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Sources of Entrepreneurial Discretion in Kinship Systems[i]

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Introduction

Entrepreneurs may wish to be selective about which relatives to include or exclude in their businesses. For example, their child might be inept but their niece might be outstanding. What aspects of kinship systems affect their ability to makes these sorts of choices? What enables them to bend their ties of kinship and marriage to the interests of their business? Most broadly, what dimensions of kinship lend themselves to tactical or instrumental actions? This question is sweeping just as my meaning of "entrepreneurs" is very broad: those who take actions with the goal of growing their capital (Stewart, 1991). This capital may take the form of newly started ventures, dynastic firms, or even in pre-capitalist systems other social forms, for example, rural estates farmed by followers.

An adequate answer for such a question would require large-scale comparative analysis. However, the question is promising enough, and neglected enough, to justify an exploratory effort. To do so I identify properties of kinship systems that affect the ability of entrepreneurs to take tactical actions and use discretion in their use or avoidance of kinship ties. Seven propositions are suggested. These refer to (1) incorporation of talent regardless of sex roles, (2) non-relatives treated as kin, (3) widening the vertical range of kinship, (4) widening the collateral range of kinship, (5) incorporation of relatives through marriage, (6) re-defining kinship ties and obligations, and (7) selective exclusion.

KINSHIP SYSTEMS AND DISCRETION FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Variations in Kinship Systems

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Entrepreneurs mobilize resources accessed through networks of kinship and marriage. These resources include people (as partners or employees), capital, information, and reputational affirmation (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Grassby, 2001: 235, 285-286; Stewart, 2003). Just as with other sources of resources, entrepreneurs will prefer to have options as they choose to work or not work with kin. For example, restriction to the closest kin could be undesirable because they might not be willing or able (Bennedsen et al., 2007; Gilding, 2005; Grassby, 2001: 229, 408-412; Pérez-González, 2006; Sciascia & Mazzola, 2008; Westhead & Howorth, 2006). Not surprisingly, then, kinship patterns in family firms are often found to be "fluid" and norms to be adaptable (Davidoff & Hall, 1987: 31, 216; Oxfeld, 1993: 166). As Hamabata (1990: 34) found amongst elite Japanese business families, "in actual practice… much of the [kinship] ideal is routinely ignored" (see also Kondo, 1990: 162-166 for modest Japanese business families).

Entrepreneurs are not unique in their "tactical" uses of kinship (Bloch, 1971). Contrary to stereotypes of "traditional", "kin-based" societies, kinship systems generally are amenable to choice and to "achievement" rather than "ascription" (Finnegan, 1970); Fortes, 1969: 219-220. This is true in North West Europe and the New World (Robertson, 1991: 110, 112, 120). This is also true in so-called "primitive" or "kin-based" societies, some of which – the "Bigman" cultures of highland New Guinea – are notorious for self-interested maneuvering (Stewart, 1990; Strathern, 1971; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2001; for an Amazonian example: Killick, 2009; for !Kung bushmen: Robertson, 1991: 28; for Swat Pathans, Barth, 1959). Even for sub-Saharan Africa, the home of apparently rigid, unilineal descent systems (Barnes, 1962), we find detailed

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ethnographies of kinship strategizing (towards village leadership: Gulliver, 1971; Turner, 1957; van Velsen, 1964). Two of the strongest arguments for choice within kinship systems are also based on African cases (Finnegan, 1970; Wallman, 1975).

That being said, kinship systems vary in their accommodation of choice, their "optative" character (Finnegan, 1970) and potential for entrepreneurial manipulations. Mattesich and Hill (1976: 151, 153) suggested that "certain properties of societies [determine whether] kinship has negative, neutral, or positive effects upon business organization." For example, Schweitzer (2000a) argued that "kinship systems" tend towards one pole – inclusive – or the other – exclusive. Following Schweitzer (2000a: 208), "inclusive refers to a given kinship system whose functional characteristic is to maximize the number of individuals who can be 'made into relatives,' if strategically advantageous." "Exclusive" then refers to the reverse.

