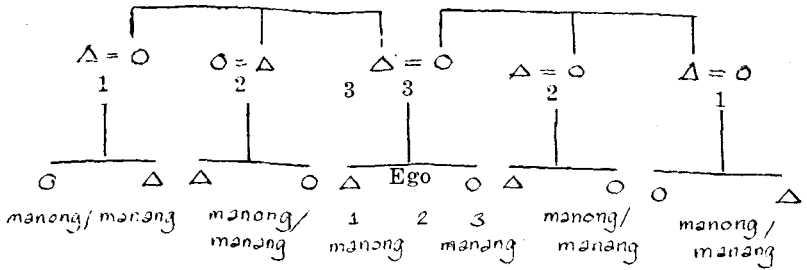
Terminologically, Malitbog kinship is hard to define under one specific type. Lineally, it exhibits descriptive characteristics, [7] in that referentially, the terms *tatay* and *nanay* (father and mother) are not used to refer to mother's or father's siblings, who are known to Ego as *bata* (parents' male siblings) and *dada* (parents' female siblings). Vocatively, however, these same parental terms are used to address directly the siblings of the parents. The modification introduced is merely the shortening of the kinship terms and the addition of the parents' siblings' personal name after each term. Thus parents' male siblings are *tay* + personal name, while their female siblings are *nay* + personal name, respectively. From this standpoint, we can describe Malitbog kinship system as *classificatory* [8].

This classificatory principle is even apparent in the grandparental generation, viewed lineally. Here, the term applied to grandparents is also applied to their siblings. In fact, relative age and sex of the referents are ignored. Collaterally, all the grandparental kin are classified under one category—the *kamal-aman*.

Within Ego's generation, the situation, is similar. From the manner in which cross and parallel cousins are grouped together, Malitbog kinship terminology is similar to what Leslie Spier [9] and G. P. Murdock [10] call the *Hawaiian type* in these two sets of cousins are called by the same term as sibling [11]. The only modification in this pattern is the shortening of kinship terms and the addition of personal names after the terms.

On the other hand, from the manner in which cross-cousins are equated with parallel cousins at the same time that they are separated from siblings by the use of personal names after the kinship term, Malitbog kinship terminology resembles the *Eskimo type*. It is perhaps this characteristic feature which makes Malitbog kinship more flexible in application. See diagram below [Fig V].

A. Hawaiian



B. Eskimo

Father side

Mother side

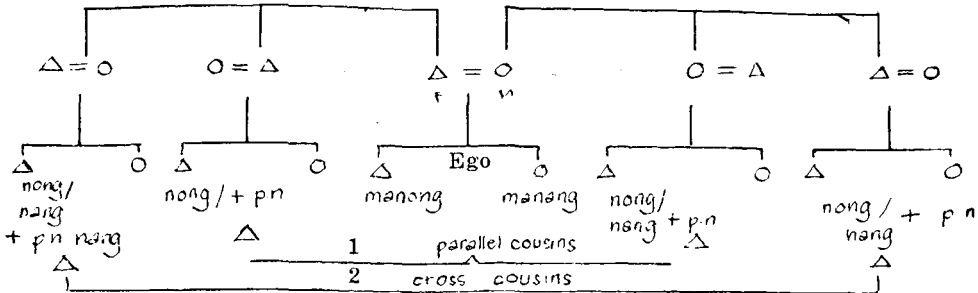


Fig. V. -Types of Malitbog kinship terminology. A shows the Hawaiian type of grouping and B diagrams the Eskimo variant.

The basic structural characteristics of Malitbog kinship terms may be outlined as follows:

Consanguineal terms—

First ascending generation.—This is the generation immediately above Ego. The term for father is *tatay* and the term for mother is *nanay*. Although these terms specify sex, they do not specify relative age. Either of these persons is senior than the other. But insofar as Ego is concerned both of them stand in equal rank and he does not like any distinction, on the basis of relative age, whatsoever. In cases where the father or the other belongs to different generations, (collaterally that is, but not linearly

because in the latter, marriage is not allowed) the mother refers to the father in the third person. In speaking to other people about the father, she would mention the name of one of her children as "father of Maria" (if the daughter's name is Maria), and so on. This usage is disappearing among the younger people, though.

