

More about the Lineality Index

The four indicators of Lineality are recoded with the objective of capturing the range of persons tied in the four institutional fields (cf. Codebook):

Recode R6: (6=0) (7=1) (3=2) (2=3) (4=4) (1=5) (5=6).

Recode R9: (5,6=1) (3,4,7=2) (2=3) (1=4).

Recode R15: (1,3=0) (4=1) (2=2) (5=3) (6=4).

Recode R43: (4,6=0) (5=1) (1,3=2) (2=3).

The scale of the ranked variables ranges between 3 and 6. The following algorithm was used to create the Lineality Index:

$$2 * R43 + R6/2 - R9/2 - R10/2 + R15.$$

Correlation of the four LIN-Indicators:

No.	Name of variable	Code Book	The variable stands for ...	1	2	3	4
1	Wealth transfer for marriage	R6	... forced dependance of young adults	—			
2	Marital composition: Mono- vs. Polygyny	R9	... aloofness of conjugal relations	-.31	—		
3	Internal segmentation of villages	R15	... ancestor-based communal integration	.22	-.30	—	
4	Rules of descent: lineal vs. cognatic	R43	... linearity of descent rules	.28	-.37	.34	—

The correlations of the indicators with structural complexity is very low or nil.

Theoretical embedding:

Definition: (1) In *lineal* systems, rights and duties are acquired in each generation through father or mother (sometimes both). *Clans* are descent groups that are unilineal, unilateral (father's or mother's side, not both), exogamous and egalitarian by heredity. (2) As for the so called non-lineal, ego-centred (*cognatic*) systems, *Genes* or *kindred* are descent groups that are bilaterally defined (mother's- and father's side) and hierarchical by heredity. Kinship systems based on bilateral descent groups tend to produce permanent leadership offices with much emphasis on genealogy for ranking purposes. Kinship in the cognatic system comes close to objective (biological) genealogy, with equal cultural emphasis on mothers' and fathers' side.

Analysis: The consequences of the two types of defining positions in society are far reaching. In the case of ideological, asymmetrical (lineage-)formation of kinship (1), the size of tribal groups may be attained by a million or more people. Its membership is precisely defined through genealogical extension in time, down to a mythical or real

founder of the first line. In principle, all actually living descendants of a founding ancestor are equal, though descendants of first born and later born sons (rarely: daughters) may differ in status. Political leadership in such systems tend to be transitory and limited to specific conflict solution. They are complex through their extension in time, not in terms of hierarchical differentiation as is the case in class or caste societies. In order to avoid confusion between the two types of complexity, we will use the term *extendedness of social relations* when dealing with lineage based complexity.

If one looks to ego-oriented cognatic systems (2), the extension of the group develops "horizontally", i.e. among all the living descendants of the 4 grandparents, the 16 grand-grand parents, the 64 grand-grand-grand parents – and so forth. However, in the social reality, there is no indefinite "and so forth", because the relational capacity of individuals in the real world is limited. In cognatic systems, the extension of membership occurs in the unstable *social* space, not in an irreversible and ideological *time* space. Having no clear definition who belongs to whom, kindreds are unsuited to mobilise collective action on a kinship ideology. Such mobilisation would always be limited to a few hundred persons – and who exactly these few hundred persons are, is beyond definition. Membership and leadership are not pre-defined on ideological grounds (no common ancestor exists, no extended concept of "brother", no founder of the clan). On the contrary it is established and reproduced in a rather arbitrary and dynamic social environment.

Hypothesis: This short glimps on two extremes in the collective formation of symbolic universes – the social against the temporal space – may suffice to render plausibility to the idea that culture matters in development. Societies with lineal descent systems tend to be far more critical against any institutionalised hierarchy than ego-centred systems. The concept of lineage lays the ground for an extended collective identity. It is highly structured and supports the mobilisation for corporate action, but only if needed. Since the collective identity of the individual is so clearly defined and socially confirmed in frequent corporate actions, the individual maintains a strong loyalty to paternal kin. Under such conditions, *competing loyalties* and particularly the demands of the state – if strong enough – have more eroding effects than in ego-centred kinship systems where there are less formal structures to be eroded. Since all known nation-states institutionalise collectivity above and beyond traditional genealogical categories, it is expected that stronger lineage traditions in a country's cultural heritage render national integration and economic development more difficult.