To my knowledge there is no comprehensive overview, either conceptual or empirical, of the qualities of kinship systems that generate opportunities for entrepreneurial discretion. One possible approach would be to adopt broad-brush typologies such as Schweitzer's. For example, we could hypothesize that entrepreneurs will profit more from kinship ties in "inclusive" kinship systems. A counter hypothesis would be that they also need methods to exclude non-contributing kin. This approach has three problems. First, broad brush treatments of kinship systems can be highly misleading, as the efforts to characterize certain cultures as "patrilineal", for example, have shown; such labels mischaracterize the complex patterns of transmission of property and office (Gough, 1971; Holy, 1996: 75; Scheffler, 2001: xii, 22, 78, 82, 87, 89). Second, an approach based on comparing kinship systems could not offer prescriptive

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advice because entrepreneurs would not be willing or able to switch kinship systems. To provide prescriptions, or simply to sensitize entrepreneurs to their options, we would need to consider the possible tactics that might or might not be available. Third, in order to classify kinship systems in broad terms we would need a rubric based on these specific tactics in the first event. Therefore I try to think "in terms of logical possibilities" (Needham, 1971: 10) to generate propositions about kinship and discretion. The first five propositions assume that kinship is a resource and refer to increasing the range of ties, that is, inclusiveness. The last two propositions do not assume that kinship is a resource and refer to methods for re-defining or excluding kinship ties.

Equal Opportunities Irrespective of Sex Roles

Cultures differ in their value placed on equal opportunities in business for females; that is, for those who play female sex roles as culturally conceived. Examples of cultures in which male roles are strongly advantaged are all too easy to find (e.g., Dhaliwal, 1998; Douglass, 1992; Greenhalgh, 1994; Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, 1987; Song, 1999: 110-111). Even in the "modern" West, where norms of sex role equality prevail (at least with respect to inheritance, Finch & Mason, 2000), actual practice still advantages males (at least with respect to succession) (Bennedsen et al., 2007). Substituting daughters for absent or incapable sons has been noted as one of the "strategies of heirship" (Goody, 1976: 92), but implicit in this formulation is a widespread bias in favor of sons.

Self-evidently, firms that equally incorporate females in both ownership and management thereby increase, and possibly double, their access to talent. Less evidently, they thereby increase the scope of their perceptions and network connections (Davidoff &

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Hall, 1987: 202, 227; Hamabata, 1990: 28; Lomnitz &Pérez-Lizaur, 1987: 118; Robertson, 1991: 41). A similar logic applies to non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Levine, 2008). Research about gay and lesbian entrepreneurship is still seminal, but undoubtedly some enterprising family firms have found use for this tactic (Schindehutte, Morris, & Allen, 2005; Willsdon, 2005).

Proposition 1. Entrepreneurial options are increased by non-discrimination on the basis of sex roles.

1a. Proposition 1 holds only to the extent that females receive equal opportunities to be prepared for ownership and for advancement into management.

1b. Entrepreneurial options are increased by non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Kin-Like Ties

Informal relatedness. Entrepreneurs have even more discretion if they can create their own kin-like ties. Opportunities vary across cultures, in both so-called "primitive" cultures as well as so-called "advanced." In some cultures, connections based on territory, age, or "association membership" are just as important as those based on kinship (Finnegan, 1970: 178). They were important in the development of capitalism in the English-speaking world (Grassby 2001: 263). They are important in Italian industry clusters (Blim, 1990: 154). Quite possibly anthropologists have overstated the importance of formally recognized kinship to the neglect of more informal forms of "relatedness." (On preference for this term of Janet Carsten's, rather than "fictive kin," see Smith, 2009: 7; compare Holy, 1996: 166-168; Howell 2009: 154-155.)

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Well-known and wide-spread examples of quasi-kinship are forms of godparenthood and ritual parenthood, which can extend to competition to nurture children more than do the "real" parents (Douglass, 1992: 22; Goody, 1976: 66; Holy, 1996: 166; Mayer, 2009; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2001: 190). Another example of these more "fluid, creative, and incorporative systems" in the context of a seemingly lineage-based society (China) is found in Stafford's (2000) study of the cycles of *yang* (related to filial piety or *xiao*) and of *laiwang*, which "centers mostly on relationships between friends, neighbors and acquaintances" (p. 38). Bruun (1993: 52 59) found that 15-20% of the Chinese family business households he studied had incorporated distant kin or non-kin into their families.

Adoption and fosterage. Adoption and fosterage of children are distinct among these practices because they can be means of acquiring an heir and successor. These practices are highly varied in incidence across societies, more common in China and India than in Europe (Goody, 1976: 76; 1996: 155; Howell, 2009). Both have been used as means of recruiting talent to family firms (Andersson, 2001; Davidoff & Hall, 1987: 223; Goody, 196: 145; Song, 1999: 12). Business families might not only take in foster children but also send children away for some years to learn a trade elsewhere (Grassby, 2001: 183; 234; 281-282). Unfortunate consequences are not unknown. For example, Oxfeld (1993: 199) reports on the practice ("generally frowned on by the community" but nonetheless observed) of disinheriting adopted sons when the mothers bore sons later on. Further, children themselves might bear emotional costs (Creed, 2000; Mayer, 2009; Notermans, 2008). This may be especially true in cases where "foster-kinship… [is] clientalism [that is, a "mechanism for tributary control"] dressed in the plumage of

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kinship" (Parkes, 2004: 606, 607). Finally, cultures vary in their willingness to incorporate children born out of wedlock into the family. (For an example of relative inclusion commingled with discrimination, see Douglass, 1992).

