

## Exploring the Culture of Relatedness in Kinship

**Vikramendra Kumar**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi,  
New Delhi, India. E-mail: bardhan.vikramendra@gmail.com*

---

### **To Cite this Article**

Vikramendra Kumar (2025). Exploring the Culture of Relatedness in Kinship. *Studies in Indian Anthropology and Sociology*, 2: 2, pp. 191-216.

---

**Abstract:** The fact that human kinship patterns are quite selective should be kept in mind. There is a rearrangement of components from a “biological” perspective. Some links in the biological matrix get special attention, whereas others are either disregarded or given less weight due to our biases about their relative merits. Belonging to one’s parents may appear to be the most essential and foundational part of “social” belonging, but it is actually just one of many connections that regulate interactions with a much wider range of people, including those with whom one is legally permitted to have sexual relations and those on the explicit market. Something very different from what one would expect in a primate society may be reportedly being “created” here. Based on the data we have, we are unable to identify a particular moment, a revolutionary turning point, a “red bar” in the evolutionary graph that would indicate a qualitative shift in the reproductive practices of early societies and the emergence of more complex forms of communication. “His claim that pattern detection “above the individual level” is crucial to understanding our distant past is challenged by John Gowlett, who demonstrates how challenging it is to detect patterns in the ancient material record. Indicators of social order have been there since long before any modern monkey could imagine them. Examples of such signals include the clustering of people around “home bases,” the first signs of fire suppression, and patterns in the geographical distribution of artefacts that show the flow of raw materials from their origins to production sites and then along trade routes. Although some ground patterns were unintentional results of movement (whether by humans or other animals), the most important takeaway from the first session was the notion that other patterns were the result of “propositions,” or deliberate categorisation. The first would denote clusters of connected occurrences, often associated with motion, and the second for fluctuations at the local level, such as those brought about by placement or apparent categorisation according to size, colour, form, technique, etc.” There is evidence for patterns of activity at concentrated areas that reach all the way back to the start of mankind, long before our anatomical modernity, even if Gowlett notes how weak and inaccurate the data is. He goes over some rough ideas about how to evaluate concentration and movement patterns, breaking them down into the three main epochs that have occurred since stone artefacts first showed up in written records. This new information on early toolmakers, who lived around 2.6 million years ago, expands our understanding of what it means for a landscape to have been inhabited in. Gowlett notes that the nascent “economy” of production and trade could have consequences for the development of the

reciprocities we normally associate with familial relationships. He also brings out the fact that there is strong evidence from very early on that the idea of a home base near water had an impact on group structure.

**Keywords:** Culture, biological, social kinship, organisation, science, ego, nature, ecological

## Introduction

Recent decades have seen remarkable progress in the biological sciences, which has greatly expanded our understanding of human evolution and prehistory. Recent discoveries have shed light on our intricate physical lineage, the several migrations our ancestors made from Africa, and the genetic connectivity of the contemporary *Homo sapiens* species throughout the globe. Our ancestors were the last hominins to leave Africa, and our modern understanding suggests that this happened not long ago—maybe even as recently as 60,000 years ago. The strength of classical Darwinian evolution theory has been further strengthened by recent findings in fields like as evolutionary psychology, primatology, environmental history, and genetics. Natural selection, the powerful idea upon which much modern biological research is founded, asserts that an organism and its characteristics will endure so long as they are able to transmit their genes to subsequent generations. This model is constantly evolving and is used in more complex ways. It has also attempted to shed light on cultural transmission and social history, an area where many prominent humanities researchers have voiced their opposition. In Western thinking, the question of how much “nature” manifests itself in opposition to or as a product of “culture” has long histories and various manifestations. This book discusses how the scientific community and the humanities can re-engage on the crucial topic of how evolution theory should account for the structured nature of human organisation, particularly in regard to the ways in which we attempt to control patterns of parent-child and male-female relations, and the intentional results of our own reproduction. A number of academics have proposed novel interpretations of the pivotal moments in human history. Although Kit Opie and Camilla Power provide convincing biological evidence for the emergence of ‘helpful grandmothers’ and early female coalitions, Using the evidence (which is also included in his most current synthesis), Clive Gamble makes bold assertions on movement, physical methods, and abstract reasoning. According to Chris Knight, significant developmental anthropological theories from the nineteenth century have been ignored by the Malinowskian focus on modernity and individuality, and these theories require a comprehensive reevaluation. Built on the structural-linguistic tradition in social anthropology, Nick Allen’s ‘tetradic’ model seeks to recreate the initial all-encompassing models of ‘kinship and marriage,’

and thus, society as a stage upon which interpersonal bonds are formed. Ethnographers are quick to point out that contemporary English speakers are frequently surprised by the ways in which different cultures' reproductive continuity and marriage norms have evolved in accordance with this concept. The common English word "kinship" is used by biologists and anybody else who takes an evolutionary or biological stance to refer directly to the inherent genetic relatedness of creatures. The introduction of the chapter by Amanda Korstjens states the idea very clearly: Primatologists often talk about genetic relatedness when they talk about kinship; animals, however, have no way of identifying their own relatives (p. 151). And if they did bring up family members, would that necessarily line up with what contemporary scientists understand when they talk about genetic relatedness? Is this the actual meaning even when people mention family members? Aside from its more specific folk meaning of "blood relations," the common English word "kinship" can cover a broader range of relationships, including adoption and marriage (what anthropologists call "affinity"). This diversity is reflected in the legal and practical contexts in which the term is used. "Next of kin" might include a spouse who is otherwise unrelated to the individual in English law.

Extending "Hamilton's rule" to explain why animals prioritise interactions with close genetic relatives over those with strangers (even if the latter may be mistaken for "altruism"), though it may need some effort, is certainly doable. Robin Dunbar's theories about the biological foundation of kinship provide a solid justification for this rule. On the other side, she demonstrates that our focus would be better directed towards the general issue of strategic action choices influencing reproductive outcomes and survival, rather than the teleology of genetic success and social form continuity. He expands on an intriguing argument raised by Austen Hughes (1988) on human kinship: that it is significant to acknowledge that people consider and plan for the vital procreation of subsequent generations by considering their own familial relationships. This insight does help to provide light on the methods used by social anthropologists to investigate culturally acceptable structures of family hierarchy and purposeful marriage activities. The so-called "social brain theory" states that our primate ancestors' ability to increase their cognitive capacities was an important factor in their evolutionary advantage. Some think that humans have evolved to benefit from social collaboration in ever-larger local groupings because the neocortex, or the area of the brain thought to be responsible for creativity, has supposedly grown, particularly in the frontal lobes. Because hominins did not engage in inter-individual grooming, they were able to survive in bigger cooperative groupings than other primate societies. Language, better spatial and temporal organisation, work distribution, and more "symbolic" forms of group

performance must be among the relics of a more complex and wide style of expression that included singing, chorusing, and gestures. In order to rein in its more narcissistic members, or “free-riders,” the expanding group may establish rules for its interactions with other parties and devise methods to regulate their sharing of information.

