Using Theory to Explain
Ethnographic Descriptions of Change

Strain Stress and Identity Systems in a Sri Lankan Village

Victor C. de Munck

Abstract. – It is argued that the relationship between nomothetic theories and ethnography has been neglected to the detriment of both. Two nomothetic theories are described and synthesized. One authored by Beals and Siegel on internal strains (e.g., leisure versus labor; economics versus education) and external stressors (e.g., environment, demographics, epidemics) as they affect sociocultural change and increase conflict. The other, by Harrison White, describes the coercive force identity forms exert on their members. These two theories are synthesized and applied to understanding three ethnographic fields of research in a Sri Lankan village: swidden cultivation practices; political leadership structures, and the increasing ambivalence locals have towards kinship, considering it both a burden and a blessing. Nomothetic theory is supported by this study and, in turn, is shown to provide a framework for analyzing the ethnographic materials. *[Sri Lanka, theory, strain stress, identity, socio-cultural change, leadership, swidden cultivation, kinship]*

Victor C. de Munck, Professor at the Dept. of Sociology, Vytautus Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania), and Professor at the Anthropology Department, New York State University (New Paltz, USA). – He has conducted fieldwork in Sri Lanka, Lithuania, Macedonia, Russia, and the United States. As main area of interest he investigates the meshing of macro-, meso-, and micro-levels for understanding or representing society and culture. – He has authored 6 monographs, 4 edited volumes and over 60 articles. See also References Cited.

This article introduces a program for investigating cultural processes of change in ethnographic settings. The theoretical engine for this program combines two theories: the first is a strain-stress theory of change first posed by Alan R. Beals and Bernard J. Siegel in 1966; the second is a network theory of "identity and control" worked out by Harrison White (1992, 2008) and also with his colleagues (White, Godart, and Corona 2007). Both of these theories contend that social dynamics and hence social forces are a product of relational processes between social forms and the physical environment. Further, both contend that radical sociocultural changes in social forms are caused by changes in the environment. Important here is that the unit of analysis is the social (and material) rather than the individual.

Nomothetic theory is often missing in ethnography, or perhaps I should say, cultural anthropology. If it is included, it is usually added ad hoc, presented in the introduction or at the end, but seldom serves as the thread that beads the ethnographic materials. To put it another way, theory seldom provides the "Aah ha, that's why they do X" moment for the reader of ethnographic texts. Anthropologists, including myself, are primarily ethnographers. One thing that has in many ways remained constant through the premodern, modern, postmodern, and post postmodern phases of anthropology is that most anthropologists still go out to the field (even if it is at home), come back, and write pretty darn good ethnography. For recent examples, I am thinking particularly of Rebecca Lester's book "Jesus in Our Wombs" (2005), and more recently Tanya Luhrmann's "When God Talks Back" (2012). Both excel as ethnographies, with the theoretical chapters feeling like opaque add-ons, providing little added benefit for most readers.

This is a great problem in anthropology. Our bread-and-butter and what we are good at is ethnography, but in order to give added value to the ethnography beyond its descriptive insight, one needs to wend it into a theoretical framework. We can enrich our offerings in two distinctive ways: the first uses ethnography to support theory; the second uses theory to guide and glean insight into our ethnographies. In the first case, the ethnographic material is systematically collected (i.e., using some reasonable diverse sample of informants and asking them the same questions) and written in such a way that it can be coded for cross-cultural or comparative purposes. This procedural method, alas, has gone the way of the passenger pigeon in cultural anthropology. In the second case, the ethnography may be written in a unique style, rely on a few key informants, be reflexive and subjectively framed, *but* the theory must provide the conceptual tools for (a), deciding what kinds of data/information to collect and (b), analyzing (making sense of) the obtained ethnographic data.

In this article, my goal is to revive the two aforementioned theories, synthesize them, and use them, albeit in a post hoc fashion, to satisfy goal 2 (b) above (analyzing the data). The first goal, collecting data amenable for subsequent comparative/cross-cultural analysis, is satisfied in this study, as I was trained and conducted the research using systematic methods for data collection.

The Beals and Siegel theory of strain and stress systems addresses cyclical and radical types of change. Their theory was much praised when it came out in their co-authored book "Divisiveness and Social Conflict" (1966), but to my knowledge was never applied by other researchers.[1] White's network theory focuses on social mechanisms of social control and, hence, resistance to change. The two theories complement each other in that they adhere to a materialist theoretical orientation and use social units as the basis of their analysis. As a result of shared suppositions for constructing a theory, they can be seen as two sides of the same coin, in that the Beals and Siegel theory of stress and strain systems provides a way to study change and the White theory provides a way to study continuity. Both theories are used to illustrate how nomothetic theory can leaven ethnographic data by (a), capturing that data which is amenable to comparative research, and (b), by making deductive sense of inductively constructed sociocultural patterns.

We begin with a discussion of the two theories, followed by a description of the village of Kutali

that highlights recent (post-1960) areas of sociocultural change. The main part of this article presents ethnographic data on economic, political, and social change and then uses the two theories to explain the warp and woof between change and continuity that is presented in the ethnographic materials. As a result of the stressors discussed in the ethnographic section of this article, we would expect new identity forms to emerge with different "arrays of symbols," consequent "menu of stories," and hence, modes of "control." We will fully flesh out the comparative changes in identities and control, and their relations to radical sociocultural changes in the discussion section of this article.

1 Theory

1.1 Beals and Siegel's Stress and Strain Theory of Sociocultural Change

This theory contends that external stressors impact on sociocultural systems and lead to radical change. Radical change refers to fundamental and unanticipated, significant changes in the social structure of a group. This process is expressed through the intensification of strains systems. Strain systems are areas of chronic conflict or logical inconsistencies in cultural symbol systems. Strain systems lead to expected and cyclical forms of conflict, but are not, in themselves, forces for social-structural changes. Ethnographic arenas to examine strain systems are conflicts after elections, corruption, divorce, conflicts regarding family honor, and so on. Strain systems are caused by disarticulations between say economic, political, religious, and social systems.[2] If uncontrolled the social conflict eventuates either in new sociocultural structures and institutions or progressing chaos and violence.[3] Stressors range from technological innovations to climate change;

---

1 Obtained via personal communication with Alan Beals.

2 As a short hand I use system to refer to sociocultural systems and also to subsystems within a system. A social system, to me, is one that focuses on the articulation and flow of information and resources within and between institutions' organizations and the roles that serve as the sources and terminals for these resources and information. In this regard, a cultural system is the information and means to identify types of resources, while the social structure is the social system through which these "goods" flow and which both uses and creates these resources. *Chena* (swidden) cultivation is a subsystem within the larger system of village farming, which is also a subsystem within the larger economic system. To avoid using subsystem or subsubsystem I simply refer to all systems as systems.

3 One can see the convergence of this idea with Bateson's (1936) theory of schismogenesis.

strains refer to expected and known types of conflict which, however dramatic or tragic, do not, by themselves, lead to change in a social system.

