UNIT 9: Kinship Ties and Social Networks

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UNIT #9

Kinship Ties and Social Networks

The previous unit introduced the different social organizations in society. In this chapter, a more stable set of relationships existing in society will be presented. These are called social institutions. This unit also includes a thorough discussion of the primary social institution of society: the family.

Fig. 1. A family picture of a couple with their two children


What comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘family’? The most familiar answer might be a suitable description of the picture shown above. A family is usually depicted with parents and their children. However, this unit will offer a deeper characterization and understanding of this social institution. One might be surprised that there are a lot more members of the family in addition to parents and children. Are you ready to know your family members?
Learning Targets

In this unit, you should be able to trace kinship ties and social networks.

Lesson 1: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Kinship by Blood

Family is at the center of the life of the Filipinos. This lesson will discuss how this personal relationship can be scientifically studied by the social sciences.

Starting Out

On a piece of a paper, draw your family tree. Include relatives from your father's and mother's side. After five minutes, discuss with your seatmate who is the relative closest to you, aside from your parents and siblings. Discuss how and why the two of you are close with each other.
Learn about It!

Social Institutions and the Family

Social Institutions are semi-permanent sets of relationships in society that last for a long period of time. Social institutions are considered as cultural universal, since they are almost always present in the different cultures and societies across time and space. A cultural universal is a common pattern or feature present among societies, which may differ in form and dynamics. Examples of social institutions include governments, education, religion, the economy, and the family.

The family is the basic unit of society. It is defined by Kingsley Davis as a group of people related by consanguinity that maintains close relationship to each other. The institution of the family is responsible for taking good care of the future members of society. This includes attending to the needs of the children from infancy until adulthood. It is also the first agent of socialization, which orients children on how to be good members of society. Not all families are related by blood. A family of orientation is the type of family that one is born into and grows up with, usually as a child of two parents. This is in contrast with the family of procreation, which is the type of family that one creates through marriage, adoption, and other legal processes, usually as one of the parents.

Practices in Tracing Family Lineage

Different cultures have their own ways of tracing kinship and descent lines, which affects the way people are grouped, their roles, and their relationships with each other. Exclusive identification to only one of the parent’s lineage is called unilineal system. Members of a family can either identify to patrilineal or matrilineal lines. In patrilineal societies, children only recognize the father’s side as members of their family. On the other hand, tracing kinship from the female parent’s side is called matrilineal. This practice is evident in Bible stories and Roman and Greek mythology. Due to these systems, biologically related people can sometimes end up marrying each other. In a patrilineal system, one can marry the child of his mother’s sibling or his cousin from the mother’s side. Since the relatives of the mother are
not considered as kin in a patrilineal system of descent, this scenario is an acceptable situation.

Another way of tracing descent is the **bilateral** system. In this case, people consider both the father’s and mother’s sides as their relatives. For instance, Filipino families consider both the relatives of the male and the female parent as their kin. This results to clannish and large families in the Philippines.

Let’s Analyze!

“Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten,” is a famous quote from the Disney movie *Lilo and Stitch*. Ohana is the Hawaiian translation of the word ‘family’, which signifies the family as a large group of people who help and give life to each other. This concept includes relatives by blood, marriage, adoption, and living and dead ancestors. Have you watched the movie *Lilo and Stitch*? What type of practice in tracing family descent does ohana refer to in this case?

History Maker

**George Peter Murdock** or G. P. Murdock was an American anthropologist. He is best known for his cross-cultural researches. His studies essentially contributed to the development of anthropology, but his works were also inspired by other disciplines like sociology, linguistics and behavioral psychology. He founded the journal *Ethnology* in 1962, where he also served as an editor until his retirement. In 1967, he published his most famous book, *Ethnographic Atlas*. He is considered as one of the leaders in “anthropology’s growth, development and maturity.”
Check Your Understanding

A. Identify whether the statements are True or False. Write “True” if the statement is true. If the statement is false, underline the wrong words, and write the correct words on the space provided below.

1. Social institutions are relationships that can easily be changed and can only last for a short period of time.
2. Cultural universals are features of culture present in most of societies.
3. The family is a form of a social institution.
4. The unilineal system of tracing kinship includes both parents' sides as members of the family.
5. The matrilineal system considers the father's side as relatives.