It must be pointed out that the terms *tatay* and *nanay* are omnibus. While they refer essentially to the biological father or mother, they are also applied to foster parents, or to anybody who stands one generation older than the speaker.

Collaterally, the shortened form of *tatay* and *nanay*, which are *tay* and *nay*, respectively, are used when referring and speaking to the parents' siblings. However, when the referential terminology is used in the context of formal relationship, the terms *bata* (male sibling) and *dada* (female sibling) are used respectively, depending upon the sex of the person spoken about. The term *bata* and *dada* can also be used vocatively and not within the context of formal relationships but in joking relationships. An older man teasing a young girl (or boy) by pairing her with any aged relative addresses her as "*dada*". These kinship terms (*dada* and *bata*) lose their attributes for formal relationships when Ego is much older than the siblings of his parents. In this situation, the term *tay* + personal name or *nay* + personal name may be used when speaking formally. Oftentimes personal names are used.

Second ascending generation. — The term used for grandparents are *ulang*, referentially, and *uwaw*, vocatively. Sex is not specified in this generation. The terms *nay mal-am* (mother old woman) and *tay mal-am* (father old man) are used vocatively by children. Adults seldom use these terms referentially or vocatively, except when asking the small children questions regarding the whereabouts of their grandparents.

Collaterally, the term *ulang* and *uwaw* are also used

to refer and to speak to the siblings of the grandparents. The spouses of the grandparents' siblings are likewise addressed to and spoken about in kinship terms similar to those applied to their husband or wife.

Third ascending generation. Kinship terms applied to lineal kin are also applied to collateral kin in this generation. Thus all the siblings of this set of grandparental kin are spoken about as *laki* or *bayi*.

There are no vocative terms for this generation in that normally the *laki* or *bayi* do not live long to see their great great grandchildren. Thus most of the usage in this generation is ritually defined and referentially used.

Fourth ascending generation.—The term for this generation is *apoy*. Relative age and sex are not specified. As in the third ascending generation these relatives are merged with the ancestral spirits, invoked during various Malitbog rituals. Collaterally, the same term is used to refer to the *apoy's* siblings and their spouses.

Ego's generation.—There is no specific term for Ego's generation, although as we have said earlier, the term *linangon* may be applied. A number of informants use *kalanopad* to describe this generation. *Kalanopad* means "of the same height or age." Included in Ego's generation, nevertheless, are the siblings and the members of Ego's collateral kin below the first ascending generation. Within the sibling group the term used to address or to speak about any particular individual is dependent upon the order of biological birth. Thus, older male siblings are called *manong*, referentially and vocatively, while older female siblings are known as *manang*, also referentially and vocatively. The youngest male sibling is often called by any one of the following terms: *nonoy*, *noy*, *toto*, *to*, or *oto*. Sometimes nicknames or personal names are used. The terms *inday*, *day*, *nene*, *ne*, *plangging*, and *anging* are used referentially and vocatively to refer to the youngest female sibling.

In a word Ego can look up to his older siblings and look down to his younger siblings, distinguishing each individual by the term he uses in addressing to and speaking about them.

The term *kaparyientihan* is used by most informants to describe Ego's collateral relatives in this generation. Normally, the term *kaparyientihan* encompasses all relatives surrounding Ego, irrespective of generations. Somehow, this is the nearest term we can use to refer to Ego's collateral relatives. Marked emphasis on numerical distance characterizes the degree to which cousinship is traced from Ego. Thus first cousin are referentially called *pakas-a*, second cousin, *pakarwa*, third cousin, *pakatlo* and so on. Vocatively, the use of sibling terms *manong* and *manang* are extended to collateral relatives, the determining factor in this usage is the relative age and birth-order of the members of the referent-group in the ascending generations. As we have stated earlier, A may be older in biological age than B, but if B's parents are older than A's, A calls B with the kinship term *manong*, or *manang* depending upon B's sex.

