

PART
III

Social Organization



8 Kinship and Domestic Life



9 Social Groups and Social Stratification



10 Politics, Conflict, and Social Order



FREDY PECCERELLI, A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST,

risks his personal security working for victims of political violence in his homeland. Peccerelli is founder and executive director of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala or FAFG), a group that focuses on the recovery and identification of some of the 200 000 people, mostly indigenous Maya of the mountainous regions, that Guatemalan military forces killed or “disappeared” during the brutal civil war that

occurred between the mid-1960s and the mid-1990s.

Peccerelli was born in Guatemala. His family immigrated to the United States when his father, a lawyer, was threatened by death squads. He grew up in New York and attended Brooklyn College in the 1990s. But he felt a need to reconnect with his heritage and began to study anthropology as a vehicle that would allow him to serve his country.

The FAFG scientists excavate clandestine mass graves, exhume the bodies, and identify them through several means, such as matching dental and/or medical records. In studying skeletons, they try to determine the person’s age, gender, stature, ancestry, and lifestyle. DNA studies are few because of the expense. The scientists also collect information from relatives of the victims and from eye-witnesses of the massacres. Since 1992, the FAFG team has discovered and exhumed approximately 200 mass grave sites in villages, fields, and churches.

Peccerelli sees the FAFG’s purpose as applying scientific principles to basic human concerns. Bodies of identified victims are returned to their families to allow them some sense of closure about what happened to their loved ones. Families can honour their dead with appropriate burial ceremonies.

The scientists also give the Guatemalan government clear evidence on the basis of which to prosecute the perpetrators of these atrocities. However, Guatemala was long structured in terms of a ruling military and a largely disenfranchised indigenous population. Many members of the former militia are still in positions of power within the government.

Peccerelli, his family, and his colleagues have been harassed and threatened. Eleven of the FAFG scientists have received written death threats. Bullets have been fired into Peccerelli’s home, and it has been burglarized. The United Nations and other human rights organizations have made it clear to the government that they support FAFG’s investigations, and exhumations continue with heightened security measures.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, an organization committed to “advance science and serve society,” honoured Peccerelli and his colleagues in 2004 for their work in promoting human rights at great personal risk. In 1999, *Time* magazine and CNN chose Peccerelli as one of the fifty “Latin American Leaders for the New Millennium.” During the same year, the Guatemalan Youth Commission named him an “icon” for the youth of the country.

Currently, Peccerelli is on sabbatical to work on a master’s degree in forensic and biological anthropology at the University of Bournemouth, United Kingdom. He intends to return to Guatemala: “There is enough work for another 25 years.”

Anthropologists at Work





8

Kinship and Domestic Life

THE STUDY OF KINSHIP SYSTEMS

Kinship Analysis
Kinship in Action

■ **Multiple Cultural Worlds:** What's in a Name

■ **ETHNOGRAPHIC PROFILE:** The Minangkabau of Indonesia

■ **Critical Thinking:** How Bilateral Is "American Kinship"?

■ **Lessons Applied:** Transnational Adoption and the Internet

HOUSEHOLDS AND DOMESTIC LIFE

The Household: Variations on a Theme

CHANGING KINSHIP AND HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS

Change in Descent

Change in Marriage

Changing Households

■ **Key Questions Revisited**

KEY CONCEPTS

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Map 8.4 Ghana

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Key Questions

- HOW do cultures create kinship through descent, sharing and marriage?
- WHAT is a household and what do anthropologists study about household life?
- HOW are kinship and households changing?

A Minangkabau bride in Sumatra, Indonesia, wears an elaborate gold headdress. Women play a central role among the Minangkabau.
(Source: © CORBIS)

Learning another culture's kinship system is as challenging as learning another language. Robin Fox became aware of this challenge during his research among the Tory Islanders of Ireland (see Map 8.1) (1995 [1978]). Some Tory Island kinship terms are similar to North American English usage; for example, the word *muintir* means "people" in its widest sense, as in English. It can also refer to people of a particular social category, as in "my people," that refers to close relatives. Another similarity is with *gaolta*, the word for "relatives" or "those of my blood." In its adjectival form, *gaolta* refers to "kindness," like the English word *kin*. Tory Islanders have a phrase meaning "children and grandchildren," also like the English term *descendants*. One major difference is that the Tory Island word for "friend" is the same as the word for "kin." This usage reflects the cultural context of Tory Island with its small population, all related through kinship. So, logically, a friend is also kin.

All cultures have ways of defining *kinship*, or a sense of being related to another person or persons. Rules about who comprise kinship can be either informal or formalized in law. From infancy, people begin learning about their particular culture's **kinship system**, the combination of rules about who are kin and the expected behaviour of kin. Like one's language, one's kinship system is so ingrained that it is taken for granted as something natural rather than cultural.

In this chapter, we first consider cross-cultural variations in kinship systems. We then focus on a key unit of domestic life: the household. In the last section, we provide examples of contemporary change in kinship patterns and household organization.



The Study of Kinship Systems

In many cultures, kinship systems are linked with symbols and beliefs about relationships, reproduction and child-rearing. Depending on the cultural context, various kinds of kinship systems shape children's personality development, influence marriage options, and affect the care of the aged. Nineteenth-century anthropologists found that kinship was the most important organizing principle in nonindustrial, nonstate cultures. The kinship group performs the functions of ensuring the continuity of the group through arranging marriages; maintaining social order through setting moral rules and punishing offenders;

kinship system: the predominant form of kin relationships in a culture and the kinds of behaviour involved.

kinship diagram: a schematic way of presenting data on kinship relationships

of an individual (called "ego") depicting all of ego's relatives, as remembered by ego and reported to the anthropologist.

genealogy: a record of a person's relatives constructed beginning with the earliest ancestors.



MAP 8.1 Ireland. Ireland's population is roughly 4 million. Its geography is low central plains surrounded by a ring of mountains. Membership in the European Union (EU) and a rising standard of living earned Ireland the nickname of the Celtic Tiger. Its economic opportunities are attracting immigrants from places as diverse as Romania, China, and Nigeria. Most people are Roman Catholics, followed by the Anglican Church of Ireland.

and providing for the basic needs of members through regulating production, consumption, and distribution. In large-scale industrial societies, kinship ties exist, but many other forms of social affiliation draw people together.

Nineteenth-century anthropologists also discovered that definitions of who counts as kin differed widely from those of Europe and North America. Western cultures

emphasize “blood” relations as primary, or relations through birth from a biological mother and biological father (Sault 1994). “Blood” is not a universal basis for kinship, however. Even in some cultures that do have a “blood”-based understanding of kinship, variations exist in defining who is a “blood” relative and who is not. For example, in some cultures, male offspring are considered of one “blood,” whereas female offspring are not.

Behaviour is a common non-blood basis for determining kinship. Among the native groups of northern Alaska, people who act like kin are kin (Bodenhorn 2000). If a person ceases to act like kin, he or she stops being a kinsperson. So, someone might say that a certain person “used to be” his or her cousin. In this system, the kin of anyone considered kin are also one’s kin.

In some other cultures, a more important criterion for kinship is breastfeeding: Babies who were nursed by the same woman are considered related and cannot marry each other. The popular Western view of kinship as based on “blood” relationships and its contemporary grounding in a genetic relationship with the birth mother and “procreative father” (the male who provides the semen that fertilizes the female’s ovum) is so widely accepted as real and natural that understanding other kinship theories is difficult for westerners.

Kinship Analysis

Early anthropological work on kinship tended to focus on finding out who is related to whom and in what way. Typically, the anthropologist would interview one or two people, asking questions such as, *What do you call your brother’s daughter? Can you (as a man) marry your father’s brother’s daughter? What is the term you use to refer to your mother’s sister?* In another approach, in an interview the anthropologist would ask an individual to name all his or her relatives, explain how they are related

to the interviewee, and provide the terms by which they refer to him or her.

From this information, the anthropologist would construct a **kinship diagram**, a schematic way of presenting data on the kinship relationships of an individual, called “ego” (see Figure 8.1). This diagram depicts all of ego’s relatives, as remembered by ego and reported to the anthropologist. Strictly speaking, information gained from the informant for his or her kinship diagram is not supplemented by asking other people to fill in where ego’s memory failed (in contrast to a genealogy; see the next paragraph). In cultures where kinship plays a greater role in social relations, it is likely that an informant will be able to provide information on more relatives than in one where kinship ties are less important in comparison to other networks such as friendships and work groups.

In contrast to a kinship diagram, a **genealogy** is a schematic way of presenting a family tree, constructed by beginning with the earliest ancestors that can be traced and working down to the present. A genealogy, thus, does not begin with ego. When Robin Fox attempted to construct kinship diagrams beginning with ego, the Tory Islanders were uncomfortable with the approach. They preferred to proceed genealogically, so he followed their preference. Tracing a family’s complete genealogy may involve archival research in the attempt to construct as full a record as possible. Many cultures have trained genealogists whose task is to help families discover or maintain records of their family lines. In Europe and North America, Christians often record their “family tree” in the front of the family Bible.