The key to this theory (elaborated and applied in the ethnographic sections) is that systems are never in a state of equilibrium; there are always strains that, at best, cycle around a dynamic equilibrium. The strains are a product of natural tensions caused by the inherent illogical or contradictory "fit" between various systems such as the economic, political kinship, and educational systems (or subsystems thereof). These disarticulations and conflicting interests and forces lead to perpetual conditions of strain within the larger sociocultural system. However, because these strains are anticipated they are not Taleb's (2010) black swans and can be regulated so they do not cause significant sociocultural disruption, though they may have significant negative impacts on individuals.

Stressors are always external, unanticipated sources and forces of change. Stressors are black swans in that they are rare and significantly disrupt the sociocultural system. An illustrative example is climate change.

1.2 Harrison White's Network Approach to Identity as Control

White's (1992, 2008) theory of identity and control is specific to identities and describes how an "array of symbols" order a "menu of stories" that form the basis of identity practices. Identities, according to White, are social forms of power and control precisely because they are social and, as such, we all recognize our "joint commitment" to the identity and to the symbols that order our behavioral practices within that identity (see also Gilbert 1983, 1989, 1994, 2001; Tomassello 2008). Identities are post hoc adaptive social forms resulting from structural changes to a social system that have become institutionalized (see also D'Andrade 2001).

In the parlance of Beals and Siegel, the stability characterized by White refers to a sociocultural system that has adapted to external stressors so that they are no longer apparent or significant. For White, power and control are emergent properties of social systems for the obvious and simple fact that by definition social refers to the synthesis of individuals into a collectivity. The collectivity may be egalitarian or hierarchical, liberal, or conservative, it does not matter. By virtue of being a collectivity there, each individual recognizes that all the other individuals are vis-à-vis the collectivity, just like them. That is, they share the same identity with

its attendant contexts, behavioral repertoires, speech code, gestures, styles of dress, beliefs, values, traditions – i.e., habitus (Bourdieu 1977) or social practices and knowledge.[4] For instance, the triadic ideals of individualism, freedom and democracy are, from White's perspective adaptive, post hoc emanations from the infra and structural levels of a social system that are thematically emphasized in official national stories about America and reformulated in the experiences of individual Americans. Those who assert their Americanness, especially in contexts where it is expected, buy into a particular menu of stories with specific symbolic expressions that are presumptively shared by others. Should someone not express their Americanness in an appropriate fashion, others, even the meek among them, may feel compelled to reprimand them. Their confidence in actually doing so is enhanced by the implicit joint commitment of the members of that identity (Gilbert 2010a/b, 2011).

It is important to note that it is not necessary for individuals to believe in the menu of stories, only to believe that the menu of stories and behaviors that express the particular identity they are performing at the moment are shared by other participants of a social event or activity. Once it is believed that others share the precepts and practices of an identity, a feedback cycle is formed in which all members enforce the cultural practices that support and express that identity, at the appropriate time. The beliefs and practices are no longer individual but collective and thus radically different than individual beliefs, in that they are perceived as "objective social facts." Scott (1998) and Scott and Arthur (2012), among many others, have described how gossip, play, and hidden transcripts are means by which members of particular identities create spaces outside the cultural compound while also creating an informal creative identity for and of themselves.

Identities consist of an array of symbols that can be ordered in a number of ways depending on context or on personality. Variation and improvisation is relatively unimportant, what matters is that in contexts that trigger the activation of a shared identity members of the cultural group behave in ways that are perceived to reflect the identity appropriately. Power and control stem from the inherent quality of culture as a shared system and that members of a culture know that other members know it.

This goes as well for the distributed aspect of culture. For instance, the builders of a house – plumbers, electricians, carpenters, architects, and so

---

4 This phrasing and insight comes from Kronenfeld (2008: 31–32).

on – do not know the jobs of others but all articulate to form a larger coherent identity that is shared.[5] It is the joint agreement, the articulation with others to form a "plural subject" that is the glue of social organization and the source of power, control and hence, identity (Gilbert 1989, 2010a/b, 2011).[6] In contexts where specific identities are activated, the collective knowledge of the array of symbols that make up the menu of stories and the collective recognition of behaviors that appropriately index those stories serve as internal psychological and external social forces that keep people in line.

For White, the emphasis is on how social identities control themselves by using cultural mechanisms that are both psychological and sociological. A brief example may be the identity form "hippies" which emerged from the alternative identity "bohemian" and was an adaptation to social, political, and economic events in the 1960s. Once having been formed there are an "array of symbols" forming a core set of stories that both give form to hippie identity and that control those who adopt this identity through the directive force of the moral expressed by the stories (e.g., pacifist, non-materialist, close-to-nature, communal values, styles of dress, language codes, etc.).

1.3 Summary of the Two Theories

Beals and Siegel offer a theory of radical sociocultural change, while White offers a theory of continuity. The main cause of change is external stressors that exacerbate internal strains and create dysfunctional unanticipated dynamic equilibrium. This idea, as noted before, anticipates Taleb's (2010) black swan events. However, Taleb is expressly, and intentionally, without a theory. Beals and Siegel view radical change as unanticipated eventful and coming from outside the sociocultural system. What needs to be determined in their theory is exactly what is outside and what is inside, and how does the outside affect inside systems, and why do outside forces cause radical change in one case but not in another? The main answer to the last question is that the social strains that are always there and fuel the dynamic equilibrium of the larger system converge sometimes with the external stressors (when forceful enough) to create conditions that may trigger radical sudden sociocultural change. It is because

radical change is unpredictable and un-anticipatable that we cannot be much more precise.[7]

White's focus, for our purposes, is on the properties of identities as they serve to control behaviors, tastes, and establish internally structured identities. White's property is on the internal constraints or coercive and normative forces that keep things together. Though a structural market materialist, White views identities as cultural formations. It is for him the requirements of encultured animals to cooperate with one another, otherwise there is no social.

We now turn to a descriptive sketch of Kutali village with a focus on general processes of change and also continuity.

2 Village: Kutali and Some Forces of Cultural Change

Kutali[8] is located in the Moneragala District of the Uva Bintenne Province, just southeast of the mountainous vertebra that runs north-south through the center of Sri Lanka. Along the western edge of Kutali lies the Nilgala forest, a protected nature reserve inhabited by elephants, sun bears, leopards, and a few hamlets. In the other cardinal directions lie the homes and hamlets of Sinhalese Buddhists farmers. In 1982, 1,000 Muslims lived in Kutali proper, and 100 Sinhalese Buddhists, mostly recent migrants in search of land, lived on the outskirts of the village. There resided approximately 1,600 villagers in Kutali in 2012.

