Marriage

All societies have customs governing how and under what circumstances sex and reproduction can occur – generally marriage plays central role in these customs

Do all groups marry? No
- Nayar of India
  - women have series of relationships w/men
  - brothers act as ‘father’ to her children (include cost to raise) even if acknowledged by biological father

= Marriage: socially approved union that unites 2 or more individuals as spouses

Implies: sexual union, permanence, common residence

Functions of Marriage
1. regulates sexual behavior

- not implying that sexual relationships w/i marriage only acceptable type

  e.g., Toda of Southern India – married ♀ = formal sexual relationship w/ certain ♂ like priests w/husband approval

  e.g., Kalinda in Philippines institutionalized married ♂ taking mistresses; children from union receive smaller inheritance; wife barren – often help choose mistress

Diff b/t marriage and other types of sexual union = commitment & fidelity of at least one of the spouses
- Cultural Diversity Data Base =
  - 88% cultures expect wives fidelity; 56% expect husbands
  - no culture accepts infidelity of both spouses

Regulating sexual behavior helps to reduce sexual competition and any negative effects associated w/sexual competition

2. fulfills economic needs of marriage partners (gender I of labor)
   - family teaches us our gender roles – who does what and what happens when you don’t do fulfill your role
   - enculturation (fundamental understanding)

3. perpetuates kinship groups

4. provides institution for care of children (protection)

Types of marriage
1. monogamy
   - most common form of marriage
   - two individuals
• serial monogamy accepted in some societies
  o one spouse at any given time; several during lifetime

2. polygamy
• multiple spouses (generally used to refer to men w/multiple wives)
• polygyny – man w/multiple wives
  o preferred custom
  o found in these types societies:
    ▪ frontier
    ▪ warrior
    ▪ ratio of women to men high
    ▪ where rapid growth of family beneficial to family survival
  o usually practiced by men of high status – can afford it
  o men usually take much younger wives (can take time to build resource base to afford multiple wives)
• polyandry – woman w/multiple husbands
  o rare
  o usually ‘fraternal polyandry’ – woman married to brothers
  o advantageous where resources severely limited; e.g., Tibet (land at premium – can’t be subdivided among offspring)

Benefits of multiple spouses?
  o increased social status
  o new set of ‘affines’ = people for help w/trade, political alliances, support
  o larger labor force
  o women share work
  o better chance children provided for (inheritance)

3. group marriage
• several males married simultaneously to several females
• usually occurs w/polygyny but not polyandry
• e.g., Toda of India – parents arranged a marriage w/boy; girl married not only to specific boy but also any brothers he might have; any of the brothers married; they also married to the girl’s husband – so several males and females married = group marriage

4. symbolic – marriages that don’t establish economic or social ties; e.g., nuns

5. fixed-term = temporary marriages
  - legitimizes a sexual relationship
  - may have minimal economic obligations
  - e.g., Iran – soldiers allowed to have temporary marriages in order to have legitimate sexual partners while at war. After conflict, marriage dissolved w/no further obligation to ex-wife

6. fictive = legal marriage that allows both partners to acquire social benefits w/no family being set up
• e.g., US Nationals & immigrants sometimes marry in order for immigrant to stay in country (not all, but does happen)

Several types of fictive marriages:
• levirate = kin of deceased man must provide new husband for widow; often one of the deceased’s brothers
• sororate = female version of levirate

Advantage: cements marriage alliances; provides survivor w/someone who will perform duties of husband

• ghost marriage = married or unmarried male kinsman of a boy who died b4 had any legal heirs, marries a woman in the name of the boy
  • e.g., Nuer

Kinship Diagram

Marriage Choice: Whom should you marry ...or not?

Societies have rules about who you can marry

Almost all societies have Incest taboo: forbids sexual behaviors thru designated kin

How do taboos come into being?
- may be biological reason (genetic diversity)
- may be psychological (familiarity breeds contempt)
- may be sociological (prevent role confusion)
- may be economic/political (force relationships outside family = alliances)

Other rules:

Exogamy: have to marry outside of your kin, residential or other specified group, e.g., Yanomani

Endogamy: marry w/i specified kinship categories or social group, e.g., Indian castes

Arranged marriages: parents arrange

promotes: political, economic and social ties

Marriage preference = rules that single out certain kin as ideal marriage partners:

1. cross-cousins
   - cousins linked by parents of opposite sex (brother/sister)
2. parallel-cousins
   - one’s mother’s sister’s child
   - one’s father’s brother’s child

Benefit? Helps to maintain lineage
Postmarital Residence: Where do you live after the wedding?

1. **virilocal (patrilocal)** – in or near husband’s family [most common]
   - found in societies where solidarity of male group important; e.g., heavy labor, warfare; China

2. **uxorilocal (matrilocal)** – 2nd most common – in or near bride’s family
   - e.g., gardening societies or warfare w/distant people; TbolI [Philippines]

3. **bilocal (ambilocal)** – 3rd most common – either bride or groom’s family’s area
   - e.g., where extended kin networks important and where land may be limited; !Kung

4. **neolocal** – reside in new place away from either family
   - most common in industrial societies

5. **avunculocal** – husband’s mother’s eldest brother
   - only in matrilineal societies where men of matrilineage must stay together (when warfare common)
   - occurs in ~ 4% of world’s cultures
   - e.g., Trobriand Islanders

6. **natalocal** – each resides with family of origin

Economic aspects of marriage negotiations = help to form links b/t families

1. **bridewealth, brideprice**
   - good’s transferred from groom’s to bride’s family
   - compensation for losing productive/reproductive services of bride

2. **bride service**
   - service performed by groom for the family of the bride for compensation
   - common among food collectors

3. **dowry**
   - pmr from bride’s family to groom’s to compensate for acceptance of the responsibility of her support
   - most common in pastoral or AG societies where market exchange prevalent (advance of woman’s inheritance)
   - hypergamy = lower status wife “marries up”=dowry buys higher status which is passed on to children
     - e.g., pre-contact Hawaiians

4. **woman exchange**
   - no gifts exchanged by families but each family gives a bride to the other family; each family loses a daughter but gains a daughter-in-law
     - e.g., Mbuti