From an evolutionary perspective, these early human ancestry groups would have benefited greatly from this variety of tactics for coordinated action, both with regard to the environment’s resources and to competing species. They would make it to the next generation and teach their biological offspring the ropes by living examples. We would certainly need what Dunbar calls a “multilevel” approach to evolutionary analysis if we were to ensure that our descendants inherited a higher aptitude for complex strategic action and that those groupings that included exceptionally bright people fared well. Robin Dunbar expands on this idea by talking about the “storytelling” ability in the brain’s frontal lobes. Imagine a series of interconnected characters, each capable of conjuring up their own mental state, as well as the ability to speculate on the motivations and feelings of others. This is the extraordinary power of the human imagination. This intriguing depiction of prehistoric people as storytellers—and, by extension, as theatrical performers and stage managers—can only make social anthropologists reevaluate some of their most fundamental concerns. For instance, James argues that the first kinds of human interactions were essentially ‘enacted,’ whether they were between the sexes, inside families, or between the young and the elderly.

Beyond story, “Kinship” encompasses behaviours, and most human activities involve exchanging values or, as Hilary Callan points out in the epilogue, a game-like dynamic. The ability to communicate and exchange ideas is fundamental to all aspects of human social life, including reproduction. Economic, material, familial, and linguistic social ties are all defined by the principles and techniques of “exchange” that our ancestors agreed upon. The processes that resulted in this agreement are examined in these chapters. Is there any way to improve upon the models we’ve previously laid out for what I think is a fundamental change—a sequence of events—signifying the passage from being just in the here and now to a future where narrative and gaming facilitate acts across more geographical and temporal boundaries? Here, the relative visibility of things in one’s memories and predictions determines the relative relevance of faraway locations, people who are no longer with us, complete strangers, the recently dead, and the future. Relationships like these can be “made possible” via commerce, knowledge sharing among experts, yearly (and, I’m sure, celebratory) get-togethers of geographically scattered groups, or even with complete strangers as a consequence of migration in reaction to changing ecological conditions, like population demands on natural resources.

In contrast to the pragmatic dispersion patterns seen in monkeys, the formation of such links by the more talented and experienced members of a society likely included the potential of forming strategic agreements over the gifting or swapping of kids in marriage. This is probably when the concept of “kinship” first emerged in human society, according to social anthropologists. Following Dunbar’s lead, “kinship” here means a “level” of systematic give and take beyond genetic relatedness; this term is especially pertinent to mating arrangements and group bonding. There are “adoptees” and “recruits” inside every group or category, and the “system” as a whole is dependent on the “marriage” or “mating” of different groups and categories. Human mobility and potentially enlarged forms of sociality can be based on the assumption that intermarriage, future affinity, and kinship are more like open categories than labels attached to known people. This will have an impact on how genotypes are distributed and how a population reproduces biologically. Understanding the local configuration of patterns of “affinity” is crucial to the future of genetic reproduction within communities or networks of interconnected groups. The question of whether this affects a population’s evolutionary “fitness” remains open, though. But if we think about it this way, maybe we can figure out how *Homo sapiens* managed to cross the globe so quickly about 60,000 years ago, and how they managed to win out over the earlier *Homo* species that had already reached Asia and Europe, not to mention how they managed to survive the vastly different climates, habitats, and animals they encountered on their way to Australia and the Americas. From the Networks of the Ego to the Social and Spatial Structure The multidisciplinary discussions in this book occur against this backdrop of human history. There is no reference to the “family lineage” in this record. The modern focus on the “nuclear family” as a universal concept, which Chris Knight attributes to Malinowski’s individualist approach, has veered historical and comparative anthropology off course, in his opinion.

## Literature Review

Knight suggests that, instead, we should return to the aims of anthropologists from the late 19th and early 20th centuries by looking at what Lewis Morgan (1871) referred to as “systems of consanguinity and affinity”—that is, how kinship is to be understood in connection to marital norms and patterns. What this could mean for our understanding of global and long-term history is anyone’s guess. As Knight says, these systems may be regarded as resting on a handful of basic principles. To begin a more comprehensive “classification” of the actual and possible relationships between individuals in a reproducing society, let’s examine a set of complete siblings. There is no difference in

treatment for same-sex siblings under this system. In fact, the idea of sibling solidarity is reinforced as the categorisation process progresses, for example, when two sisters or two brothers are considered as having similar characteristics and may even be referred to as siblings. They are referred to as “parallel cousins” by anthropologists. They are not considered marryable in many regions of the world, just like siblings.

But having siblings of the opposite sex may be a whole other ballgame: they provide a prime example of gender difference and, by extension, a springboard for family-level diversity. The fact that their children often see each other as more than just “siblings” is easy to see. People in this connection are referred to as “cross-cousins” by anthropologists. Biologically related people can legally marry in many regions of the world, even if the term “crosscousinhood” refers to a category rather than a specific person within it, and the reasoning behind this might have far-reaching ramifications in terms of terminology. Even in English, terms like “second cousin three times removed,” etc., have little relevance to the real lives of true communities because of the inherent momentum and logic of kinship language. The material and creative lives, as well as the moral and political spheres, of actual human groupings are impacted by kin terms. Knight follows in the footsteps of the great early anthropologists by showing how ideas about the social and logical equality of same-sex siblings may be broadened in many ways. There are several instances of intergenerational coalitions of “sisters” or “brothers” that might be viewed as lineages or groupings of descendants. The individual referred to as Wendy James First and foremost, the English way of counting kinship starts with “ego” — the viewpoint of an individual looking outward, so to speak, and working out the lineage that links them to others equally via either parent.

To avoid falling into the trap of believing this is the universal view of relationships, Knight makes his argument extremely explicit. His main point is that matrilineal ideology and matrifocal family arrangements have historically been dominant in anthropology, but he re-energises these ideas by showing how they were previously nearly universally accepted. In order to determine the fate of a population, the Darwinian paradigm begins with successful reproduction. The paradigm has now moved its attention to the strategies employed by individual men and females of any species, including humans, to successfully raise their kids to reproductive age.