Proposition 2. Entrepreneurial choice is increased by the strategic use of kin-like forms of relatedness.

2a This is rendered more possible to the extent that adoption and fosterage are options.

Widening the Vertical Range of Kin

Polygyny. Entrepreneurs' choices can be limited by their available offspring. Perhaps they have no children or the children they have are incapable or uninterested in their business. The entrepreneur requires a "strategy of heirship" (Goody, 1976). Adoption is one example, of the type that adds children directly. The other main type adds mothers (Goody, 1976: 90-95). Historically the common example is polygyny. (Polygyny is not a unitary phenomenon, but for simplicity I ignore sub-types and include for current purposes both concubinage and polycoity (e.g. handmaidens) (Goody, 1976: 17, 42, 90; White, 1988: 549-553).) The clear benefit of this tactic is that it increases the offspring (of a male) and it is in some countries "an economically viable production system" (White, 1988: 557; also Goody, 1976: 51). The logical inverse of polyandry is extremely rare and it increases the offspring of the wife only if one husband is infertile (Goody, 1976: 17; Holy, 1996: 62-63). Rather than polyandry, the practice of woman-woman marriage for purposes of jural rights to the offspring – found amongst the Nuer – is the female equivalent of polygyny with respect to heirship (Gough, 1971: 107).

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Polygyny is not for all occasions or cultures. As Robertson (1991: 58) puts the point, "polygyny may be a smart strategy for marshalling labour, but it is not a sensible means of consolidating a narrow interest in property in the longer term." Moreover, it generates not only children but also family problems such as domestic conflicts and mistreatment of and resistance from women (Al-Kremawi & Graham, 1999; Bove & Valeggia, 2009; Goody, 1976: 51-57; Jad, 2009; Jankowiak, Sudakov, & Wilreker, 2005). Sustaining a polygynous system, given normal demographics, also requires frequent divorce and late marriage by males and early marriage by females (Holy 1996: 63-65). Of course it is also not a legal option in every country; a point that reinforces the differences found amongst kinship systems.

Re-marriage. From the perspective of a male seeking to increase the number of mothers of his children, another strategy of heirship is re-marriage or serial monogamy (Goody, 1976: 42, 91). This strategy, which is frequently observed in the highly optative kinship systems studied by Gulliver (1971), Turner (1957) and van Velsen (1964), can increase the number of children and bring step-children besides. For women especially, re-marriage can also help to overcome the financial burdens of divorce (Dewilde & Uunk, 2008; Ozawa & Yoon, 2001). It adds greater complexity and options because it leads to "extensive kindreds" and potentially to "the sense of a controlled expansion of relationship possibilities and permutations" (Simpson, 1994: 832, 846).

Such an upside applies to the entrepreneurially oriented actor, particularly one with the resources and time to invest in the more complex kindred. It might not apply otherwise (Simpson, 1994). Moreover, this strategy has its costs, aside from presumed emotional distress at least at some times. Children often lose touch with half siblings,

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and parents – fathers especially - often lose connection with and support from their children (Kalmijn, 2007; Simpson, 1994; van Velsen, 1964: 107). According to a meta-analysis by Jeynes (2006), the psychological well-being of children following parental re-marriage is diminished. Moreover, as fairy tales and social science both tell us, parents tend to be biased towards their own offspring at the expense of step-children (Akashi-Ronquest, 2009; Simpson, 1994). On balance, then, re-marriages introduce conflicts "between the children of the first and second alliance [but they also] widen contacts and increase resources" (Davidoff & Hall, 1987: 202; also 215, 221).

New reproductive technologies. Another tactic for generating offspring is the use of the new reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization. As with polygyny, this tactic is differentially available, partly for economic and partly for normative reasons. Where it is available it is adapted to its particular cultural context. For example, it is used very differently in the socially conservative culture of Lebanon (Clarke, 2008) than in the socially liberal cultures of urban China and India (Gates, 1993; Khanna, Sudha, & Rajan, 2009; see generally Levine, 2008). We can expect that it will become an increasingly utilized strategy of heirship.

Proposition 3. Entrepreneurial choice is increased by tactics that increase the inter-generational range of kinship ties.

3a This is made more possible to the extent that polygyny and informal marriages are options. As a corollary, this is made more possible to the extent that the incorporation of children born out of wedlock is an option.