First descending generation. — The term used for the first descending generation is *kabataan*, (derived from the word *bata*, meaning child; the affix *ka-* *-an* indicates plurality) if the point of reference is one's own children and *kahinablosan* (derived from the word *hinablos*, meaning nephews and nieces; the affix *ka-* *-an* also indicates plurality) if the point of reference is Ego's siblings' children. Genealogical distance is used to distinguish each group of *hinablos* from each other—as in *hinablos sa pakas-a*, *hinablos sa pakarwa*, or *hinablos sa pakatlo* (meaning, nephews and nieces by first, second, and third degree cousins). Vocatively, however, this is not qualifiedly stated. Ego calls his *kahinablosan* by their personal names, and reciprocally, they call him by kinship terms they apply to their own parents.

Second descending generation. — Apo is the term used for all the immediate grandchildren. By “immediate grandchildren” we mean those who descended lineally from one’s own children. Referentially used, the term is compounded with an explanatory statement as in *apo sa lawas*, meaning “grandchild by the body.” Collateral grandchildren, those who descended from collateral kin, are also *apo* plus the necessary explanatory phrase defining the relationship. Thus we have *apo sa lawas sa pakas-a* (grandchildren by second cousin), *apo sa lawas sa pakatlo* (grandchildren by third cousin) and so on. Both collateral and lineal kin, in this generation, however, address Ego as *ulang* or *uwaw*, referentially and vocatively.

Third descending generation. — The term for this generation is *apo sa tuhod* (grandchildren by the knee). Biologically, no individual in Malitbog has lived to see his *apo sa tuhod*. Sociologically, however, that is in terms of generational positions and not relative age, there are few individuals who have *apo sa tuhod* in the area. The great grandparents are addressed by the *apo sa tuhod* as *laki* or *bayi*, depending upon the sex of the individual spoken to or about. Genealogical distance is still emphasized when the *laki* or *bayi* is talking about the collateral *apo sa tuhod*. Thus all the kin in the third generation are *apo sa tuhod sa pakas-a*, *apo sa tuhod sa pakarwa*, and so on.

Fourth descending generation. — The term used for this generation is *apo sa umang-umang*, meaning grandchildren by the large toe of the foot. Ego’s relationship with this group of relatives is almost mythological. Except for generational position and never in terms of relative age, there is no one in Malitbog who lived to see his *apo sa umang-umang*. Ego, who died a long time ago, is still addressed to and spoken about as *apoy*. He is associated with the ancestral spirits and is invoked during rituals performed during planting harvest and other occasions.

The term used for lineal kin within this generation is also applied to collateral kin with, as in other descend-

ing generations an explanatory phrase signifying genealogical distance. Thus we have *apo sa umang-umang sa pakas-a*, *apo sa umang-umang sa pakarwa*, and so on.

Fifth descending generation. — The term use for this generation is *apo sa ingay-ingay*, meaning grandchildren by the smallest finger of the foot. Ego is addressed as *apoy*, as in the fourth descending generation. Collateral kin in this generation are known as *apo sa ingay-ingay sa pakas-a*, *apo sa ingay-ingay sa pakarwa*, and so on. Sex and relative age are not emphasized referentially. Vocatively, personal names are used. Ego is associated with the highest group of ancestral spirits invoked during special religious and curing rituals.

Affinal Terms

Kinship established by marriage is called *tapik*, meaning attached. The term for husband is *bana* and for wife, *asawa*; for both, referentially, *magasawa*. Husbands and wives normally call each other by first name, unless nicknames are used. As we have indicated earlier, when generational positions between the husband and the wife differ, the wife rarely mentions the name of the husband. Some of my informants say that,

I have been used to calling him "Bata" (uncle) and now he is my husband. I can no longer call him "bata" and I feel embarrassed each time I call him by his personal name. So I'd rather not mention the name at all.

There are actual cases when wives refused vehemently to mention the name of their husbands under any circumstances. This particular case is enough to elucidate the matter.

A's son met an accident one day. One of the witnesses was his mother (A's wife). A sued the bus company for damages. During the trial, the defendant's lawyer called A's wife to the witness stand. Asked if he knew the deceased, the woman answered. "Yes, he is my son." The law-

yer then proceeded. "Who is the father of your son?"

The woman hesitated. The lawyer repeated the same question. The woman looked toward the direction of her husband. The judge prodded the woman to answer, saying among other things, that she was under oath. The lawyer repeated: "Who is your husband?"