B. What is the importance of the family as a social institution?

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C. Aside from the example given above, what are the other possible implications of tracing descent using a bilateral system?

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Putting Value

In a ½ illustration board, make a collage of your family tree. Be as creative as possible. Make sure to highlight the practices you used in tracing your descent. At the back, attach a one-paragraph description of your clan and how you traced your descent.

Lesson 2: Kinship Ties and Social Networks:
Kinship by Marriage

The previous lesson discussed kinship through blood relations. On the other hand, this topic will be about familial ties through marriage. Although there are other rituals constructed by society for family membership, the social phenomenon of marriage is particularly given attention due to its special means of creating familial connection through affinity.

Starting Out

On a one whole sheet yellow paper, write an essay about your ideal future partner. Use the following guide questions:

1. Are you willing to marry someone of a different nationality? Why?
2. Are you willing to marry someone who practices a different religion? Why?
3. Are you willing to marry someone of a different ethnicity? Why?
Learn about It!

Marriage is such an idealistic yet serious topic when discussed with close friends and family. This concept is also a subject of interest of the social sciences. It is one of the most common ways to create one's own family, a family of procreation. In the eyes of society, this ritual is a requirement before a couple becomes socially acceptable and legally bonded.

Societies’ Rules for Marriage

Different societies and cultures have their own rules when it comes to this very delicate social phenomenon. Some social groups are very particular with regard to pairing with members from their own affiliations. These groups prohibit their members to marry outside their circle. This is called endogamy. One good example in the Philippines is the rules of marriage within the religious group, Iglesia ni Cristo. Members of this church are not allowed to tie the knot with people who belong to other religious denominations, unless he or she undergoes baptism before the wedding. On the other hand, the practice of marrying someone from a different social group is called exogamy.

Other cultures’ rules in marriage are manifested in terms of the number of partners one can have. Polygamy is the practice of having more than one marital partner. Muslim men can marry up to four women, if he is able to equally provide for the emotional and material needs of his partners and their children. This practice comes from a very merciful teaching of Muhammad, which encourages the provision of assistance to widows and orphans. The practice of having more than one wife is called polygyny. One the other hand, polyandry is the tradition of females having multiple husbands. This practice is common to areas with hostile environments. In this way, the population can also be regulated. In Tibet, multiple brothers equally share a wife to preserve land ownership. Through this means, a piece of land owned by the husband’s family will not be divided.

In contrast to polygamy, monogamy is the practice of having only one partner. This practice is supported by the Philippine Constitution. However, this is not applicable to Muslims, since they are subject to the Sharia Law. The Sharia law is a set of rules and regulations based on
the Islamic faith. This set of laws is considered first before the constitution, in the case of practitioners of Islam.

**REMEMBER!**
Polygamy is the practice of having more than one marital partner, while monogamy is the practice of having only one partner.

**Let’s Analyze!**

![Fig. 3. A couple holds hands during a Hindu wedding](https://pixabay.com/en/couple-indian-wedding-indian-couple-1245864/)

Arranged marriages, wherein parents choose the partners of their children, are practiced by different cultures around the world. This is practiced in India, where most people are Hindu. What do you think are the reasons behind this tradition? In your opinion, would you accept your parents’ decision to find and choose your spouse? Why?

**Post-Marital Residence Rules**

Guidelines set by the society do not end in mate selection and wedding ceremonies. Even before the actual matrimony, couples decide where to live and where they can start their
family. The decision is usually rooted on the type of the lineage system their society follows. If the couple’s place of residence is near the ancestral house of the groom, the system is called a patrilocal residence. This is one reason for the migration of women, since tradition requires them to move to a house near the relatives of her husband. Conversely, if they join the household of the bride or live near the bride’s relatives, it is called a matrilocal residence. When the couple has the freedom to choose where to live, the practice is called ambilocal residence. There are also instances when the couple does not consider the distance of their home to the relatives of both parties. This is called neolocal residence. In more liberal societies, some factors that may affect the choice of the residence’s location are job opportunities, safety from calamities, and accessibility to different establishments.

