

Kinship and Descent

Lecture Outline

- Kinship
 - Eskimo Kinship System
 - Iroquois Kinship System
- Descent (Consanguine Relations)
 - Unilineal Descent
 - Patrilineal Descent
 - Matrilineal Descent
- Non-unilineal Descent
 - Double Descent
 - Bilateral Descent
 - Ambilineal Descent
- Marriage (Affinal Relations)
 - Defined
 - Spousal Preferences
 - Selecting a Spouse
 - Types of Marriage
- Incest and the Incest Taboo
- Film: Kinship and Descent

Kinship Dynamics – Key Definitions

- kinship system – kin relations and the kinds of behavior associated with those relations
- kinship diagram – a way of presenting data graphically about the kin relations of a particular individual (called ‘ego’) (works up from the individual)
- genealogy – a record of a person’s relatives starting with an ancestor (works down to individual)
- descent system – the kinship principles traced through parent-child links
- descent group – a group defined by the descent system; a group of related people descended from a real or mythical ancestor
- Types of Decent Systems:
 - Unilineal Descent – decent through the mother or the father
 - Patrilineal – through the father’s line
 - Matrilineal – through the mother’s line
 - Double Descent – combines matrilineal and patrilineal patterns (unilineal or non-unilineal)
 - Non-unilineal descent – descent through mother and father’s line, *or*, a choice between the two
 - Bilateral –descent is reckoned through the lines of both parents relatively equally
 - Ambilineal – descent is reckoned either parent’s line and the individual (or the parents for the individual) is able to choose his or her affiliation with one group or the other
- Residence Patterns
 - Patrilocal – with the husband’s family
 - Matrilocal – with the wife’s family
 - Avunculocal – with the wife’s brother’s family (maternal uncle)
 - Bilocal – with either the wife or the husband’s family
 - Neolocal – a new residence location after marriage

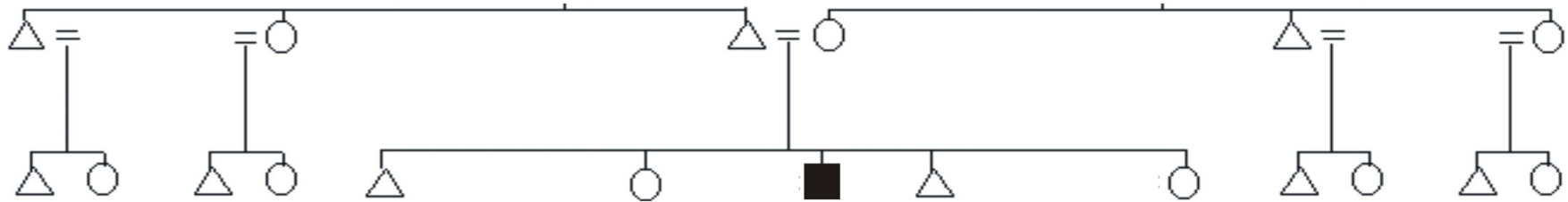
- Marriage – a generally stable and intimate relationship between (usually) two people which creates in-law kin relations
 - Preference Rules – rules governing preferred marriage partners
 - endogamy – marriage within a group
 - exogamy – marriage outside of a group
 - Forms of Marriage
 - monogamy – one spouse
 - polygamy – more than one spouse
 - polygyny – one husband; more than one wife
 - polyandry – rare; one wife; more than one husband
- Incest Taboo – a strong prohibition against marrying or sex with particular kin
- lineages: sets of related kin tracing ancestry to a known ancestor
- clans: kin from related lineages, descended from a common ancestor who may or may not be identified; tracing the connections is difficult or impossible; groups of lineages
- phratries: groups of clans
- moieties: a single pair of unilineal descent groups that make up a society; both groups have a common ancestor; made up of clans or phratries

Legend for Kinship Charts

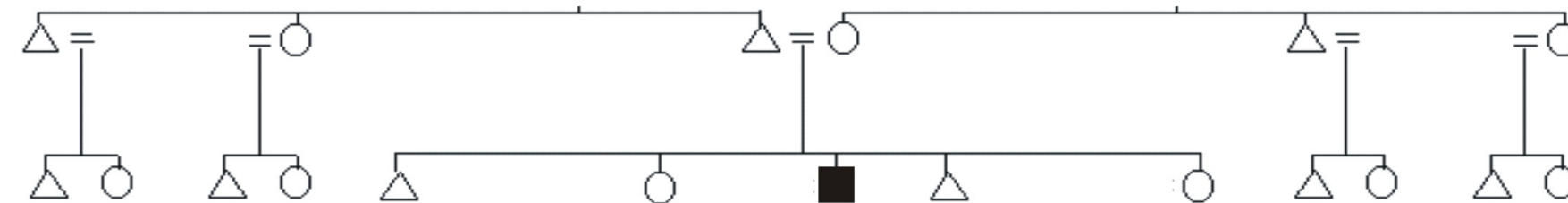
- women
- △ men
- non-specific gender / ego
- = marriage / spousal tie / parental tie

