International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies
Website: https://www.ijahss.in/
ISSN(*Online*): 2582-3647
Volume 3; Issue 6; Nov-Dec 2021; Page No. 70-76

Open Access | Original Paper

Cultural Approach to The Study of Kinship

Dr. Vikramendra Kumar
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, New Delhi

ABSTRACT
Kinship is the essential premise of organizing individuals into social groups, roles, and categories. It serves as the premier universal and fundamental aspect of all human relationships and relies on blood and marriage ties. Hence, Kinship is vital to an individual and a community's well-being because different societies connote Kinship differently. They also set the rules governing Kinship, which are sometimes legally defined and sometimes implied. This paper focuses on the cultural approach to the study of Kinship. Somebody can explore the cultural approach to kinship study through David M. Schneider's powerful framework, American Kinship: A Cultural Account, published in 1968. It was a part of the more extensive debate on the nature of Kinship. It bore on the anthropological definition of Kinship, and it explains whether or not it was necessary to refer to Kinship's biological dimension. Schneider examined Kinship as a cultural system that is based on shared symbols and meanings. This type of analysis became known as the culturalist approach. He offered a two-part answer to the question of how North American culture defined a relative. The study is based on approximately 100 interviews. Two symbolic kinship orders included nature and the law. In terms of character, relatives shared natural, biogenetic substances as symbolized by the indigenous word 'blood.' In terms of regulation, relatives were persons who followed a particular code of conduct. North American Kinship involved an opposition between two sets of symbols; first being the kinship 'by blood,' which was material, permanent and inalienable, and the second one is the kinship 'by marriage,' based on a human imposed order and referring to morals, law, and custom.

Keywords: *Kinship, marriage, relative, culture, alliance, informant, love, blood, custom, law.*

***Citation*:** Dr. Vikramendra Kumar (2021). Cultural Approach to The Study of Kinship. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 3(6), 70-76.

INTRODUCTION

In the study of Kinship, one first encounter various strands or approaches that different scholars have taken, all with their benefits and disadvantages. On the one hand, those early scholars propound the importance of biological factors in understanding kinship relations. On the other hand, some highlight social conventions as a vital factor. Scholars like L.H. Morgan, Meyer Fortes, Bronisław Malinowski, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and many others made their name through their work on Kinship. It has been a topic of interest among anthropologists and sociologists coming from a varied set of schools and traditions.

The paper aims to observe the evolution of the study of Kinship to what it is today. We can achieve this goal if the cultural approach of kinship studies, spearheaded by American anthropologist David M. Schneider, is examined. The essay will look at the various ways that anthropologists have approached Kinship and how Schnieder's work was a turning point in the way we look at kinship studies. Schnieder laid out a basic framework in understanding nature in the cultural concept of Kinship. Through his work titled *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*, he showed how Kinship is natural is a western cultural idea and not something universal. This gave way to the reconstruction of kinship studies into a whole new dimension. Basing their arguments on Schneider's model, many scholars like Janet Carsten, Esther Newton, and Marilyn Strathern opened up their research to concepts previously excluded from the purview of kinship studies. With this background, this article will touch upon these aspects and examine the criticism levied upon the cultural approach to the study of Kinship.

The Study of Kinship

Writing for the Britannica Encyclopedia, cultural anthropologist Janet Carsten [1] defined Kinship as a "system of social organization based on real or putative family ties." By this definition, many Western scholars have undertaken the study of Kinship for at least the past 200 years.

Elsewhere, Carsten [2] divided the history of the study of Kinship into three phases— the early to mid-twentieth century anthropology of Kinship, the latter half of the twentieth century, which centered around the culturalist approach, and the post-Schneiderian era (p. 10). But even to her acknowledgment, that is not the whole picture. One can trace the roots of kinship studies to nineteenth-century scholars such as the lawyer turned social theorist Lewis H. Morgan.