**History Maker**

Mohammed Bello Abubakar is a Nigerian and former Muslim preacher, who holds the title of having the greatest number of wives. He married 107 women and divorced 10 of them throughout his lifetime. He is also the father to 203 children. Because of these statistics, he is termed as a “superpolygamist.” Bello justifies his acts as obedience to the Divine Order. However, this led to controversies and the termination of his church leadership. In 2016, he died at the age of 93 in leaving behind his 87 wives.

**Check Your Understanding**

A. Identify the concepts being described on the statements below.

___________1. The ritual, which is the most common step in starting a family of procreation

___________2. The prohibition of a social group’s members to marry an outsider from their social group

___________3. The practice of having multiple partners

___________4. The rule of society which dictates where a newly-wed couple should build their home

___________5. The practice of deciding where to live independent of the location of the couple’s relatives.
B. Nowadays, how do Filipinos value marriage?
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C. In your opinion, why do majority of newly-wed couples join the house of one of their parents or live near the house of their relatives?
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Putting Value

On a one whole sheet of paper, analyze the place of your residence according to the post-marital residence rules. Write the advantages and disadvantages of living near or far from your relatives. Ask your parents why and how they ended up living in your current address.
Lesson 3: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Kinship by Ritual

From the previous lessons, you have learned that family ties can be formed through blood relations or by affinity. The last process of creating familial bonds will be discussed in this lesson.

Starting Out

Form a group with your classmates with the help of your teacher. Re-enact a baptismal ceremony of a religion the group is familiar with. After the preparation period is over, perform in front of your classmates and watch the performances of the other groups. Reflect on the similar elements and characters present in each presentation.

Learn about It!

Aside from the familial ties built through blood relations and marriage, familial ties can also be formed through rituals. This is called fictive kinship. Through the rituals, people can form bonds and treat each other like a family member. An exact depiction of this phenomenon is the compadrazgo system. Compadrazgo is the Spanish term for “co-parenthood,” which is actualized by the godparents after being part of rituals or ceremonies, like baptism, weddings, and religious confirmation. This social phenomenon creates two types of relationships. First is the bond between the parents and the godparents. Second is the relationship between the child or couple to the godparents. This practice fosters social solidarity and integrating the community.

This practice is also evident in the Filipino culture, as an influence of Spanish colonizers. This is in the form of compadre or ninong and ninang. They are considered as the second parents of
the child. They have the responsibility in guiding the child to be a good son or daughter, as well as inspire them in their religious faith. In cases of the early death of the parents, they are expected to help in raising the children. The have the same responsibility as the blood relatives of the child. Although they are not related by blood, the connection created by this ritual is so strong that they are considered as family member. In fact, this bond can be found in the workplace, where special treatment is given to *compadres*.

**What do you think?**

Do you have a close relationship with your godparents? How do they help you become a good son or daughter?

**History Maker**

**Joseph Ejercito Estrada** is the 13th President of the Philippines. He is more popularly known as Erap. Erap is the reverse spelling of the word *pare*, the term used by parents to call the godparents of his children and vice versa. This is the image projected by the former president during his campaign for presidency in 1998: a *compadre* to the Filipino masses. He is famous for the line, “*walang kama-kamag-anak, walang kumpa-kumpare* (no preference for relatives, no preference for the *kumpare*),” which he used in his inaugural address. This was a promise to the Filipinos that no special treatment will be given to his family and friends during his term. However, he was impeached in 2001 through the EDSA People Power II Revolution. He was convicted of plunder and corruption. He was sentenced a lifetime imprisonment, but was given pardon in 2007.
Check Your Understanding

A. Identify whether the following statements are True or False.

1. Family ties can be made through blood relations, marriage, and ritual.

2. The compadrazgo system is an example of family membership through affinity.

3. The Filipinos’ compadrazgo system is a Portuguese influence.

4. Compadrazgo creates a bond between the child and the godparent only.

5. The term compadrazgo means co-parenting.

B. What is the significance of your ninong and ninang in your life development?

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C. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using the compadre system in the workplace?

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Putting Value

Interview your parents about your godparents. Ask them about their relationship to your godparent, even before they had you as their child. Also include the considerations of your parents in choosing their compadre. Write a reflection paper based on the said interview.