In the 1960s, the Sri Lankan government changed the structure of village governance, and a new bureaucratic rather than hereditary, local, person was assigned to be the village "headman" (*grama sevaka*).[9] In 1981, government agents came to assign deeds to land that had previously been cultivated without deeds. The village had been without electricity and plumbing or a post office, most villagers had little cash. In the 1980s, villagers began to be employed in Pakistan and the Middle East. In the early 1980s, no one owned a car. By the middle 1980s, some villagers had bought motorcycles and cars; the local economy was becoming increasingly meshed with the national and global economies. By the mid-1980s, there was already a small but steady stream of women from the Kutali area working in textile factories in Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zone

---

5 I am indebted to Kronenfeld (2012: 323 f.) for this metaphor.

6 Margaret Gilbert's work, particularly her vocabulary of "joint commitment" and "plural persons" has been co-opted for elucidating Harrison White's theory because it works and is more precise, to me, than the formulations of White.

7 Taleb (2010) is particularly eloquent and obsessively forceful on emphasizing the limits of both inferential and deductive knowledge (that is human knowledge).

8 Kutali is a pseudonym I have used in most of my writings on this village.

9 From the village perspective, this would be a stressor.

(FTZ) and going abroad where they worked, mostly as maids. This was a general development throughout Sri Lankan rural communities at this time (see Gamburd 2000: 36–40; Lynch 1999: 18–22).

Nevertheless, throughout these momentous political and economic changes and to the present (2013), rain-fed rice paddy and *chena* (swidden) cultivation remain the mainstays of the local economy. Livestock, hunting, timber, and gathering various forest resources for trade provide additional economic outlets. Land holdings are small; at the time of this study no family owned more than 15 acres of paddy land, and the mean was 1.5 acres per family. *Chena* lands were even more uniform in size, with 90% of families cultivating between one and two acres.

Demographically, Kutali is an atypical village; 90% percent of Moneragala District's population is Buddhist and 2% Muslim (these figures have held steady from 1981–2012), compared to national averages of 67% and 7%, respectively. Villagers are not only relatively isolated from other Muslim populations but feel threatened by the growing Sinhalese population that surrounds them. Ethnic tensions have been present since the origins of Kutali when, in the early 1800s, village Muslims were said to have given the British information that led to the capture and execution of Kepitipola, a Sinhalese resistance leader. Since the 1980s and through the civil war in Sri Lanka (1981–2009), Muslims maintained a stance of "managed neutrality" (Berkwitz 2003: 61; De Munck 1998: 112–113). Ethnic tensions are an internal and constant feature of Kutali (and for Sri Lanka). Yet, no matter how horrific, they are a "strain system" according to Beals and Siegel. This is so because since interethnic conflict is an internal phenomenon that does not, by itself, alter the social structure.[10]

All of the Sinhalese Buddhists living on the village periphery are post-1970 immigrants attracted by the availability of cheap arable land. The centrality of land in the local economy, its geographical remove from the West and East coast, and the ethnic neutrality of "otherness" positions the Muslim villagers as socio-economically "backward" and culturally liminal relative to the larger Tamil and Sinhala populations of Sri Lanka.[11] However, to depict the villagers as paranoid "country bumpkins" or the village as sealed off from the outside world would be inaccurate. Male villagers work as seasonal laborers and travel on business throughout the island; outsiders arrive daily to buy raw resources; Sinhala folk healers are called on to cure illnesses and local Sinhala come by to chat or find work.[12] Pakistani and Indian importers as well as Sri Lankan businessmen come to the village to buy local products, particularly *beedi* leaves, *areloo* (a nut used for red dye), areca nut, timber, etc.

In 1979 when I first entered the village, it did indeed seem as a village that time and the modern world had forgot; no one owned even a bicycle and there were no striking observable differences between rich and poor from an outsider's perspective. But new wealth brought in largely through that nebulous process "globalization," had created significant economic and class differences between members of the village. The new wealth coupled with transnational mobility has led to a re-evaluation of kinship values that underlie kinship identity.

3 Ethnographic Materials

3.1 Stressors on the *chena* Cultivation System and the Rise of New Identity Forms

In Kutali, *chena* cultivation is of secondary importance to rice paddy cultivation. There is quite a bit of difference between the two kinds of cultivation. In brief: *chena* fields are always in the highlands or the scrub forest around the village, whereas paddy fields are in the lowlands usually near permanent water sources. *Chena* lands are typically left fallow for at least a year; rice paddies are farmed annually. Rice is a cash and subsistence crop, *chena* crops (i.e., "Indian corn," finger millet, long beans) are primarily consumed by the household and harvested a month or so before the rice paddy. Most pertinently, paddy lands are almost always deeded and had permanent borders; *chena* lands were never deeded traditionally and had no hard borders.

Chena lands are usually owned as parcels in large plots farmed by kin. For example, in one large parcel farmed by 19 independent households, only three were not closely related (see Table 1). Thus, traditionally the economic and kinship systems appeared to be seamlessly interwoven in the sociocultural system of Kutali.

---

10 At the end of the war for an independent homeland (Eelam) for the Tamils, the Sri Lankan military brutally slaughtered Tamils with at least tacit government approval. Two books to read on this subject are by Weiss (2011) and Harris (2012), both UN officials stationed in Sri Lanka at this time.

11 "Backward" is a common colloquialism (the English phrase is used) to describe poor farming communities where villagers are characterized as uneducated and rough in character.

12 I use Sinhala and Sinhalese interchangeably when referring to the majority ethnic group or language of that group. Sinhalese is the Anglicized form of Sinhala.

Table 1: Relations among Households Cultivating *chena* Fields in One Tract.

Pa–Child		Sibling			Distant Kin	
Pa–Da	Pa–So	Bro–Si	Bro–Bro	Si–Si		
3	3	7	3	0	3	Total = 19

With regard to the social forms related to *chena* lands three different stressors are discussed: the "regularization" of land; population increase particularly via the immigration of Sinhalese Buddhists; and the introduction of cash for labor. We would expect that conflict within the village would increase as a result of these stressors, and that the conflict has the potential to be decisive. I introduce the stressors and the emergence of new identities within the context of the ethnographic material.

a) Stressor 1: The Land *kacheri* (or the "Regularization" of Land)

In 1979, the Sri Lankan government passed a law prohibiting the clearing of jungle lands without a permit. This law remained ineffective in remote areas such as Kutali, but in February 1981, a group of land surveyors and bureaucrats from the Moneragala District offices came to Kutali to survey land, listen to land claims, and approve or reject villagers' applications for land deeds or long-term leases of government lands.[13] This organization was referred to by villagers as a "*kacheri*."[14] There had been one or two earlier land *kacheris* but they had been limited in scope, mainly giving permits to lease government lands for development purposes for nominal fees.

At this land *kacheri*, said to be the last (*antime*) of its kind, villagers were allowed to claim no more than two acres of lowland and one acre of highland for which they paid a nominal fee of two to five rupees. The Assistant Government Agent (head administrator for this region), assisted by the *grama sevaka* and *vel vidane* (agricultural extension officer) of the village, listened to the various claims, asked if there were any objections; if there were none, they registered the claim. Legally, the land is consigned

on temporary ninety-nine year leases and must remain in the family, i.e., given to a son or daughter.

