

Culture

- Matrilineal
- Patrilineal
- Matrilateral
- Patrilateral
- Matrilocal
- Patrilocal
- Neolocal
- Avunculocal
- Cross cousins
- Parallel cousins
- Abawā
- Gini index

Descent Reckoning

- In **matrilineal** societies, descent through female lines is stressed.
- In the extreme (e.g. Trobriand Islanders), matrilineal ideology *denies paternity*: males merely “stir the pot”, thus stimulating females to reproduce.
- In **patrilineal** societies, descent through male lines is stressed, and matrilineal ancestry is soon forgotten.
- Patrilineal naming practices in English reflect a history of patrilineal descent reckoning and inheritance.
- In the extreme (e.g. Bedouins), patrilineal ideology treats females as mere vessels for the growth of paternal seed.

Descent reckoning is:

patrilineal	in 47 %	of 857 human societies
matrilineal	in 14 %	
“bilateral”	in 36 %	(really <i>multi</i> lineal)
“double-descent”	in 3 %	(<i>truly bi</i> lineal)

Diverse, *but not random*. The greater prevalence of patrilineal defies chance. (Interesting, since patrilineal links are the uncertain ones!)

Also interesting: patrilineal affiliation and female transfer between male kin groups, though rare in mammals, also characterize our closest ape relatives.

(Murdock 1967)

Matrilineal Descent

Where female sexuality is relatively unrestricted and paternity is uncertain, family resources tend to be passed down matrilineally.

Men pass status and property to sisters' sons (*avuncular* inheritance) instead of wives' sons.

But in societies where women's sexuality is highly controlled, patrilineal inheritance is the norm.

Inheritance	Paternity Certainty	
	Low-Moderate	Moderate-High
Matrilineal	17	3
Patrilineal	5	45
% matrilineal	77%	6%

(Hartung 1985)

Terminological Classification

In English, the child (of either sex) of the sibling (of either sex) of your parent (of either sex) is your *cousin*

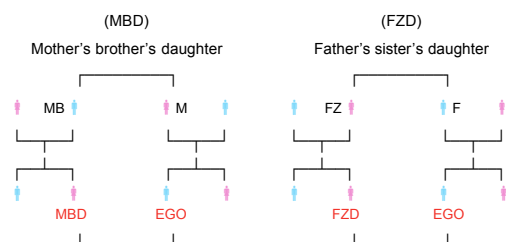
People in many other societies find this bizarre!

Other languages distinguish

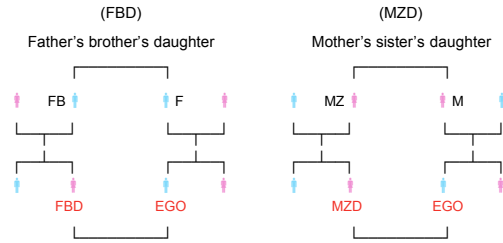
- Male *versus* female cousins
- **patrilateral** (father's side) *versus* **matrilateral** (mother's side)
- **parallel cousins** (father's brother's child or mother's sister's) *versus* **cross cousins** (father's sister's child or mother's brother's)

These distinctions can matter with respect to marriage or alliances.

Cross Cousins



Parallel Cousins



Cousin Marriage

Most societies don't encourage cousin marriage, but in those that do, the four cousin types are seen as different.

Out of 206 societies where cousin marriage is prescribed or preferred:

- 182 (88 %) prescribe cross cousin marriage:
 - 112 permit men to marry both types of cross-cousin (MBD and FZD) and prohibit marriages with parallel cousins (MZD and FBD)
 - 57 permit only MBD
 - 13 permit only FZD
- 24 (12 %) prescribe parallel cousin marriage:
 - always FBD, never MZD

(Flinn & Low 1986)

Marital Residence Practice

Cousin marriage rules are associated with residence practices, hence with which lineages are socially significant

	Patrilocal	Neolocal	Matrilocal / Avunculocal
Cross cousins	98 (22%)	11 (13%)	73 (41%)
Parallel (FBD) cousins	23 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
No cousin marriage	331	76	103

Yanomamö Kinship Terminology

- English "cousin" includes relationships distinguished elsewhere. Other languages conflate relationships we distinguish.
- In Yanomamö, *Abawä* refers to your brother *and* your patrilineal parallel male cousin, *and* (in principle) to every patrilineal male relative of your generation.
- Similarly, some females are "sisters", and forbidden as marriage partners, even if genealogically distant, whereas other females are nominal cross-cousins and thus *ideal* brides.
- Is it an ethnocentric error to assume *abawä* means "brother" and its application to "cousins" is metaphorical?

Yanomamö Kinship



Kinship Universals

1. Ego-centered kindred terminologies are universal. All kinship systems have relationships like *mother* and *brother*. No one is "mother" to everyone, by virtue of some status variable like age or parity. *My* mother is someone other than *your* mother.
2. Parent-offspring relationships are the fundamental building blocks of this ego-centered structure, so that *the terminology implies a genealogy*.
3. All kinship systems include terminological (and practical) distinctions according to sex.
4. All kinship systems include terminological (and practical) distinctions according to generation.