Lesson 4: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Family and the Household

The last three lessons elaborated the ways how family relationships are formed. In this lesson, the contemporary situations and dynamics within the family institutions will be discussed.

Starting Out

Divide the class into two groups with the help of the teacher. The first group will be assigned as the pro-divorce group, while the second will be the anti-divorce group. For five minutes, list down reasons to defend the side that you were assigned. Present in class the summary of reasons of the two groups. After the presentation, each of the groups may ask questions to stir a debate.

Learn about It!

Families from different parts of the world are facing unique situations and challenges. Families usually live together in a single household. However, this is not always the case for all families. A household is a group of people sharing a common house. When parents and their children occupy a single house, it is called a nuclear family. On the other hand, an extended family includes other relatives in the house, such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. This
type of household is common in the Philippines. Unlike in Western societies, where grandparents are usually sent to homes for the aged, Filipinos still live with their grandparents and care of them.

However, a household may not always contain a family. For instance, friends sharing an apartment together are not tied by blood, marriage or ritual. These friends are considered as a household. Another trend in contemporary households is composed of cohabiting couples. **Cohabitation** is the act of sharing a household by unmarried couples. Cohabiting couples may share their household with their children.

**Types of Families in the Contemporary World**

Not all families live in the same house. A good example of this are transnational families. A **transnational family** is a type of family where one or more of its members live in different nations. This social phenomenon is prevalent in Philippine society due to overseas employment.

On the other hand, not all families consist of two parents. **Single-parent** families only have one parent taking responsibility for their children. According to the Federation of Solo Parents, there are around 20 million single parents in the Philippines. There are also instances where a single parent marries another single parent, thus joining their households together. This is called a **reconstituted family** or a type of family where at least one of the parents has children from a previous relationship.

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**REMEMBER!**

A nuclear family is a household with two parents and their children. In contrast, an extended family is a household composed of the nuclear family, plus other members of the family like grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives.
Annulment VS. Divorce

Marriage is a legal contract, and there are also legal means for couples to separate. In the Philippines, legal separation allows the couple to stay in different households, while their marriage is still considered as valid. On the other hand, annulment nullifies the wedding, which means the marriage was never valid due to certain grounds. This allows the couples to marry again. This process is often confused with divorce. Divorce is the legal termination of marriage, which means that the marriage was valid, but the couple have decided to formally separate. At present, divorce is still not legal in the Philippines. The Philippines is the only country which prohibits divorce, aside from the Vatican City.

History Maker

Judy Taguiwalo was the appointed Secretary of Department of Social Welfare and Development after the victory of President Rodrigo Duterte in 2016. She is a professor in the University of the Philippines and a known advocate of women’s rights. She was the subject of headlines after receiving a bad joke about being a solo parent from a senator during the review of her appointment. This stirred arguments and debates in the social media about single parents, and the senator eventually said sorry for having said the joke. Her appointment was eventually rejected by the commission.

Fig. 4. Judy Taguiwalo
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Secretary_Taguiwalo_at_ASEAN_event_(2017-01-24).jpg
Check Your Understanding

A. Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.
1. A group of people sharing the same house is called ________________.
2. The members of a nuclear family are ________________ and ________________.
3. The practice of sharing a household between an unmarried couple is referred to as ________________.
4. Transnational families have at least one member of the family living in a different ________________.
5. The legal termination of marriage is called ________________.

B. What are the motivations of people who engage in cohabitation? How are cohabiting couples viewed by Philippine society?
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C. Do you think it is important to implement laws for legal separation like annulment and divorce? Why?
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Putting Value

Interview someone from your community who is from a transnational family. Ask them why someone from the family had to live abroad. Inquire respectfully regarding any problems they have encountered from living in separate nations and the coping mechanisms they developed to solve their problems. Write about the results of your interview on a sheet of paper.

Lesson 5: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Politics of Kinship

The institution of the family is known for the intimate relationship among its members. Surprisingly, politics also exists within and among families in society. This topic of interest will be discussed on this lesson.

Starting Out

Equally divide the class into three groups with the help of your teacher. The first group will be tasked to position all the chairs upside down. The second group must arrange all the chairs in circular form. Lastly, the third group must stack all the chairs into two. The first group to accomplish the task is the winner. After the game, the class can share their reflections on how they are able to finish the job despite the presence of the other groups.
Learn about It!