Kinship System Charts

Eskimo System

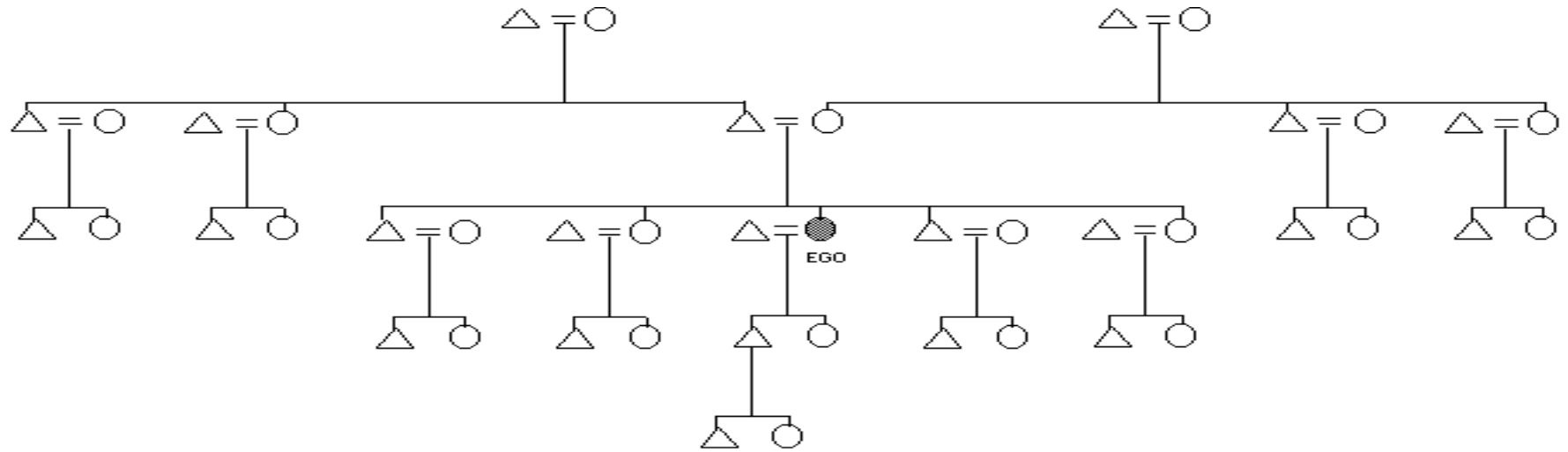


Iroquois System

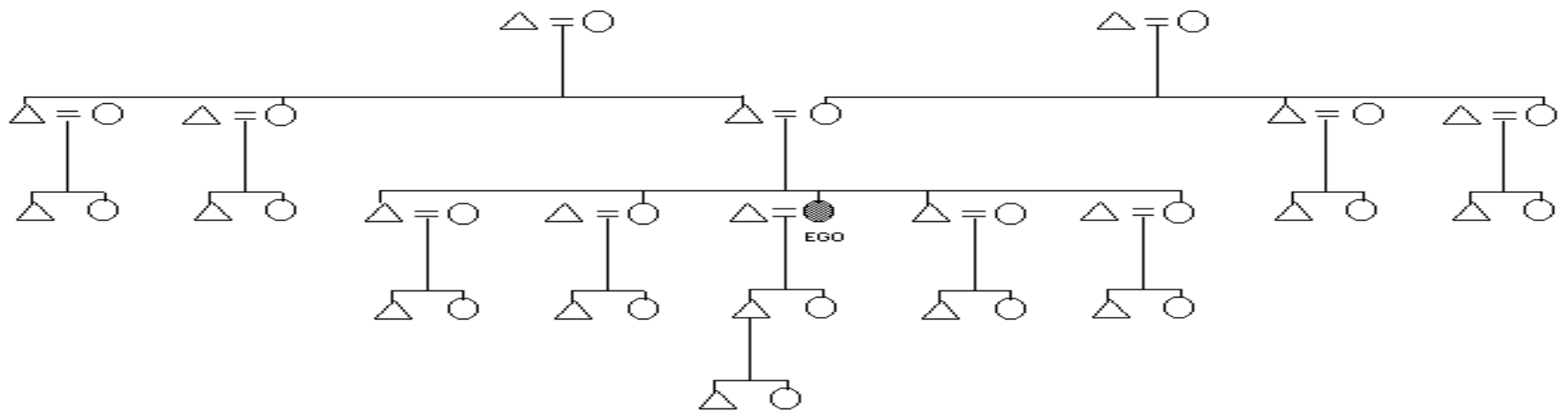


Descent System Charts

Patrilineal System



Matrilineal System



Film: Kinship and Descent

Note: This film discusses the kinship systems of several native groups. They include: The Yanomamo, The Trobriand Islanders, The Mende, Chambri Lake People, and Americans.

General Questions

What descent systems are shown in the film?	Yanonamo Trobriand Islanders Mende Chambri Americans
Why does the narrator dismiss the importance of kinship and descent in North American society? Is he right to do so?	
Discuss the difference between the role of the mother's brother among the matrilineal Trobriand Islanders and what it must be like among patrilineal groups like the Mende.	

How do modes of production affect kinship systems? Why? How might a shift to the industrial mode affect a matrilineal society?	
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Other Observations about the Film

Geographical Locations	
Other Observations	