This cadastral process was, as James Scott (1998: 24; 34–36) has so aptly shown, part of a deliberate process of state control over the communities and people comprising the nation. Traditionally, villagers did not need to "regularize" *chena* lands. According to villagers, everyone knew where everyone's *chena* lands were located and their boundaries. There were no problems unless someone intentionally encroached. Due to the effectiveness of implementing government policies and the presence of government agents in the village, there occurred a shift from public recognition of non-titled "historic" ownership of land to official deeds as legitimate proof of ownership. Villagers had been effectively "reduced to enlisted men and women" as power and knowledge were transferred from "here and us" to "there and them."[15]

Many villagers, realizing the shift that had taken place, took land through opportunistic means from traditional owners. For example, Hakeem had been working his father's *chena* field when his *maama* (uncle) came to tell him to stop working since he (the *maama*) now (after the land *kacheri*) had a permit. Hakeem's *maama* threatened to go to the police if Hakeem did not leave the land immediately. According to Hakeem, his father had the historical right to the property, but the family was too poor and had not bothered to obtain a permit. Hakeem said, "If the police come, I will definitely have to give it back since we took no steps to apply for a permit. So, now, how am I going to work a *chena*"?

The new regulations were implemented from the outside and contravened traditional modes of "ownership" based on historical rights and common knowledge. They can be seen from the village perspective as an external stressor since that was a radical reformulation in the way ownership and use of land was perceived: the traditional method was via historical and consensual rights; the new method was via land deeds and government rights.

b) Stressor 2: Increasing Population

Between 1971 and 1981, the population of Kutali had increased 43%, from 767 to 1,100. From my own census taking in 1981, there were 100 Sinha-

---

13 There are twenty-five districts, hence twenty-five *kacheris*, in Sri Lanka.

14 *Kacheri* is more frequently spelled *kachcheri*. I am taking a slight liberty because phonetically as spoken at least in kutali, I did not hear two "ch" sounds. Originally, *kacheri*, a Hindustani word, means collector's office. In Sri Lanka, a *kacheri* is equivalent to a district and refers to a tax collector's and assessor's office in a district (see Raby 1985: 1; 3).

15 The statement in the first double quotes comes from a conversation with Alan Beals; the second quote is my own way of emphasizing that power had been transferred both in terms of the people who have it and the place where the people are: from inside to outside.

lese added to the official census of the village. Thus 43% of that increase (i.e., 100/233) can be accounted for by the arrival of the Sinhalese immigrants. The remaining population increase was comprised of children under ten years old. This had the effect of increasing the dependency ratio of adult villagers. The rise in population together with the reduction of available land increased tensions within the village and between Muslims and Sinhalese Buddhist immigrants.

Compared with 1980 there was a rise in conflicts in 1981 and 1982 over usufruct rights to *chena* lands (see Table 2 below). Many of these conflicts were between Sinhalese and Muslims. One typical example of such an interethnic conflict case is presented below.

Table 2: Conflict Types and Frequencies during *chena* Season.

	Stray Cattle	Theft	Land	Total
1980	8	8	5	21
1981	4	9	10	23
1982	6	15	16	37
Total	18	32	31	81

Azam, a Muslim village leader, was involved in a *chena* dispute with a Sinhalese man, Premaratne, a forty-year-old man who, with his family, had moved to Kutali 1979. In 1982 they had cleared a two-acre *chena* field adjacent to Azam's land. According to Premaratne they had been clearing this land without a deed, because deeds had not been necessary and Azam had never complained. In 1982, Azam wanted to extend his two acres. Explaining his strategy he said to me (paraphrasing him) that increasing numbers of Sinhalese were moving into the area and, as the government was Sinhalese, he felt he had to move fast and establish his claims on the land before Sinhalese immigrants did so. Azam began to erect a fence on what Premaratne claimed was his land. Azam went to the police station and made an entry against Premaratne. Approximately one week later, a police officer arrived by bus. According to Premaratne, the policeman said that, unless the Assistant Government Agent (AGA) settled the matter, the land cannot be given to either party. In behalf of the AGA, the *grama sevaka* arbitrated the dispute. He visited the land, demarcated a boundary with the consent of both parties, and the case was decided mostly in Azam's favor. Premaratne had agreed to the decision because he said he was not a troublemaker and he was afraid that Azam or other Muslims would later claim all of his lands. For Azam the two external stressors, increasing population and

the land *kacheri*, together with the internal strain of interethnic conflict, motivated him to use the land *kacheri* for his own gain and security against future conflicts with Sinhalese immigrants.

c) Stressor 3: Labor Exchange and Cash Labor

Malleyar (Mountain-Man) offered a vivid portrayal of the problems and tasks that go with farming a *chena* field. He said,

If you begin too early, before the rains, then the seeds will die or you will get weeds and will have to turn them up again, doubling the work. If you wait too long, you can't burn the vegetation; you will have to wait for a period of sunshine. After burning, you weed and then sow the seeds. For Indian corn, you have to dig small holes, eight inches apart and put two seeds in each hole. If one seed is bad, the other will germinate. Sometimes the holes may be attacked by white ants. If the plant is healthy, it will grow six to eight feet in height. On one acre you can plant about five hundred Indian corn seeds, which may give you a harvest of thirty to forty bushels. Between the Indian corn you broadcast *kourakkan* (finger millet) and cover the seeds lightly. *Kourakkan* grows up to two and a half feet. With an exceptional crop you may harvest 100 bushels. If the ground is bad, the yield will be badly affected. Neither Indian corn nor kourakkan requires much water, and no manure or insecticide is used. Once that is over, you can broadcast some *gingelly* (sesame seed) which grows to three feet, and for one acre you can harvest forty to fifty bushels.

There are two ways to recruit labor for these tasks: *atam waede* (reciprocal labor exchange) and daily wage labor. For *atam waede*, a person will recruit a number of people to help work a *chena* field. In return, that person will work on each of those people's fields approximately an equivalent amount of time. Significantly, *atam waede* does not involve cash and the relations are usually long-term ones, rolling over from task to task, year to year, and from *chena* to paddy cultivation. Regardless of the labor type used, laborers have to be provided with tea, betel chew, and lunch.

Of the twenty-four families that I have data for sixteen (66.7%) relied exclusively on *atam waede*, five (20.8%) on a mixture of *atam waede* and wage labor, and three (12.5%) used exclusively wage labor (one person worked the *chena* field alone). Indeed, the traditional labor relations continued, yet a significant minority (33.3%) adopted wage labor practices.[16]

---

16 Unfortunately, I did not systematically inquire into the relations between field owners and laborers. I just assumed that

The sociocultural implications of the difference between these two recruiting policies are profound. Wage labor offers a contractual definition of the relationship between an employer and employees. In the case of wage labor, the rate of pay for a particular amount of work is precisely specified, whereas in *atam waede* the exchange of labor for labor is always approximated. However, the formula for converting the value of labor into a cash value is necessarily arbitrary, as both measures of value are independent of one another. Consequently, wage labor and reciprocal labor exchange systems are inversely related in terms of what is approximated and what is precisely measured. With wages the conversion of values is approximate, but, once determined, it is measured precisely as is the duration of the relationship, which terminates upon completion of the work or amount of hours hired. With labor exchange the value is precise (work for work), but the measure is approximate and the relationship stretches both backward in time (as an established relationship) and forward in time (to be activated the next *chena* season).

