

Good essay on anthropology

[Countries](#), [Canada](#)



Critical Thinking of Anthropological Questions

The term descent group is associated with the term kin group. So it is important to know the term descent group, it is essential to know the kin group. A kin group is formed of the relatives both blood relationship and in-law relationship. A descent group is a kind of kinship group whereby being a linear descendents of a particular real or mythical ancestor is a criterion of membership. The Descendent may be considered exclusively through men, women or through both. Descent groups form from extended family organization. (p. 193)

Unilineal descents are also called as unilateral descent. They establish group membership through either male line or female line. (p. 196) Unilineal descent groups are commonly found in Non-Western cultures especially in middle class society. By birth, the person attains membership in a specific descent group, which may be traced either by matrilineal descent through female line or by patrilineal descent through the male line. Patrilineal descent is widespread of two unilineal descent group trace their descent through other males from a common ancestor. For example, the brothers and sisters belong to the descent group of their father's father, their father, and their father's siblings, and their father's brother's son. (p. 196)

Lineage

A lineage group is a corporate descent group composed of consanguinal kin who trace descent through known links back to a common ancestor. The term lineage is usually employed where a form of unilineal descent is the rule. (p. 202)The lineage is ancestor oriented. Membership in this group is

recognized only if relationship to a common ancestor can be traced and proved. The person may not get political or legal status except his lineage status. Lineage endures after the deaths of the members with new members continually born into it. The lineage is very strong and it gives individual important social, political and legal privileges such as owning property, organizing productive activities, distributing goods, and labor power, assigning status and regulating relations with other groups. (p. 202)

One of the characteristics of lineage is the exogamy. The lineage members must find their marriage partners in other lineages. Lineage exogamy means that the marriage does not take place just between two individuals, but it is an alliance of two lineages. (p. 202)

Clan

As the generation succeeds generation and new members are born into a lineage, its membership becomes so large for the lineage's resource that it is not manageable to support. This culminates into the formation of fission. Fission is the split of lineage into new smaller lineages. When the process of fission occurs, the members of the new lineage continue to recognize their ultimate relationship with one another. This process results into the emergence of a second kind of descent group which is called clan. The clan thus is defined as a non corporate descent group whose members have descent from a common ancestor. Unlike lineage, clan lacks the residential unity. (p. 203)

Moiety

Moiety is a kind of descent group. When the entire culture is divided into only two major descent groups, each group is called a moiety. Sometimes these groups are equivalent to clans or they are involved an even more all-inclusive level. Moiety members believe that they share common ancestor though they cannot prove it through definite genealogical links. Like clan and lineages, moieties are also exogamous and are bound together by marriages between their marriages. (p. 204)

Every child must be named for somebody. A first born son is supposed to be named after his father's father while the first born daughter should be named after her father's mother and additional children are to be named after father's brothers and sisters and mother's brothers and sisters. Parents never name their child after their names. All Ju/'hoan names are sex-linked. A man and a woman will never have the same name. The Ju also have no surnames (Kinship Social Organization, Chap5, p. 76-77) When people share the same name, it means the genealogical ties and creates close kinship even with the distant relatives. (Kinship Social Organization, Chap5, p. 79) The principle that the elders chose kin terms for juniors, when combined with the name relationship, make kinship appears quirky and unpredictable. All these choices made perfect sense when you grasped wi's inner meaning. Wi is the great rattler and destroyer of systems. It is because for the first half of your life, you have to take all your elders' various wis according to their lights and not yours.