Morgan [3] visualized Kinship in the form of a branched structure. In the design, according to him, every individual will have above all the people from the previous generation that he/she/they is directly related to by blood. Below the individual, who is the *ego,* would be the next generation and so on. For Morgan, the closeness to the individual in this Kinship diagram determines the real distance in a relationship any person may have with the *ego.*

He further categorizes Kinship into two types. Classificatory, which Morgan found to exist in societies he considered 'primitive,' had broad terminologies that similarly addressed a class of family members. Whereas in the second category, i.e., descriptive, mainly found in European regions, each member is addressed distinctively regarding how the *ego* is related to them. Morgan proposed that the classificatory mode stands earlier in the evolutionary journey of Kinship and that it bases itself on the absence of monogamy, which he termed as 'primitive promiscuity.'

In this sense, Morgan [3] proposed that as the nature of Kinship evolved, it moved closer to the descriptive model. Polygamy gave way to monogamy; classificatory kinship terminologies gave way to descriptive vocabularies.

After Morgan, there have been many contestations over his concepts. For one thing, the idea that Kinship is only based on biology is largely discarded. Emile Durkheim and later Rodney Needham [4] argued that Kinship is purely based on social conventions. Czech- British philosopher Earnest Gellner [5] disputed this, claiming that social conventions are constructed using the building blocks of physical Kinship.

Meanwhile, other theories of Kinship arose in the early and mid-twentieth centuries; namely, the Descent theory, proposed by the likes of Bronisław Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe- Brown and Meyer Fortis, and the Alliance theory, offered primarily by Claude Lévi-Strauss. Both views, while being rooted in very different traditions and influences—the former having a functionalist approach to Kinship, while the latter used Marcel Mauss' idea of reciprocity— presupposed the existence of Kinship as a universal phenomenon among all human societies.

This scenario, where there were multiple dimensions of studying Kinship, that David Schneider disrupted with his new conceptualization in the classic *American Kinship: A Cultural Account.*

The Cultural Approach to Kinship Studies

In his approach to the study, David Schneider [6], unlike many anthropologists before him, did not regard Kinship as a presumable fact of life. Instead, he attempted to conceptualize Kinship—specifically in the American context for his study—through what he referred to as

Cultural units. This brought the effect of making explicit all the basic tenets of American culture, which would have been considered too obvious to require investigation. This way, Schneider hoped to delineate how Americans, in fact, the western civilization, imagined Kinship as a system.

Cultural units, in Schneider's study, are constructs that do give symbolic meanings. They are entities in themselves that signify and represent some of the other concepts. Whether or not the idea exists tangibly, the cultural unit it is characterized by indeed does exist. This way, Schneider distinguishes cultural units as a basic block to understand the mechanisms of American culture. Using the idea of cultural units, Schneider defines who a relative is in the American context. Based on Schneider's interviews with his informants, a relative is an individual who is related to the ego either by the sharing of biological substances or the linkage of lawful marriage. The former is based on the *order of nature,* and the latter on the *order of law.*

Schneider then looks at 'family' as a cultural unit in American Kinship. Here, he states that although the family can mean an aggregate of all relatives, it has a narrower meaning that includes only the father, the mother, and the offspring. This he calls a singular unit of a family. His method here is to identify the distinctive features of family as a cultural unit. Since conjugal relationship, i.e., the sexual intercourse between the mother and the father, is the defining bond that holds the special team together, it only follows that the same be considered the distinctive feature of the family as a cultural unit. Sexual intercourse, according to Schneider, is the symbol that defines and differentiates family as a cultural unit and in terms of relatives.

The existence of sexual intercourse as a symbol is vital in American Kinship, and Schneider proves this by pointing to what his informants did not consider as a family. In general, arrangements where there is none or no possibility of sexual intercourse that leads to the procreation of offspring are not considered a family. This would include a mother with a child but no father, a father with a child but no mother, a married couple with no children, a widow/widower with children, or an old couple whose kids have grown up and moved out. All these examples show how in American Kinship, Schneider identified sexual intercourse between the husband and the wife as the central symbol for defining a family.

