

## The Nature of Kinship Systems in Traditional Algerian Society

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### Abstract:

This paper explores the nature of kinship systems within traditional Algerian society. Drawing upon studies from the colonial era, such as Germaine Tillion's ethnographic examination in *The Harem and Cousins* and the contribution of R. Descloîtres and L. Debzi in *Kinship Systems and Family Structures in Algeria*, this research delineates two predominant kinship modalities: consanguineous (biological) kinship, which forms the foundational social fabric within familial units, and fictive kinship, epitomized by kindred that signify shared geographical bonds. The structuration of kinship revolves around the concept of 'asabiyya (social or tribal solidarity), encapsulating the intrinsic cohesion derived from the shared moral and material ethos within kinship networks.

**Keywords:** Kinship, traditional society, 'asabiyya, social cohesion, familial structures.

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### 1. Introduction:

Kinship systems represent a universal and indispensable framework across all human civilizations, forming the bedrock of societal organization. These systems not only delineate the social architecture by defining interpersonal relations within communities but also facilitate the perpetual exchange of social capital. Kinship manifests as the core of societal fabric, encompassing both the dyadic gender relations and the broader familial configurations. As such, kinship systems hold a central role in traditional societies, warranting significant scholarly attention, particularly within the discipline of anthropology, which examines kinship as a key structural axis in social organization.

Pioneering anthropological studies by scholars such as Lewis H. Morgan, Bronisław Malinowski, and Johann Jakob Bachofen on primitive societies laid the groundwork for kinship analysis. Claude Lévi-Strauss's foundational work, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949) was one of the seminal works on this subject.

Kinship extends beyond mere familial ties, engendering a complex array of moral, ethical, and economic responsibilities that significantly influence an individual's social standing and intra-community recognition. This network of relationships ensures psychological stability, social integrity, and economic reciprocity, thereby fostering an environment of mutual support and collective solidarity.

This study posits kinship as a principal analytical vector in traditional Algerian society, underscoring its pivotal role in interpreting and orchestrating social interactions. This raises the central research question: What is the nature of the kinship system in traditional Algerian society?

## **2. Research Methodology:**

The methodological approach of this study involves a review of foundational ethnographic and sociological research concerning Algerian society during the French colonial epoch. Foremost among these are Germaine Tillion's "*The Harem and Cousins*" and the collaborative analysis by R. Descloitres and L. Debzi in *Kinship Systems and Family Structures in Algeria*.

Further depth is afforded by incorporating sociological research conducted by Algerian scholars, including Mostefa Boufennouchet's *The Algerian Family: Evolution and Modern Characteristics*, Addi El Houari's analysis in *French Colonialism in Algeria: The Policy of Economic and Social Dismantling (1830-1960)*, Fadhel Retimi's work on *Kinship and Labor in the Industrial Sector in Algeria*, and Abdel Ghani Maghreb's investigation into *The Social Thought of Ibn Khaldun*.

## **3. Conceptual Definitions**

### **3.1. Definition of Kinship**

#### **A. Etymological Definition:**

In *Lisan al-Arab*, Ibn Manzur defines kinship (*qaraba*) as proximity in descent, indicating closeness in terms of genealogical ties, primarily referring to consanguineal relationships. The term stems from the notion of nearness, either to a person or by a legitimate connection of lineage, emphasizing affinal and consanguineal ties (Ibn Manzur, 1999, p. 666).

Likewise, referring to *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wajiz*, the term "qaraba" (proximity) is defined in several forms: proximity (*qurb*), closeness (*qaraba*), and nearness (*qurbā* and *maqraba*). It is used to denote an entity being near or close, either physically or relationally. The phrase "qaraba" also conveys the idea of approaching or drawing near to something or someone (Madhkour et al., 1996, p. 750).

#### **B. Terminological Definition:**

This study adopts a socio-anthropological paradigm to provide a thorough analysis of kinship, employing insights from prominent scholars in sociology and anthropology who have examined this topic extensively.

Kinship, in its biological dimension, refers to relationships established through descent systems. An individual's connection to their parents arises from unilineal or bilateral descent, while parents are linked through shared reproductive roles. Siblings share consanguineal bonds by virtue of their common parentage (Al-Jouhari, 1999, p. 89). Therefore, kinship is understood as a social relationship based on actual or socially constructed consanguinity, which can include fictive kinship ties (Dinkin and Mitchell, 1989, p. 130). Additionally, kinship includes relationships based on affinity, which arise through marital alliances or affinal connections (Ahmed, 1997, p. 89).

