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Anthropology short notes

Descent and Alliance

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination · Anthropology Paper 1 · Anthropology GS 1 (Paper I)

Descent and Alliance

Short notes by official syllabus heading.

Revision notes for the Anthropology optional. Confirm thinkers and examples against standard texts and recent papers.

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Descent And Alliance

Definition

III. Applications in Anthropological Studies

Thinkers

Radcliffe-Brown: Used genealogies to reconstruct descent groups and social structure in Africa. Malinowski: Used them to understand kinship and land inheritance among the Trobriand Islanders. Claude Lévi-Strauss: Used genealogical/kinship data to develop Alliance Theory, focusing on marriage and exchange between lineages. India: S.C. Roy documented Oraon genealogies; Irawati Karve used genealogical mapping to study village kinship and exogamy in Maharashtra. Challenge to Descent Primacy: While British anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown emphasized descent groups (lineages/clans) as the primary basis of social structure, the Purum system proved that marriage alliances are equally fundamental.

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