Contemporary Western ideas of relatedness and the ‘natural’ family have already taken some hits from social changes and the incredible new technical possibilities of contemporary reproductive technologies (Carsten 2004). We strive throughout this work to avoid making any assumptions on this model. We strive to show how the goals of contemporary evolutionary biologists may be reconciled with the more all-

encompassing views of what was formerly called “consanguinity and affinity.” Because of this, we focus on the sociological and logical “grammar” of the potential evolution of human connection schemes; these schemes are unique to humans and probably not found in other animal kingdoms, but they were an important part of early human history. In this chapter, Nick Allen argues that structuralist thought during Lévi-Strauss’s period put more emphasis on the “lateral” norms and connections that arise from marriage than on the “vertical” interactions that form between parents and children, as well as any potential trends in these patterns over time. Marriage class systems in Australia are typical of societies that adhere strictly to the tetradic paradigm, which posits that various sorts of family members should not be differentiated horizontally or vertically. Spread the word to your neighbours and even total strangers; it’s a little but supplementary part of the social cosmos. The kin terminologies that have been uncovered via anthropological research are, like the grammar of any language, bound to a particular imagined picture of society at large. The field of social anthropology has long placed great focus on this. The genetic grid, as described by scientists (Fox 1967; Parkin 1997), cannot ever have an incompatible underlying language.

Rather than revealing the distribution of genetic ties, the usage of kin words in everyday life might do the exact opposite. However, cultural relativists today would be wrong to assume that they are completely subjective, open to interpretation, and changeable. In fact, there are a number of strikingly consistent aspects, such as the cross/parallel distinction, which runs counter to the biological perspective on relatedness (Godelier et al. 1998). While Dunbar argues that kin terms do not have an arbitrary relationship to the genetic matrix, this is a whole other argument. Although it might be said that the specifics of cultural terminology for relatives are irrelevant to biologists, it is undeniable that the strategic distribution of individuals along mating networks by kin terminologies is crucial to comprehending the makeup and traits of the future population. In a “story-telling” approach that aims to influence the future, these concepts are best understood not as descriptions of relatedness but as comparing maps of the field of potential partners. We start by comparing and contrasting two archaeological viewpoints that try to explain the many human migrations out of Africa. Lots of planning goes into what has to happen for *Homo sapiens* to win in Africa and then, apparently, colonise the whole world at lightning speed. After Clive Gamble makes some assumptions about the material circumstances that allowed humans to develop their more complex and hierarchically organised mental processes, John Gowlett surveys the data from this and many earlier eras. What social anthropologists call “intentionally organised kinship” may have its origins considerably further back in human history

than previously believed, according to spatial patterns in the archaeological record. Clive Gamble raises the intriguing subject of whether Neanderthals were married in the opening chapter of his book. We are unable to provide a definitive response to this question; nonetheless, Gamble brings up some important points by raising it. Is it still OK to term it marriage if there is a biological and statistical tendency towards “pair-bonding”? You won’t believe who’s tying the knot! Instead of relying on biological reproduction, may the elders have controlled their daughters’ (and perhaps even their sons’) libido and fertility through the establishment of rites of passage that led to socially sanctioned “marriage”? As Gamble points out, there had to be a major leap in human potential before the massive migration of *Homo sapiens* from Africa to settle the rest of the world.

Archaeologists generally agree that our ancestors were finally able to completely embrace civilisation approximately 10,000 years ago, when the agricultural revolution happened. The findings in the southern Blombos cave, however, have shown that creative endeavours may be traced back more than 80,000 years ago (Henshilwood et al. 2001). Only a select few have paid much attention to creative achievements from all across the globe that extend back forty to fifty thousand years. One may argue that farming had a minor impact on the complete maturation of the modern intellect. We know that Gamble would have thought this revolutionary turning moment to have happened before Blombos if there is a major period when we can assert with clarity that we are with other humans. At our first workshop, he speculated on the potential long gestation preceding human “modernity”—a creative age of “sapiens-hood” or “saphood”—when the parts of the jigsaw were progressively coming together, rather than a sudden bolt of change.

Unlike other monkey species, ours supposedly made the switch from utilising sticks and stones as tools to using containers made of material. Using materials such as calabashes, coconut shells, animal horns, skins, and leaves, people were already creating containers prior to the discovery of pottery in archaeological records. Transporting infants, food, or water in containers would greatly facilitate movement, and that’s without even taking into account the development of boats. Moreover, the stick metaphor isn’t always the best fit; it’s more suited to more concrete situations like homes and cemeteries as well as more abstract ones like groups of people organised by gender, kinship, generation, attachment to strong leaders, craft specialisations, sacred sites, and so on. The container metaphor, on the other hand, works well in many of these settings. Prior to their articulation and perfection in language, physical or embodied symbols may have functioned as first types of categorisation. For that reason, Gamble’s

talk covers a wide range of theoretical and speculative topics related to the dawn of civilisation. Were these aspects of our common existence not there long before we could have evolved into a diasporic species able to weave a web of connections throughout the world? Consensus may be preserved over time and space in this way. In recent years, Gamble has explored a number of interconnected theories regarding the beginnings of early material culture, including the creation of hand-axes and other tools, and how this culture is dependent on the disassembly, reorganisation, and rewrapping of materials that already exist in nature (Gamble 2007).

The obvious telltale sign that archaeologists are dealing with human activity is the presence of shattered and reassembled artefacts. The creative process begins with the breaking and remaking of things from natural elements like stone, wood, etc., and continues much beyond their practical use. Could these data be used to inform the design of social relationships, namely the physical interactions that occur during pregnancy and labour, and then we could see how it turned out. Around 1.7 million years ago, a smaller-brained *Homo* species had already colonised the Old World, preceding the 1.5–0.5 million year old classic period of *Homo erectus*. This data was recently made public. *Homo erectus* probably obtained the “hardware” needed for language and made objects guided by rules during their previous journey from Wendy James’s Africa. They then moved these artefacts great distances and accumulated them in favourable areas. Sites spanning Africa and Europe reveal evidence of the later *erectus* period’s meat trade as well as its fuel trade. At Schöningen, where evidence of large fires and spears fashioned from saplings dates back 400,000 years, people likely collaborated and perhaps even split the labour.

While it’s plausible that modernity evolved gradually over a few hundred thousand years, maybe beginning in Africa, Gowlett argues that we shouldn’t see the appearance of physically modern people as a revolutionary step towards the social reality we know today. Even our much-maligned Neanderthal ancestors in Europe have remarkable abilities, such as in hafting tools, and finely ground blades had been found at sites in Kenya and the Middle East. Gowlett shows how much evidence of human involvement may be found even in the remote past. Perhaps our “modernity” in this sense is actually very young. This makes us think that Blombos finds should excite rather than surprise us, and that we should expect to find more evidence of clearly recognisable “art” (and perhaps even developed language?) from even earlier periods. In line with his earlier works (1999, 2007), Clive Gamble envisions a heavily inhabited location, such as a settlement centre or a hearth, as a social arena, a stage for performances; yet, such objects can only be used to deduce performance art. Social gatherings, particularly those

that occurred around the nightly fire, may have been a driving force in the development of various types of coded communication. Who would have hung out around the traditional home bases or hearths, and who would have lived there for the longest and been the most probable caretaker of these gathering spots? Beyond Marriage and Women's Coalitions: "Bases at Home" Domestic depictions of prehistoric families often feature "Man the Hunter" bringing home meat for his wife and children, as if there were some sort of mummy-and-daddy exchange underpinning pair-bonding. Nonetheless, there has been a recent uptick in discussions over how to divide up meat and vegetables in the kitchen.