Alfred Radcliffe-Brown defines kinship as the direct relationships that emerge between two individuals through descent systems, either by vertical transmission (parent to child) or through shared descent from a common ancestor. (Marmouka, 2015, p. 47).

Sociologist Émile Durkheim further elaborates on corporate kin groups within clan structures, explaining that kinship involves juridical and moral obligations imposed by society. These groups are often structured around beliefs in a shared apical ancestor, although Durkheim emphasizes that kinship is primarily influenced by social organization, with genealogical ties serving as a secondary factor (Marmouka, 2015, p. 48).

According to R. Fox, kinship in both anthropology and sociology is not limited to consanguinity or marital bonds; it also encompasses relationships of affinal kinship. Kinship includes blood-related ties, while affinity derives from marital connections. Thus, the relationship between a father and his child is consanguineal, while that between a husband and wife is affinal (Hassan, 1981, p. 19).

From these definitions, it is clear that kinship can be divided into two primary components: biological (consanguineal) and social. Martine Segalen further distinguishes between these two complementary dimensions: kinship involves not only blood descent but also relationships established through marriage and alliance (Segalen, 1981, p. 12).

According to the *Dictionary of Sociology*, kinship is defined as a group of individuals connected by emotional bonds, represented through filial relationships (between parents and children), sibling relationships (between brothers and sisters), and affinal relationships (between the families of the spouses). These kinship ties are governed by social norms and practices that vary according to the cultural context of each society, whether traditional or modern. (Boudon, 2003, p. 170).

Thus, kinship represents a system of social relations recognized by society, connecting individuals through genealogy, and serves as a foundational element of family structures in all human societies (Choukri, 1996, p. 59).

#### **4. Types of Kinship:**

Kinship is the cornerstone of all social structures, with its foundation built on the binary relationship between male and female, and its framework structured around the family. Kinship [www.psychologyandeducation.net](http://www.psychologyandeducation.net)

systems establish a continuous exchange of social forces within communities. From a socio-anthropological perspective, kinship can be classified into several categories:

#### **4.1. Consanguineal Kinship:**

Consanguineal kinship refers to relationships formed through shared descent from a common ancestor, whether male or female. Within consanguineal kinship, a distinction is made between primary and secondary kinship. Primary kinship encompasses direct relationships, such as those between parents and children or between siblings. In contrast, secondary kinship involves more distant blood relations, often traced through a shared grandparent or apical ancestor. Individuals who descend from a common progenitor are part of the same kin group, with membership extending through bilateral descent, recognizing both uterine (matrilineal) and agnatic (patrilineal) lines (Mahjoub, 1999, p. 105).

#### **4.2. Social (Fictive) Kinship:**

In addition to consanguineal ties, fictive kinship represents socially constructed relationships that mimic the obligations of biological kinship. Anthropologists distinguish between ascribed kinship and fictive kinship created through cultural norms or social frameworks. In many societies, individuals may assume the role of a parent or sibling without biological ties. These relationships carry similar obligations to those based on blood relations. For instance, in rural Egyptian communities, it is common to address an elder as "my father" even when no biological connection exists, reflecting deeply rooted social customs (Al-Samalouti, 1981, p. 137).

#### **4.3. Affinal Kinship:**

Affinal kinship, also known as marital kinship, arises from relationships formed through marriage. In this context, the relatives are referred to as affines (in-laws), and they are classified into various degrees of closeness depending on their relationship to the ego. Historically, kinship studies primarily focused on consanguineal ties, often overlooking affinal relatives as secondary. However, contemporary sociological and anthropological research has placed greater emphasis on the significance of affinal relations. For instance, the connection between a brother-in-law (the sister's husband or the wife's brother) establishes kinship ties not only to the ego but also between them and the ego's children. The former would be considered an affine to the ego's children, while the latter would hold an avuncular role as the maternal uncle (Choukri, 1996, p. 60).