Kinship Universals

5. Kin relations are universally understood to be ordinaly positioned along a dimension of "closeness". This spatial metaphor is somehow universally intuitive, and ...
6. This "closeness" is always positively correlated with the degree of genetic relatedness (r) of the kinship category's prototype.
7. There is always a strong positive correlation between this r and the levels of solidarity and cooperation among those so related.

Kinship Universals

8. People who are related by marriage are considered to be in a quasi-kinship relationship.
9. Interest
People are motivated to inquire how strangers and new acquaintances might be genealogically linked to people they already know, and they feel that they have acquired useful social information when such links are uncovered.
10. Genealogists
There are people who make it their business to know genealogies and to educate others, especially their own relatives, about exactly how they are related to one another. Who these people are is cross-culturally variable, perhaps in relation to the different uses of genealogical information in different societies.

Kinship Universals

11. Importance to concept of self
We emphasize blood ties less than any traditional society, but even here ...imagine learning that your father is not who you thought ! Note, too, the quest of many adoptees to find their blood kin and "identity".
12. Kinship terms are used metaphorically.
Metaphorical "brothering" to make shared interests salient and elicit fellow feeling is cross-culturally widespread, probably universal. e.g. Salmon's experiment on the persuasiveness of kinship metaphors in political speeches in relation to birth order
13. When kinship terms are "extended" to more distant relationships, people remain sensitive to the distinctions that terminology obscures.

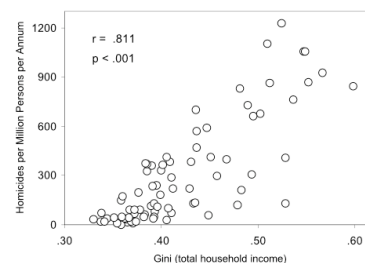
Levels of Violence

- There are large differences in the levels of violence in different cultures.
- We see this even within North America, where the homicide rate in the US is vastly higher than that in Canada.
- What might cause this difference?

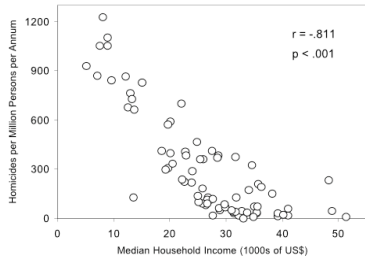
Income Inequality

- The Gini index is a measure of income inequality. It is 0.0 when all units (households) in the population have equal wealth and 1.0 when one unit has all the wealth.
- The Gini index measures relative, rather than absolute, resource deprivation. Average household income is a measure of absolute resources.
- Gini and average household income are highly negatively correlated and both predict levels of violence. Which is a better predictor?

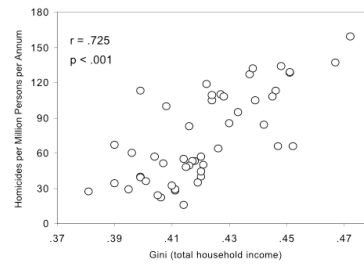
Chicago Homicide and Gini



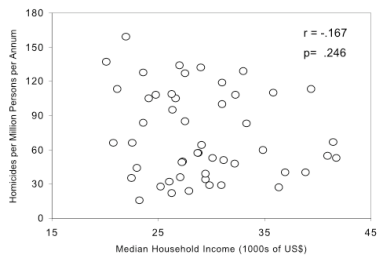
Chicago Homicide and Mean Income



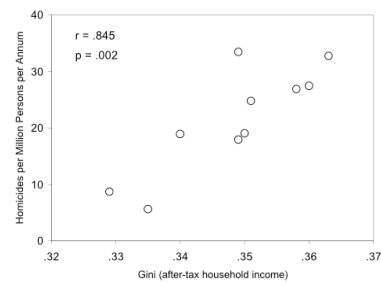
US Homicide and Gini



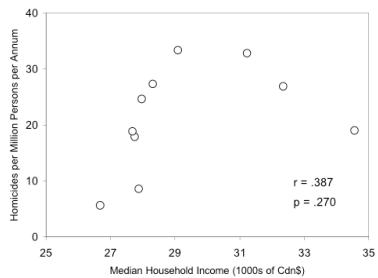
US Homicide and Income



Canadian Homicide and Gini



Canadian Homicide and Income



Correlations

Interrelationships among the average annual values of the homicide rate, the Gini index of income inequality (computed on the basis of after-tax household incomes), and median household income, correlated across Canada's 10 provinces, for each of four successive 4-year blocks. (The first block is based on data for 1981, 1982, and 1984 only)

	1981-1984	1985-1988	1989-1992	1993-1996
Bivariate correlations				
Homicide-Gini	.833**	.757*	.774*	.732*
Homicide-Income	.470	.404	.374	.342
Gini-Income	.279	.467	.481	.607
Partial correlations				
Homicide-Gini with Income controlled	.828**	.702*	.731*	.703*
Homicide-Income with Gini controlled	.447	.087	.003	-.190

(* indicates 2-tailed $p < .05$, and ** 2-tailed $p < .01$.)

US and Canadian Homicide Rates