## Discussions

In addition, a home base's core community would primarily be made up of females, with a smaller number of men serving as either mates or children. Kit Opie and Camilla Power offer this perspective in this chapter, along with the strong evidence that female alliances were pivotal in early human history. In a female coalition, the "sisters" of the mother and the "grandmothers" of the kid would take turns caring for the baby, while a home-coming hunter would likely take care of his "own family" (if there was such a thing) and pitch in with the common food supply. Theories that attempt to explain why modern women tend to live longer than their biological fertility would indicate are in line with this more communal conception of an early society, the exact date of which is still up for debate. For evolutionary reasons, it makes perfect sense for grandmas to stay close by so they can provide their grandchildren the additional care they need during the formative years, when their brains are still little and delicate.

This view is consistent with the complex models developed by Knight and Power (e.g., Power 1999; Knight 1991) that place the development of gender-specific rituals at a pivotal juncture in the history of cultural and symbolic innovation. Continuing the work of Ruth Mace (1996), Clare Holden argued at the inaugural workshop that matrifocality should be retained and its principles should be defined as matriliney. She accomplished this by drawing parallels between eastern and central African nations whose populations speak Bantu. She asserts that the matrifocal social structure is still properly used by the subsistence economies of the hoe-cultivating and foraging peoples of the region. Additionally, she provided support for earlier anthropological studies that indicated that patrilocal residency, improved bridewealth transfers, and patrilineal grouping are all positively impacted by cow ownership. Despite its international reach, Laura Fortunato's study focusses on a specific area where a language family—the enormous Indo-European languages—has been dominant. In this area, she compares

and contrasts gender roles in representation and the long-established practices of transferring money after marriage.

In this linguistic area, which covers a major portion of Europe and the Indian subcontinent, the dowry principle—that the bride’s riches and property should accompany her—has proven remarkably resilient. The bridewealth transfer from the groom’s side to the bride’s family is the least prestigious sort of marriage throughout much of Africa, but bride capture appears to be the second most prestigious in Indo-European law. These examples are from more recent times, yet they show how long-standing notions about gender and social reproduction have been there in languages. These issues are clearly profoundly embedded in the varied range of activities and beliefs that we call “culture.”

Analysing the Tetradic Model and Ethnographic Criticism Our whole research is based on the core question of how early human groups moved about relative to one another and how quickly they moved. Mobile individuals are likely to have an impact on genetic and social reproduction through factors such as seasonal migration, long-term patterns of group formation and dissolution, or long-distance migration across generations, which can cause known individuals to be separated from one another on occasion or even permanently. The idea of a “flow of life,” across location and time, might be useful when choosing images. The development of mating patterns impacting Wendy James’s “reproduction of life” may not have significant consequences for a single proto-human hunting band, but it might have far-reaching consequences when it intertwines the genetic fate of several small, nomadic groups. In light of the fact that contemporary people have extended over the whole planet, it is important to consider not only the methods of transportation (walking, boats, etc.) but also the “flow of life” (a network of reproductive ties that binds human groups throughout ever-expanding territory). In most cases, the “vertical” axis is used by scientists when thinking about how genes are passed down through generations. The ‘horizontal’ aspect, which is often focused on by social anthropologists, deals with the origins of the mating relationship and the possible economic and social consequences of the child’s group membership. Marriage, cohabitation, and extramarital affairs are all part of this dimension. The ‘river of life’ in biology becomes a pattern of social reproduction in Allen’s ‘tetradic’ prototype. This paradigm can grow laterally to link groups in the past and future, but it also sees biological time as a continuous cycle of supplementary generations. It makes one wonder how the future of biological inheritance will be organised. Here, we’re highlighting the model’s value not as a “fixed” structure of a “bounded” group but as a collection of principles that, when implemented strategically, can increase mobility and contribute to the

construction of a social whole—an ideology that values connections with “others” across space and time. Current research on group connection mobility in non-human monkey societies and patterns of kin identification and fusion across species suggests that huge recurrent encounters do have a particular character. During these periods, notions of the “social whole” and a system of agreed-upon interactions among its components may be more effectively developed and enforced than during the dispersion seasons, when small groups live independently and are constantly engaging with known individuals.

What comes to mind is the seminal 1940 research by Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer’s “segmentary” clan and lineage system, which, when questioned, could assert shared heritage over a vast area, but could also split into rival factions showcasing rival lineages. In contrast to the intimate kin networks established by parents, siblings, and other immediate family members, the term “descent” was used to describe long-lasting associations (Evans-Pritchard 1951). During the dry season, greater celebrations were conducted in cattle camps, and during the wet season, people dispersed. This pattern of political fission and fusion mirrored these smaller-scale migrations. Alluding to Durkheim’s imagined Australian corroboree, such regular patterns of human movement ring true. Can we identify any demographic or environmental factors from the distant past that may have encouraged regular, massive gatherings? How would societies fare if they figured out how to divide up their natural resources in a way that didn’t involve bloodshed and favouritism amongst blood relatives? Is it possible that the development of political gameplaying outside of the immediate social circle and concerned only with the well-being of those who are biologically related to one another was integral to the establishment of “symbolic order”? Even Allen uses abstract and diagrammatic language to describe his “tetradic” paradigm. Keep in mind that present-day hunter-gatherers are not the basis for this concept; rather, it is based on a comprehensive comparative analysis of kin terminology and associated beliefs throughout the modern globe. At some places, though, we may try to tie the model to what we know about the hunting-and-gathering lifestyle of early humans from archaeological and evolutionary research. For instance, although Allen acknowledges that the model would appear identical from either a male or female perspective, he begins by stating that he is describing the system of categories through the lens of a female ego. However, he notes that the paradigm is both egocentric and “socio-centric” all at once. It is likely that the first systems relied solely on physical motherhood as a point of reference for individuals, and that “fathers” were best understood via socio-centric lenses.