#### **4.4. Ritual Kinship:**

Ritual kinship refers to a form of social relationship that is not based on biological descent but rather emerges from culturally defined rituals and. These bonds are sustained by the societal norms and values of the community traditions (Al-Khachab, 1985, p. 119). A prominent example of ritual

kinship can be found in Evans-Pritchard's study of age-grade systems among the tribes of Southern Sudan. In such systems, members of the same age-grade share the same rights, responsibilities, and social roles, creating bonds of brotherhood that extend beyond bloodlines. These relationships often impose social restrictions similar to those in consanguineal kinship, particularly in areas such as marriage and sexual conduct (Al-Samalouti, 1981, p. 121).

## **5. Kinship Systems:**

Kinship systems are pervasive across human societies and civilizations, representing a universal structural phenomenon; no human society exists devoid of a system defining relational kinship among its members.

### **5.1. Patrilineal Descent System:**

The patrilineal descent system delineates an individual's kinship relations exclusively through the male lineage for various social purposes, commonly referred to as agnatic descent. In this framework, kinship bonds are based solely on the father, linking the child to his paternal family, whereas the mother and her family are deemed non-kin (Al-Hadi and Al-Johari, 1999, p. 17). This system historically prevailed among ancient societies such as the Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, Hebrews, Germans, Greeks, Romans, ancient Arabs, and Slavs, where a discernible disparity in social and legal status between genders was standard (Choukri, 1996, p. 41).

### **5.2. Matrilineal Descent System:**

In contrast, the matrilineal descent system traces kinship through the female line. Like patrilineal descent, it is unilineal, but connections are established through maternal links, often to a common uterine ancestor, typically a grandmother. This system emphasizes inheritance patterns in which maternal uncles transfer wealth and responsibilities to their sisters' children, thereby preserving the economic and political identity of the kin group. Although men hold authority in such matrilineal societies, their roles differ significantly from those in patrilineal contexts. Here, the maternal uncle, rather than the biological father, assumes primary custodial and guiding responsibilities for the child, exemplifying avunculate kinship (Choukri, 1996, p. 39).

### **5.3. Bilateral Descent System:**

The bilateral descent system, widely recognized in contemporary global societies, does not prioritize a singular lineage—maternal or paternal—but equally considers both. It is exemplified by family trees that symmetrically represent both parents' ancestries, affirming an individual's equal belonging to both maternal and paternal kin (Choukri, 1996, p. 53).

### **5.4. Totemic System:**

The totemic system centers kinship around a totem, a sacred emblem that binds clan members into a unified spiritual and social collective individual who identify with the same totem consider themselves to be descendants of this revered symbol, viewing ancestors and descendants—parents, children, grandchildren, and forebears—as equally connected within the kinship structure. Consequently, no individual holds a higher or lower degree of kinship within the totemic hierarchy. Within these groups, the totem is not only respected but also protected; harming or consuming the totemic entity—whether animal, plant, or other—is strictly prohibited, as it serves as an emblem of the clan's collective identity. Therefore, this system is closely linked to exogamous marriage practices, compelling individuals to seek spouses outside their totem group, reflecting a broader societal reverence and symbolic association with the totem (Al-Khachab, 1985, p. 51).

## **6. Kinship Typology**

### **6.1. The Nuclear Family**

The nuclear family serves as the fundamental component of the kinship system. It traditionally comprises a husband, a wife, and their children, regardless of whether they cohabit. Within this framework, three primary types of social relationships are recognized: those between parents and their child, among siblings (children born to the same parents), and between spouses who co-parent the same children (Al-Khatib, 2000, p. 185). The family is among the most ancient and widespread social structures, where members are connected by either consanguinity or affinity. These emotional bonds, often referred to as kinship ties, are forged through marriage and birth. Pierre Bourdieu conceptualizes these connections as forms of marital or sexual capital (Bonte, 2005, p. 39).

### **6.2. The Extended Family**

The extended family exists in several forms, the most notable of which include the compound family and the expanded family, both of which stem from unique marriage customs or residential patterns. In many societies, compound families emerge through polygyny, involving a husband with multiple wives and their half-siblings (Ghamri, 1991, p. 88). In contrast, the extended family consists of two or more nuclear or compound families linked by primary kinship ties. Members of an extended family typically reside in a shared household and engage in collective economic activities (Omar, 2000, p. 161).