3b This is made more possible to the extent that serial monogamy with re-marriage is an option.

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3c This is made more possible to the extent that the new reproductive technologies are options.

Widening the Horizontal Range of Kin

Bilateral kinship. Kinship can also be expanded in the ancestral direction. If one recognizes a founding or apical ancestor a generation further into the past more of the descendants are recognized as kin (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley, 1996). That is, the method refers to vertical (cross-generational) kinship but the effect is horizontal; increasing generational depth increases the collateral range of kin. Another approach that increases the horizontal range and, in practice, is associated with choice of connections is reckoning kinship through both the mother's and father's sides; that is, the use of bilateral kinship, or in descent terms, cognatic descent. To Westerners this seems obvious because they are used to non-unilineal, non-ancestor centered kinship (Finch & Mason, 2000: 163). Also obvious to contemporary Westerners but scarcely universal is flexibility in choice of residence. Such choice can also be found in some pre-capitalist systems (Harrell, 1997: 432-434; Holy, 1996: 111-118; Turner, 1957: 61-64; van Velsen, 1964: 65, 73, 229).

With bilateral reckoning, individuals face multiple overlapping memberships that lack stable kinship groupings (Harrell, 1996: 212; Holy, 1996: 42, 116-117). This can result in rivalries over loyalties on the part of grandparents (Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, 1987: 132-134) and greater complexity, as different "descent modes [are often used] for differently for different purposes" (Barnes, 2006: 337; also Bloch & Sperber, 2002; cf. Gough, 1971). By the same token it provides a wider safety net within which entrepreneurs can take risks (Greenhalgh, 1989; Mattesich & Hill, 1976) and generates

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greater choice and a wider range of options (Grassby, 2001: 263; van Velsen, 1964: 75). For example, de Lima (2000) reports that elite Portuguese family members could choose their mother's or father's surname, depending on which was more prestigious (also Holy, 1996: 119).

The "work of kinship". Capitalizing on these wider options may call for women's "work of kinship," as di Leonardo (1987) called it. By this she meant "the conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross-household kinship ties,… the creation and maintenance of quasi-kin relations [and] decisions to neglect or to intensify particular ties" (1987: 442-443; also Davidoff & Hall, 1987: 202, 227; Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, 1987: 118). In di Leonardo's view (1987: 443) this work requires "an adult woman in the household" (also Kalmijn, 2007). This work could be useful in any system but particularly so in bilateral kinship systems because their combination of complexity and informality offers more potential for creative enactment.

Diverging devolution. "Diverging devolution" is Goody's (1976: 6) term for bilateral inheritance; the opposite, such that "the intergenerational devolution of valuables" follows only one line of the sexes, is "homogenous" (Hann, 2008: 146). We have noted that this is prescribed in the modern West (Finch & Mason, 2000) but this is a recent development whereas bilateral kinship is not. One might suspect that if bilateral inheritance offers more options than does homogenous inheritance, then it follows that partible rather than impartible inheritance (though a murky distinction; Hann, 2008: 151) does also.

Proposition 4. Entrepreneurial choice is increased by bilateral kinship and cognatic rather than unilineal descent.

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4a This is made more possible to the extent that choices of household residence are possible.

4b This is made more possible to the extent that the "work of kinship" is carried out, often by women.

4c This is made more possible to the extent that bilateral inheritance (diverging devolution) is possible.

Increasing Options by Means of Ties through Marriage

Ties through marriage – that is, affinity – increase the range of ties and offer greater strategic discretion than do consanguineal ties alone. The incorporation of in-laws is highly useful, where possible, not only in developing successors but also in developing alliances between business families (Barth, 1959: 40; Gates, 1996; Holy, 1996: 160-162; Leyton, 1970; Wong, 1988: 31). For this purpose polygyny has the advantage of enabling a wider range of alliances (Turner, 1957: 281). Alliances provide not only mutually advantageous transactions but also information benefits through increased network range and heterogeneity. Heterogeneity is a variable in the kinship networks of family firms. In one study (Renzulli, Aldrich, & Moody, 2000), kinship networks tended to provide relatively redundant information for entrepreneurs. In another study (Anderson, Jack, & Drakopoulou, 2005) the opposite obtained. Strategic marital ties increase the heterogeneity of kinship networks, provided that marriages include outsiders; that they are, loosely speaking, exogamous rather than endogamous.