A family is described in the first lesson as the institution responsible for taking care of its members. Close interpersonal relationships among family members are commonly present. However, politics is also present between and among families in society.

Politics Among Family Members

Power is not equally distributed among members of the family. Parents, for instance, decide for their children. They also set rules and regulations inside the home. However, power inequality can also be present between parents. If the father has the final decision in the family, the family is described as a patriarchal household. This is common in the Philippine context, where the father is known to be the padre de pamilya. On the other hand, if the mother’s decision has a greater impact, the household is a matriarchal one. If the parents have equal power, then an egalitarian household exists.

The family is seen by feminist advocates as the starting ground for women’s oppression. Cultural preference for a baby boy can lead to infanticide of baby girls. This scenario happened in China after the implementation of one-child policy. In addition, many working mothers suffer from a double shift, that is, after a stressful day at work, mothers usually must work again by doing household chores. As a solution, radical feminists aim for the abolishment of the family to free women from oppressive house duties.
Politics Among Families in Society

Rivalries between different families may be more familiar. Within Philippine politics, there are family rivals campaigning for positions during local elections. Political dynasties, or families that hold political power for generations, are also present in the country. Political dynasties come in two types. In vertical political dynasties, politicians from the same family hold different positions in the government at the same time. On the other hand, in horizontal political dynasties, members of the same family hold the same position over time. This shows how family-centered Filipino culture is in terms of politics. In addition, nepotism or patronage towards family members is also widespread.

Cooperation among families, on the other hand, is also used to amass more power in society. Alliances are made between families to further protect their wealth and power. According to

Inequality among siblings also happens in different cultures. This is usually based on the birth order of the children. Is this scenario occurring in your household? How? Research the practices of different culture that shows inequality between siblings.

Let’s Analyze!

**Fig. 5.** Boy Siblings

Claude Levi-Strauss, creating alliances are a more common way of forming kinship ties than tracing descent. Since endogamy between families tend to foster relations among the same families, alliances among families may sometimes result in incest. **Incest** is the practice of marrying a member of the same family.

**History Maker**

Claude Lévi-Strauss is a French Anthropologist. He is considered as the Father of Modern Anthropology. His major contribution in the field is the use of structuralism. Structuralism is a way of analyzing cultures according to its structural relations. This method only focuses on the essential elements of the society's culture.

He served as an academician in University of Paris, University of Sao Paulo, New School for Social Research and College de France. Among his notable works are *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, *A World of the Wane*, *Structural Anthropology* and *The Savage Mind*. He died at the age of 100 on October 30, 2009.

**Check Your Understanding**

A. Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.

1. Families with equal power dynamics between men and women are called ______________.

2. Giving favors like jobs to members of the family, while holding a position in the
government is referred to as ________________.

3. Family create ________________ with other families to maintain or increase power and wealth in society.

4. ________________ said that families are more likely to create alliances than to trace descent.

5. ________________ is the practice of marrying a member of the same family.

B. What do you think is the most effective type of decision-making within the household, patriarchal, matriarchal or egalitarian? Why?

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C. In your opinion, how can the working mother’s double shift be prevented or lessened?

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Putting Value

Interview a barangay or a local government official from your community regarding their family’s political history. Ask them if their family had influenced them in their decision to run for a position in the government. Is the official part of a long-standing political family? Determine whether the official’s family is part of a political dynasty.
Real-world Challenge

Read the GRASPS situation below and perform the following tasks. Make sure to read the rubrics for the activity.

Goal:
• Your task is to create a genealogy of your family.
• The goal is to preserve a record of your family history, lineage and descent.
• The problem/challenge is to make sure that kinship by blood, marriage and ritual is included.

Role:
• You are a storyteller.
• You have been asked by your grandmother to make sure that they will not be forgotten by the next generation of your family.

Audience:
• The members of the target audience are the future descendants of your family.

Situation:
• The context you find yourself in is in a modern society which does not give much importance to the family.