Decades of anthropological research have produced a mass of information on kinship terminology, or the terms that people use to refer to kin. For example, in Euro-American kinship, children of one’s father’s sister and brother and one’s mother’s sister and brother are all referred to by the same kinship term: cousin. Likewise, one’s father’s










Characters	Relationships	Kin Abbreviations
 female  male  deceased female  deceased male  female “ego” of the diagram  male “ego” of the diagram	= is married to ≈ is cohabiting with ⚭ is divorced from ⚭ is separated from  adopted-in female  adopted-in male is descended from  is the sibling of	Mo mother Fa father Br brother Z sister H husband W wife Da daughter S son Co cousin

FIGURE 8.1 Symbols Used in Kinship Diagrams

sister and one's mother's sister are both referred to as aunt, and one's father's brother and one's mother's brother are both referred to as uncle. And the terms *grandmother* and *grandfather* refer to the ascending generation on either one's father's or mother's side. This merging pattern is not universal. In some cultures, different terms apply to kin on one's mother's and father's sides, so a mother's sister has a different kin term than a father's sister. In yet another type of system solidarity along lines of siblings of the same gender is emphasized. One's mother and mother's sisters all have the same term, which translates as "mother"—a system found among the Navajo, for example.

Anthropologists have classified the cross-cultural variety in kinship terminology into six basic types, named after groups that were first discovered to have that type of system; for example, there is an "Iroquois" type and an "Eskimo" type (see Figure 8.2). Anthropologists would place various cultures with similar kinship terminology, no matter where they lived, into one of the six categories. The Yanomami, an Amazonian tribe who live in the rainforest in Venezuela, would, in this way, be identified as having an Iroquois naming system. Contemporary anthropologists who study kinship have moved beyond these categories, since the six kinship types do not promote understanding of actual kinship dynamics. In this text, therefore, we merely present two examples and avoid going into detail on the six classic types.

Kinship in Action

Today, the formalism of early kinship studies has been replaced by a renewed interest in kinship that considers it in relation to other topics such as power relations, reproductive decision-making, women's changing work roles, and ethnic identity (Carsten 2000).

Anthropologists who study kinship as a living and changing aspect of life use varied methods of data gathering, rather than simply interview informants. Participant observation is extremely valuable for learning about who interacts with whom, how they interact with each other, and why their relationship has the content it has. Observations can provide understanding, for example, of the frequency and intensity of people's kinship interactions and the degree to which they have supportive social networks. The life history method (see Chapter 2), reveals changes through an individual's lifetime and the way they are related to other events such as migration, a natural disaster, or political change. Focused life histories are useful in targeting key events related to kinship, such as marriage or cohabitation, divorce, or widowhood/widowerhood. Anthropologists interested in population dynamics, for example, use focused life histories, interviews, and questionnaires to gather information on personal demographics to learn at what age a woman commenced sexual relations, how many pregnancies she had, if and when she

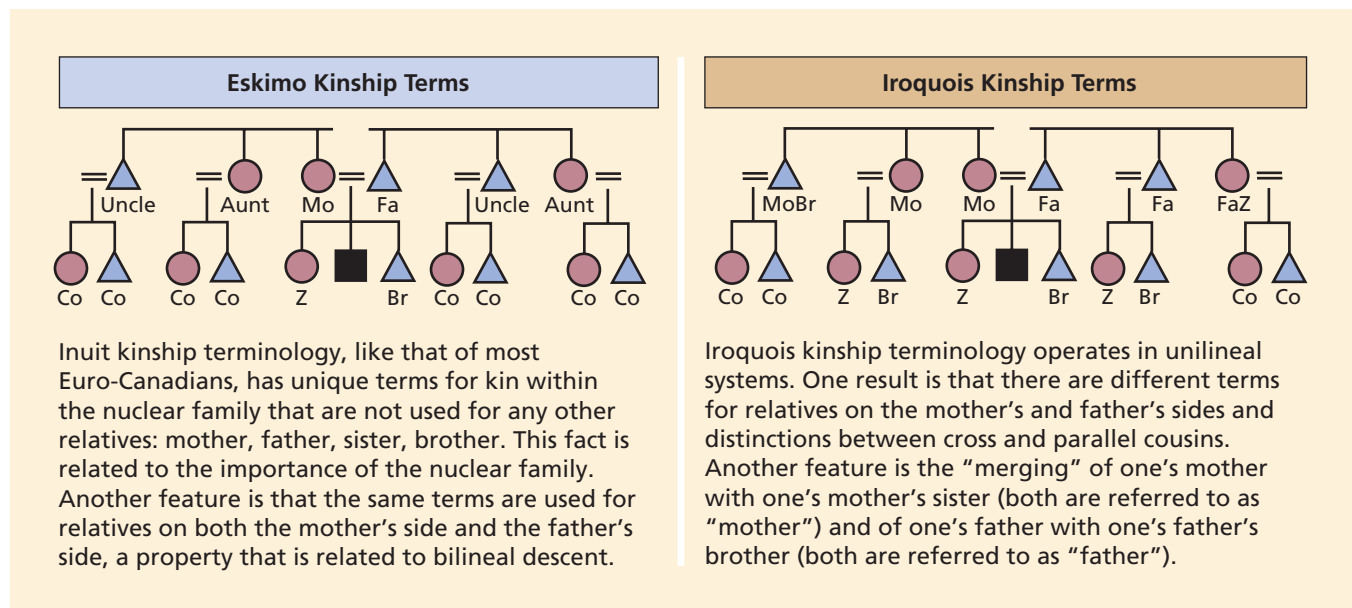


FIGURE 8.2 Two Kinship Naming Systems

descent: the tracing of kinship relationships through parentage.

bilateral descent: a kinship system in which a child is recognized as being related by descent to both parents.

unilineal descent: a kinship system that traces descent through only one parent, either the mother or the father.

patrilineal descent: a kinship system that highlights the importance of men in tracing descent.

matrilineal descent: a kinship system that highlights the importance of women by tracing descent through the female line.

had an abortion or bore a child, whether the child lived or died, and when she stopped having children.

Descent

Descent is the tracing of kinship relationships through parentage. It is based on the assumption that everybody is born from someone else. Descent creates a line of people from whom someone is descended, stretching through history. But not all cultures recognize descent in the same way. Some cultures have a **bilateral descent** system, in which a child is recognized as being related by descent to both parents. Others have a **unilineal descent** system, which recognizes descent through only one parent, either the father or mother. The distribution of bilateral and unilineal systems have been correlated with different modes of production. This correspondence makes sense because economies—production, consumption, and exchange—can be tied to the way people and their labour power are organized and how commodities are used and transferred. We discuss examples of this correlation in the following section. We begin with the descent system that is the most prevalent cross-culturally.

Unilineal Descent

Unilineal descent systems are the basis of kinship in about 60 percent of the world's cultures, making some form of unilineality the most common form of descent. In general, unilineal systems characterize societies with a “fixed” resource base, such as cropland or herds. Thus, unilineal descent is most common among pastoralists,

horticulturalists, and farmers. Inheritance rules that regulate the transmission of property through only one line help maintain cohesiveness of the resource base.

Unilineal descent has two major forms: One is **patrilineal descent**, in which kinship is traced through the male line. The other is **matrilineal descent**, in which kinship is traced through the female line. In a patrilineal system, only male children can carry on the family line, that is, only their children become members of the patrilineage. Female children “marry out” and become members of their husband's lineage. In matrilineal descent systems, only daughters are considered to carry on the family line, and sons “marry out.”

Patrilineal descent is found among roughly 45 percent of all cultures. It occurs throughout much of India, East Asia, the Middle East, Papua New Guinea, northern Africa, and some horticultural groups of sub-Saharan Africa. Cultures with patrilineal descent tend to have ideologies that are consistent with that concept. For example, theories of how conception occurs and how the fetus is formed give priority to the male role. Among the Kaliai people of Papua New Guinea, people say that an infant is composed entirely of *aitama aisuru*, the “father's water” or semen, which is channelled to the fetus. The mother is an “incubator” who contributes nothing substantial to the developing fetus. The mother's relationship with the infant develops later, through breastfeeding.

Margery Wolf's book, *The House of Lim* (1968), is a classic ethnography of patrilineal descent. Wolf lived for two years with the Lims, a Taiwanese farming household (see Figure 8.3). In her book, she describes first the village