Schneider writes, "Informants describe the family as consisting of husband, wife, and their children who live together as a natural unit". What we are to note here is the idea of a natural unit. Schneider here points out that in American culture, the family is considered to reflect the laws of nature. They identify the cultural unit of the family as something that is incomplete synchrony with heart. This, Schneider reasons is why Americans find it completely obvious to see singular units similar to theirs among animals. They consider the American arrangement of the family system as the natural form of how a family should be. So, they are not surprised when they find these systems among some animals.

But the nature is not enough. Schneider's informants state that while the biological aspect is what a family is based on, it needs more than that. For a family to materialize, there needs to be the application of human reasoning and the willful act of creating the unit. Simply participating in what is considered natural is hence, inadequate.

In this sense, the act of choosing one's partner, with whom one willfully participates in creating a family unit, completes the necessary environment for the same. So, the willful, exclusive act of sexual intercourse between the husband and wife to procreate is the process by which the family is created. And this process, Schneider argues, is also through which the central concept of American Kinship is developed.

Love, Schneider claims, is the defining characteristic of American Kinship. The members of the family, both the singular and the aggregate, are bound by this idea. Love, as sexual intercourse between the husband and wife, is considered a natural phenomenon. This love is extended to the parents' love for their children and those between relatives.

This form of love, termed 'cognatic' love by Schneider, is the polar opposite of 'conjugal' love. These two forms constitute the natural order through which the family as a cultural unit operates. This love, Schneider states, can be expressed and conceptualized as *enduring diffuse solidarity.*

The central takeaway here is that American Kinship, according to Schneider, is based on the assumption that the American notion of Kinship is in sync with biological fact. But it does not include all physical possibilities it. Only a particular, curated form of biology is deemed as natural culturally. So, American Kinship has one specific version of the biological phenomenon that it considers as natural. To Americans, Schneider argues, whatever is biologically factual becomes the kinship relation's logic. This means that if new facts come into the picture, that is also inserted into the notion of Kinship.

Through this treatise, Schneider argues that the very notion of Kinship based on the biological sharing of substances is a Western idea and hence cannot be universally applied to all human societies. Not all communities in the world consider their notion of conjugal relation the same way as American Kinship does. One example which can be stated is how in American Kinship, husband and wife, combining their biogenetic substances, create an offspring that is considered equal parts both the husband and the wife. In contrast to this, anthropologist Leela Dube [7] talks about how in many parts of India, man is considered the seed in procreation while the woman is the earth. This way, the man is believed to determine the characteristics of the offspring, while the woman's role is passive.

Schneider broke down the idea that just because there is a notion of Kinship in the west, it may apply elsewhere as well. He explicitly showed how the many scientific apparatuses of kinship studies are just based on notions colored by western culture. It can be understood that the study of Kinship until this point was based on assumptions that were not necessarily valid cross-culturally. With the wrong assumption, the field has been asking the inappropriate questions. Blood relations were considered superior to legal ones, where the first was the model for the second. The shared biogenetic substance was of greater importance than conventions defining the content of behavior. However, during this cultural representation of Kinship, procreative sexual intercourse is central. It is the moment when love links the two aspects of Kinship, the one that involves a shared substance and thus cognatic love between parents and children and the one about the law and norms of conduct between parents and thus to conjugal love. Combining these two sorts of love gives rise to 'enduring diffuse solidarity' among family members, implying trust, support, and cooperation. Schneider then explains the concept of 'relative.' The definition Americans readily provide is that a relative is a person related by blood or marriage. Those described by marriage may be called 'in-laws.' But the word relative can also be used by Americans in a more restricted sense for blood relatives alone and used in direct opposition to a relative by marriage.

Solidarity resulting from the connection is supportive, helpful, and cooperative; it rests on trust, and the other can be trusted. Diffuse because it is not narrowly confined to a particular goal or a particular kind of behavior. Schneider's example 'two athletes may cooperate and support each other for the duration of the game and to win the game, but be indifferent to each other otherwise. Two family members cannot be indifferent to one another. Since their cooperation

does not have a specific goal or a specific limited time in mind, it is enduring.' [6] Kinship in American culture, then, is a relationship of enduring diffuse solidarity.