Marriage is also a way to incorporate a wider range of talent into the firm (Grassby, 2001: 413; Leyton, 1970: 180). For example, the "appointed daughter" in Hindu India married with the intention of producing an heir not for her husband but her

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father (Goody, 1976: 73, 81). By contrast, Japanese "merchant families… celebrated the birth of a daughter because it enabled them to recruit and train a capable man through marriage to the daughter" (Saito, 2008: 6). Hamabata (1990: 43-45) observed an elite Japanese business family contemplating this tactic. In this case the daughter objected as she did not wish to become, in effect, a household (*ie*) head. In the cases studied by Saito, this tactic could also lead to conflict due to "dual power between [the son-in-law] and the founding family" (Saito, 2008: 18). Not surprisingly, marriage in these cultures has often been arranged. Another variant of affinal recruitment that is more feasible in some cultures than others is incorporation of affines from gay and lesbian unions (Barnes, 2006).

Proposition 5. Entrepreneurial choice is increased by the use of affinal, not just consanguineal ties.

5a. This is made more possible to the extent that marriages are made with the strategic interests of the families in mind.

5b. This is made more possible to the extent that affines may be incorporated as members of the kin group.

5c. This is made more possible to the extent that partners from gay and lesbian unions may be incorporated as members of the kin group.

Redefining Kinship Ties and Obligations

Widening the range of kin (propositions 1-5) is insufficient because some relatives are unhelpful or worse (Davidoff & Hall, 1987: 217; Grassby, 2001: 229-232; Wallman, 1975). While it might not be harmful, and even helpful in the interests of domestic harmony, to be inclusive in the distribution of wealth, it could certainly be

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harmful in the distribution of executive positions. Following Schweitzer's (2000a: 208) terminology, then, both small and major family firms may tend to be inclusive regarding property but exclusive regarding office (Marcus & Hall, 1992: 27; Oxfeld, 1993: 165).

Manipulating membership. Entrepreneurs prefer a situational logic (Wallman, 1975) when deciding whether to invoke kinship ties, and if invoked, in deciding which people they count as kin. Two of the most widely noted means for excluding are selective memory and acknowledgement ("genealogical amnesia") and renegotiation of kinship ties (for quote: van Velsen, 1964: 47, also 268; Barnes, 1962; Davidoff & Hall, 1987: 32; Gulliver, 1971: 236; Holy 1996: 119). Some cultures have institutionalized methods of "ancestral gerrymandering", such as Zimmer-Tamakoshi (2001) found among the Gende of New Guinea. Even written genealogies have had little effect in damping these rewritings of ties (Lewis, 1996); in fact, charters can also be re-written (Barth, 1959: 25; Scheffler, 2001: 40).

Another approach to "pruning the family tree," as Lambrecht and Lievens (2005) put it, is to define the founder in the immediate past, most conveniently as one's own parent (Choi, 1995). As Holy notes (1996: 117), even in cognatic systems "groups [based on kinship] do form" *as if* in unilineal systems, based on the selective choice of a particular apical ancestor – a firm founder, for example. Of course, such redefinitions do not go uncontested; Choi (1995) offers a good case study. Moreover, most "prunings" require a negotiated buy-out of various kin, a process that does lead to simpler structures (as Lambrecht and Lievens noted) but often to considerable acrimony as well (which they did not).

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Dis-embedding and re-embedding. Entrepreneurs may not only wish to redefine not only the boundaries of their kindred, but also the normative expectations of behavior towards particular kin. Early in an entrepreneur's career, she may face kinship obligations that conflict with the growth of her venture. This conundrum is found wherever kinship implies a moral obligation to kin, which is to say everywhere (Grassby, 2001: 230, 298; Hart, 1975; Stewart, 1990). What is fortunately not so ubiquitous is the success of the pull of these obligations in opposition to economic success. A vernacular expression for this problem in Caribbean cultures is "crab antics" (Wilson, 1973: 58). The analogy with crabs is based on their behavior, when placed in a bucket, of pulling back down any who begin to escape (also Douglass, 1992: 263; Quinlan, 2006; Trevinyo-Rodríguez, 2010).

In order for entrepreneurs to make choices that balance their kin and business obligations, they must follow a career that begins with the option of deciding who deserves support, and what resources must be invested in their ventures. They must engage in at least some measure of dis-embedding from the norms of generalized reciprocity and sharing with kin (Hart, 1975; Holy, 1996: 110; Turner, 1957: 133). Excellent examples of dis-embedding are found in Hart (1975) and more colorfully yet in Turner (1957). Turner recounts the opportunistic use of suboptimal kinship ties by the ambitious but infertile Sandombu, who built up a successful farm based on an initial recruitment of "three generations of matrilineal kinswomen… one of them… a witch, another a prostitute, and the third a child in arms. In allowing [these three] to reside at his farm Sandombu was openly defying the people of [the village]" (Turner, 1957: 153; also 230-231).