With *atam waede* an identity is established through the equality, intimacy, and durability of the relationship, each is expected to be honest and trustworthy, year in and year out. With wage labor that identity is shattered, as the relationship endures only as long as the contract of labor for wages endures. The laborers are commensurable in the cash economy, why they are in many ways incommensurable in the reciprocal labor exchange since it is difficult to find someone else to exchange labor with if there is a disagreement with one's traditional partner.

Once the value of cash to labor is established, favoring those landowners with surplus capital to spend on wage labor, then the benefits of a land/kin-centered culture become dubious and, often, avalanched by its attendant costs. People no longer just fight with or cooperate with particular kin but begin to question the whole enterprise of kinship. Further, having access to government agents becomes the means by which villagers acquire new forms of power. This shift in the locus and relations of power is manifested in the local-level structure of leadership.

3.2 Change and Continuity in the Village Leadership Structure

Mahroof (1979) wrote that at the turn of the 19th century, Muslim village leadership was entrusted to mosque administrators called *marikars*; the head *marikar* was given the title of "Trustee." Though nominally an elective post, in practice it tends to pass through descent. For example, the Trustee Hassan replaced his elder brother Siddik, who had succeeded his elder sister's husband Adam Marikar, who succeeded the father of Hassan and Siddik. The primary functions of the *marikars* are to administrate mosque functions, particularly the collection and management of its funds. *Marikars*, as well as other religious personages, were the socio-moral guardians and political leaders of the village. Not only was religious and political leadership hereditary but economic status was also hereditary. Thus *marikar* families had a monopoly on the village economy and power structure. Villagers were indebted, often in servitude to these powerful men. In this traditional leadership structure religious, economic, and political leadership was held by a few powerful *marikar* families – kinship ruled the social order – for all practical purposes.[17]

In the 1980s and 1990s, the two most visible and powerful local leaders have been Azam and Mahroof.[18] Their power, as described below, seemed a hybrid of traditional and new sources. They were the two village patrons acting as the conduits to outside funds of political power (the police, courts, politicians, and government administrators) and economic resources (i.e., jobs and government subsidies). Their position also depended on kinship and religious-ethnic affiliation in that some of their power came from their ability to control and marshal villagers to vote for specific politicians or to work on development projects.

Mahroof was a leader somewhat in the traditional style described above. He was the Village Council representative and had been the mosque trustee. Mahroof was also one of the largest landowning villagers with approximately 15 acres of paddy land; he owned the longest-running and probably most successful village store, and, through his wife, he loaned money to villagers. Another important and new source of Mahroof's income and clout came from his capacity to obtain contracts for govern-

---

atam waede relations were established among kin and wage labor with non-kin. It was improbable that individuals would actually hire their close relatives for *chena* work, that would be both unnecessary and an insult.

---

17 Even connections to the outside world were accessed through kinship connections to local gatekeepers, to powerful outsiders of all stripes.
18 These are real names of villagers, but here fictitiously ascribed to real people.

Table 3: Village Leaders and Their Attributes.

Name	Freq. Cited	K	R	P	W	HV	HM	GC	SD
1. Adam Marikar	25	10	25	1	0	8	2	3	14
2. Hassan Trustee	21	10	21	0	0	10	0	3	3
3. Azam	19	13	3	7	9	10	7	3	2
4. Mahroof	18	13	7	15	6	5	5	1	2
5. Yassim	14	8	12	0	10	5	7	6	0

Key: K = Kinship; R = Religiosity; P = Politics; W = Wealth; HV = Helps Village; HM = Helps Me; GC = Good Character; SD = Settles Disputes

ment-sponsored development projects. Villagers also perceived Mahroof as a gatekeeper to outside political agents such as the *grama sevaka* and various other political and economic resources.

Azam, I think, obtained his position of leadership more directly through his role as a village gatekeeper to outside resources. He has no close genealogical affiliation with the *marikar* families and was born into a socially and economically average village family. He became wealthy mostly through his own entrepreneurial abilities. Though he owned far less land than Mahroof, Azam also owned a village store and earned most of his income by acting as an economic middleman, buying local foodstuffs and goods and selling them to large merchants at nearby fairs. Mahroof and Azam were also the respective leaders of the two rural cooperative societies through which government funds were channeled for local development projects.

In the 1980s, Azam and Mahroof were the official village representatives for the United National Party (UNP), one of the two major political parties in Sri Lanka. Politicians needed them to deliver the Kutali vote during elections. When politicians or government officials came to Kutali, it was usually Azam who hosted them and acted as the village spokesman. Azam and Mahroof competed with one another for political resources, but they could cooperate against a common foe. For example, the *grama sevaka* confiscated timber valued at 10,000 rupees from Mahroof. Mahroof and Azam joined forces, visited the region's UNP Member of Parliament (MP) in Colombo to petition for the return of the timber. Their petition was successful, the timber was returned and the *grama sevaka* was shortly thereafter transferred.

Azam and Mahroof fit the classical ethnographic descriptions of political middlemen or gatekeepers who bridge and manipulate both local- and national-level political structures. They were village leaders relying on both traditional (i.e., internal, local) and modern (i.e., external, national, and global) funds of power. They relied on kinship and access to local-level funds of power; they were quick to respond to and use new external political and economic structures serving as middlemen for obtaining documentation and jobs to go abroad for local women.

To discover the villagers' perceptions of the local-level leadership structure, I asked 42 adult male villagers to name 5 village leaders and to discuss their selections.[19] For the sake of brevity, Table 3 presents only the 5 most frequently named individuals and the leadership qualities attributed to them. The categories of leadership attributes were derived from the villagers' responses.

On the basis of attribute frequencies, the top four leaders (Adam, Hassan, Azam, and Mahroof) neatly represent two distinct forms of leadership. Religious reasons were most frequently cited for selecting Adam and Hassan, and political clout and wealth were most frequently cited as reasons for selecting Azam and Mahroof. Note that Azam and Mahroof received all but one of the "political" reasons for citing them as leaders. Hence, villagers perceive their leaders to be due to kinship and politics. The combination of kinship and politics suggests that political leaders and villagers rely on kinship connections for mutual interests (more on this below). Note also that Adam Marikar and Hassan Trustee are the only two in this group of five leaders who do not have a single citation as leaders due to their wealth. Indeed, both are relatively poor men who are perceived as leaders due to their religious roles in the community. Ingrained in the religious role is kinship since both were *marikars* and trustees and this is traditionally, and still in practice, a hereditary status.