Moreover, Schneider, in his essay, stated that the central symbol of American Kinship is sexual intercourse. Between husband and wife, genital to genital, coitus represents the resolution of a fundamental contradiction in American culture; between nature and law, which is a resolution of the dichotomy between nature and reason, that may be a resolution of the fundamental paradox between man and nature. Marital coitus is both natural and lawful; it generates children who love and are loved, non-sexually, by their parents and with whom an indissoluble relationship in nature-heredity or "blood"-exists. Marriage with children thus represents both the unity of differences and the differentiation of agreement. And it produces "the family" and the category of "relatives," who are all consanguine and affinal alike, united by the bonds of that lawful love (of which marital coitus is both symbol and expression) that Schneider defines as "enduring diffuse solidarity." This symbol of love, with its dual characteristics (Conjugal and Cognatic), is why Schneider believes incest is a taboo. As Schneider says, "Incest, which is the gravest wrong, consists in unifying what is one, to begin with by the device for unifying opposites, and of failing to separate what was one into two, thereby directly inverting in one stroke both sides of the formula, that only different things can be united by sexual intercourse and only united things made different." [6] However, Sylvia Yanagisako in her essay entitled "Variance in American Kinship: Implication for cultural Analysis" provides a rich basis for a discussion of many important abstract, theoretical, and methodological issues embedded within the cultural analysis of Kinship or any other cultural domain. Sylvia Yanagisako represents by analyzing David Schneider's cultural account of American Kinship, which explicates the symbolic system of second-generation Japanese-Americans. This ends up in the most crucial theoretical problem: the means during which we tend to formulate heuristic levels of study and interpret their interrelationships and associate explication of the academic consequences of Schneider's theme of the activity, normative, and cultural systems and his articulation of the "pure" and "conglomerate" levels of the cultural system compels to reassess the goals of cultural analysis and suggests the sort of theory of which means and action which will prove most instructive in such an attempt. Thus, to conclude, this essay has brought to light the various aspects of American Kinship. And as Kinship speaks the language of intimacy instead of that of fastened structures, and its expressions frequently evolve as societies generate new pathways of connectedness.

Kinship as a cultural system of symbol

Schneider approaches American Kinship as a cultural system of the symbol where cultural units are apart from and exhaustive in themselves. He isolates them from other cultural units to maintain them in a pure realm. In his study,, he also emphasizes language as one of the major parts of the culture and how it aids cultural construct by naming things. These names can be defined and differentiated from others and can be derivative of a single lexeme in nature, and some cultural units do not have a name at all. Schneider cautions us that words may have alternate meanings depending on circumstance. Schneider also gives a premise for his understanding of cultural unit as independent and most observable, although all observable behavior is not cultural. He points to note that the origin of the cultural construct is of no interest to his approach (we shall discuss the problem here when we discuss Yanagisaako). Data for Schneider is primarily collected from informants, and he elaborates on how much a good informant is essential for the relevance of work. However, that data itself is not sufficient; the analysis of it and the extraction of cultural construct alone is the most crucial aspect.

Schneider also makes it a point to note that his informants predominantly and exclusively included white Americans mainly from Chicago and from the middle-class realm. Still, he claims to have read and referred to a lot of anthropological texts about other ethnic, racial, and class groups. He agrees that there are variations, but they do not exist in the realm of family or Kinship as a cultural unit but in the realm of other cultural units. Sylvia Junko Yanagisako disagrees mainly from here. For her, he ignores the interconnection of the various cultural units and, in doing so, commits an error. In isolating them from other cultural teams to meet his goal of forming a universal kinship system for America, he deprives those symbols of other alternate meanings and ignores other characters that exist, and only considers the common ones from among various ethnic groups. However, he admits later in the second edition of his book that ethnicity matters. He ignored such data mostly because they were unavailable or not discussing the things he required [8].