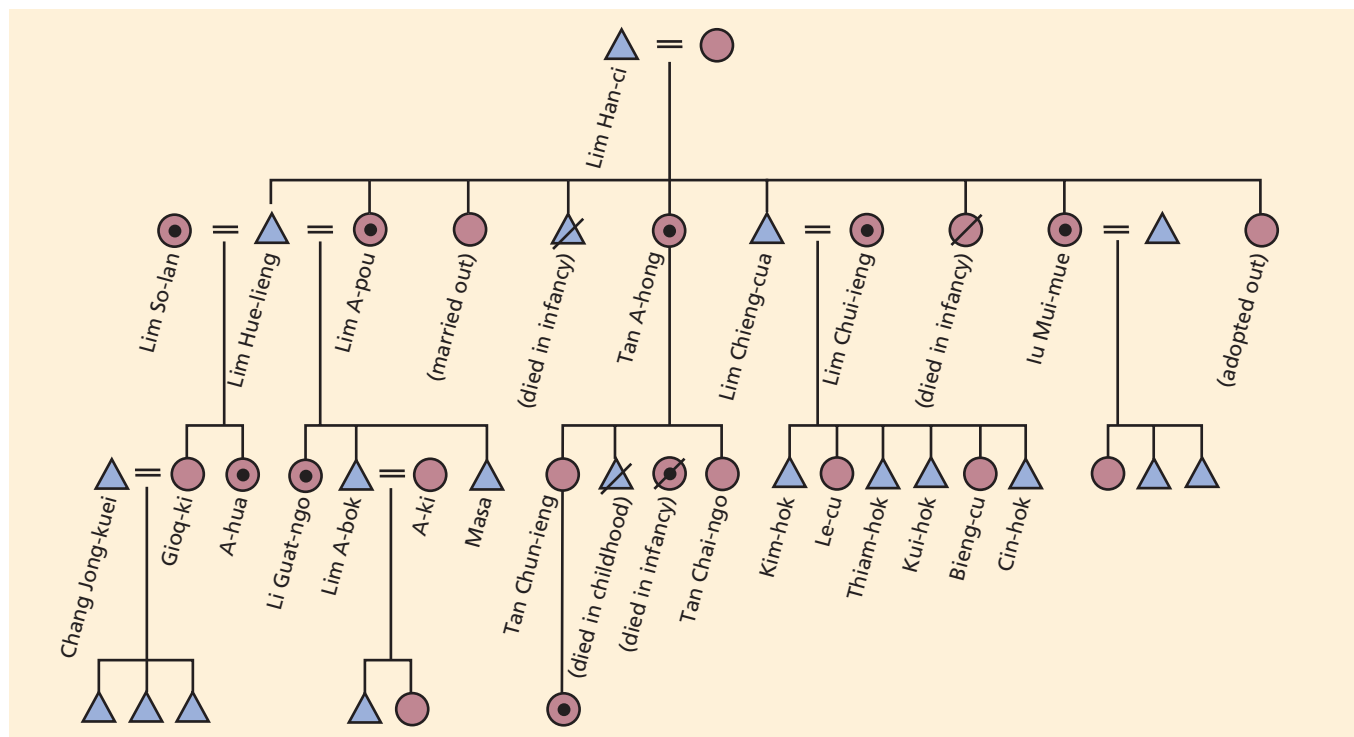
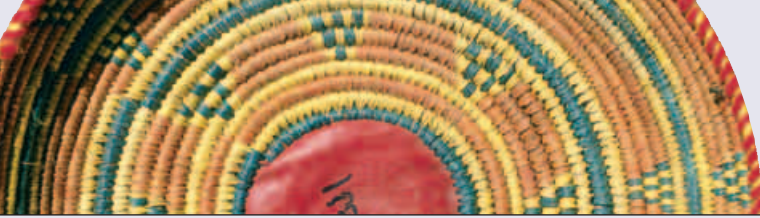


FIGURE 8.3 The Lim Family of Taiwan



Multiple Cultural Worlds

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Naming children is always significant. Parents may follow cultural rules that a first-born son receives the name of his father's father or a first-born daughter receives the name of her mother's mother. Some parents believe that a newborn should not be formally named for a year or two and is instead referred to by a nickname. Others think that a name must convey some special hoped-for attribute of the child, or that a name should be unique.

The village of Ha Tsuen is located in the northwest corner of a rural area of Hong Kong (Watson 1986). Roughly 2500 people live in the village. All the males belong to the same patrilineage and all have the same surname of Teng. They are descended from a common male ancestor who settled in the region in the twelfth century. Daughters of Ha Tsuen marry into families outside the village, and marital residence is patrilocal.

Women do not own property, and they have no direct control of the means of production. Few married women are employed in wage labour. They depend on their husbands for financial support. Local politics is a male domain, as is all public decision-making. A woman's status as a new bride is low, and the transition from daughter to bride can be difficult psychologically. Women's primary role is in reproduction, especially of sons. As a woman bears children, especially sons, her status in the household rises.

setting and then the Lims' house, giving attention to the importance of the ancestral hall with its family altar, where the male household head meets guests. She next provides a chapter on Lim Han-ci, the father and household head, and then a chapter on Lim Hue-lieng, the eldest son. Wolf next introduces the females of the family: wives, sisters, and an adopted daughter. The ordering of the chapters reflects the importance of the *patriarch* (senior, most powerful male) and his eldest son, who will, if all goes according to plan, be next in line for the leadership position. Daughters marry out into other families. In-marrying females (wives, daughters-in-law) are always considered outsiders and are never fully merged into the patrilineage. The Lim's kinship system



MAP 8.2 Hong Kong. The formal title of Hong Kong is the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. A world centre of finance and trade, it lacks natural resources and agricultural land, so it imports most of its food and raw materials. With 7 million residents, Hong Kong's population density is high. Most of the population is ethnic Chinese, and many practice ancestor worship. Ten percent of the population is Christian. Religious freedom is protected through its constitution.

exemplifies strong patrilineality in that it heavily weights position, power, and property with males. In such systems, girls are raised "for other families" and are, thus, not fully members of their birth family. Likewise, they are never full members of their marriage family. The world's most strongly patrilineal systems are found in East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East (see the accompanying Multiple Cultural Worlds box).

Matrilineal descent exists in about 15 percent of all cultures. It traces kinship through the female line exclusively, and children belong to their mother's group. It is found among many Native North American groups; across a large band in central Africa; among many groups of Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Australia; in parts of

double descent: a combination of patrilineal and matrilineal descent.

The local naming system reflects the power, importance, and autonomy of males. All children are first given a name referred to as their *ming* when they are a few days old. If the baby is a boy, the 30-day ceremony is as elaborate as the family can afford. It may include a banquet for many neighbours and the village elders and the presentation of red eggs to everyone in the community. For a girl, the 30-day ceremony may involve only a special meal for close family members. Paralleling this public expenditure bias toward sons is the thinking that goes into selecting the *ming*. A boy's *ming* is distinctive and flattering. It may have a classical literary connection. A girl's *ming* often has negative connotations, such as "Last Child," "Too Many," or "Little Mistake." One common *ming* for a daughter is "Joined to a Brother," which implies the hope that she will be a lucky charm, bringing the birth of a son next. Sometimes, though, people give an uncomplimentary name to a boy such as "Little Slave Girl." The reason is protection, to trick the spirits into thinking the baby is only a worthless girl so that the spirits will do no harm.

Marriage is the next formal naming occasion. When a male marries, he is given or chooses for himself a *tzu*, or marriage name. Gaining a *tzu* is a key marker of male adulthood. The *tzu* is not used in everyday address, but appears mainly on formal documents. A man also has a *wai hao*, "outside name," which is his public nickname. As he enters middle

age, he may take a *hao*, or courtesy name, which he chooses and which reflects his aspirations and self-perceptions.

In the case of a woman, her *ming* ceases to exist when she marries. She no longer has a name. Instead, her husband refers to her as *nei jen*, "inner person," since now her life is restricted to the domestic world of household, husband's family, and neighbourhood. People may also refer to her by *tekonyms*, or names for someone based on their relationship to someone else, such as "Wife of So and So" or "Mother of So and So." In old age, she becomes *ah po*, "Old Woman," like every other aged female in the village.

Throughout their lives, men accumulate more and better names than women. They choose many of the names themselves. Over the course of their lives, women have fewer names than men. Women's names are standardized, not personalized, and women never get to choose any of their names.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Go to www.slate.com/id/2116505 (*Trading Up: Where Do Baby Names Come From?* by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner) and read about the status game of child naming. How does your first name fit into this picture?

eastern and southern India; in a small pocket of northern Bangladesh; and in localized areas of the Mediterranean coast of Spain and Portugal. Matrilineal societies vary greatly, from foragers to intensive agricultural societies (Lepowsky 1993:296). Most, however, are horticultural economies in which women dominate the production and distribution of food and other goods.

Often, but not always, matrilineal kinship is associated with recognized public leadership positions for women, as among the Iroquois and Hopi. The Minangkabau (pronounced mee-NAN-ka-bow, the last syllable rhyming with "now") of Indonesia are the largest matrilineal group in the world (see the Ethnographic Profile on page XXX).

Double Descent

A minority of cultures have **double descent** systems (also called *double unilineal descent*) that combine patrilineal

and matrilineal descent. In these systems, offspring are believed to inherit different personal attributes and property from both their father's line and their mother's line. Many early anthropologists mistook this mixed system for a patrilineal system, demonstrating once again the power of ethnocentrism in interpretation. For example, the Bangangté of Cameroon in West Africa have a double descent system, although it was first described by anthropologists as patrilineal (Feldman-Savelsberg 1995). This misrepresentation was probably the result of interviewing only men and focusing on the inheritance of land property rather than on other traits.



and what would be their sequence?

IF YOU were going to write an ethnography of your family, like Wolf's book about the Lims, what chapter titles would you choose

Ethnographic Profile

The Minangkabau of Indonesia

The Minangkabau are the world's largest matrilineal culture, numbering between 4 and 5 million people (Sanday 2002). Most live in West Sumatra, Indonesia, and about 500 000 live in Malaysia. The Minangkabau are primarily farmers, producing substantial amounts of surplus rice. Many Minangkabau, both women and men, take up employment in Indonesian cities for a time and then return home.

In this strongly matrilineal kinship system, Minangkabau women hold power through their control of lineage land, its products, and agricultural employment on their land (Sanday 2002). Many have prominent positions in business, especially having to do with rice. Men are more likely to become scholars, merchants, and politicians. Inheritance of property, including farmland and the family house, passes from mothers to daughters.

Members of each submatrilineage, constituting several generations, live

together in a lineage house or several nearby houses. Often, men and older boys live in a separate structure, such as the village mosque. In the household, the senior woman controls the power, and she makes decisions in all economic and ceremonial matters. The senior male of the sublineage has the role of representing its interests to other groups, but he is only a representative, not a powerful person in his own right.

Water buffaloes are important in both the Minangkabau rice economy and symbolically. The roofline of a traditional house has upward curves that echo the shape of water buffalo horns. Minangkabau women's festive headdress has the same shape. The Minangkabau are mostly Muslims, but they mix their Muslim faith with elements of earlier traditions and Hinduism. They have long-standing traditions of music, martial arts, weaving, wood carving, and making fine filigree jewellery of silver and gold.