The fifth person cited as a village leader, Yassim, was almost invisible in village political and religious life. I had very little knowledge about him. Note that two of the most frequent citations for him were in the "Wealth" and "Helps Me" categories.

---

19 The informants were recruited independently and I sought to obtain diversity on gender and age within the sample. However, in village contexts the ideal plan was trumped by local practices and knowledge and only about five informants were women (I do not have the gender data available).

Yassim is a businessman who in an interview with him after this survey told me that he purposefully disengaged himself from village political, economic, and social life because villagers would place demands on him for help, and if he refused, they would speak ill of him. Yassim owned a store in a nearby town and most of his wealth was produced outside the village. He possibly represents the emergence of a new sort of streamlined leadership role, one that is specific only to economic interests. This role is emergent rather than established, because villagers rely on their kinship connections to him to make requests for help. Of interest here is that he neither views himself as a village leader nor desires to be one. Consequently, he is the only village leader who considers kinship to be a mixed blessing and does not identify himself with the village through an idiom of kinship. This is an important issue in the next section, where I discuss how villagers use the idiom of kinship to establish control through claims of duty and obligation.

Azam and Mahroof represent a different type of leadership system and identity than do Adam and Hassan. The latter are leaders of the social-religious sphere of village life. In contrast, Azam and Mahroof, like Yassim, respond as instrumental rather than moral leaders. Villagers become clients to Azam and Mahroof for the purpose of gaining economic benefits. As patrons Azam and Mahroof are responsible for getting jobs for them or family members, giving loans, and helping them in applying for government aid. Further as clients, villagers are required to vote as Azam and Mahroof tell them to vote and give support to Azam or Mahroof when requested. The identity created here is one based on the patron-client relations of factions. Kinship as an idiom of affiliation is used instrumentally rather than morally in this case. In this sense, the instrumental facet without its attendant moral facet reduces and creates an ambivalence about kinship that will be examined in the next section.

However, because Azam and Mahroof use kinship (part of the strain system of the traditional political structure) in a new way – to deliver vote banks in exchange for favors from politicians – this ambiguity is likely to endure as long as faction leaders can maintain their gatekeeper role to modern resources. There have always been economic-political gatekeepers in villages such as Kutali, but the role played by Azam and Mahroof has become more important than in the past, as "high modern" forms of statehood discussed by Scott (1998) become more effective in monitoring and regulating the lives of Sri Lankan villagers. Power for both the two traditional and the two modern village leaders is still

grounded in kinship. For the former, kinship is an intrinsic principal of and for leadership, and kinship is affiliated with religion, thus explicitly establishing a twined, DNA-like bond between religion-morality and kinship. For the latter, kinship is intrinsic as a feature of relations but instrumental as a principal for leadership, therefore splitting these two identities. The split, however, is not complete and one can observe the relationship between external stressors (the political structure of leadership in a nation-state), internal strains (the inherent moral rights and duties that are knitted into kinship and Muslim identities) in the way villagers view the leadership system at the local level. Yassim, we may surmise, is the Kutali analogue to multinational CEOs; his position of leadership is reduced or concentrated solely on the economic arena of life. This is intentional, since for Yassim kinship relations would enmesh him in the convoluted, complex, and turbulent world of local-level social life, which would require him to adopt a kinship identity as patron to all those who claim kinship with him – and that would be everyone in the village (as we see from Fig. 1). This sort of embeddedness in local social life would thwart his economic ambitions; hence his intentional disengagement from village social life is necessary for him to succeed, not unlike the rich in the modern world.

3.3   Change and Continuity in the Kinship Identity and Idiom of Villagers

Figure 1 below shows that in 1982 the village could easily be characterized as kin-based. Each line represents a kinship tie, and one can see those households are woven together in multiplex kinship ties. The diagram is a visual, concrete manifestation of Durkheim's concept of mechanical solidarity. The dense linkages show that kinship must be part of the web of meaning that tangles all persons in the village and serves as the foundation of all local-level sociocultural systems.

It is perhaps worth looking at this diagram carefully and then drawing or considering what such a kinship schematic for a Western community would look like. The diagram makes clear that the idiom of kinship underlies and structures all social identities within the village. For Kutali villagers the social coordinates for situating individuals in their relevant social world are kinship and ethnicity. Indeed, during festivals and celebrations such as weddings younger villagers will march/dance down the main street chanting "we are one" in Tamil (*nām oṉru*) and sometimes in Sinhala (*apee ekay*). In the sense
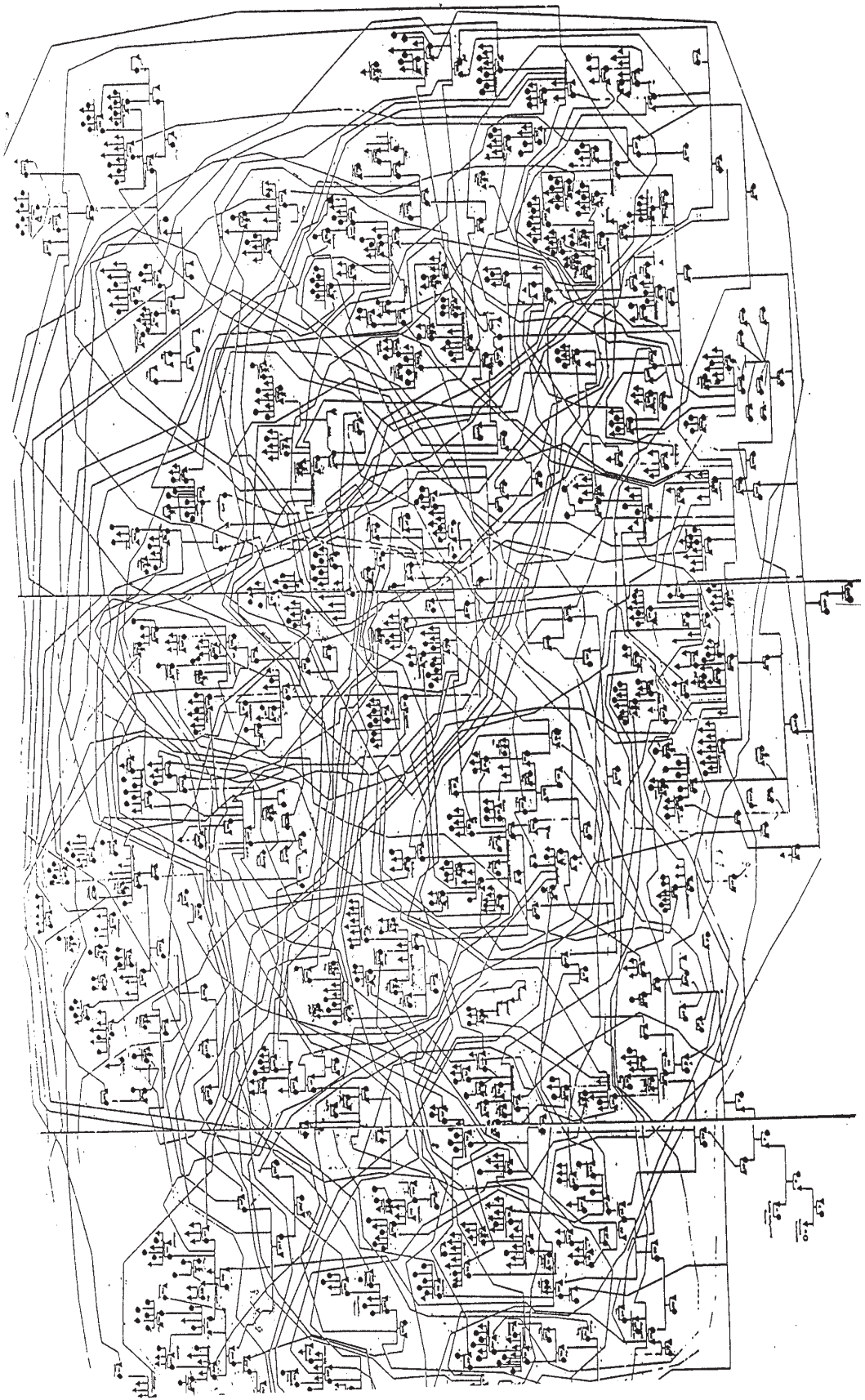
Fig. 1: The socio-spatial distribution of kinship ties in Kutali (drawn by A. A. Salaam).