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Some cultures have greater understandings of the need to dis-embed, and also of the need later in the entrepreneurial career to re-embed in culturally approved ways. Mechanisms of dis-embedding may be as simple as opportunities for geographic distancing and as complex as trusts and other legal devices. Mechanisms of re-embedding permit the successful entrepreneurs to convert their wealth into social standing by such means as the adoption of landed gentry lifestyles, volunteer public service and philanthropy (Barth, 1959: 77-80; Hart, 1975; Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, 1987: 13; Marcus & Hall, 1992: 110-112; Stewart, 1990; 2003).

Proposition 6. Entrepreneurial choice is increased by opportunities to manipulate and redefine membership in the kindred.

6a. This is made more possible to the extent that there is cultural recognition of the need for adaptations in the normative expectations of reciprocity over the entrepreneurial career.

Selective Exclusion

Not surprisingly, large dynastic family firms tend to be the most exclusive in Schweitzer's sense. In fact, in the Portuguese cases studied by de Lima (2000), and the American cases studied by Marcus and Hall (1992) not all family members possess shares in the business, let alone control the top management team, despite legal regimes that tend to treat kinship ties as necessary and sufficient for access to family wealth. This is to be expected, for as Schweitzer (2000b: 21) argues, "'exclusion' is a function of kinship relations in contexts where they regulate access to limited resources" (see also Harrell, 1997: 34, 272-276; Holy, 1996: 107-108 regarding inheritance; Schweitzer, 2000a: 208-210).

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Exclusionary tactics. Some exclusionary tactics are indirect. Examples include selective memory and ancestral gerrymandering (above) and hiring from the labor market or other "spheres of exchange" (Barth, 1967) and other means of ignoring kinship altogether (Hann, 2008). As Needham (1971) implies and Wallman (1975) asserts, the functions that may be performed by kinship can also be performed by other means. More direct tactics include refusing to promote a child as successor and attempting to dismiss a family member. These methods can be emotionally costly, and culturally and politically complex (for the first example, Hamabata, 1990: 43; for the second Learned, 1995, for his efforts to remove his father from his board of directors). Therefore, those who are excluded may be compensated with moveable property or with the launch of new ventures for their benefit (Goody, 1996: 143, 155, 203; Oxfeld, 1993: 181).

Other exclusionary tactics are more draconian, such as "whispered slander", accusations of sorcery or the threat of same (Turner, 1957: 103), banishment and "obligatory sojourning" (Gates, 1996: 4) and disinheritance (for Japan, Whyte, 1996). Other tactics are repugnant: *sati* (widow burning) and infanticide (Bakan, 1971; Fisch, 2005; Gates, as above; Goody, 1976: 95-96; Spinelli, 2005). All of these tactics, where they occur, are "deeply embedded in and responsive to the societies in which [they] occur" (Spinelli, 2005: 17). The entrepreneur's options depend not only on the repertoire of feasible tactics but also the cultural and personal costs, if any, to be paid for their use.

Affiliation to Kin-Based Groups

de Lima (2000) found that in large Portuguese family firms the route to the top required experience in the firm, high levels of training, proven competence, and the backing of one's own powerful branch of the family. It was also advantageous to be an

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eldest male. Under certain circumstances the TMT might be open to long-tenured non-kin. However, the norm was patrifiliation (being an offspring on the father's side) as the "necessary but not sufficient" condition for affiliation to the status. Scheffler (2001) has elaborated on the theoretical and ethnographic consequences of this sort of logic. He did not develop his arguments in the context of studying family firms, with the exception of Asian joint family firms (personal communication). Therefore we will use his concepts by analogy from kinship groups to family firms.

Scheffler proposed three possible constitutive rules: filiation is a necessary and sufficient condition, a necessary but not sufficient condition, or the sufficient but not necessary condition for the acquisition of a kinship status. For economy, I will refer to these as the **N&S**, **N** and **S** rules. To illustrate the principles, we could say that for dynastic firms, whether in Portugal, China or the United States, access to wealth generally follows the **N&S** rule whereas access to the TMT follows the **N** rule. The latter rule is more stringent as more conditions than mere filiation must be met (de Lima, 2000; Greenhalgh, 1994; Marcus & Hall, 1992: 27; Whyte, 1996).

The ability of the family firm to choose other criteria than kinship for affiliation into the TMT does not require it to choose economically rational criteria. Even in the **N** case, rewards and promotions in family firms need not be meritocratic (Dhaliwal, 1998; Douglass, 1992: 263). Practices of exclusion in high status families may have no bearing on business capability. For example, Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, (1987: 112, 120) discuss the use of familial ideology in boundary maintenance by elite Mexican "grandfamilies". These ideologies in fact reject modern business practice. They are interesting for their use of negative moral examples, that is, the role of black sheep (pp. 9-10; see also Long,

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1979 and compare Panoff, 1985 and Strathern, 1971: 84-86, 143, 187-189 for Melanesian "rubbish men").