Many of the traditional wooden houses and palaces in Western Sumatra

are falling into a state of disrepair (Vellinga 2004). The matrilineal pattern of only women living in the house is changing and men and women are more likely to live together in nuclear households.

Readings

Evelyn Blackwood. *Webs of Power: Women, Kin, and Community in a Sumatran Village*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.

Kirstin Pauka. *Folk Theater, Dance, and Martial Arts of West Sumatra*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002 (with CD-ROM).

Peggy Reeves Sanday. *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Anne Summerfield and John Summerfield. *Walk in Splendor: Ceremonial Dress and the Minangkabau*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History. Textile Series No. 4, 1999.

Thanks to Michael G. Peletz, Emory University, for reviewing this material.



A traditional wooden Minangkabau longhouse with its distinctive upward-pointing roof (left). The house interiors are divided into separate “bays” for submatrilineal groups. Many are no longer places of residence but are used as meeting halls or are falling into ruin. ■ (Source: © Wolfgang Kachler/CORBIS) The symbolic importance of water buffaloes, apparent in the shape of traditional rooftops, is reiterated in the shape of girls’ and women’s ceremonial headdress (right). The headdress represents women’s responsibilities for the growth and strength of Minangkabau culture. ■ (Source: © Lindsay Hebbard/CORBIS)



MAP 8.3 Minangkabau Region in Indonesia. The shaded area shows the traditional heartland of Minangkabau culture in western Sumatra. Many Minangkabau people live elsewhere in Sumatra and in neighbouring Malaysia.

Research among married women uncovered double descent. Through the maternal line, one inherits movable property (such as household goods and cattle), personality traits, and a type of witchcraft substance that resides in the intestines. Patrilineal ties determine physical resemblance and rights to land and village residence. Matrilineally related women tend to bond together and visit each other frequently, consulting on marriage partners for their children, advising on child naming choices, and supporting each other in times of trouble.

Bilateral Descent

Bilateral descent traces kinship from both parents equally to the child. Family groups tend to be nuclear, with strong bonds among father, mother, and their children. Marital residence is predominantly **neolocal**, that is, residence for the newly married couple is somewhere away from the residences of both the bride's and the groom's parents. Neolocality offers more flexibility than what is usual in unilineal systems. Inheritance of property from the parental generation is allocated equally among all offspring regardless of their gender. In bilateral descent systems, conception theories can emphasize an equal biological contribution to the child from the mother and father. For example, contemporary Western science states that the sperm contributed by the male and the ovum contributed by the female are equally important in the formation of a new person.

Bilateral descent is found in less than one-third of the world's cultures (Murdock 1965:57). The highest frequency of bilateral descent is found at the opposite ends of the production continuum. For example, the Ju/wasi have bilateral descent, and most people think bilateral descent is the prevalent pattern in North America (see the accompanying Critical Thinking box).

Given that most of the world's people recognize some connection between a baby and both parents, it is puzzling as to why the majority of kinship systems are unilineal and thus emphasize only one parent. Cultural evolutionists of the late nineteenth century thought that people in prehistoric societies did not understand the biological role of the father. Bilateral kinship, in their view, emerged as "higher civilization" and unilineal kinship systems are remnants of earlier times. This argument is weak on two grounds. First, it is ethnocentric to claim that contemporary bilateral cultures, especially Euro-American culture, are the only ones that recognize

the father's role in paternity. Evidence from many unilineal cultures indicates widespread recognition of paternity. Second, foraging peoples tend to have bilateral kinship, suggesting that the world's earliest humans may have also had bilateral kinship, assuming that foraging was the first human mode of production.

In attempting to explain the relative scarcity of bilateral systems, some anthropologists have offered a theory that looks to the mode of production as influencing the type of kinship system. They point out that bilateral kinship systems are associated mainly with two modes of production: foraging and industrialism. Both modes of production rely on a flexible gender division of labour in which both males and females contribute, relatively equally, to production and exchange. Logically, then, a bilateral kinship system recognizes the strengths of both the mother's and father's sides. Bilateral kinship is also an adaptive system for members of foraging and industrial populations because it fits with small family units that are spatially mobile. Bilateral kinship offers the most flexibility in terms of residence, keeping open opportunities related to making a living.

Residence rules, where a newly married couple takes up residence, often match the prevailing "direction" of descent rules. Thus, in most patrilineal societies, marital residence is **patrilocal**, with or near the husband's family. In most matrilineal societies, it is **matrilocal**, with or near the wife's family or **avunculocal**, with or near the husband's mother's brother. Common in Western industrialized society is the practice of neolocality, residence in a place different from either the bride's or groom's family. Residence patterns have political, economic, and social implications. The combination of matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence, for example, is often found among groups that engage in long-distance warfare (Divale 1974). Strong female household structures maintain the domestic scene while the men are absent on military campaigns, as among the pre-colonial Iroquois of upstate New York and the Nayar of southern India. Patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence promote the development of cohesive male-focused lineages that are associated with frequent local warfare, which requires the presence of a force of fighting men on the home front.

Sharing

Many cultures emphasize kinship ties based on acts of sharing and support. These relationships may be informal

neolocality: a kinship rule that defines preferred marital residence in a new location not linked to either the bride's or the groom's parents' residence.

patrilocal: a kinship rule that defines preferred marital residence with or near the groom's kin.

matrilocal: a kinship rule that defines preferred marital residence with or near the bride's kin.

avunculocal: a kinship rule that defines preferred marital residence with or near the groom's mother's brother.



Critical Thinking

HOW BILATERAL IS “AMERICAN KINSHIP”?

“American kinship” refers to a general model based on the bilateral system of Euro-Americans of the 1960s (Schneider 1968). According to this model, children are considered to be descended from both mother and father, and general inheritance rules suggest that property would be divided equally between sons and daughters. Given the rich cultural diversity of Canada and the United States, most would now consider the label “American kinship” and its characterization as bilateral to be overgeneralized.

Even within the so-called American kinship of the 1960s, bilaterality was not strictly followed. Indications of patrilineality include the practice of a wife dropping her surname at marriage and taking her husband’s surname, and using the husband’s surname for offspring. This is called patrimony. Although inheritance is supposedly equal among all offspring regardless of gender, often it is not. In many business families, the business is passed from father to sons, while daughters are given a different form of inheritance such as a trust fund. Increasing trends toward matrifocality are caused by high rates of divorce and the trend of more

young children living with the mother than with the father.

In order to explore descent patterns, each student in the class should draw his or her own kinship diagram. Students should note their ethnicity at the top of the chart, choosing the label with which they feel most comfortable. Then, each student should draw a circle around the relatives who are “closest” to “ego,” including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins—whoever fits in this category as defined by ego. As a group, students in the class should then consider the following questions about the kinship diagrams.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- How many students drew equal circles around relatives on both parents’ sides?
- How many emphasized the mother’s side? How many emphasized the father’s side?
- Do ethnic patterns emerge in terms of the circled kin?
- From this exercise, what can be said about “American kinship” in Canada?

or formally certified. God-parenthood and blood brotherhood are examples of sharing-based kinship that is ritually formalized.

Food Sharing Sharing-based kinship is common in Southeast Asia, Papua New Guinea, and Australia (Carsten 1995). Among inhabitants of Langkawi, one of Malaysia’s many small islands, sharing-based kinship starts in the womb when the mother’s blood feeds the fetus. After birth, the mother’s breast milk nourishes the infant. This tie is crucial. A child who is not breastfed will not “recognize” its mother. Breastfeeding is also the basis of the incest rule. People who have been fed from the same breast are kin and may not marry. After the baby is weaned, its most important food is cooked rice. Sharing cooked rice, like breast milk, becomes another way that kinship ties are created and maintained, especially between women and children. Men are often away on fishing trips, in coffee shops, or at the mosque and so are not likely to have rice-sharing kinship bonds with children.

Adoption and Fostering Another form of sharing-based kinship is the transfer of a child or children from

the birth parent(s) to the care of someone else. *Adoption* is a formal and permanent form of child transfer. Common motivations for adoption include infertility and the desire to obtain a particular kind of child (often a son). Motivations for the birth parent to transfer a child to someone else include a premarital pregnancy in a disapproving context, having “too many” children, and having “too many” of a particular gender. Among the Maasai, a woman who has several children might give one to a friend, neighbour, or aged person who has no children to care for her or him.

Currently, roughly 1 of every 10 couples in Canada is infertile, and many of these couples would like to have children. Some use fertility drugs, in vitro fertilization (IVF), or surrogate child-bearing. Many people, including those who have biologically recognized children, choose to adopt (see the accompanying Lessons Applied box).

Fostering a child is sometimes similar to a formal adoption in terms of permanence and a sense of kinship. Or it may be temporary placement of a child with someone else for a specific purpose, with little or no sense of kinship. Child fostering is common throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Parents foster out children to enhance the

Lessons Applied

TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTION AND THE INTERNET

China's population policy (discussed in Chapter 5) has made children—especially girls—available for international adoption. While sons ensure the continuity of the patrilineage, girls are considered better caregivers to the elderly. Ann Anagnost (2004) explored the world of transnational adoption where North American parents adopt infants from China. She noted that many people outside China assume that baby girls there are abandoned because of Chinese cultural attitudes and government policy. However, Anagnost notes that baby girls do find adoptive homes in China. Nevertheless, many children are made available for international adoption every year.

Her research explores how adoptive parents use Internet communication to articulate thoughts they might otherwise never express. Online discussions explore the best adoption agencies, the process of referral when an infant is assigned to waiting parents, the arrival of the child, and later adjustment. These informal parent networks are used to ask practical advice and share information. When they settle into the daily routine of parenting, their Internet participation tapers off.