Another central argument that Schneider makes is that sexual intercourse or coitus and enduring, diffuse solidarity or love are the significant symbols of Kinship as a cultural construct in America. This then makes blood the substance and enduring, diffuse solidarity the code for conducting the basis of counting in relatives according to him. He emphasizes relative as a person and that in American Kinship,, there is choice to count them in if both are involved in natural relations, blood relations and the second code for conduct when the connection is by law or by marriage.

By language, Schneider observes these relatives may or may not have set terminologies for them. If they do, they are either primary or derivative with a modifier. For example, he explains that basic terms like husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, etc. are for immediate relations, and when relations are connected, they are derivative and with a modifier

like a mother-in-law , son-in-law, foster mother, foster son, or step-mother, step-son show when modifiers show the type of relation, and some modifiers show distance in Geneology like the second cousin. He also points out that some connected, not direct relations have names without modifiers like an aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, cousin, but sometimes they are accompanied with modifiers to specify relations. Schneider views that this is what constitutes a variation in how various people describe their relatives; some define that they are relations by marriage, others do not, and for him, these are not fundamental somewhat legitimate alternatives.

Yanagisaako views that it is by this logic that Schneider can ignore the impostance given to distant affinal relatives in the Japanese- American kinship unit. Among the Nesei the second generation Japanese they consider their Affinal consanguine affinal (.A.C.A) or conganguinal affinal consaguinal (C.A.C) or even A.C.A.C or C.A.C.An as relatives when they take into consideration their Japanese culture and the Koden system of mortuary offering. They are also relatives in the sense that they are invited for other rituals and ceremonies. These relatives are similar to other European-American kinship terms like shirt-tail Kinship where you see them in gathering or functions as people related to your relatives, as observed by Schneider. But Yanagisaako argues that by that scheme, if we equate them to the American shirt-tail kinship term, we are ignoring the fact they according to Schneider Americans do not count them in their relatives as they do not constitute code for conduct or mainly even blood relation, but Japanese Americans do consider the. Yanagisaako thus argues that this cannot be set aside as just a variation in counting a person as a relative.

Another symbol that arises from a major symbol of Kinship in America, according to Schneider, is nature. In American culture itself, man is part of nature as he is a type of animal but is apart and dominates it because of his intelligence. Still, there are certain parts of cultural construct, that is, a law that he made with his intelligence, that is, a reason which still confines to nature. That part, according to Schneider, is family. He says they adopted the idea of the family from nature that of two parents, one male and female and children. The basis of union in coitus and the natural one that is only among genitals. All others are unnatural and thus wrong. Enduring, diffuse solidarity is also a part of nature here. American culture refers to nature when it comes to age and sex also, thus, differences in the role of father and mother, husband and wife, etc.. Still, Schneider argues that these cultural constructs of sex roles and age roles are not in the realm of Kinship and thus must be isolated. But another vital aspect of the American cultural construct of family or marriage is that it arises out of romance, attraction, passion, etc., between two people of opposite sexes, as he observes.

However, Yanagisaako disagrees with this as a universal distinctive and definitive feature of American Kinship as a cultural construct. She elaborates with the example from Nesei community where marriage among two people is dominated by the cultural construct of rights and duties that this contractual relation holds. It is important to note that Yanagisaako is not rejecting the love involved in this relationship but is majorly about the rights and duties they have for each other despite love. [9].

However, it is essential to note that for the Nesei, who is second generation Japanese Americans, they are moving away from the purely Japanese cultural construct but have not yet reached the purely American cultural construct in most aspects of culture, Yanagisaako points out. She illustrates this by viewing how Nesei parents have moved away, if not entirely, from the strict parenting that was the dominant feature in their parent's generation, towards a more open and compassionate one with their children, which Schneider takes as the symbol of the American Kinship construct. But as mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph for the Nesei it's either one or the other cultural construct depending on circumstance, like American one when asked to list persons as relatives and Japanese one when specifically asked whom they considered relatives when taking family as a unit, or it is a synthesis of both constructs like in marriage or parenting, in all cases quite distinct from the universal American Kinship of Schneider.