When you turn around in middle of your life, you take these well-established wis and impose them on your juniors of various names in ways that have

little meaning to them just as your wis originally had little meaning to you. Thus wis seemingly devoid of logic keep getting passed on and such neat rules as alternating generations from either kinship I or kinship II. Again this trend towards nonlogical wis, there is the continuing refreshing of kinship with terms drawn from real parents, real siblings and later real spouses and in-laws. It gives the individual's personal wi system a semblance of order, especially with his or her juniors (Kinship Social Organization, Chap5, p. 80)

Social stratification

Social stratification is the division of society into two or more groups of people that do not share equally in wealth, power, or prestige. Groups are also stratified on the basis of age, gender, class, ethnicity or race. The factors generally use to measure the degree of stratification in the given society are gender, class, age, race and common interest, and the principles of social, ethnic, and gender stratification. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 225)

The differences between human groups are seen as racial or ethnic and they can lead to social inequality. A racial stratification is the social division on the basis of race. Racism is the belief that one race is superior to another owing to biological and cultural features. Behind racism, there is a feeling of exploitation. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 226)

Canada has its own history of racism or racial discrimination such as reservation system forced on First Nation people. The internment of the Japanese during the Second World War, the relocation of Blacks from Africville, enactment of exclusionary laws against the Chinese, and more

recently the backlash against immigrants from Muslim countries. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 229) Canada is facing the problem of institutionalized racism and it infuses every aspect of Canadian life. First Nations people were stripped of their land, and their land and their traditional subsistence pattern were disrupted. It affected their ability to support themselves and they led to poverty, loss of identity, and other severe social problems. To bring them into the main stream, their children were taken from their parents to live at residential schools, where they were forced to learn the ways of White people. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 230) It is now that they have started accessing the resources such as higher education. The condition of the First Nations people is increasing now, but still they are given a lower rank of society.

The people of Afriville, Nova Scotia were forcefully relocated and their homes were razed. They are deprived of the basic necessities such as water, electricity, sewers, paved streets and playgrounds for the children. In 1947, the people were forced to leave their homes and given \$500 for relocation. Their belongings were transported in garbage truck. The people of Afriville had a little education and low income or they were underemployed. After relocating the people from Afriville lost their community identity. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 231)

Racism against Chinese began in the early period of immigration between 1858 and 1923. The Chinese working on railway construction were seen as little, more than human horses or living pieces of machinery. The civil rights of Chinese in Canada were curtailed. In Chinese Immigration Act 1923 excluded Chinese from immigrating to Canada and Chinese Canadians were

given inferior status. They also faced violence and hostility. In 1922, the Chinese children were segregated in one school. The institutionalized racism was prevalent in 1885 as extra taxes were imposed on Chinese immigrants. Today though the condition has been improved, yet the Chinese students are considered as foreigners. Even today the Chinese were considered as inferior race. This perception of inferiority is not allowing the Canadians to accept injustice imposed on the Chinese. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 231)

Ethnic stratification in Canada

Canada is a pluralistic society as the members of the society have come from every corner of the world. Ideally when the people immigrate to Canada they were free to follow their own culture and at the same time they were given benefits becoming the members of Canadian society. The ethnic stratification was especially done with the Ukrainians in Canada. The period of World War I was the crucial period for the Ukrainians. The example The Ukrainians, were paid lower wages than other workers. Further they worked in hazardous conditions. During the First World War, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Germans, Italians, Croatians and Jews were declared as enemy aliens. It was because all of them were against England, France and America. Around 6000 Ukrainians were interned in internment camp during World War I. Foreign language was banned. They were used as forced laborers to develop Banff National Park and work in mines of British Columbia, the steel mills of Ontario and Nova Scotia and lumber camps of Northern Ontario and Quebec. They lost their right to vote in 1917 federal election. They also faced public persecution and discrimination. The French and English Canadian

clamored for the deportation of these foreigners. The interment was continued after the end of the World War I. The Ukrainians had to suffer the torture probably because of the wartime xenophobia and bigotry against them as well as the economic benefits of the forced labor system.

In 1901, the general attitude towards Ukrainians was very hostile. They were called as ignorant. Their customs were blamed as being barbarian and repulsive. They were also blamed for their primitive civilization. Their characters and morals were also condemned. They were supposed to be the low class immigrants. (Social Stratification & Grouping, Chap 10: p. 237-238)

Political Organization

According to the definition of Anthropology, “ a political organization is referred to the means the culture uses to maintain order internally and manage its affair with other culture externally.” (Chapter 11: p. 243) these organizations are informal and not centralized.