It is highly unlikely that we will uncover symmetrical ties between the sexes or genealogical definition of individual fatherhood based on all the information we have

for the probable conditions of a “beginning point” for human kinship. Allow me to provide the following quite realistic scenario in an effort to bolster the reader’s belief in the potential applicability of this paradigm to the pre-literate period of “deliberate” social organisation. We have shown that it is quite probable (and a pretty frequent pattern among our fellow primates today) that a localised community’s core will be a lasting coalition of females. This tiny community is not completely isolated; rather, it is one of several in the area, and its members only interact with one another on rare occasions, perhaps during certain seasons. These are starting to form relationships based on “exchange,” maybe of various cuisines or other tangible items, such as artefacts. In order to find mates, male adolescents often leave their birth groups and go hunting, but within their own groups. When looking at this first group through the eyes of an adult female, how is her community ensuring its own survival and safety? With the support of her elderly but energetic mother, how can she prevent her daughter from being taken advantage of by her male boyfriend and staying at home with her?

When it comes to this, a daughter just cannot “take the place” of my mom. Lehmann notes that young monkey females likewise disperse, likely to avoid predatory males, even their own fathers. Evolutionary biologists have long recognised the importance of long-lived grandmothers to infants’ survival during a lengthy “growing up” period; now, this same phenomenon may provide light on the possible invention of formal principles that govern and even control youth. The mother and her young remain indoors and tend to each other’s needs because, from her point of view, it is somewhat inconvenient to go foraging while carrying large kids. As the date of her own “retirement” approaches, she intends to increase her time spent at home with her grandchildren. From a mother’s perspective, it’s simple to see why her children and mother spend so much. The time that Wendy and James spend together is distinct from the time that she and her own grandkids spend together. It is possible that the grandma keeps tabs on her grandkids’ sexual activities. In this article, we have presented a reasonable model of human conduct that prehistoric people who were politically active, inventive, and socially aware may have used to test out a more systematic set of rules for keeping the community together and its members from interacting with one another and the outside world. As part of the “exchange” approach, this may have been a more organised way of “dispersing” teens as compatible partners to nearby groups with whom they were already communicating and forming ties.

The home community is inclined towards a “theory” of self-sufficiency when the torch is passed on through grandkids instead of direct descendants. A woman’s generation is seen as “replacing” her mother and other women when she produces

children. She thinks her grandkids will take over for her in the long run, and she plans to have a say in their weddings. Seasonal gathering rituals, according to Allen's theory, establish, as a whole, the fundamental distinctions between belonging categories and the exchange connections between them via dancing and other kinds of embodied activity. Because people were scattered and split in the period between these meetings, the structure might not have been able to come together as a whole. The Nambikwara people of the Amazon rainforest disappointed Lévi-Strauss due to their pragmatic individualism and social flexibility; Robert Layton reiterates this point and emphasises it for many Australian cultures. Similar arguments are advanced by Alan Barnard on the southern African Khoesan ('Bushmen').

But there are three important things to remember about this. One, a more realistic kind of personal agency and the "labelling" of specific individuals may and should exist alongside a more broad, sociocentric understanding of human identity. The second line of reasoning is that no interpersonal "relationship" (such as "mother's brother") can truly matter unless there is a system of distinctions that distinguishes one person from another. We have a hard time imagining a pre-linguistic past when such "individuality" may start to emerge due to our current socio-centric method of classifying people, such as "left-hand" or "right-hand" generation. Keep in mind that our ancestors were just starting to find out how to efficiently arrange themselves hundreds of thousands of years ago, when these questions first arose. Even if Barnard and Layton thoroughly dissect Allen's tetradic model in light of modern kinship systems, using instances from different hunter-gatherer groups, this remains valid. We can't help but see a distinct pragmatic quality in the behaviour of our primate cousins. But does this have anything to do with the social identities of modern Wendy James? Allen and James's reasoning suggests that early social agreements would have centred on membership in large groups as a basis for cooperation and a way to influence behaviour. Social reproductive methods that developed and flourished in such setting would have included arranging for sexual access and providing long-term care for newborns.

### **Role of Environmental Factors**

Setting, Human Motion, and Expression in Nature As a result of environmental factors and human mobility, the language families spoken in Africa have spread beyond a small border region in the southeast Sahara, as Chris Ehret's insights show. Nearly 15,000 years ago, this area was the birthplace of the languages that would later become known as Nilo-Saharan, Afroasiatic, Niger-Kordofanian, and Khoesan. It is possible that speakers of older languages sought refuge in this varied and relatively well-watered area during

the protracted dry period of the last glacial maximum 21,000 years ago. The languages that were spoken during that era have now faded from memory.

The population flourished after the last glacier melted, thanks to the milder weather. The most prosperous groups eventually spread out throughout the continent, repopulating it with people who introduced “new” languages and ways of thinking. Careful examination of word correspondences throughout families of modern languages provides evidence in favour of this scenario. There is evidence of both borrowing and ancestral proto-terms in these correspondences. When asked about kin-term continuity, Ehret gives strong proof. Although he disagrees with Allen on the matter, he does acknowledge that there are other viewpoints and that the “extension” or “contraction” of particular references is possible, and that references to direct “family” can be broadened to encompass other relatives. We may ask perceptive questions about the period before the continent’s enormous linguistic repopulation approximately 15,000 years ago thanks to Ehret’s technique and findings, even if he couldn’t use forensic instruments to travel into that age. Is it possible that a similar climatic cycle may have driven modern humans from Africa 60,000 years ago, allowing some population groups—particularly the “successful” ones—to concentrate and then divide and multiply? Is there any way to broaden Ehret’s methodology to uncover other languages that predated his four proto-languages? The intriguing subject of the language(s) utilised by the artisans who created these artefacts has arisen in light of the latest discoveries in the Blombos cave. Intercommunity trade, group identification, personal decoration, and rites of passage (such as marriage and initiation) are further intriguing aspects of this artefact record. These are the kinds of problems that harken back to a time when we had to rely on creative modelling and indirect inference—the “beyond Blombos” era to be exact. One such strategy is presented by Alan Barnard. He states categorically that no one ever lives in a “half kinship system” and argues against the assumption that *Homo sapiens*’ social lives evolved in a gradualistic fashion. A dramatic shift is also something he strongly dislikes.

While Layton and Barnard have studied modern hunter-gatherers, Barnard offers a middle ground by proposing a series of separate phases in the development of kinship “systems,” similar to the three phases that Calvin and Bickerton assert language took to arise. The third one would reflect the existence of “elementary structures” of the Lévi-Straussian kind that “exist” in ethnography. Although Barnard included them in his bracketing of the ‘tetradic’ model, Allen’s approach encompasses periods before modern ethnographic data, which, according to him, only depicts remnants, developments, and unfinished pieces of what may have been whole in the past. On the other hand, Barnard

and Allen are in agreement about how comprehensive systems have been gradually dismantled in recent history, particularly in Europe. When trying to piece together global history over the long term, information from comparative ethnography is still vital.