### **6.3. The Joint Family**

Another dimension of the kinship system is the joint family, a collective of several nuclear families bound by an economic framework known as a corporate economic unit. These families either share a single residence or live in close proximity to one another. Co-residence is a foundational principle of this system, accompanied by shared economic and social responsibilities (Ghamri, 1991, p. 89).

#### **6.4.The Kin Group**

In certain cases, families are interconnected through a distant common ancestor, giving rise to a kin group. Anthropologically, it refers to a cooperative and cohesive kin group whose members share descent along a specific genealogical line. The group operates with a structured authority based on kinship, reflecting its collective unity, autonomy, and fulfillment of mutual obligations (Mahjoub et al., 1998, p. 45).

#### **6.5.The Clan**

The clan, or Al-Ashira, represents an extended social unit that builds upon familial ties, characterized by a distinct kinship sequence and shared residential patterns. It functions as a localized unit, with its members tracing lineage back to a common ancestor, who is sometimes of mythical or legendary significance (Wasfi, 1981, p. 46).

#### **6.6.The Tribe**

A tribe encompasses multiple clans and is commonly observed in traditional societies. Tribes are identified by shared territory, language, and cultural practices (Muslim, 2001, p. 213). Members typically claim common ancestry, jointly hold land, and communicate in a unified dialect or language. Tribes are subdivided into clans, and each clan is further divided into kin groups comprising one or more families (Omar, 2000, p. 130).

### **7. Kinship Theories**

#### **7.1.Evolutionary Theory**

Scholars adhering to evolutionary theory approach the study of kinship systems by tracing their origins, examining the stages through which they have passed, and identifying the various forms these systems have taken over time (Al-Saif, 1992, p. 39). A key figure in this domain, Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), developed a theory grounded in the belief that familial and marriage structures evolved from simplicity to complexity (Abou Zeid, 2011, p. 278). Morgan categorized kinship systems into 139 variants observed across different societies, concluding that humanity had progressed through three main phases: savagery, barbarism, and finally, civilization (Rashwan, 2004, p. 137).

Concurrently, Swiss scholar Johann Jakob Bachofen, in his work *Mother Right* (1861), postulated a sequential model of family and marriage systems, starting with sexual promiscuity and evolving into matriarchal systems where maternal ties were predominant, referring to this stage as

'Amazonian'—a period characterized by the transition of political dominance from women to men in early societies (Rashwan, Ahmed, 2004, p. 137).

Moreover, John Ferguson McLennan (1867-1881) discussed the historical evolution of marriage and kinship traditions in his book *Primitive Marriage*, suggesting that early human societies transitioned from unrestricted sexual relations to polyandry and subsequently to a patrilineal system, gradually forming the conventional family structure recognized today (Al-Samalouti, Nabil, 1981, p. 105).

## **7.2.Descent Theory**

Dominating kinship studies from the 1930s to the 1960s, descent theory gained prominence through the works of anthropologists like Meyer Fortes and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, particularly in their research on African societies (Marshall, 2000, p. 1116).

Descent theorists argue that procreation, rather than marriage, ensures the continuity and cohesion of basic social groups. The solidarity and endurance of these groups rely on kinship structures that recognize descent through both the maternal and paternal lines. This emphasis on descent lines is crucial for the socio-economic, cultural, symbolic, and communicative infrastructure of societies (Maatouk, 1998, p. 161).

## **7.3.Claude Lévi-Strauss's Theory: Exogamy and the Elementary Structures of Kinship**

Claude Lévi-Strauss, a leading French structural anthropologist, significantly advanced kinship studies through his 1949 work on the elementary structures of kinship. His research introduced two essential concepts: the kinship atom and alliance theory, both of which have profoundly influenced modern kinship studies (Maatouk, 1998, p. 207).

The kinship atom, according to Lévi-Strauss, consists of three fundamental relationships: husband-wife, sibling (particularly brother-sister), and parent-child. These primary relations expand into broader social networks and form the foundation for broader societal structures (Maatouk, 1998, p. 53).