that kinship underlies local identity formations, including that of being a Muslim, any stressor that symbolically opposes this identity should lead to ambivalence and create new types of strains within the local identity forms. Expressions of this should be found in the weakening of the control factors of an identity.

New sociocultural systems emerge as responses to powerful national and global (i.e., external) forces. Thiessen (2013) uses the term "tangential" to refer to – as we have noted – these forces, referred to as stressors are in a tangential relation with kinship identities. Thiessen (2013) refers to the citizens of Macedonia as "tangential" to Europeans in terms of their inclusion into a European identity. She writes, "… tangentiality refers to all things that are perpendicular to unity. Perpendicularity creates a 90° angle to a given plane. People [meaning Macedonians] understood very early on that they were not in 'direct alignment' with the West" (2013: 48). The new modes of social, economic, and political relationship, that is the new menu of stories by which people construct shared identities, were tangential to the more traditional forms. The move from "traditional" to "modern," however, cannot be said, at least, not at the time of this study nor in 2013, to be linear nor is it a quantum jump to another stage. Rather kinship and community networks become even more important for individuals, particularly local gatekeepers, to establish position and power in the national and global worlds with which they are engaged.

Kinship has always been a central part of the larger strain system, since there is an inherent logical strain or contradiction between the web of kinship obligations and rights and self-interest, particularly as it becomes clearer that the former can be a millstone for entrepreneurial ambitions. The control mechanisms of kinship identities require that one attends to the moral injunctions of "owe and ought" that are part and parcel of kin relations. In the past, excising these meant that one is ostracized, unmoored from all social docks and left as flotsam. In the present, if one has the wherewithal, one can take the option of Yassim or the hybrid options of Assam and Mahroof. There is no either/or, no dichotomy, but a rather complicated middle ground with enough niches for people to maneuver and find their niche.

A new identity (one presumably more suited to a Western capitalist mode of living) has not yet been formed, but there is evidence of its emergence, not only in the vast amount of social science and popular writing on globalization and modernization, but also in the responses and attitudes of villagers to each other. A villager crystallizes his own ambivalence towards kin as follows:

All people are faced with this problem: let's say the father or elder brother went out of the village on business or to work a job. When he comes home on vacation he will have to bring home all sorts of gifts and eatables. As soon as he steps off the bus, people will crowd around him and all the children will demand candies. He will have to give them all something otherwise the parents of the children will find out and gossip about his spendthrift ways, this will cause uneasiness among all relations. When he steps off the bus he will end up completely embarrassed because there is no way to satisfy everyone. He will have to buy presents for his wife and children, and also for his sisters and his wife's sisters. His brothers and cousins will think he is rich and ask for loans. Instead of cooking one measure of rice for meals, his wife will have to cook two or three measures, just to feed the people who will come by for meals. Relations will come by to borrow something from him and he will have to give it to them, otherwise they will be offended and all sorts of trouble will start.

The source of tension in this account is the consideration of the accumulation of money and goods obtained from outside the community. Explicit is the theme that actions, particularly entrepreneurial activities that occur outside the village, serve to differentiate one from the other villagers. Gift-giving restores social equilibrium by signaling the returnees reentry into the web of kin relations. Kin identity is reaffirmed through this control effort, the traditional notion of kinship identity and its reciprocal obligations and right is preserved, but it is not left without a nick. Enough nicks and the above villager as well as others will start acting on an emergent and robust egocentric-contractual identity rather than the socio-centric identity that has been characteristic of South Asia.[20]

4 Discussion

Kinship divides in two ways: one, when we contest the propriety of behavior, second, when we contest the privilege of kinship. In the first we have disputes between kin with one or both parties, claiming that the other is not behaving "like a brother should." This leads to what Beals and Siegel (1966) call "normative disputes" and does not threaten the structure itself. The second leads to questions about the structure and power of kinship as being privileged over other social identities, as in the phrase "blood is thicker than water." Such conflicts lead (or may lead) to a radical change in social forms and

---

20 Bharati (1985); Inden and Nicholas (1977); Marriott (1990); McHugh (1989, 2001); Mines (1988, 1994); Shweder and Bourne (1984).

identities where the older (i.e., kin) forms of power and control are no longer deemed legitimate, because they have been replaced and/or attenuated by other forms of power, identity, and control.

The effects of these stressors as they call in to question traditional practices and patterns of relations is what we see occurring in the ethnographic cases presented in this article. New stressors, which will only grow in intensity and scale, exacerbate strain, increasing local conflict. Emergent is a growing generalized contestation between the default "traditional" kinship framework for local identities and new identity forms introduced by the nation, capitalism, and globalization. We have identified specific forms those stressors have taken: increasing population; scarcity of farm lands; immigration; the penetration of national bureaucracy into the life of villagers; capitalism; wage labor; leadership structure; self-interest; and social networks based on commensurable rather than incommensurable social relationships. We concluded by showing how kinship, the idiom, and view of kinship has been altered by these stressors and how this implies the emergence of new identity forms.

Power has shifted out of the village to the government. The structure of this change had been in place for some time, but was ineffective until the 1970s and 1980s. It was not only the government but population growth, arable land scarcity, interethnic tensions, capitalism, and the global marketplace that served as external forces that converged on the village and forced rapid adjustments to be made. Opportunistic and positional-advantaged villagers responded to these stressors in three ways: Yassim exemplifies one alternative, which was to disengage from kin-based local identities; the other alternative, represented by Azam and Mahroof, was to articulate the local with the national and global by becoming gatekeepers or power brokers between them; a third alternative was to adapt the shreds and patches to these stressors – for instance, immigrating, mixing *atam* and wage labor, and so on.