### **Schneider's Cultural Approach to Kinship: Beyond Biology**

The term “kinship” is most commonly used to describe relationships between members of the same biological family, such as parents and children or blood relatives. In contrast, prominent anthropologist David Schneider argued that kinship is about much more than only blood ties and offered evidence that this approach is flawed. Schneider's cultural perspective on kinship recasts traditional notions of family, cultural norms, and “being related.” Instead of seeing kinship as an abstract concept moulded by biological factors, his writings argued that it is a social construction impacted by symbolic meanings and cultural practices. This blog post will go into Schneider's work in kinship sociology, analysing how his cultural perspective enriched our comprehension of familial dynamics.

### **Schneider's Critique of Traditional Kinship Theories**

It is crucial to comprehend Schneider's context before exploring his cultural approach. Biology and evolutionary theory have long served as the foundation for kinship research. Because of their exposure to Western concepts of family and genealogy, early anthropologists saw kinship mostly through a biological lens. For a long time, anthropologists believed that kinship was based on a person's biological relationship. On the other hand, Schneider thought that this biological determinism neglected the complexities of human connections and oversimplified kinship. He contended that kinship is more than just a genetic link between people or a biological truth. His alternative view was that kinship is a social construction, reflecting the values, conventions, and symbolic meanings of a given society.

### **The Cultural Approach: Kinship as a Symbolic System**

Moving the focus of understanding family from biology to culture was Schneider's revolutionary contribution. According to him, our cultural backgrounds impact our understanding and use of the concept of kinship. Kinship, then, is not a fact of biology but rather a socially constructed symbolic structure based on the values and significance that people place on particular types of connections. When anthropologists rethought kinship, it changed their approach to studying families,

kin, and communities. Schneider said in *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*, a seminal work in the field, that societal symbols form the basis of kinship. These symbols may represent a culture's perspective on family, relationships, and social links rather than any inherent biological significance. A long-held belief that kinship consisted solely of a biological bond between parents and offspring or between siblings and other relatives was cast into doubt by this viewpoint. Schneider's idea broadened the definition of kinship to encompass non-biological ties that are often seen as similar to kinship in many cultures. These include marriage, adoption, and even close friendships. It is necessary to understand the cultural perspective on kinship before exploring the particular works of influential scholars. Biological determinism was the traditional foundation of kinship studies, which mainly examined familial interactions via the prism of genetic links. One example is the idea that a kid is biologically related to their parents and so automatically considered a family member. Family structures and relationships vary greatly between cultures, and this biological model fails to account for this.

Scholars such as David Schneider advocated for a significant change in our understanding of kinship through the cultural approach. Schneider stated that family is not based on blood ties alone but is instead a cultural construction consisting of deeply ingrained ideas, rituals, and classifications in every particular community. According to this theory, kinship is not an objective reality but rather something that emerges from and is shaped by certain cultural settings.

### **Kinship Terms and their Cultural Meanings**

Words like “mother,” “father,” “brother,” and “cousin” have cultural connotations beyond their literal biological meanings, according to Schneider. These phrases can differ greatly among cultures since they are socially formed. For example, in certain cultures, a woman might be called a “mother” if she has assumed a caring role, regardless of whether she is biologically related to the child or not. Likewise, “father” can refer to any male figure in various cultures who is seen as a caretaker or protector, regardless of whether they are the biological parent or not. The symbolic nature of these kinship phrases and their importance in reinforcing cultural notions of roles, duties, and social expectations was highlighted in Schneider's research. While Westerners tend to limit the meaning of “kinship” to biological links, Schneider's cultural approach shown that other cultures recognise and value kinship in diverse ways. To fully grasp the concept of kinship, he said, one must examine the cultural context in which these concepts are used.

## **Beyond Biology: The Role of Culture in Kinship**

Schneider's criticism of conventional kinship studies' emphasis on biology was only the beginning; he also offered a thorough framework for seeing kinship in its cultural context. His view is that historical, social, and cultural variables, rather than being intrinsic or universal, determine the meanings attached to familial connections. These interpretations shape people's sense of belonging in the family and the larger community as they pass them down through the generations.

To illustrate the point, "family" can mean different things to different cultures. In some, it might mean close friends, neighbours, or even those who are seen as related via common experiences or mutual support, regardless of whether there is a biological link. Emotional, social, and economic ties take precedence over "blood relations" as the concept loses ground. According to Schneider, a society's kinship system offers a window into its values and the ways those values are embodied in its rituals, behaviours, and symbols.

## **The Role of Rituals and Ceremonies**

Schneider also placed a premium on the significance of rites and rituals in strengthening familial bonds. For instance, many cultures have very ritualised celebrations of life-cycle events like births, marriages, and baptisms that highlight and honour familial ties. The public displays of kinship in these rites help to strengthen bonds that may otherwise be seen as vague or unofficial. Take Indian arranged weddings as an example. These ceremonies not only mark the joining of two people but also establish new familial ties between families. Even though they may not have any physiological foundation, these traditions play an essential role in establishing societal acknowledgement of familial relationships. According to Schneider, these kinds of rituals significantly impact how people in different cultures conceptualise family and kinship.

## **The Impact of Schneider's work on Modern Kinship Studies**

Anthropologists and sociologists who research kinship have been greatly influenced by Schneider's cultural approach. A more complex view of human connections has resulted from his work, which recognises the variety of kinship forms across cultures and situations by focussing on the symbolic and cultural aspects of kinship. The approach put forward by Schneider challenges us to consider how social, political, and historical forces have shaped kinship rather than assuming that it operates consistently throughout cultures.

Scholars in the area of kinship studies today use Schneider's research as a jumping off point to investigate kinship in many cultures. Adoption, same-sex marriage, and non-traditional family structures are just a few of the topics that have benefited from his groundbreaking views, which have cast doubt on the biological determinism that has long dominated family studies. Kinship may be flexible and adapt to new social realities; for instance, many modern cultures are seeing an increase in nontraditional family structures including cohabiting couples, single-parent homes, and families formed via adoption or assisted reproductive technologies.

### **Rethinking Kinship in Contemporary Society**

When looking at modern-day familial concerns, Schneider's work is illuminating as well. As a result of societal, legal, and technical shifts, new kinds of kinship are developing in today's globalised society, leading to an increase in the variety of family structures. One such idea that has recently come to light is the "chosen family," in which people develop close relationships with those who do not share their genetic makeup, typically due to common experiences or mutual support. Similarly, the rise of assisted reproductive technologies like surrogacy and sperm donation has prompted discussions on the proper definition of kinship and the nature of biological relatedness.

The cultural lens through which Schneider examines these changing family dynamics sheds light on the significance that individuals place on their connections. The text urges us to consider not just biological characteristics, but also the emotional, social, and cultural aspects that influence people's definitions of "family" and the reasons behind them. While modern notions of kinship develop further, Schneider's work provides a useful framework for contemplating these shifts and their far-reaching effects on social identity and organisation.