Adoptive parents express concern about the possibility of “reactive attachment disorder” in their adoptions caused by the lack of nurturing contact in the early weeks and months after birth. Yet, Chinese adoptions are favoured because they are secure, fast, inexpensive, and final—final because there is no danger the birth parent will try to reclaim the child. One popular topic of discussion is how to construct a cultural identity for a Chinese adoptee. For example, parents search out ethnically marked clothes and toys, particularly dolls, and send their children to special summer “culture camps.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- If you were conducting an applied project to improve parental and child experiences using an agency specializing in transnational adoptions, what ethical concerns would you have? Would you consider the discussion rooms “off limits” for an applied anthropologist? How would you put your advice on policy changes at the agency into effect?



An orphanage in Shanghai, China. Human-rights activists have claimed that abuse was widespread in Chinese orphanages, especially of children with physical handicaps. Following this allegation, foreign media were invited to visit the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute.

■ (Source: © Reuters/Will Burgess)

child's chances for formal education or so that the child will learn a skill such as marketing. Most fostered children go from rural to urban areas and from poorer to better-off households. Fieldwork conducted in a neighbourhood in Accra, Ghana (see Map 8.4), sheds light on the lives of fostered children (Sanjek 1990). Child fostering in the neighbourhood is common: About one-fourth of the children were foster children. Twice as many of the fostered children were girls as boys. School attendance is biased toward boys. All of the boys were attending school, but only 4 of the 31 girls were. An important factor affecting the treatment of the child is whether the fostered child is related to his or her sponsor. Although 80 percent of the

fostered children as a whole were kin of their sponsors, only 50 percent of the girls were kin. People who sponsor nonkin girls make a cash payment to the girl's parents. These girls cook, do housecleaning, and assist in market work by carrying goods or watching the trading area. Fostered boys, most of whom are kin of their sponsors, do not perform such tasks because they attend school.

Ritually Established Sharing Bonds Ritually defined "sponsorship" of children descended from other people is common among Christians, especially Catholics, worldwide. Relationships between godparents and godchildren often involve strong emotional ties and financial flows from the former to the latter. In Arembepe, a village in Bahia state in northeastern Brazil, "Children asked their godparents for a blessing the first time they see them each day (Kottak 1992:61). Godparents give their godchildren cookies, candy, and money, and larger presents on special occasions.

Among the Maya of Oaxaca, Mexico, godparenthood is both a sign of the sponsor's status and the means to increased status (Sault 1985). The request by parents that someone sponsor their child is a public acknowledgment of the sponsor's standing. The godparent gains influence over the godchild and can call on the godchild for labour. A godparent of many children can amass a large labour force when needed and gain further status. Most godparents in Oaxaca are husband-wife couples, but many are women alone, a pattern that reflects the high status of Maya women.

Marriage

The third major basis for forming close interpersonal relationships is through marriage or other forms of "marriage-like" relationships, such as long-term cohabitation. In this section, we focus on marriage.

Toward a Definition Anthropologists recognize that some form of marriage exists in all cultures, though it may take different forms and serve different functions. What constitutes a cross-culturally valid definition of marriage is open to debate. A standard definition from 1951 is now discredited: "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the recognized legitimate offspring of both parents" (Barnard and Good 1984, 89). This definition says that the partners must be of different sexes. It implies that a child born outside a marriage is not socially recognized as legitimate. Exceptions exist to



MAP 8.4 Ghana. The Republic of Ghana has over 20 million people. Ghana has rich natural resources and exports gold, timber, and cocoa. Agriculture is the basis of the domestic economy. Several ethnic groups exist, with the Akan people constituting over 40 percent of the population. English is the official language, but another 80 or so languages are also spoken. Over 60 percent of the people are Christian, 20 percent follow traditional religions, and 16 percent are Muslim.

marriage: many factions make the definition of marriage a contentious issue; anthropologist Linda Stone defines it as

an intimate relation between spouses that creates culturally recognized in-law kin relations.

incest taboo: a rule prohibiting marriage or sexual intercourse between certain kinship relations.



Two young lesbian women in Ontario celebrate their marriage dressed in traditional white wedding dresses.

both these features cross-culturally. Same-sex marriages are now legal in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Canada. The legal status of same-gender marriage is still a matter of debate and disagreement throughout the United States.

In many cultures, no distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate children on the basis of whether they were born within a marriage. Women in the Caribbean region, for example, typically do not marry until later in life. Before that, a woman has sequential male partners with whom she bears children. None of her children is considered more or less “legitimate” than any other.

Given the range of practices that can come under the heading of marriage, many anthropologists have given up trying to find a working definition that will fit all cases. Others have suggested an open checklist of features, such as reproduction, sexual rights, raising children, or a ritual ceremony. Anthropologist Linda Stone has developed a definition that focuses on the kinship relationships formed upon marriage. This may be the most inclusive definition possible. She defines **marriage** as an intimate relation between spouses that creates culturally recognized in-law kin relations (Stone 1998:183). This definition accounts for all possible combinations of number and sex of spouses and avoids

the problem of confounding marriage with more casual relations

Selecting a Spouse All cultures have preferences about whom one should and should not marry or with whom one should or should not have sexual intercourse. Sometimes, these preferences are informal and implicit; other times, they are formal and explicit.

THE BOX
OUTSIDE
THINKING

DO SOME RESEARCH on www.match.com to learn what cultural preferences people mention in their profiles.

Rules of Exclusion

Some sort of **incest taboo**, or a rule prohibiting marriage or sexual intercourse between certain kinship relations, is one of the most basic and universal rules of exclusion.

In his writings of the 1940s, French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss dealt with the question of why all cultures have kinship systems. In his classic ethnological study, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), Lévi-Strauss argues that incest avoidance motivated men to exchange women between families. This exchange, he says, is the foundation for social networks and social solidarity beyond the immediate group. Such networks allow for trade between areas with different resources and the possibility that peaceful relations will exist between bride-exchangers.

Genetic research suggests an alternative theory for universal incest taboos. Larger breeding pools help reduce the frequency of certain genetically transmitted conditions. Like the theory of Lévi-Strauss the genetic theory is also functional. Each theory attributes the universal existence of incest taboos to their adaptive contribution, although in two different ways.

The most basic and universal form of incest taboo is against marriage or sexual intercourse between fathers and their children, and mothers and their children. In most cultures, brother–sister marriage has also been forbidden. But there are exceptions. The most well-known example of the allowance of brother–sister marriage comes from Egypt at the time of the Roman Empire (Barnard and Good 1984:92). Census data from that era show that between 15 and 20 percent of marriages were between full brothers and sisters, not just within a few royal families. Incest taboos do not universally rule out marriage with cousins. In fact, some kinship systems promote cousin marriage, as we discuss next. Cousin marriage, like brother–sister marriage, builds tightly localized kin networks. In contrast, among the pastoralist Nuer of southern Sudan, the incest taboo includes all members of the patrilineage, which may be hundreds of people. This kind of incest taboo creates widely dispersed kinship networks.

Preference Rules

Many preference rules exist cross-culturally concerning whom one should marry. Rules of **endogamy**, or marriage within a particular group, stipulate that the spouse must be from a defined social category. In kin endogamy, certain relatives are preferred, often cousins. Two major forms of cousin marriage exist. One is marriage between **parallel cousins**, children of either one's father's brother or one's mother's sister—the term *parallel* indicates that the linking siblings are of the same gender (see Figure 8.4). The second is marriage between **cross-cousins**, children of either one's father's sister or one's mother's brother—the term *cross* indicates the different genders of the linking siblings. Parallel-cousin marriage is favoured by many Muslim groups in the Middle East and northern Africa, especially the subform called *patri-lateral parallel-cousin marriage*, which is cousin marriage into the father's line.

Hindus of southern India favour matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, which is cousin marriage into the mother's line for a male ego. Although cousin marriage is preferred, it nonetheless constitutes a minority of all marriages in the region. A survey of 3527 couples in the city of Chennai (formerly called Madras; see Map 8.5) in South India showed that three-fourths of all marriages involved unrelated people, while one-fourth were between first cross-cousins (or between uncle

and niece, which is considered the same relationship as cross-cousin) (Ramesh, Srikumari, and Sukumar 1989).

Readers who are unfamiliar with cousin marriage systems may find them objectionable on the basis of the potential genetic disabilities from “close inbreeding.” A study of thousands of such marriages in South India, however, revealed only a very small difference in rates of certain “birth defects” compared with cultures in which cousin marriage is not practised (Sundar Rao 1983). Marriage networks in South India are diffuse, extending over a wide area and offering many options for “cousins.” This situation contrasts to the much more closed situation of a single village or town.