After a hard swallow, the woman looked up to the judge and said: "The father of _____ (she mentioned the name of her oldest daughter).

"And who is the father of _____?" asked the lawyer.

"The father _____ (she mentioned the name of her older son). This went on until every child has been mentioned. Flabbergasted, the judge intervened. "And who is the father of all these children?" he said firmly. "The court wants to know. I repeat, the court wants to know your husband's name. Who is your husband?"

The woman, apparently nervous, looked up and said: "The father _____ (she mentioned then of the deceased son).

Irked by this proceedings, the judge dismissed the case.

When I interviewed the woman, she told me that she "can't mention my husband's name. I just can't do it."

The term for Ego's husband or wife's male siblings is *bayaw* and for spouse's female siblings, it is *hipag*. *Biras* applies to the husband and wife of Ego's wife or husband's sister or brother, referentially and vocatively. See diagram.

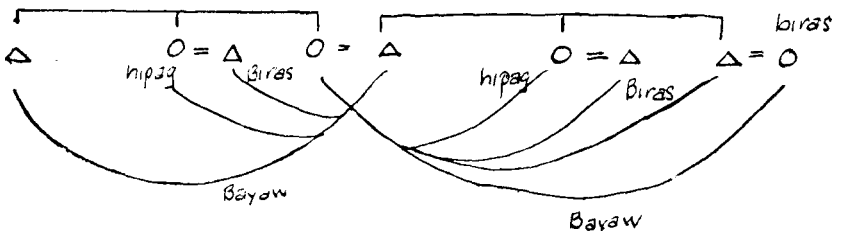


Fig. VI — Structure of *Biras/Hipag* relationships

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Ego's spouse is *manugang* to his or her parents, regardless of sex, and Ego is, in turn, *manugang* to his or her spouse's parents. *Manugang* is derived from the word *dugang*, meaning "additional." Ego calls his or her spouse's *ugangan*, referentially, and *tatay* or *nanay*, vocatively. The parents of Ego and those of his or her spouse call each other *balayi*. See Fig. VII.

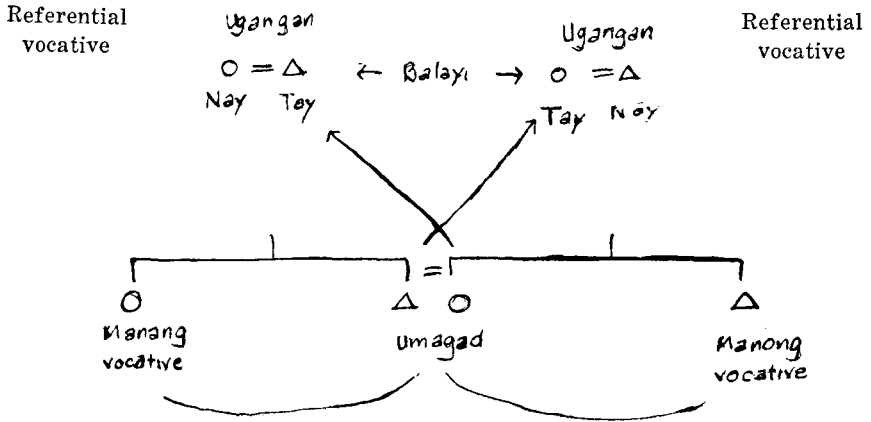


Fig. VII — Structure of *Ugangan/Manugang/Balayi* relationships

Ritual Kinship

Another characteristic feature of Malitbog social organization is the establishment of kinship through the performance of religiously accepted rituals. In the past, this type of kinship was not so well defined, probably due to the Protestant influence. It was often established between Malitbog residents and outsiders but infrequently between the residents themselves. With a number of residents becoming Roman Catholics, ritual kinship has become an accepted pattern of extending kinship ties to non-kin.

The term for ritual kinship is *kumpari*. This bond is formalized between non-kindred when either of the prin-

cipal actors stands as sponsor for the marriage, baptism or confirmation of the other's child or children. Although initiated mainly as a spiritual relationship, the tie "actually develops and emphasizes a primary social bond between the parents of the child and the godparents: hence the compadre system is best defined as "ritual co-parent-hood". Established with this bond, too, are certain rights and obligations between the godparents and the godchildren; the godparents and parents of the godchildren, and between the godchildren and their godsiblings.

