

Consanguinal kinship is organized differently across cultures. Although the concept of "descent" is everywhere important, there are various ways in which the descent groups of people are determined. Biological ancestors are not always "relatives" or "kin" in all cultures.

**unilineal** descent groups: unilineages

matrilineal descent and matrilineages

Relatives have a shared mother, grandmother, or other female ancestor.

patrilineal descent and matrilineages

Relatives have a shared father, grandfather, or other male ancestor.

**cognatic** descent

bilineal, double descent

Siblings have the same two lineages.

Each person is a member of precisely two descent groups.

parallel descent

Brothers and sisters have different lineages (i.e., they are not relatives).

Each person is a member of only one descent group.

ambilineal descent

Generations show matri-patri-lineal alternation.

Each person is a member of only one descent group.

Siblings are in the same descent group.

bilateral descent

All biological ancestors and their descendents are kin.

All blood relatives are kin.