A few remarks on the four components of the index may be added:

a) The *transfer of wealth for marriage* describes what has to be given in exchange for a wife, her reproductive capacity and work force. The coding indicates how much the kin of the future husbands and wives are involved and in fact controlling the process. As can be seen from the table, the dependence of the young generation is higher when the descent rules are more lineage-oriented. It has also been shown that the bride wealth increases with structural complexity¹. As our analysis proves this practice to be relevant in all kinship systems, we add some commentaries.

¹ Marriage exchange theories are particularly interested in the reasons for differences in the quantity and quality of transactions. Since we try to link our institutional types with different levels of structural complexity, the following remarks of Schlegel/Eloul (1988) are of particular interest: "Absence of transactions [of bride wealth], women exchange,

Unfortunately, dependence is increased and accelerated with increasing monetarizing of all social relations in the course of modernization: In many parts of the world, young men have to pay for a traditional legal marriage from a half years to a full years salary to the family of a future wife. On the other hand, young women pay the sum directly to their parents in order to be free to chose whoever they like to marry. Of course, such practices stand completely outside the traditional logic of mutual exchange. The point here is that practice and rules of the local institutions are open to all kinds of interpretation if conditions for social transactions change. But as a rule we can say, that new institutional arrangements fit into pre-existing power differentials and tend to produce non-intended consequences.

b) The *type of marriage* – our second indicator of extendedness – not only influences the composition of the households, but also the vested interests of their members and the relations among them. In average, common interests and intimacy between husband and wife are more pronounced in monogamous than polygynous marriages. Where collective cooperation is based on lineage principles, husband and wife belong to different identity groups due to exogamous marriage rules. Under such conditions, intimacy between conjugal partners is often viewed with a critical eye and judged as a potential threat to the clan of origin (Broude 1983; de Munck 1999). Empirical facts are consistent with this view: The more strongly a society is organised on lineage principles, the more frequent is polygyny (hence the aloofness of conjugal relations) and the higher is the control of marriage through extensive exchange of marriage wealth. In societies with ego-oriented (cognatic) kinship systems, personal identity and social relations are less based on ideological principles and they manage marriage arrangements on a lower level of expenditure and exchange.

c) The third indicator – *internal segmentation of villages* – is partly a result from marriage and kinship norms while at the same time reproducing them. In the most common case of (*patri-*) lineal organisation with exogamy, combined with the residence of wives in the location of the husbands family, local communities become strongly segmented. Brothers and their male descendants tend to live together with wives taken from outside – outside not only in social, but also in spatial terms². If, however, societies are less structured by lineage principles and the descent based internal differentiation is low, it is locality rather than descent which forms the basis of corporate grouping (Leach 1971). Wives and husbands can more easily find each other "just around the corner" with lower hurdles set by kin and offer more options with regard to the residence of the new couple. The question of residence is important

and bride service characterize marriage at the lower levels of cultural complexity". And on the side of high complexity: "Societies that produce large amounts of goods and have greater social complexity tend toward asymmetrical exchange of goods: bride-wealth, dowry and indirect dowry. These findings support a property hypothesis and lend credence to our assumption that property relations underlie the type of marriage transaction" .

² "The primary effect of a rule of residence is to assemble in one locality a particular aggregation of kinsmen with their families of procreation. Patrilocal [...] residence bring[s] together a number of patrilineally related males with their wives and children. Matrilocal residence aggregate matrilineal kinsmen and their families" (Murdock 1949:17f.) .

because local groups are the super-familial units within which all important day-to-day and face to face interactions occur.

The three variables – transfer of wealth, type of marriage and internal segmentation of villages –, together with (d) the principle of descent, are functionally related. They were selected with an abstract concept in mind, intended to identify institutional sets which differ with respect to the extent of network involvement. Roughly speaking, kinship extendedness measures how much social life is ordered along principles of unilineal descent (irrespective of the lateral preference) in combination with the extent of the kin's involvement in basic aspects of social life.