The ritual coparents are expected to help each other in time of need. The godparents, who are called *Maninuy* (male) and *maninay* (female) respectively, contribute to the upbringing and education of the child and, reciprocally, the godchild helps in whatever activities the godparents want done or in resolving whatever difficulties they encounter. The force of this reciprocal rights and duties is as binding as the ones obtaining between parents and child. The godparents' advice and sometimes their consent are sought before the godchild takes action on major decisions such as getting married, mortgaging family properties, applying for loans, and so forth. In turn, the godparents are expected to provide their godchild with wedding clothes when they get married or else underwrite part of the expenses of the wedding feast. The godchild is categorized with the godparents' children and he maintains a quasi-sibling relationship with them. They call each other *igsoon* and are expected to help one another at all times.

Terminologically, ritual coparents call each other *mari* (for female) and *pari* (for male). This form of address, as well as the existing relationship, is extended to include the siblings of either of the coparents. The *igsoon* relationship, as well as the form of address, is also extended to the children of the godparents' siblings. A minimal degree of rights and obligations is inherent in this extension, however. As among the real siblings, the *igsoon* help each other in times of crisis and regard each other as close

relatives in the conduct of day-to-day affairs in the barrio. In other words, the network of relationship obtaining through *compadre-maninuy-igsoon* complex is in consonance with the bilateral kinship structure in the barrio, which emphasizes the generational extension of kinship.

*Theoretical Implications of
Kinship for Change: A Preliminary Statement*

Thus far I have described in detail the structure of Malitbog kinship. I have presented implicitly in this descriptive account a model by means of which one can best understand the dynamics of Malitbog society. In this section, I shall explore the theoretical implications of kinship for social, cultural, and technological change. At the outset, I would like to emphasize that my position here is highly tentative; it is designed to provoke thinking and comments from the reader so that I may be able to evaluate and crystalize my theoretical *rationale* for the entire study.

This may be too premature. However, it is my belief that it is desirable to re-examine one's thinking from time to time by discussing it with other people. In this way, one may be able to note gaps in his conceptual frame of reference, and to discover the fallacy of his theoretical bias. Moreover, as Fred Eggan has expressed it:

...anthropological vistas widen to the extent, that we see new problems and gather materials which bear upon them [12].

The manner in which our understanding of Malitbog society (and of culture change for that matter) "widens" is dependent upon the degree to which we assess the sociological implications of our data for social behavior and change, as these notes accumulate. It is also from this standpoint that we "see new problems and gather materials which bear upon them." And this examination of data involves building theoretical models of which kinship as a model by means of which one understands the inner

dynamics of Malitbog society is the network of relationships underlying the concrete, observable behavior of the people.

What interests me, in other words, is to discover how significant is this kinship structure in providing clues for understanding the relationship of people and for evaluating sensitive points in their normative behavior so that programs of directed change may be carried out in the area, or elsewhere, with maximum effect and at a minimum of human and financial cost.

It must be borne in mind that society is composed of interacting individuals and these individuals constitute an aggregate we call the group. Any individual born into this group is provided by society with a given "position" which defines his relations with other members of the community throughout his life. If he is born son, he behaves or interacts with a person whom he calls father, as son to that man and not in any other form, insofar as the father-son relationship is concerned. If we move further and consider his relations with other members of the group, we find that he is related to them in accordance with how old he is in relation to them, in what generation he belongs, what degree of relationship his parents have to his relatives' parents, and so on. This relationship is already formalized at birth. In other words, his kinship behavior is a prescribed one. He may choose to disregard some of his rights and duties but he cannot in anyway disregard his structural position with regard to other members of his kin group—as he being the son of the man he calls father. If he marries he acquires other relatives of indefinite number but his relation with them is again determined by the structural position of his wife. It is this structural position which defines the kind of relationship which should exist between two affinally related individuals; that is, he calls the woman whom his wife calls mother "*ugangan*" and behaves toward her accordingly only after he marries this woman whom he calls wife and not before. In other words, it is kinship which

provides the major shape of homogeneous societies; a reliable guide to individual and institutional actions.