Endogamy may also be based on location. Village endogamy is a basis of arranging marriages throughout the eastern Mediterranean among both Christians and Muslims. Village endogamy is the preferred pattern among Muslims throughout India and among Hindus of southern India. In contrast, Hindus of northern India forbid village endogamy and consider it a form of incest. Instead, they practise village **exogamy** (“marriage out”). For them, a preferred spouse should live in a far-off village or town. Thus, marriage distance is greater in the north than in the south, and brides are far less likely to maintain regular contact with their natal kin in the north. Many songs and folktales of North Indian women

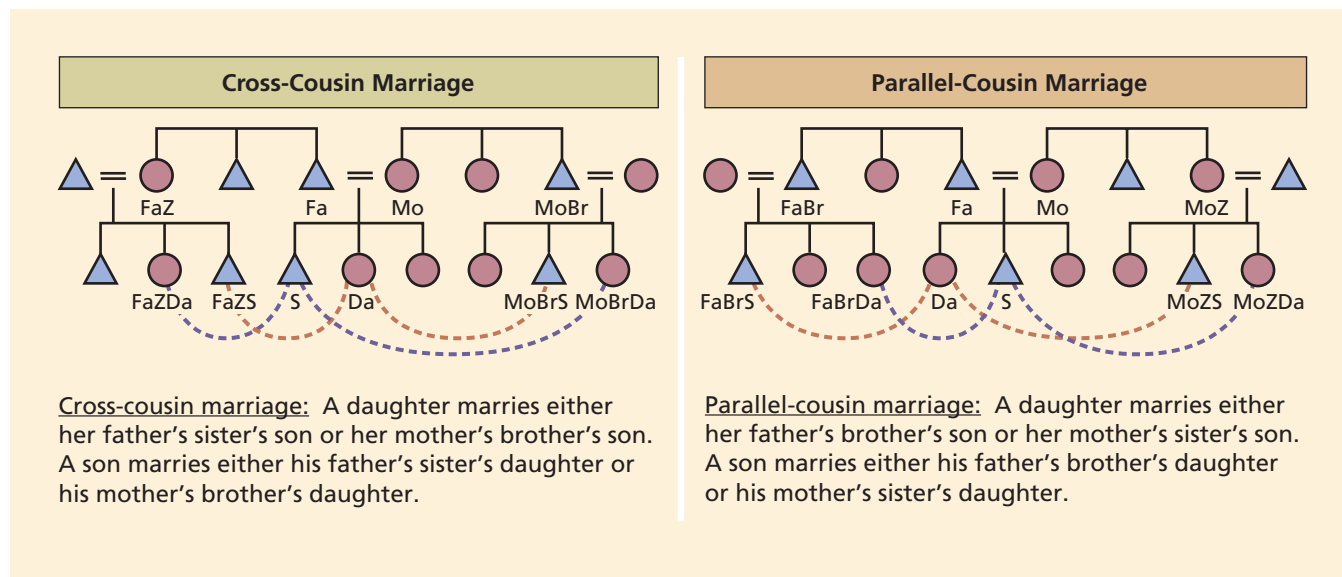


FIGURE 8.4 Two Major Types of Cousin Marriage

endogamy: marriage within a particular group or locality.

parallel cousin: offspring of either one's father's brother or one's mother's sister.

cross-cousin: offspring of either one's father's sister or one's mother's brother.

exogamy: marriage outside a particular group or locality.

hypergyny: a marriage in which the groom is of higher status than the bride.

hypogyny: a marriage in which the bride is of higher status than the groom.

isogamy: marriage between status equals.



MAP 8.5 South India. The states of southern India, compared to the northern states, have lower population density, lower fertility rates, higher literacy rates, and less severe gender inequality. Agriculture is the mainstay of the region's economy and the population is predominantly rural. Industry, information technology, and business process outsourcing (BPO) are of increasing importance in cities such as Chennai and Bangalore.

convey sadness about being separated from their natal families, a theme that may not make much sense in a situation of village endogamy, where the bride's parents are likely to be close by.

Status considerations often shape spouse selection (see Figure 8.5). The rule of **hypergyny** requires the groom to be of higher status than the bride; in other words, the bride “marries up.” Hypergyny is a strong rule in northern India, especially among upper-status groups. It is also implicitly followed among many people in North America where females “at the top” have the hardest time finding an appropriate partner because there are so few options “above them.” Women in top professions such as medicine and law have a difficult time finding an appropriate partner because there are few, if any, options for higher-status marriage partners. Women medical students in North America are experiencing an increased marriage squeeze because of status hypergyny. The opposite is **hypogyny**, when the female “marries down.” Status hypogyny is rare cross-culturally, as is age hypogyny, in which the groom is younger than the bride. Age hypogyny, though rare as a preferred pattern, is increasing in North America because women who would otherwise prefer a husband of equal age or somewhat older. **Isogamy**, marriage between partners who are status equals, occurs in cultures where male and female roles and status are equal.

Physical features, such as ability, looks, and appearance, are factors that may be explicitly or implicitly recognized, or both. Features such as facial beauty, skin colour, hair texture and length, height, and weight are variously defined as important, depending on the culture. Invariably, however, “looks” tend to be more important for females. Marriage advertisements placed in newspapers in India (similar to the “personal ads” in Western newspapers) that describe an available bride often mention that her skin colour is “fair” or “wheatish” and may note that she is slender and tall—although she should not be too tall, that is, taller than a potential groom. Preference for having the groom be taller than the bride is more common in male-dominated contexts. Marriages where the spouses are similar in height are common in cultures where gender roles are relatively equal and where sexual *dimorphism* (differences in shape and size of the female body compared to the male body), is not marked, as in much of Southeast Asia.

The role of romantic love in spouse selection is debated by biological determinists and cultural constructionists.

FIGURE 8.5 Status Considerations in Partner Selection (Heterosexual Pairing)

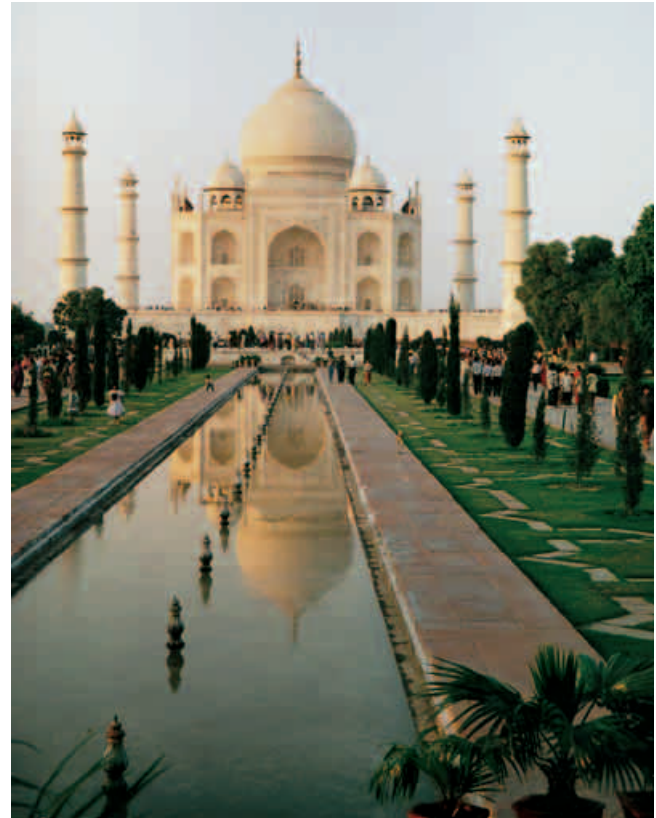
Hypergyny	The bride marries a groom of higher status.	The groom may be wealthier, more educated, older, taller.
Hypogyny	The bride marries a groom of lower status.	The bride may be wealthier, more educated, older, taller.
Isogamy	The bride and groom are status equals.	The bride and groom have similar wealth, education, age, height.



Males and females throughout much of Southeast Asia are approximately the same size, as is the case with this couple from Bali, Indonesia. ■ (Source: © Rick Smolan/Stock Boston, LLC)

Biological determinists argue that feelings of romantic love are universal among all humans because they play an adaptive role in uniting males and females in care of offspring. Cultural constructionists, in contrast, argue that romantic love is far from universal, that it is an unusual, even “aberrant” factor influencing spouse selection (Little 1966, quoted in Barnard and Good 1984:94). The cultural constructionists point to variations in male and female economic roles to explain cross-cultural variations in an emphasis on romantic love. Romantic love is more likely to be an important factor in relationships in cultures where men contribute more to subsistence, and where women are therefore economically dependent on men. Sri Lankan young people in Toronto are reported to see love marriages as occurring between inexperienced or immature individuals. For many couples, an arranged marriage “offers a tangible sense of security, family support and approval” (Morrison, Guruge, and Snarr 1999:151). Whatever the cause of romantic love, it is a common basis for marriage in many cultures (Levine et al. 1995).

The new billionaires of China (multimillionaires in terms of dollars) are men with wealth and interest in marrying a virgin woman (French 2006). They have turned to advertising to seek applications from prospective brides. In Shanghai, an enterprising lawyer began a business by managing the advertising and applicant screening for over 50 billionaires. On average, the process takes three months.



The Taj Mahal, located in Agra, North India, is a seventeenth-century monument to love. It was built by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, as a tomb for his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in childbirth in 1631. ■ (Source: Jack Heaton)

Marriage Gifts Most marriages are accompanied by gift-giving of goods or services between the partners, members of their families, or friends (see Figure 8.6). The major forms of marital exchanges cross-culturally are dowry and bridewealth.

Dowry is the transfer of goods, and sometimes money, from the bride’s side to the new married couple for their use. The dowry includes household goods such as furniture, cooking utensils and sometimes rights to a house. Dowry is the main form of marriage transfer in farming societies throughout Eurasia, from Western Europe through the northern Mediterranean and into China and India (Goody 1976). In northern India, what is called

THE BOX
OUTSIDE
THINKING **WHAT IS** your opinion about the relative merits of love marriages versus arranged marriages, and on what do you base your opinion?

bride-service: a form of marriage exchange, in which the groom works for his parents-in-law for a certain period of

time before returning home with the bride.
monogamy: marriage between two people.

polygamy: marriage involving multiple spouses.

