

## Anthropology and Kinship

Kinship is seen as a web of social relationships that is present in all societies. There are many aspects of kinship that anthropologists study, and there are many types of kinship patterns seen around the world. When studying kinship, anthropologists may consider the following:

**Family:** If relationships are concrete or abstractly related.

**Descent Rules:** Bilateral (descent from both parentage) and Unilateral (patrilineal vs matrilineal)

**Marriage:** Monogamous, Polygamous, Same-sex, Arranged

### Family and Kinship

Anthropologists broadly sort kin into two different categories, consanguineal and affinal.

i) **Affinal:** Those related by marital relationship

ii) **Consanguineal:** Kin who are related by blood. There can be three different levels of blood relations.

**Lineal:** Direct descendants (ie grandfather → father → son)

**Siblings:** Children of the same parents

**Collateral:** Related indirectly (ie cousins)

### Descent Rules

A variety of descent patterns can be seen throughout the world. Descent patterns can define the inheritance of both goods and titles.

i) **Bilateral Descent:** Descent is traced through both parents

ii) **Unilateral Descent:** Descent is traced only in one line

**Patrilineal (Agnatic):** Descent traced only through males

**Matrilineal (Uterine):** Descent traced only through females

### Marriage

Marriage is seen as a legal obligation between two or more individuals. While in North America marriage is seen as a choice between two individuals, in other cultures marriage is seen as an economic or political tool.

Marriage can be sorted into two main categories:

i) **Monogamy:** Having one partner at a time.

ii) **Polygamy:** Having multiple partners at a time.

**Polygyny:** Practice where a man has more than one wife

• May be sororal (co-wives are sisters) or non-sororal (co-wives are not related)

**Polyandry:** Practice where a woman has more than one husband.

• May be fraternal (a woman is wed to brothers) or non-fraternal (husbands are not related)

Choice and marriage has also been a topic of discussion amongst anthropologists for years. Anthropologists have taken particular interest in:

**Arranged marriages:** Bride and groom are selected by families

Types of arranged marriages include:

**Arranged exogamous marriage:** third party finds and selects the bride and groom irregardless of group

**Arranged endogamous marriage:** third party finds and selects the bride and groom from a particular social group

**Consanguineous marriage:** is one where the bride and groom share a grandparent or near ancestor.

**Same-Sex marriages:** Marriage between two individuals of the same sex

Arranged Marriages	Bride and groom are selected by families or acquaintances.	Common in many Indian and Japanese cultures.
Function in Society:		
Polygyny	Practice where a man has more than one wife.	Common in Hinduism, where the number of wives is linked to what caste (social status) you fit into.
Function in Society:		
Polyandry	Practice where a woman has more than one husband.	Seen in Sri Lanka and in the Himalayan mountains.
Function in Society:		
Patrilineal Descent	Through the relationship of his father, a man has claims to resources. This also describes his rank.	Common in most European dynasties.
Function in Society:		
Matrilineal Descent	Through the relationship of her mother, a woman has claims to resources. This also describes his rank.	Seen in the Ashanti of Ghana and Garo of India.
Function in Society:		