A central focus of Lévi-Strauss's analysis was the role of women as exchange partners within kinship networks, particularly through exogamous marriage, which he viewed as a form of communication essential for social cohesion (El-Sakhaoui, 1996, p. 46). He posited that, in this system, marriage functions as a communicative mechanism akin to language, with individuals exchanging women instead of words. In one dimension, language involves the exchange of signs

with specific meanings, while in kinship relations, exchanges center on women, who bear and transmit the group's values and symbols (El-Aswad, 2002, p. 85).

In classical anthropology, kinship social relations fundamentally hinge upon the entrance of a wife into her husband's household, carrying with her an inheritance that is both material and kinship-based, as well as cultural, symbolic, and communicative. This crucial role is attributed to progenerative reproduction, which ensures the perpetuation and expansion of societal connections (Maatouk, 1998, p. 52). Claude Lévi-Strauss comments on this dynamic, stating, "The kinship system always necessitates that a man relinquish a daughter or sister to another man for marriage, thereby establishing a kinship structure fundamentally based on the wife originating from outside the biological family, or on the sister or daughter who marries externally. Hence, marriage acts as a foundational pillar in constructing outward-facing kinship across all global civilizations" (Lévi-Strauss, 1949, p. 497).

Lévi-Strauss made a distinction between primary kinship systems, which are more common in traditional societies where strict rules govern marriage choices, and complex systems, where personal preference dominates partner selection, as is typical in modern, industrialized societies (Al-Sakhawi, 1996, p. 48).

#### **7.4. Germaine Tillion's Theory: Endogamy and the Secondary Structures of Kinship**

Anthropologist Germaine Tillion conducted groundbreaking research on endogamy and kinship structures across Mediterranean regions, particularly in Algeria among the Berber and Tuareg groups. Her work diverges from linear evolutionary theories, emphasizing the intertwined influence of economic, cultural, and demographic factors on kinship patterns (Michel, 1986, p. 43).

In her landmark book *"The Harem and the cousins"*, Tillion identified cousin marriage as a social marker of nobility in Maghrebi communities, observing that the cultural value placed on patrilateral cross-cousin marriage fosters cohesion within kinship networks influences (Tillion, 1982, p. 25).

In her analysis, Tillion employs the term "endogamous marriage" or, as sociologists refer to it, "consanguineous marriage," to denote unions within kin groups. She argues that this marriage practice has long been established within the Mediterranean region, functioning as a cultural mechanism to resist the integration of foreign elements into Maghrebi society. This resistance, Tillion observes, led to social ramifications, particularly for those who sought unions with outsiders, though they represented a minority within the population (Tillion, 1982, p. 29).

As societies evolve, Tillion notes an intensification of tensions within these structures, resulting in a rigidification of social norms. The communities in question exhibit resistance towards the settlement of outsiders, employing a range of tactics and even hostility to prevent foreign integration (Tillion, 1982, p. 27). In rural Algerian communities, Tillion frequently encountered individuals who expressed contentment in keeping all their children within the familial circle through kin-based marriages. This practice, they believed, not only fostered family cohesion but also provided a strong sense of security and collective pride (Tillion, 1982, p. 30).

Tillion further documents her observations across several urban areas, including Oran, Algiers, Constantine, and Saharan settlements, where cousin marriages continue to be favored for their perceived stability, while marriages to outsiders are often viewed as more vulnerable to dissolution (Tillion, 1982, p. 38).

## **8. The Nature of Kinship in Traditional Algerian Society**

### **8.1. Definition of Kinship in Algeria**

Kinship is employed as a principal analytical lens to dissect social relations, functioning as an ideological apparatus that mediates both symbolic familial control and subtle forms of social dominance. These relationships, especially those under the guise of consanguineous or kin ties, transform connections into legitimate social bonds (Retimi, 1993, p. 36). Kinship explicitly frames the operational sphere where labor forces are organized, and familial authority is consolidated, also serving as a vehicle for socio-racial stratification and explicit differentiation among individuals (Retimi, 1993, p. 36).

Furthermore, kinship in Algeria is reconceptualized as a mechanism for social recognition among individuals who either share a direct lineage or believe in a common progenitor. A precise delineation of kinship types is essential: consanguineal kinship, based on blood relations, and fictive kinship, which emerges from socially constructed affiliations recognized by a specific cultural context. The ancestor plays a crucial role in defining the depth and breadth of these kin ties, potentially based on either lineal or affiliative connections. However, it is the shared belief in a common apical ancestor that unites individuals into cohesive social units, fostering enduring alliances and avoiding fragmentation (Boutafnouchet, 1984, p. 212).