FIGURE 8.6 Major Types of Marriage Gifts and Exchanges

Dowry	Goods and money given by the bride's family to the married couple	European and Asian cultures; agriculturalists and industrialists
Groomprice	Goods and money given by the bride's family to the married couple and to the parents of the groom	South Asia, especially northern India
Brideprice	Goods and money given by the groom's family to the parents of the bride	Asian, African, and Central and South American cultures; horticulturalists and pastoralists
Brideservice	Labour given by the groom to the parents of the bride	Southeast Asian, Pacific, and Amazonian cultures; horticulturalists



Hausa dowry goods in Accra, Ghana. The most valuable part of a Hausa bride's dowry is the *kayan dak'i* ("things of the room"). It consists of bowls, pots, ornamental glass, and cookware which are conspicuously displayed in the bride's marital house so that the local women can get a sense of her worth. The bride's parents pay for these goods as well as other more utilitarian dowry goods such as everyday cooking utensils. ■ (Source: Deborah Pellow)

"dowry" is more appropriately termed "groomwealth" because the goods and money pass not to the new couple, but instead to the groom's family (Billig 1992). In China during the Mao era, the government considered dowry a sign of women's oppression and made it illegal. The practice of giving dowry in China has returned with increased personal wealth and consumerism, especially among the newly rich urban populations (Whyte 1993).

Bridewealth, is the transfer of goods or money from the groom's side to the bride's parents. It is more common in horticultural and pastoral cultures. **Bride-service**, a subtype of bridewealth, is a transfer of labour from the groom to his parents-in-law for a designated time period. It is still practised in some horticultural societies, especially in the Amazon.

Many marriages involve gifts from both the bride's and groom's sides. For example, a typical pattern in Canada is for the groom's side to be responsible for the rehearsal dinner the night before the wedding, while the bride's side is responsible for everything else.

Forms of Marriage Cultural anthropologists distinguish two basic forms of marriage on the basis of the number of partners involved. **Monogamy** is marriage between two people—a male and female if the pair is heterosexual, or two people of the same sex in the case of a gay or lesbian pair. Heterosexual monogamy is the most common form of marriage cross-culturally, and in many countries, it is the only legal form of marriage.

Polygamy is a marriage with multiple spouses, a pattern allowed in many cultures (Murdock 1965:24).

THE BOX
OUTSIDE
THINKING

IN YOUR FAMILY, what are the prevailing ideas about wedding expenses and who should pay for them?



The woman on the lower right is part of a polyandrous marriage, which is still practised among some Tibetan peoples. She is married to several brothers, two of whom stand behind her. The older man with the sash in the front row is her father-in-law. ■ (Source: © Thomas L. Kelly/Woodfin Camp & Associates)

Two forms of polygamous marriage exist. The more common of the two is **polygyny**, marriage of one man with more than one woman. **Polyandry**, or marriage between one woman and more than one man, is extremely rare. The only place where polyandry is prevalent is in the Himalayan region that includes parts of Tibet, India, and Nepal. Non-polyandrous people in the area look down on the people who practise polyandrous marriage as backward (Haddix McCay 2001).



Households and Domestic Life

In casual conversation, North Americans might use the words *family* and *household* interchangeably to refer to people who live together. Social scientists, however, propose a distinction between the two terms. A **family** is a group of people who consider themselves related through kinship. In North American English, the term includes both close or immediate relatives and more distant

relatives. All members of a family do not necessarily live together or have strong bonds with one another.

A related term is the **household**, a person or persons who occupy a shared living space and who may or may not be related by kinship. Most households consist of members who are related through kinship, but an increasing number do not. An example of a nonkin household is a group of friends who live in the same apartment. A single person living alone also constitutes a household. In this section of the chapter, we look at household forms and organization cross-culturally, and relationships between and among household members.

The Household: Variations on a Theme

Here, we consider three forms of households and the concept of household headship. The topic of female-headed households receives detailed attention because this pattern of headship is widely misunderstood.

Household Forms

Household organization is divided into types according to how many married adults are involved. The **nuclear household** (which many people call the nuclear family) is a domestic group that contains one adult couple (married or “partners”), with or without children. An **extended household** is a domestic group that contains more than one adult married couple. The couples may be related through the father–son line (making a *patrilineal extended household*) such as the Lims of Taiwan (see Figure 8.3 on page XXX), through the mother–daughter line (a *matrilineal extended household*), or through sisters or brothers (a *collateral extended household*). Polygynous (multiple wives) and polyandrous (multiple husbands) households are **complex households**, domestic units in which one spouse lives with or near multiple partners and their children.

The precise cross-cultural distribution of these various types is not known, but some broad generalizations can be offered. Nuclear households are found in all cultures but are the exclusive household type in roughly one-fourth of the world’s cultures (Murdock 1965 [1949]:2). Extended households are the most important form in about one-half of all cultures. The distribution of these

polygyny: marriage of one husband with more than one wife.

polyandry: marriage of one wife with more than one husband.

family: a group of people who consider themselves related through a form of kinship, such as descent, marriage, or sharing.

household: a group of people, who may or may not be related by kinship, who share living space.

nuclear household: a domestic unit containing one adult couple (married or partners), with or without children.

extended household: a co-residential group that comprises more than one parent–child unit.

stem household: a co-residential group that comprises only two married couples related through males, commonly found in East Asian cultures.

matrifocality: a household system in which a female (or females) is the central, stable figure around whom other members cluster.

two household forms corresponds roughly with the modes of production. The nuclear form is most characteristic of economies at the two extremes of the continuum: in foraging groups and in industrialized societies. This pattern reflects the need for spatial mobility and flexibility in both modes of production. Extended households constitute a substantial proportion of households in horticultural, pastoralist, and farming economies.

In Japan, a subtype of the extended household structure has endured within the context of an industrial/post-industrial and urban economy. The *ie*, or **stem household**, is a variation of an extended household that contains two (and only two) married couples related through the male line. In it, only one son remains in the household, bringing in his wife, who is expected to perform the important role of caregiver to the husband's parents as they age. The stem household is still widely preferred throughout much of East Asia, although it is increasingly difficult to achieve due to changing economic aspirations of children and lowered fertility rates. Aging parents find that none of their children is willing to live with them and take responsibility for their care. Some parents exert considerable pressure on an adult child to come and live with them (Traphagan 2000). A compromise is for an adult child and his or her spouse to live near the parents but not with them.

Household Headship

The question of who heads a household is often difficult to answer. In this section, we review some approaches to this question and provide insights into how cross-cultural perceptions about household headship differ.

The *head* is the primary person, or persons, responsible for supporting the household financially and making

major decisions. This concept of household head is based on a Euro-American view that emphasizes the income contribution of the head who was traditionally a man. European colonialism spread the concept of the male, income-earning head of household around the world, along with laws that vested household authority in male headship.

The model of a male household head influences the way official statistics are gathered worldwide. If a household has a co-resident man and woman, there is a tendency to report the household as male headed. In Brazil, for example, the official definition of household head considers only a husband to be head of the household, regardless of whether he contributes to the household budget. Single, separated, or widowed women who are responsible for household support are deprived of the title of household head. If they happen to have a man visiting them on the day the census official arrives, he is considered to be the household head (de Athayde Figueiredo and Prado 1989:41). Similarly, according to official reports, 90 percent of households in the Philippines are headed by males (Illo 1985). Filipina women, however, play a prominent role in income generation and budgetary control, and both partners share decision-making. Thus, co-headship would be a more appropriate label for many households in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Matrifocality refers to a household pattern in which a woman (or women) is the central, stable domestic figure around whom other members cluster (González 1970). In a matrifocal household, the mother is likely to be the primary or only income provider. The concept of matrifocality does not exclude the possibility that men may be part of the household, but they are not the central income providers or decision-makers.



In China, the stem household system is changing because many people have one daughter and no son as a result of lowered fertility and the One-Child-Per-Family-Policy. ■ (Source: © Keren Su/Stock Boston, LLC)



Members of a matrifocal household in rural Jamaica: two sisters and their children. ■ (Source: Barbara Miller)

The number of woman-headed households is increasing worldwide, and these households are more likely to be poorer than other households. Most popular theories do not take into account ethnographic insights about the several possible causes of this form of household headship. A woman-headed household can come about if a partner never existed, if a partner existed at one time, but for some reason—such as separation, divorce, or death—is no longer part of the household, or if a partner exists but is not a co-resident because of migration, imprisonment, or some other form of separation. Most thinking about woman-headed households assumes a heterosexual relationship and thus does not account for woman-headed households formed by a single woman with children either adopted or conceived through artificial insemination, with or without a visiting woman partner. A variety of household forms are to be expected, depending on such factors as men's and women's economic roles, especially access to work, wages, and the distribution of productive resources such as property. It is not simply the gender of the household head that is of importance in the healthy functioning of households. It has more to do with the resources that the head (or co-heads) has, both material and social, such as property ownership, a decent job, and living in a safe neighbourhood.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can occur between domestic partners, parents and children, and siblings. In this section, we are concerned with the first of these. Violence between domestic partners, with males dominating as perpetrators

and women as victims, seems to be found in nearly all cultures, although in varying forms and frequencies (J. Brown 1999). A cross-cultural review reveals that wife beating is more common and more severe in contexts where men control the wealth. It is less common and less severe where women's work groups exist (Levinson 1989). The presence of women's work groups is related to a greater importance of women in production and matrifocal residence. These factors provide women with the means to leave an abusive relationship. For example, among the Garifuna, an African-Indian people of Belize, Central America (see Map 7.2 on page XXX), incidents of spouse abuse occur, but they are infrequent and not extended (Kerns 1999). Women's solidarity in this matrifocal society limits male violence against women.