Legal regimes may also impose the **N&S** rule on certain distributions of wealth. However, the **N** rule makes meritocracy possible. In this sense it represents the polar opposite of the **S** rule, which makes it virtually impossible (barring very high levels of flexibility or of exclusiveness) to avoid an inclusive nepotism (Ram & Holliday, 1993). That the **N** rule may be the most suited to entrepreneurial family firms is suggested by Scheffler's choices for exemplars: the Swat Pathans and the joint families of India and China; to anthropologists, these are classically entrepreneurial cases (see Barth, 1959: 11, 29; this rule also applies to the maneuverings for advantage in Gulliver, 1971: 37, 44, 49, 61).

Chinese "Lineage" Based Businesses: An Illustration

Scheffler's proposals about filiation are rooted in kinship theory and hence are obscure to non-anthropologists. Therefore, the example of Chinese firms, an example that is well recognized, will illustrate the concepts. Chinese family "lineages" (*zongzu*) are the prototypical case for illustrating the **N** mode. As noted, the mode of affiliation in itself is not sufficient to generate entrepreneurial uses of kinship ties. The Chinese case illustrates the point that we ought not to characterize a kinship system, let alone a society, on the basis of its system of affiliation (Holy, 1996: 123; Scheffler, 2001: 22; Stewart. 1998: 21-22). Whereas *zongzu* organization is rather exclusive, lived Chinese kinship is overall rather fluid and inclusive because of alternative kinship modes that operate simultaneously. As noted above, Stafford (2000: 38) proposed that "alongside

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patriliny… and alongside affinity… we find two other *equally* forceful, and relatively incorporative, systems of Chinese relatedness."

Chinese norms regarding inheritance also facilitate dynamism and creativity. Most anthropologists of China have studied peasant families whose property is a joint estate or co-parcenary that is handed down patrilinealy and "owned by the male descent line as a whole" (Greenhalgh, 1994: 756). However, "Chinese customary law recognized two kinds of property, the 'inherited assets' transmitted from the ancestors and the 'acquired property'" developed by entrepreneurs (as above; also Goody, 1997; Wong, 1988: 152-155). This latter property was much more attractive to its creators for two reasons. Unlike inherited assets, a small number of people (usually a father; occasionally two or more brothers) controlled its disposition with very few constraints. It was also more socially prestigious. Consequently, heirs had a strong incentive to branch off on their own and create their own wealth; surely this was a source of vigor in the economy if also a source of paternal consternation.

The *zongzu* themselves offer many possibilities for exclusion and centralization, which is to say they do not meet the "sufficient" requirement of the **N&S** case (and are for this reason not true lineages). Chinese "lineages" are essentially "voluntary organizations" (Scheffler, 2001: 161; also Freedman, 1958; Greenhalgh, 1994; Watson, 1985), in that the potential connections offered by filiation are only mobilized in certain cases, in which there are economic and political advantages in doing so. Their modes of exclusion center on class, generation and gender differentials in control of the assets of the firm (Freedman, 1958: 69, 105, 109-112; Greenhalgh, 1989; 1994; Scheffler, 2001: Chap. 9; cf. de Lima, 2000). They are exclusive in another sense as well. In contrast to

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traditional Mexican family firms, which prefer to do business with relatives, Chinese family firms have preferred to keep their familial character internal to the firm and to trade with non-relatives (Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, 1987: 144; Menkhoff & Labig, 1996; Wong, 1988: 133, 159-161). (The reason for this difference appears to be that the former practice fits low trust, high transactions cost environments, and vice versa (see Leff, 1978).)

Proposition 7. Entrepreneurial choice is increased by the availability of mechanisms of exclusion.

7a. This is made more possible to the extent that tactics for exclusion are culturally and legally sanctioned.

7b. This is made more possible to the extent that the **N** rather than **N&S** or **S** modes of affiliation apply to incorporation in the ownership and management of family firms.

Limitations and Qualifications

The effects suggested by some propositions might be non-monotonic. At some point flexibility diminishes kinship norms. If everyone used all the possible tactics at once very little would be left of any kinship system. Similarly, the degree to which kinship norms are internalized may be a moderating factor in the relationship between kinship discretion and entrepreneurial opportunity. Further, some of the propositions are inconsistent with one another. For example, it is not possible to maximize opportunities for women and also adopt polygyny or concubinage. It is not possible to have both the **N** rule in all respects and *required* bilateral inheritance. Moreover, some of these propositions are logically compatible but in practice are seldom found together. The

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devolution of productive property to females, for example, is associated with controls on their marriage and courtship; consistent with strategic marriages but not with opportunities for discretion by female entrepreneurs (Goody, 1976: 13-14). Similarly, in any given society some strategies of heirship tend to be used and not others; for example, polygyny is not associated with adoption (Goody, 1976: 48-49, 76, 82; Hann, 2008).