Given all these criticisms, it is still important to note that Schneider brought a new approach to understanding kinship; he was mostly criticized for universalizing or generalizing it for America itself, if not the world. His cultural approach has led to an intricate understanding of beliefs like why incest is wrong, which again he explains through Kinship as a cultural construct and system of symbols. From his analysis, family symbolizes by nature the unification of opposites (marriage and differentiation from one that unification that is the children, incest then as he points unifies the already differentiated), therefore erotic love is reserved from opposites and not for ones already related by substance.

Similar is the understanding of the term family, and what it denotes; it does denote not only persons as relatives but also the ones who share the dwelling. Hence, his analysis puts residence as a symbol of the American family, and if that dwelling doesn't have anyone component or more that is anyone parent or no children, it is not a family. Thus, forming the premise for phrases like, they do not have a family when a couple has no children or our family is grown up and has their own family when children marry and have their own families, or they do not have a family when the couple is divorced and not living together. The dwelling, home is differentiated from work again based on the symbols of sexual intercourse, substance, code for conduct, etc.

Similarly, we can also understand American Kinship when Schneider explains how they value natural Kinship over code for conduct. The former includes both enduring diffuse solidarity and substance and the latter only includes enduring, diffuse solidarity and code of conduct. The substance is ascribed and is for life while by law ones are chosen. However Schneider points out that these by law relatives are distinct from friends precisely in code for conduct, and the former cannot be removed or evaluated suddenly.

Similarly, we can also understand the underlying cultural construct and base of variation in the naming of certain termless relatives as Schneider points out like cousins spouse which some informants call cousin by marriage or just cousin or nothing at all or as stated formerly why and aunts' or uncles' spouse is called an essential term like aunt or uncle and often counted in as relatives as a person and person as a relative, but similar relation on the other side like spouses nephews' or nieces' (who also has basic terms) are mostly not called niece or nephew and not even counted as a person as a relative.

However, these are only true for middle-class white American kinship constructs. Other ethnic and economic groups may have additions. Those cannot be declined as variations like how the informants of Schneider vary in choosing certain relatives as relatives or even in naming them. While Schneider sticks to his method of isolating one cultural unit construct from another and thus views that mother is the nurturer and father the authoritative figure precisely because of sex and age roles, Yanagisaako points out that such isolation does not come in handy constantly. This Isolation blinded him to the particularities of other groups in America and that which led to him declining them as just variants which for him were on a behavioral level. He does not come across the fact as Yanagisaako states, "people do not adopt the pure symbolic system, but construct them based on experiences" Thus, according to Yanagisaako, what Schneider ignored as an anthropologist who confirmed to Parsonian notions of action is the asymmetry between pure and behavior.

However, Schneider's work is important if we choose to ignore the error of variation and universal generalization. It stands different from results that ignored cultural symbols to explain Kinship but purely studied them in the realm of substance. The cultural approach leads to the inclusion of adopted children and illegitimate but natural children into the realm of studying Kinship and has the potential to include other forms of Kinship as long as they are not universalized like gay Kinship, chosen families, etc., in a particular cultural context. Yanagisaako's criticism shed light to European-American anthropologists' assumptions like the American middle class is the prototype to study American culture as observed by Mead and followed and later confessed by Schneider. This pioneering work on the cultural approach to Kinship and its dialogue has brought about a new paradigm into the Sociology and Anthropology of Kinship.

Impact of Cultural Approach in the study of Kinship

While Schneider wanted to term Kinship as a non-subject, that is not the only way his work's consequence can be read. Janet Carsten [2] suggests that it could either imply that Kinship as a study is no more relevant or that Schneider's theory and methodology is a new approach that helps shape the future of the field. In many ways, the latter proved to be true over time.