### **The Impact of Cultural Approach on Kinship Studies**

Several shifts have occurred in the sociological study of kinship as a result of shifting theoretical perspectives and cultural mores. When people began to question long-held ideas about kinship based on cultural norms rather than biology, it sparked a paradigm change in the area. Prominent academics such as David Schneider, Janet Carsten, Marilyn Strathern, and Kath Weston have laid the groundwork for this approach. The cultural practices, societal conventions, and individual experiences that shape the familial links that we recognise are more than just biological, according to these experts. This blog will analyse the work of these influential thinkers and discuss how the cultural perspective has changed kinship studies.

## **The Role of Janet Carsten: The Culture of Relatedness**

Janet Carsten's "culture of relatedness" is a seminal cultural contribution to our understanding of kinship; it has profoundly affected how we think about kinship in the contemporary day. The importance of cultural practices and shared experiences in establishing kinship, according to Carsten, should take precedence over biological linkages as the principal determinant of kinship.

The ways in which Malaysians understand and experience family via shared practices, ceremonies, and interactions were the focus of Carsten's anthropological work. Her research shows that kinship is about more than simply blood ties; it also includes social connections formed through common experiences, responsibilities, and feelings.

The concept of "relatedness" was first proposed by Carsten to characterise the processes via which individuals perceive their interconnectedness with others. Cultural norms, practices, and individual experiences, she said, mould this bond rather than being an inherent or set attribute. As an example, in certain cultures, people may name people who aren't biologically related "parents" or "siblings" because of the strong emotional bond, shared roles, and reciprocal caring that exists between them. This view of relatedness incorporates not only the biological but also the psychological and social aspects of kinship.

## **Marilyn Strathern and the Critique of Biological Determinism**

The cultural perspective on kinship also includes Marilyn Strathern, whose writings questioned the primacy of biological ties as a foundation for kinship. Within the framework of anthropological research that primarily looked at biological reproduction as the driving force behind family connections, Strathern's criticism takes on further significance.

Influential Melanesian scholar Strathern studied kinship patterns in Papua New Guinean and other Melanesian communities. She contended that in these communities, kinship encompasses more than just genetic inheritance; it also incorporates many cultural, political, and social elements. Social and cultural elements, such the division of labour, ceremonial behaviours, and the exchange of money, complicate the biological basis of kinship, according to Strathern.

The artificial barriers between "nature" and "culture" that frequently underpin Western understandings of family were brought to light in Strathern's seminal critique of biological determinism. Strathern provided valuable insight into the multifaceted nature of kindred by drawing attention to the cultural factors that influence it, demonstrating that kinship is not limited to biological reproduction. More nuanced

and broad conceptions of family and kinship, which incorporate both biological and non-biological elements, have their origins in her work.

### **Kath Weston and the Concept of “Families of Choice”**

Kath Weston is another prominent cultural kinship specialist. Her research on “families of choice” has helped us grasp how kinship may emerge outside of traditional biological or legal frameworks. Instead of relying solely on blood or legal connections, Weston looked at how members of LGBTQ groups form their own webs of care, support, and kinship based on common goals and experiences.

Family structures are not always defined by biology or law, according to Weston’s “families of choice” theory. She made the observation that many people who identify as LGBTQ+, for instance, build tight-knit families via shared experiences and emotional ties rather than through biological relatives. Some examples of “families of choice” include groups of friends who treat each other like siblings and couples who live together and raise each other’s children, even if they aren’t legally recognised as such.

The point that kindred is neither fixed or applicable everywhere is driven home by Weston’s art. On the contrary, kinship may be malleable and changeable depending on factors such as personal preferences, societal demands, and cultural milieu. Kinship is not limited to blood relations or legal standing; her idea of “families of choice” serves as a potent reminder of this. Because it questions traditional, heteronormative conceptions of family and kinship, this concept has struck a chord with LGBTQ+ campaigners.

### **Reinterpreting Kinship in Contemporary Society**

Janet Carsten, Marilyn Strathern, and Kath Weston have altered our modern conception of kinship via their work. Contemporary thought challenges the primacy of biological ties as the sole criteria for kinship, and instead gives more weight to the role that social norms and cultural practices play in shaping the concept. What we know about family, relationships, and social networks will change drastically as a result of this change. The variety of family configurations in modern society is growing. Examples of non-biological kinship links that are gaining recognition and acceptance include those created via adoption, surrogacy, or same-sex unions; in metropolitan areas, nuclear families are frequently mixed with extended family networks. The social and emotional components of kinship, such as mutual caring and sharing of life experiences, are often valued as much, if not more, than the biological ones. A more inclusive culture that values diversity in family structures, gender equality, and individuality is reflected in this growing acceptance of various familial relationships.

## Conclusion

What it means to be “related” to someone has changed drastically due to cultural shifts in how kinship is defined. Researchers like as Janet Carsten, Marilyn Strathern, and Kath Weston have shown that kinship encompasses not only blood relations or legal connections, but also the bonds we create and maintain with other individuals. These concepts have broadened the scope of kinship studies, allowing it to include a wider range of perspectives on family and relationships. When it came to family and relationships, anthropologists and sociologists were completely reshaped by David Schneider’s cultural perspective on kinship. Schneider emphasised that kinship is not a straightforward scientific truth but rather a multi-faceted system of cultural and social connotations by moving the emphasis from biology to culture. His writings paved the way for fresh perspectives on the nature of kinship in different cultures by questioning long-held beliefs that placed an emphasis on blood relationships. We are still struggling to make sense of how families work in our more globalised society, but Schneider’s work sheds light on the cultural and symbolic aspects of kinship that transcend biology. Biological distinctions between sexes and between generations would most certainly be emphasised in the following activities: formation of coalitions, creation, distribution, and trade; and “home”-making. Classical ethnographic literature, echoing earlier anthropological ideas on “kinship,” favours the expansive notions of “consanguinity and affinity” over the more restricted nuclear family paradigm. In this example, we’ve used the following operational definition of “social kinship”: the establishment of relatedness categories that allow individuals to engage in various economic and “symbolic” activities in tandem. The idea of intergenerational fertility gives rise to these categories since it calls for a system of allowed and forbidden mating interactions to accommodate new generations. What is at stake here is a basic framework of reproductive logic, not specifics about who mated with whom or had children with whom. Thus, the dialectic of gender and generation defines various forms of cooperation, “belonging,” and productive labour within each human civilisation. A possible development that may make transactional interactions easier is the complexity of social kinship structures. To anthropologists, the idea of “kinship” has long been central to the search for ancient human communities.