While a dichotomous frame for identifying stressors has been presented, I have also described the hybrid strategies villagers have adopted as a result. I did not depict the relation between village, nation, and world or between kinship and capitalist identities as hydraulic (that is, in inverse relation to each other). Indeed, neither the two theories used nor the ethnographic data depict the relationship so simplistically. Instead, I have emphasized (thanks to the use of these theories) how kinship has become an important resource for village gatekeepers and one they, no doubt, are interested in preserving in their new local-global economic and political roles.

5 Conclusion

This article has looked at changes that occurred in the 1979–1982 period in Kutali village. From this ethnographic anchor we looked both to the past and future to get some understanding of the development of these changes. Thus, the bureaucratization of the local village headman role to that of the *grama sevaka* began what we have charted as a general decline in kinship as the predominant and default source for shaping local identities. Looking into the future (from the 1982 vantage point), we see that in Kutali there has been no significant change in either the ethnic ratio or patterns of livelihood since the time of this study. The villagers are still predominantly farmers. There has been an increase of jobs outside the village and the importance of global and national identity forms have continued to develop. The government has further penetrated village life: there is now electricity; a permanent forest ranger is stationed to control illegal appropriation of forest resources; roads have been paved; cell phones, television, and computers are now in use by villagers.

While information gathering and engagement with the villagers has occurred since 1982, no long-term or large-scale ethnographic work has been conducted and alas a descriptive analysis of present-day circumstances cannot be reported. However, the key point of this article is to show how theory can illuminate ethnographic data and use it, even after the fact, to chart and explain processes of social change, as long as the ethnographic data is systematically collected. I also hope to have shown the use of the stressor-strain theory of social change as well as White's approach to studying identity and control. While a full working out of the use of these theories in directing and analyzing ethnographic fieldwork is beyond the scope of one article, I think this study has shown that such efforts bear fruit.

References Cited

Bateson, Gregory
1936   Naven. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Beals, Alan R., and **Bernard J. Siegel**
1966   Divisiveness and Social Conflict. An Anthropological Approach. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Berkwitz, Stephen C.
2003 Recent Trends in Sri Lankan Buddhism. *Religion* 33: 57–71.

Bharati, Agehananda
1985 The Self in Hindu Thought and Action. In: A. J. Marsella, G. DeVos, and F. L. K. Hsu (eds.), Culture and Self. Asian and Western Perspectives; pp. 185–230. New York: Tavistock Publications.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 An Outline of a Theory of Practice. London: Cambridge University Press. (Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, 16)

D'Andrade, Roy G.
2001 A Cognitivist's View of the Units Debate in Cultural Anthropology. *Cross-Cultural Research* 35/2: 242–257.

De Munck, Victor C.
1998 Participant Observation. A Thick Explanation of Conflict in a Sri Lankan Village. In: V. C. de Munck and E. J. Sobo (eds.), Using Methods in the Field. A Practical Introduction and Casebook; pp. 39–54. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

Gamburd, Michele Ruth
2000 The Kitchen Spoon's Handle. Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's Migrant Housemaids. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gilbert, Margaret
1983 Notes on the Concept of a Social Convention. *New Literary History* 14/2: 225–251.
1989 On Social Facts. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
1994 Durkheim and Social Facts. In: W. S. F. Pickering (ed.), Debating Durkheim; pp. 86–109. London: Routledge.
2001 Social Rules as Plural Subject Phenomena. In: E. Lagerspetz (ed.), On the Nature of Social Institutional Reality; pp. 39–69. Jyväskylä: SoPhi, University of Jyväskylä.
2010a Culture as Collective Construction. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* (Sonderheft) 50: 383–393.
2010b Shared Intention and Personal Intentions. *Philosophical Studies* 144/1: 167–187.
2011 Culture as Collective Construction. *Analyze and Kritik*, 30/2: 483–514.

Harrison, Frances
2012 Still Counting the Dead: Survivors of Sri Lanka's Hidden War. London: Portobello Books.

Inden, Ronald B., and **Ralph W. Nicholas**
1977 Kinship in Bengali Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kronenfeld, David
2008 Culture, Society, and Cognition: Collective Goals, Values, Action, and Knowledge. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
2012 Flexibility and Change in Distributed Cognitive Systems: A View from Cognitive Anthropology, *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*. 10/2: 315–345.

Lester, Rebecca J.
2005 Jesus in Our Wombs. Embodying Modernity in a Mexican Convent. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Ethnographic Studies in Subjectivity, 5)

Luhrmann, Tanya M.
2012 When God Talks Back. Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God. New York: Knopf.

Lynch, Caitrin
1999 Good Girls or Juki Girls? Learning and Identity in Garment Factories. *Anthropology of Work Review* 19/3: 18–22.

Mahroof, M. M. M.
1979 Some Aspects of Social Organization and Hierarchical Structure among the Muslims of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). 1901–1912. *Islamic Culture* 41/2: 99–109.

Marriott, McKim
1990 India through Hindu Categories. New Delhi: Sage Publications. (Contributions to Indian Sociology, 5)

McHugh, Ernestine L.
1989 Concepts of the Person among the Gurungs of Nepal. *American Ethnologist* 16: 75–86.
2001 Love and Honor in the Himalayas. Coming to Know Another Culture. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Mines, Mattison
1988 Conceptualizing the Person. Hierarchical Society and Individual Autonomy in India. *American Anthropologist* 90: 568–579.
1994 Public Faces, Private Voices. Community and Individuality in South India. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Raby, Namika
1985 Kachcheri Bureaucracy in Sri Lanka: The Culture and Politics of Accessibility. Syracuse, NY: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

Scott, James C.
1998 Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven: Yale University Press.
2012 Two Cheers for Anarchism. Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Shweder, Richard A., and **Edmund J. Bourne**
1984 Does the Concept of the Person Vary Cross-Culturally? In: R. A. Shweder, and R. A. LeVine (eds.), Cultural Theory. Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion; pp. 158–199. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taleb, Nassim Nicholas
2010 The Black Swan. The Impact of the Highly Improbable. New York: Random House. [2nd Ed.]

Thiessen, Ilka
2013 "EU as future?": From a Macedonian Viewpoint. In: V. C. de Munck and L. S. Risteski (eds.), Macedonia: The Political, Social, Economic and Cultural Foundations of a Balkan State: pp. 44–64. London: I. B. Tauris.

Tomasello, Michael
2008 Origins of Human Communication. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Weiss, Gordon
2011 The Cage: The Fight for Sri Lanka and the Last Days of the Tamil Tigers. New York: Bellevue Press.

White, Harrison C.
1992 Identity and Control. A Structural Theory of Action. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
2008 Identity and Control. How Social Formations Emerge. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [2nd Ed.]

White, Harrison C, Frédéric C. Godart, and **Victor P. Corona**
2007 Mobilizing Identities. Uncertainty and Control in Strategy. *Theory, Culture & Society* 24/7–8: 181–202.