Carsten, through her work, took further steps in analyzing the various presumptive methods of anthropological studies that take Western notions of nature, biology, and culture for granted. She studied the development of new reproductive technologies to observe the shift in how kinship relations are seen. Her study, while following the culturalist approach, was also a strong critique against its misgivings. Carsten points to Schneider's claim that all new biological facts get assimilated into the notion of Kinship. She observed how pure biology is not enough to culturally validate kinship relations in the case of artificial insemination.

The problem is that it is pretty difficult to distinguish what is supposed to be biology and what is supposed to be cultural, as both are, notional. There isn't a biological aspect and a social aspect; both are aspects of reality. Pointing to this idea, Carsten proposes to study the very distinction that any culture may make about nature and culture, what is taken for granted and what is not, for a critical comparison of Kinship across communities. Besides Carsten's take, the cultural approach has had a lot of roles to play in the discussions around topics like reproductive technologies, gay and lesbian relationships, to name a few.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Whether one agrees with everything that the culturalist approach implies or not, it is safe to say that what it has done is bring the field of kinship studies down to question its fundamental tools. What is nature? What is culture? How are they different? Schneider's approach is crucial in reckoning with biological essentialism within kinship studies. But it also brings problems of its own. To prove his idea, Schneider stated the existence of a single, uniform system of Kinship within American culture. But what he does not first establish is who an American is supposed to be. Schneider's study, although quite diverse, does not get into the actual demographic realities of the people. Culture is a precarious idea, as it combines all the meanings that a group may ascribe to a variety of symbols. Sylvia Junko Yanagisako [9] explores this as

she applies the arguments made by Schneider on Japanese American informants.

When Schneider attempts to explain culture as a broad, comprehensive idea, he fails to recognize the inherently segregated nature of culture that constantly varies itself. In a context where there is a rapid inflow of outside influences in all cultures, it is difficult to label one as explicitly distinctive over the other. Instead, it is necessary to identify the different strands of our notions of culture and how they may be intermingling to form a new structure, which in itself is constantly in flux.

Besides that, Schneider did very little to address the aspects of gender that play a decisive role in how relationships work. A person's everyday interactions are directly dependent on the social perception of that individual in terms of gender, class, race, etc. Gender has a peculiar position here, as it is determined by biology at some level. While Schneider's analysis did look at how biology plays a role in the notion of Kinship, he did not see how the very same argument can be made about gender. If Kinship is a notion that is chiseled using apparent biological facts, then so is the idea of gender. The two are interrelated and influence each other heavily.

Nevertheless, there is something to be said for Schneider's evidential approach to deconstructing the implicit ideas around which Western society is built. After him, it allowed many scholars to figure out a way to study human relations and bonds with less presumptive methods.

REFERENCES

1. Carsten, J. (2012, April 5). Kinship, *The Encyclopedia Britannica.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/kinship
2. Carsten, J. (2004), *After Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Morgan, L. H. (1871), *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, United States: Smithsonian Institution.
4. Needham, R. (1960), Descent Systems and Ideal Language. *Philosophy of Science*, 27(1), 96–101. doi:10.1086/287716 (https://doi.org/10.1086/287716)
5. Gellner, E. (1960). The Concept of Kinship: With Special Reference to Mr. Needham's "Descent Systems and Ideal Language", *Philosophy of Science*, 27(2), 187-204. Retrieved February 4, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/185893
6. Schneider, D. (1968), *American Kinship—a Cultural Account* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
7. Dube, L. (1986). 'Seed and Earth: Symbolism of Biological Reproduction and Sexual Relations of Production', in Leela Dube, Eleanor Leacock, Shirly Ardener (Ed.), *Visibility and Power—Essays on Women in Society and Development* (pp. 22-53). Delhi: Oxford University Press.
8. Schneider, M. David (1980), American Kinship: A Cultural Account, Second Edition, TheUniversityof Chicago Press
9. Yanagisako, S.J. (1978), 'Variance in American Kinship: Implications for Cultural Analysis', *American Ethnologist*, 5(1), 15-29.