## References

- Bob Simpson. 1998. *Changing Families: An ethnographic approach to divorce and separation*, Berg Publishers: Oxford.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Butler, Judith. 'Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?' *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* - Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2002.
- Carol Smart. 'Law and the Regulation of Family Secrets', *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 2010, 24(3): 397-413.
- Carsten J. 2000 (ed.). *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carsten, Janet, 1995, 'The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi' *American Ethnologist*, 22 (2): 223-24.1
- Carsten, Janet, 1995, 'The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi' *American Ethnologist*, 22 (2): 223-24.1
- Das, V., 1994, 'Masks and Faces: An Essay on Punjabi Kinship', in Patricia Uberoi (ed.), *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Das, V., 1994, 'Masks and Faces: An Essay on Punjabi Kinship', in Patricia Uberoi (ed.), *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Dumont, L., 1968, 'Marriage Alliance', in D. Shills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, U.S.A.: Macmillan and Free Press.
- Engels, Frederick. (1884) 1948 *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 2004 (1940), 'The Nuer of Southern Sudan', in R. Parkin and L. Stone (eds.), *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, U.S.A.: Blackwell.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 2004 (1940), 'The Nuer of Southern Sudan', in R. Parkin and L. Stone (eds.), *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, U.S.A.: Blackwell.
- Fortes, M., 1970, *Time and Social Structure and Other Essays*, University of London: The Athlone Press.
- Fortes, Meyer. 1949 *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, J. D., 1958, 'The Family Systems of the Iban of Borneo', in J. Goody (ed.), *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gayatri Reddy. 2006 'The Bonds of Love: Companionate Marriage and the desire for intimacy among Hijras in Hyderabad, India' in Jennifer Hirsch and Holy Wardlow (ed.) *Modern Loves: The anthropology of romantic courtship and companionate marriage*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1957. 'Ideal language and kinship structure', *Philosophy of Science*, vol. 24, No.3.
- Gold, Ann Grodzins, 1994, 'Sexuality, Fertility, and Erotic Imagination in Rajasthani Women's Songs', in *Listen to the Heron's Words: Re-imagining Gender and Kinship in North India* by Gloria Goodwin Raheja and Ann Grodzins Gold, Delhi: OUP.

- Gold, Ann Grodzins, 1994, 'Sexuality, Fertility, and Erotic Imagination in Rajasthani Women's Songs', in *Listen to the Heron's Words: Re-imagining Gender and Kinship in North India* by Gloria Goodwin Raheja and Ann Grodzins Gold, Delhi: OUP.
- Goody, Jack. 1973. 'Strategies of heirship' *Comparative studies in history and society*, 15(1): 3-20.
- Gough, Kathleen E., 1959, 'The Nayars and the Definition of Marriage', in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 89: 23-34
- J. A. Barnes. 1961. 'Physical and social kinship' *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 28, No. 3.
- Judith Stacey. 2003. 'The making and unmaking of modern families' in David Cheal (ed.) *Family: Critical concepts in sociology*, New York: Routledge, vol. 4.
- Kahn, Susan Martha, 2004, 'Eggs and Wombs: The Origins of Jewishness', in R. Parkin and L. Stone (eds.), *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, U.S.A.: Blackwell.
- Kaja Finkler. 'The Kin in the Gene: The Medicalization of Family and Kinship in American Society', *Current Anthropology*, 2001, 42: 2.
- Katie Featherstone et.al. *Risky relations: Family kinship and the new genetics*, New York: Berg Publishers, 2006.
- Leach, E.R., 1961, 'Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage with Particular Reference to Sinhalese Customary Law', in E. R. Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Anthropology*, London: The Athlone Press.
- Leach, E.R., 1961, 'Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage with Particular Reference to Sinhalese Customary Law', in E. R. Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Anthropology*, London: The Athlone Press.
- Leach, Edmund, 1962, 'On Certain Unconsidered Aspects of Double Descent Systems', *Man*, Vol. 62, Pp. 130-134.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 1969, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 1969, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude.1969. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode
- Marilyn Strathern. 2005. *Kinship, law and the unexpected: relatives are always a surprise*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nicholas j. Allen, Hilary Callan, Robin Dunbar and Wendy James 2008. *Early Human Kinship from Sex to Social Reproduction*, Blackwell Publishing

- Parkin, Robert, and Linda Stone, 2000. (ed.). *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, U.S.A.: Blackwell.
- Prem Chowdhry. 2010. *Political economy of production and reproduction*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. and D. Forde (eds.), 1950, *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, London: Oxford University Press, Introduction.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. and D. Forde (eds.), 1950, *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1950 'Introduction', in A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (ed.) *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Ragone Helena (2004). *Surrogate Motherhood and American Kinship* in R. Parkin and L. Stone(ed) *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Ragone Helena (2004). *Surrogate Motherhood and American Kinship* in R. Parkin and L. Stone(ed) *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Rapp, Rayna. 1991. 'Moral pioneers: Women, Men and Fetuses on a Frontier of Reproductive Technology' In Micaela di Leonardo (ed.) *Gender at the Cross Roads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Berkley and Los Angeles, California. University of California Press.
- Rodney Needham. 1960. 'Descent Systems and Ideal Language' *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 27, No. 1.
- Schneider, D., 2004, 'What is Kinship All About?' in R. Parkin and L. Stone (eds.) *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, U.S.A.: Blackwell.
- Schneider, David M 1968. *American Kinship: A Cultural account*, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Schneider, David Schneider. 1984. *A critique of the study of kinship*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Shah A.M., 1964, 'Basic Terms and Concepts in the study of family in India', *The Indian Economy and Social History Review*, vol. 1(3), pp 1-36.
- Shah A.M., 1964, 'Basic Terms and Concepts in the study of family in India', *The Indian Economy and Social History Review*, vol. 1(3).
- Therese Locoh. 2003. 'Social change and marriage arrangements: New types of union in Lome, Togo' in David Cheal (ed.) *Family: Critical concepts in sociology*, vol. 1.
- Trautmann, T. R. Lewis 1987. *Henry Morgan and the Invention of Kinship*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Uberoi, Patricia, 1995, 'When is a Marriage not a Marriage? Sex, Sacrament and Contract in Hindu Marriage', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, n.s. 29, 1&2: 319-45
- Uberoi, Patricia. 1994. *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim 2004 'Families in a runaway world' in Jacqueline Scott, Judith Treas and Martin Richards (eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to sociology of families*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Vatuk Sylvia, *Household Form and Formation: Variability and Social Change among South Indian Muslims In Great*, John N. & David J. Mearns (1989). *Society from the Inside Out: Anthropological Perspectives on the South Asian Household*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Veena Das. 1995. 'National Honour and Practical Kinship' in *Critical Events*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Weston, Kath, 1991, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Weston, Kath, 1991, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Weston, Kath. 1991 *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. *Private Life under Socialism: Love intimacy, and family Change in a Chinese Village 1949-1999*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.