Political organization of band

The bands are prevalent especially among the nomadic groups. Band is a small group which is politically independent. They are like extended family groups and they are politically autonomous. They live together in camps and sometimes on temporary basis, they part from each other for getting food or for meeting other relatives. Bands are the kin groups of men and women, spouses and unmarried children. Band is supposed to be the oldest form of political organization (Chapter 11: p. 244)

Tribe is the group which is not organized in the state. When the European called a particular group as tribe, they suppose the group inferior to them. “

Tribe is a group of nominally independent communities occupying a specific region and sharing common language and culture integrated by some unifying factor (Chapter 11: 246). Like the bands, the tribal political organization is also informal and temporary. There are several groups in the tribes and they come together if certain situation arises.

Chiefdoms

Chiefdom consists of two or more local groups. They organize together under the authority of a single person called chief. He is the head of the people. The individuals' relationship with the Chief determines his/her social status. The individuals who are close to the chief they receive special treatment as compared to those who are not close to the chief. Unlike band or band in chiefdom the authority is centralized. (Chapter 11: p. 249)

Social control can be maintained through internalized and externalized controls. Social control is the control over the group through coercion and sanction. Sanction according to Radcliffe-Brown is ' a reaction on the part of the society or of a considerable member of its members to the mode of behavior which is thereby approved (positive sanction) or disapproved (negative sanction).' (A. R. Radcliff-Brown 1952: 205) In social control, the individual follow the rules of the society because he is afraid of the social punishment. He/she knows that if they break the rules, the society will impose penalty on them. They are very careful about sustaining their social status. The sanction or coercion is the externalized way of forcing the individual to follow the social norms. The external pressure is there and that is the pressure of society. But if the individual has to be controlled internally then, cultural control is the effective method. (Chapter 11: p. 254)

The individual's behavior is controlled by both negative and positive sanction. The positive sanctions include the reward, titles or award for his behavior whereas the negative sanction is given through threat, imprisonment, corporal punishment or ostracism from the community. For example, in North America, the man who wears Tennis shorts to a church service may get variety of negative sanctions such as disapproving glances from the clergy, or chuckling of other parishioners. These sanctions are informal negative sanction. However, if he continues with the same behavior, he may be arrested for his indecent exposure. Arrest is the formal sanction. (Chapter 11: p. 255)

World views are the explicit and implicit conceptions, an individual or a group has of the limits and workings of its world. The difference between food-gathering and food-producing population is their different world views. The following are the major types of worldviews:

Naturalistic Worldview: There is a strong perception in Western Abenaki hunters animals, like human being are also the important parts of nature and they also have both body and spirit, They should be honored after their death. So these hunters, instead of throwing their bones into the garbage pit, they return it to the water. This perception is called as naturalistic worldview. Chapter 11: p. 265)

Exploitative Worldview: This is the worldview which is totally opposite to the naturalistic worldview. According to this view, the nature exists only for human beings. Here the tendency is seen to dominate the nature for attaining our personal deed. This is the view among the neighbors of Abenaki, known as Iroquoian.

Among the people with naturalistic view, the warfare activity is just a defensive activity. They have no need to prey upon the resources of others but unlike them the people with exploitative worldview engage in predatory warfare. The culmination of this attitude is environmental degradation around their settlements and overutilization of the resources.

Ownership and leadership

The group of people owns a land among the Ju/'hoansi. Each waterhole is surrounded by the land with food and other resources available for the group to sustain. This territory or region is owned by the group collectively. If you want to stay in the area, you need to take the permission from the group. Thus the ownership is not individual in Ju/'hoansi, but it is collective. There is no formal political institution to maintain harmony between the members of the group. In such circumstances, the leadership works. But there is no specific leader assigned in the group. The people with leadership qualities may influence in group decisions. They work in subtle ways; they do not have right to order or command, but they can only suggest. Their roles are not hereditary. (Conflict, Politics and Exchange, Chapter 8: 123-125)

References

A. R. Radcliff-Brown (1952) Structure and Function in Primitive Society New York: Free Press, p. 205