Moreover, it is clear that kinship discretion is but one of many factors affecting entrepreneurship. These have all been ignored for present purposes. But entrepreneurship in the sense of wealth creation depends on the wider socio-political context. Mann's (1984) study of brokers in pre-socialist China, whose individually entrepreneurial behavior co-existed with a stultifying bureaucracy, is a case in point. The actions of Swat Pathan chiefs and of Melanesian bigmen are clearly entrepreneurial in a broad sense of the word but they are wealth accumulators and not wealth creators. Further, tactics that are helpful to individual entrepreneurs might not be associated with economic development. As an example, "impartible inheritance [which diminishes choices] tended to promote social mobility, more efficient agriculture, and the first shoots of industrial development" (Hann, 2008: 150).

We should also be wary of inferring from the use of a tactic that an entrepreneur, or anyone else, has used it strategically. There might be any number of reasons, legal, demographic, cultural, ecological, rather than strategizing, to explain a particular tactic (Viazzo & Lynch, 2002). For example, a reason for bilateral inheritance and "women [as] residual heirs" might simply be maintenance of a family's "honour" (Goody, 1976: 20). We also need a great deal more knowledge of kinship discretion within an economic and venturing context before we can develop a satisfactory theory of kinship discretion

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among entrepreneurs. As Wallman (1975) argued, in certain contexts kinship is a resource, in others irrelevant, and in others a burden. Yet we lack a contingency theory for the three possibilities.

Suggestions for Further Research

Cross-cultural research. The propositions in this study might perhaps best be considered "speculations," mere armchair anthropology. They certainly need more comparative study and more systematic use of data. Comparisons are rendered difficult by the need to consider holistic contexts, history, and geographic proximity, as well as the differential attention and fieldwork skills reflected in ethnographic reports (Needham, 1971; White, 1988). Such comparisons – Goody's (1976) work for example - are currently somewhat out of fashion (Bloch & Sperber, 2002; Boyer, 2003; Hann, 2008). Nonetheless, such work is rendered feasible with the use of the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) (Ember & Ember, 2001: 139-143; Hann, 2008; Stewart, 1998: 50-51, 83). Moreover, studies using the HRAF continue to be published; a ProQuest® search for 1990 to the present finds 452 articles in a wide array of journals that cite it. Moreover, HRAF codes include many that cover both kinship systems and economic action and lend themselves to testing of hypotheses based on the propositions above. Examples of HRAF codes are (428) Inheritance; (472) Individual enterprise; (556) Accumulation of wealth; (557) Manipulative mobility; (586) Termination of marriage; (595) Polygamy; (596) Extended families; (597) Adoption; (608) Artificial kin; and (609) Behavior towards non-relatives (www.yale.edu/hraf/outline.htm).

Conflict and the rules of affiliation. Scheffler (2001: 27, 41) has sketched the relationships between conflict – an important concern in family firms - and the rules for

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affiliation. For example, there can be no competition between kinship groups over recruitment of their members when filiation is necessary (the **N&S** and **N** rules), but there can be rivalry for non-kin followers and, particularly with the **N** rule, intense rivalry within the group. The illustrative Swats are notorious for the virulence of competition between the closest of agnates (so-called blood kin by patrifiliation). Amongst them, the route to advancement is indebting increasing numbers of agricultural laborers and craftspeople for work on the khans' estates. This requires the control of more agricultural land, which in turn leads to rivalry between those who seek to inherit more land; that is, between brothers and patrilateral parallel cousins (Barth, 1959: 45, 68, 108, 112; Scheffler, 2001: 108, 111; see generally Fortes, 1969: 237-238 for the "rivalries and latent hostilities that are… intrinsically built into [ties such as] close kinship (notoriously siblingship)"). We can see in this example the potential for developing an anthropology of conflict in kinship systems. Such a project should consider the constitutive rules for kin affiliation, the overlay of non-kin organization (such as the markets for labor), the manner in which entitlements and individual contributions affect attributions of credit and blame, and the political and legal regime, with particular attention to systems of inheritance and succession.

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[i] A much earlier version of this paper was included in a presentation at the University of Alberta, September, 2001, and critiqued by Hal Scheffler. A recent version was critiqued by colleagues in a symposium at Marquette University. The manifold errors that remain are entirely my own.

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