### **8.2. Kinship and Tribal Solidarity (*Asabiyya*)**

In Algeria, the concept of *bani 'amm* (translated as “sons of paternal kin”) indicative of agnatic kin— extends beyond biological kinship, signifying a type of social belonging rooted in tribal

connections and often reflecting shared geographic spaces. This construct gained prominence during the French colonial era, as Algerians would introduce each other to colonial authorities under the banner of kinship as sons of paternal uncles or cousins—a designation particularly common in Greater Kabylia region (Boutafnouchet, 1984, p. 180).

Patriarchal authority dominates the traditional Algerian family structure. According to R. Mounier's research, the Algerian Kabyle family exhibits structural similarities with ancient Roman patrilineal familial organizations, where the patriarch retains comprehensive authority. However, this model has evolved in Algeria, producing a family unit characterized by profound solidarity and cohesiveness across all dimensions. Studies indicate that despite the father's demise, Algerian families preserve their structural integrity, reflecting robust intra-familial connectivity that endures across generations (Boutafnouchet, 1984, p. 25).

Within the tribal and clan contexts, *asabiyya* (tribal solidarity) becomes central. Individuals within a lineage group or clan are bound by socio-economic agreements formalized by tribal councils, which orchestrate communal endeavors like agricultural campaigns, embodying the economic and social fabric of tribal interactions. Participation in communal events, such as the *touiza* (a cooperative labor system), is mandated by these bodies, reinforcing community bonds through shared labor and responsibilities (Retimi, 1993, p. 37). This structure reflects Ibn Khaldun's conception of *aşabiyya*, wherein tribal unity and clan allegiance form the foundation for authority structures and are reinforced through consanguineal ties, serving as the essential framework for social cohesion and kinship continuity in these lineage-based societies.

*Asabiyya* thus functions as a unifying mechanism grounded in formalized alliances based on shared lineage or territorial bonds. Members of the tribe—whether connected by consanguineal ties, social pacts, or fictive kin contracts—commit themselves to the tribe's preservation, with a willingness to sacrifice property and even life for its continuity. Thus, *aşabiyya* embodies kin solidarity derived from intrinsic moral and material values within kin-based systems such as the clan or lineage group (Moghrabi, 1986, p. 143). In contemporary contexts, *aşabiyya* signifies economic and ethical solidarity founded on both kinship and territorial affiliation. As kin groups expand in size, *aşabiyya* correspondingly intensifies, amplifying collective authority and inter-tribal dominance. Core elements such as allegiance, patrilineal descent, honor codes, and reciprocal loyalty underscore *aşabiyya*'s function within the kinship structure (Boutafnouchet, 1984, p. 55).

In synthesis, Kinship operates as a mode of *aşabiyya*, wherein loyalty is concentrated among tribal affiliates connected through consanguineal or affinal bonds. This allegiance network serves as a

vector of influence both within and beyond the tribal group. An individual's primary social allegiance is to their kinship unit, their initial social and ritual network where kin affiliations are deeply rooted, fostering a cohesive force that connects family members across social, economic, and ritual domains (Boutafnouchet, 1984, p. 58).

This affiliation is rooted in the belief in shared descent from a common apical, often of revered status, which enhances the sense of solidarity within the kin group. Despite the presence of multiple lineages within a tribe, kinship bonds remain potent, forming essential descent clusters within segmented kinship structures anchored by a mutual progenitor. Kinship thus conveys blood relations that embed family members into broader kinship configurations (Boutafnouchet, 1984, p. 58).

### **8.3. Kinship Networks in Algerian Society**

Drawing on the research conducted by R. Descloitres and L. Debzi concerning kinship systems and familial structures in Algeria, five principal kinship networks have been delineated as fundamental to understanding the relational dynamics within Algerian families. These concentric networks provide a framework for organizing and conceptualizing the layers of kinship relations:

#### **a) Primary Relatives**

This network includes first-degree kin constituting both of the individual's nuclear families: one comprising direct lineal ascendants and collateral kin (e.g., parents and siblings), while the other includes the spouse and offspring. The relational ethos within this circle is marked by deference, reverence, and filial piety. Younger family members exhibit a profound respect towards elders, characterized by an awareness of hierarchical social obligations and a sense of duty that upholds the family's moral order. The patriarch, typically the father, serves as the primary representative of familial authority, followed by the paternal uncle and eldest brother. Behavioral norms here are prescribed by village communal standards aimed at ensuring family unity and cohesion. Sons are expected not to oppose their fathers or act in ways that could result in paternal disapproval, following the patriarchal rights enshrined in both customary law and religious mandates (Descloitres & Debzi, 1965, p. 24).