Keeping this in mind, we can say that Malitbog kinship exhibits characteristics of a *system* in that it is the organizing framework of relationship in the community; it is the effective means of making intelligible elements of human actions as observed from the activities of the people; and that it is important in making possible the prediction of how people will react if intensive and directed change is introduced in the area.

Any individual, it may be noted, is surrounded by approximately 308 relatives, of which number, 194 persons stand in close relationship with him and to whom he owes and maintains certain rights and obligations. These are the people to whom he can go for help in time of crises, and these are the people who come to him in time of their respective needs. Seen from this perspective, it seems difficult to introduce change in any dimensions of Malitbog life, social or cultural, without this change affecting in all other elements of local interaction processes.

One of the prerequisites in introducing or in making change acceptable to the people, I believe, is what Talcott Parsons has described as

...the need to secure adequate participation of a sufficient proportion of these actors (i.e. people) in the social system, that is to motivate them adequately to the performances which may be necessary if the social system is to persist or develop [13].

The degree to which a social system, having been modified after the introduction of change, develops and persists through time depends upon the degree to which the agents of change have understood and penetrated the system and in the manner in which this system is utilized in working with people in terms of their relational position with one another. This observation is not new. But

it seems that most fieldworkers have taken this for granted so that its restatement is necessary and in order.

On the basis of the above observation, it is my assumption that kinship, viewed as a ramifying framework of specific positions in society, constitutes the crucial guide-line for the direction of change. It is in kinship that one can discover sensitive points of conflicts, adaptive mechanisms of internal and external pressures, patterns of conformity, and the configuration of beliefs, symbols and values. If, as Evon Vogt has argued, "one of the generating mechanisms in the directional process of change in the system is incongruity and tension," [14] then it is in kinship system where we can unravel the meaning of change, the direction it takes, and the tension it generates among the other members of society. This change may, hypothetically, begin with incongruity in the preceptual and behavioral apparatus of two individuals. As we have said, society consists of interacting individuals. This interaction involves communication in terms of shared symbols, and when two individuals, in our example above, do not share common symbols they either do not interact or when they do interact, such interaction is characterized by tension. This tension results in the performance of actions incongruous with the accepted standard of behavior. This is the beginning of deviancy. There is a possibility that this deviant behavior becomes standardized if the performer of the act can rally the support of a large number of people in the group.

In a small, more or less homogeneous group like Malibog where each individual stands in close relation to each other, the structural position of the deviant actor determines the degree to which he can influence the behavior pattern of other members of the group to conform with his own thinking and with the logic of his action-premises. For as we have stated elsewhere, there are certain reciprocal rights, obligations, values, and norms inherent in every structural position which a particular individual occupies—be this position seen in its spatial,

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temporal, social, or cultural dimensions. Hence, we are sure that the success of any man who sponsors change in the community (he has to be a deviant to begin with) depends upon the degree to which he is regarded by the people in terms of his structural position and in terms of how far he carries effective (may be defective too) reciprocal rights and obligations within this indefinite range of kinship ties. In a word, it is in kinship that much can be learned about the dynamics of change and the processes involved in its acceptance or rejection.

REFERENCES

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12., *Social Organization of the Western Pueblos*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1950, p. 1.
13. Talcott Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
14. Evon Vogt, "On the Concepts of Structure and Process in Cultural Anthropology," *American Anthropologists*, Vol. 62, (1960), p. 25.

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Practice occurs within a work system consisting of multiple occupations, and how well a service is performed depends on the integration of these occupations through a process of coercion or cooperation. Most institutional systems are organized in a pattern of interrelated occupational specialties or roles. Presumably, each role holder is aware of the roles of others. Theoretically, he has a clear idea of what is expected of him and what he expects of others. The term *role expectations* is used to characterize this process. However, a given ordering of role expectations is sometimes difficult to obtain because of multiple organizational hierarchies, each with a complex role system: for example, in the hospital system, there are administrative, nursing, and medical hierarchies. Often these hierarchies contend against one another for power. Who should do what and when and to whom is often overlooked in such a power struggle. Areas of responsibilities and lines of command are never entirely clear.

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