Product/Performance and Purpose:
• You will create a book, scrapbook or chart that shows your family lineage from your mother's and father's side, including your godparents.
• You need to include a picture with caption of all your family members. In addition, include the personal details of your relatives, like their name, birthday, occupation, etc.

Standards & Criteria for Success:
• Your work will be judged by the following standards on the next page.
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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Beginning (0-12 points)</th>
<th>Developing (13-16 points)</th>
<th>Accomplished (17-20 points)</th>
<th>Score</th>
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Total Score:
Society and I: Self-Check

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<td>Trace kinship ties and social networks</td>
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Reflect

How is my relationship with my family and relatives? Do I still have time to bond with them?

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Wrap Up

- Family and kinship ties can be formed by blood relations, marriage, and ritual.
- Tracing descent by blood can be bilateral or unilineal. Unilineal tracing can either be patrilineal or matrilineal.
- Society imposes different rules on marriage, in terms of the number of partners, belongingness to the same social circle, and post-marital residency.
- Compadrazgo or co-parenting is the most famous example of kinship by ritual.
- Families usually live in a common household. However, there are trends in present societies that reflect other realities, such as families living in different countries or the union of two single parent families.
- Power inequality exists between and among families.

## Bibliography


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Answers to Check Your Understanding

Lesson 1: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Kinship by Blood

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. False – Bilateral; unilineal must be underlined.
5. False – Patrilocal; matrilocal must be underlined; or False – mother’s; father’s must be underlined.
Lesson 2: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Kinship by Marriage
1. Marriage
2. Endogamy
3. Polygamy
4. Post-Marital Residence Rules
5. Neolocal

Lesson 3: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Kinship by Ritual
1. True
2. False; Compadrazgo system is family membership through rituals.
3. False; Filipinos’ Compadrazgo system is a Spanish influence.
4. False; Compadrazgo system creates parent to godparent relationship and child to godparent relationship.
5. True

Lesson 4: Kinship Ties and Social Network: Family and the Household
1. household
2. two parents; their children
3. cohabitation
4. country
5. divorce

Lesson 5: Kinship Ties and Social Networks: Politics of Kinship
1. Egalitarian
2. Nepotism
3. Alliance
4. Claude Levi Strauss
5. Incest
Glossary

**Alliance** – cooperation between families or groups of people to attain desired goals

**Ambilocal** – the freedom of newlyweds to choose to live near the relatives of the groom or of the bride

**Bilateral** – tracing one’s descent from both parents’ sides

**Cohabitation** – the practice of sharing a household by an unmarried couple

**Compadrazgo** – means co-parenting and the greatest example of a fictive kinship

**Cultural Universal** – common feature of culture across time and space

**Egalitarian** – men and women have equal power in society

**Endogamy** – practice of marrying inside one’s social circle

**Exogamy** – practice of marrying outside one’s social circle

**Extended family** – a household composed of parents, children and other relatives

**Family of orientation** – type of family that one is born and raised with

**Family of procreation** – type of family created usually through marriage

**Fictive kinship** – kinship formed through ritual

**Matriarchal** – women practice more power or influence within society

**Matrilineal** – tracing one’s descent from the mother side only

**Matrilocal** – the practice of living near the relatives of the bride

**Monogamy** – practice of having only one partner at a time

**Neolocal** – the decision of the newly-wed couple which is independent of the location of their relatives

**Nepotism** – practice of politicians giving special treatment to their relatives while still in power

**Nuclear family** – a household composed of two parents and their children

**Patriarchal** – men having greater power or influence within society

**Patrilineal** – tracing one’s descent to the father’s side only

**Patrilocal** – the practice of living near the relatives of the groom

**Political dynasty** – the practice of holding government positions simultaneously or across time by people coming from the same family

**Polyandry** – practice of a woman having multiple husbands at the same time

**Polygamy** – practice of having multiple partners at a time
Polygyny – practice of a man having multiple wives at the same
Reconstituted family – a household composed of a parent with his/her children from a past relationship joined by a new partner and his/her children from previous relationship
Sharia law – law that applies to Muslim practitioners
Single-parent family – a household headed by only one parent
Social institution – semi-permanent set of relationships present in society that lasts for a long period of time
Transnational family – type of family where at least one member lives in a different country
Unilineal – tracing one’s descent to only one side of the parents