#### **b) Secondary Relatives**

This kinship circle encompasses extended paternal kin, particularly the paternal uncle and his descendants, including cousins and grandchildren, as well as the offspring of the paternal aunt.

#### **c) Matrilineal Relatives**

This circle is composed of maternal relatives, including the maternal uncles, aunts, their offspring, and the maternal grandparents.

#### **d) Patrilineal Relatives**

Representing agnatic lineage, this kinship circle includes direct male-line ancestors, encompassing the grandfather, great-grandfather, and extending back two or three generations.

**e) Extended Cousins (Kindred)**

This group is oriented around patrilineal lineage, tracing ancestry through the male line from the grandfather and extending back to the great-grandfather from the fourth to the sixth generation, up to a common ancestral progenitor. Such kin, encompassing more distant relations, demonstrate the extension of kinship through both consanguineal and fictive ties (Descloitres & Debzi, 1965, p. 25).

These kinship networks are integral to the individual's social life, with the primary, secondary, and matrilineal relatives holding notable significance in shaping social and familial cohesion within Algerian society.

**9. Findings:**

In traditional Algerian society, kinship manifests predominantly in two forms. Consanguineal kinship and social kinship, the first one establishes the initial bond, embedding individuals within closely knit familial units that share co-residence and collectively undertake key economic, political, and religious roles. Such kin groups serve as foundational structures for defining social identity, though the nuclear family plays a more limited social role within the tribe, functioning mainly as a reproductive unit (al- Houari, 1983, p. 121). Within these domestic groups, social roles are oriented less toward personal advancement and more toward satisfying collective responsibilities, with gender-based distinctions in kin interactions reinforcing the sociocultural roles expected within the household. This alignment with societal norms serves to maintain traditional values and roles (Madher Sliman, 1992, p. 28).

In the context of traditional Algerian society, the notion of social kinship is articulated through the term *ibn al-amm* (literally "paternal cousin"), which encompasses not only consanguineal ties but also extends to include affiliations based on shared territoriality and social bonds. This form of kinship gained particular prominence during the French colonial era, when Algerians commonly presented one another to colonial authorities as "cousins," regardless of genealogical connections—a phenomenon particularly noted among Kabyle tribes. Similarly, in the Aurès region, the Amazigh use the term *tharwa n tmurth* ("kin of the land") to denote individuals who share common geographic origins, thus invoking a form of **fictive kinship** that is grounded in **territorial affiliation** rather than direct **lineal descent**. For the Berber community, shared geographic origins inherently foster a kin-like connection among those belonging to the same land or region (Boussaha, 2023, p. 25).

Distinctly, kinship within traditional Algerian society is underpinned by the concept of *aṣabiyya*—a unifying principle denoting solidarity and cohesion within a shared spatial context. This solidarity encompasses all members of the tribe, whether linked by consanguinity, alliance, or contractual bonds, with each individual demonstrating an unwavering readiness to sacrifice resources, wealth, and even life for the tribe's continuity and collective welfare.

## 10. Conclusion

Kinship occupies a central place in Algerian society, embodying a comprehensive system of moral values, ethical codes, and reciprocal obligations. This network positions the individual as a core agent within kin relations, exerting influence over cohesion or potential discord. Over time, however, kinship structures have undergone marked transformations, reflecting a shift from traditional kinship models. Contemporary Algerian kinship now exhibits a notable decline in interaction among extended kin, especially more distant relatives, although a sense of ethical duty toward kin remains intact during crises.

The evolution of kin relations corresponds to significant societal shifts, such as advancements in education, increased female labor force participation, the introduction of civil law alongside customary codes of honor, the growth of wage-based labor, and redefined family structures emphasizing individual freedom.

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