Increased domestic violence worldwide throws into question the notion of the house as a refuge or place of security. In North America, there is evidence of high and increasing rates of intrahousehold abuse of children (including sexual abuse), violence between spouses or partners, and abuse of aged family members. Anthropological research will help policy-makers and social workers better understand the factors affecting the safety of individuals within households and to be able to design more effective programs to promote personal safety.

Household Transformations

The composition and sheer existence of a particular household can change as a consequence of several factors, including divorce, death, and possible remarriage.

A shared bedroom in a battered woman's shelter, Tel Aviv, Israel. Many people wonder why abused women do not leave their abusers. Part of the answer lies in the unavailability and low quality of shelters throughout much of the world. ■ (Source: © David Wells/The Image Works)



In this section, we review anthropological findings on these topics.

Divorce and Kinship Patterns Divorce and separation, like marriage and other forms of long-term union, are cultural universals, even though they may be frowned on or forbidden. Marriages may break up for several reasons—the most common are voluntary separation and death of one of the partners. Globally, variations exist in the legality and propriety of divorce. Some religions, such as Roman Catholicism, prohibit divorce. In Muslim societies, divorce by law is easier for a husband to obtain than for a wife. Important research questions about marital dissolution include the causes for it, the reasons why divorce rates appear to be rising worldwide, and the implications for the welfare of children of divorced parents and other dependents.

One hypothesis for why divorce rates vary cross-culturally says that divorce rates will be lower in cultures with unilineal descent. In such cultures, a large descent group has control over and interests in offspring and control over in-marrying spouses due to their dependence (Barnard and Good 1984:119). Royal lineages, with their strong interests in maintaining the family line, are examples of groups especially unlikely to favour divorce, because it generally means losing control of offspring. In bilateral foraging societies, there is more flexibility in both marriage and divorce. The hypothesis, in general, appears to have some merit.

Another question is the effect of multiple spouses on divorce. A study in Nigeria, West Africa, found that two-wife arrangements are the most stable, whereas marriages involving three or more wives have the highest rates of disruption (Gage-Brandon 1992). Similar results come from an analysis of household break-up in a polyandrous group of Tibetan people living in north-western Nepal (see Map 7.3 on page XXX) (Haddix McCay 2001). Wealth of the household is an important factor affecting household stability, but the number of brothers is another strong factor. Polyandrous households comprising two brothers are far less likely to break up than those with four or more brothers. An additional factor, although more difficult to quantify, are the social support and networks that a brother has beyond the polyandrous household. Only with such social support will he be able to build a house and establish a separate household on his own.

Widow(er)hood The position of a widow or widower carries altered responsibilities and rights. Women's position as widows is often marked symbolically. In Mediterranean cultures, a widow must wear modest, simple, and black-coloured clothing, sometimes for the rest of her life. Her sexuality is supposed to be virtually dead. At the same time, her new "asexual" status allows her greater spatial freedom than before. She can go to

public coffeehouses and taverns, something not done by women whose husbands are living.

Extreme restrictions on widows are recorded for parts of South Asia where social pressures on a widow enforce self-denial and self-deprivation, especially among the propertied class. A widow should wear a plain white sari, shave her head, eat little food, and live a celibate life. Many widows in India are abandoned, especially if they have no son to support them. They are considered polluting and inauspicious. Widows elsewhere experience symbolic and life-quality changes much more than do widowers. For example, in South Africa, a widower's body is not marked in any significant way except to have his head shaved. He is required to wear a black button or armband for roughly six months. A widow's body is marked by shaving her head, smearing a mixture of herbs and ground charcoal on her body, wearing black clothes made from an inexpensive material, and covering her face with a black veil and her shoulders with a black shawl. She may even wear her clothes inside out, wear one shoe, eat with her wrong hand, or dine from a lid instead of a plate (Ramphele 1996:100).



Changing Kinship and Household Dynamics

In this section, we provide examples of how marriage and household patterns are changing. Many of these changes have roots in colonialism whereas others are the result of recent changes effected by globalization.

Change in Descent

Matrilineal descent is declining worldwide as a result of both European colonialism and contemporary Western globalization. European colonial rule in Africa and Asia contributed to the decline in matrilineal kinship by registering land and other property in the names of assumed male heads of household, even where females were the heads (Boserup 1970). This process eroded women's previous rights and powers. Western missionaries contributed to transforming matrilineal cultures into patrilineal systems (Etienne and Leacock 1980). European colonial influences led to the decline of matrilineal kinship among Native North Americans. Before European colonialism, North America had one of the largest distributions of matrilineal descent worldwide, although not all Native North American groups were matrilineal. A comparative study of kinship among three reservation-based Navajo groups in Arizona shows that matrilineality is stronger where conditions most resemble the pre-reservation era (Levy, Henderson, and Andrews 1989). Among the Minangkabau of Indonesia

(review the Ethnographic Profile in this chapter), three factors are related to the decline of matrilineal kinship (Blackwood 1995):

- Dutch colonialism promoted the image of male-headed nuclear families as an ideal.
- Islamic teachings idealize women as wives and men as household heads.
- The modernizing Indonesian state has a policy of naming males as household heads

Change in Marriage

Although the institution of marriage in general remains prominent, many of its details are changing. New forms of communication are affecting ways of finding a potential partner and courtship. In a village in western Nepal people's stories of their marriages reveal that arranged marriages have decreased and elopement has increased since the 1990s. Through interviews with dozens of married women, Laura Ahern learned of the growing importance in the 1990s of love letters in establishing marital relationships (2001). Dating is not allowed, so sending love letters is how young people court. One woman offered to share a love letter from her husband and gave permission for it to be copied. Eventually, many



A newly married husband and wife and their relatives in front of a church in Seoul, Republic of Korea. ■ (Source: © Noboro Komine/Photo Researchers, Inc.)

other villagers did the same. Of the 200 letters Ahern collected, 170 were written by men and 30 by women. Typically, the man starts the correspondence. For example, one man's love letter contains the following lines: "I'm helpless and I have to make friends of

a notebook and pen in order to place this helplessness before you. . . . I'll let you know by a 'short cut' what I want to say: Love is the union of two souls. The 'main' meaning of love is 'life success.' I'm offering you an invitation to love" (2001:3). Love letters became possible only in the 1990s because of increased literacy rates in the village. Literacy facilitated self-selected marriages and thus supported an increasing sense of personal agency among the younger people of the village.

Nearly everywhere, the age at first marriage is rising. The later age at marriage is related to increased emphasis on completing a certain number of years of education before marriage and to higher material aspirations such as being able to own a house. Marriages between people of different nations and ethnicities are increasing, partly because of growing rates of international migration. Migrants take with them many of their marriage and family practices. They also adapt to rules and practices in their area of destination. Pluralistic practices evolve, such as conducting two marriage ceremonies—one conforming to the "original" culture and the other the culture in the place of destination.

Marriage crises are situations in which people who want to marry cannot do so for one reason or another. They appear to be more frequent now than in the past, at least as perceived and reported by young people in the so-called marriage market. Two examples illustrate variations in how a marriage crisis comes about and how it plays out for those caught up in it. In a town of about 38 000 in rural Niger, West Africa, the marriage crisis involves young men's inability to raise the necessary funds for the bridewealth and additional gifts to the bride's family (Masquelier 2005). Among these Muslim, Hausa-speaking people, called Mawri, marriage is the crucial ritual that changes a boy into a man. Typically, a prospective groom receives financial assistance from his kin and friends. In Niger, the economy has been declining for some time, and typical farm or other wages are worth less than they were in earlier times. Marriage costs for the groom have not declined, however—quite the opposite. Wealthy young men can afford to give a car to the bride's parents as a wedding gift. But most young Mawri men cannot afford such gifts and are caught in the marriage crisis. They remain sitting at home in their parents' house, something that



WHAT FORMS of communication do young people use to "court" someone in your cultural world? How was it different in your parents' time?

only females do. The many young, marriage-age women who remain single gain a reputation of being immoral, as they occupy a new and suspect social space between girl and wife.

Weddings are important, culture-revealing events in themselves. Style changes in weddings worldwide abound. Factors of changes to consider are the ceremony, costs, appropriate clothing, and the possibility of a honeymoon. The globalization of Western-style “white weddings” promotes the adoption of many features familiar in the West: a white wedding gown for the bride, a multilayered wedding cake, and certain kinds of floral arrangements. What the bride and groom wear is an expression of their personal identity as well as the cultural identity of their families and larger social group. Clothing choice may reflect adherence to “traditional” values or may reject those in favour of more “modern” values. Euro-American trends are prominent worldwide. Throughout much of East and Southeast Asia, advertisements and upscale stores display the Western-style white wedding gown (but less so in India, where white clothing for women signifies widowhood and is inauspicious). On the other hand, resurgence of local styles is occurring in some contexts, such as in Morocco, where there is a trend for “modern” brides to wear a Berber costume (long robes and silver jewellery characteristic of the rural, mountain pastoralists) at one stage of the wedding ceremony.

Changing Households

Globalization is creating rapid change in household structure. One assumption is that the frequency of extended households will decline with industrialization and urbanization and the frequency of nuclear households will rise. Given what we mentioned earlier in this chapter about the relationship between nuclear households and industrialism, it is highly possible that with the spread of this mode of production, nuclear households will increase, too.

This projection finds strong confirmation in the changes that have occurred in household structure among the Kelabit people of highland Borneo since the early 1990s (Amster 2000) (see Map 8.6). One Kelabit settlement was founded in 1963 near the Indonesian border. At the time, everyone lived in one longhouse with over twenty family units. It was a “modern” longhouse, thanks to roofing provided by the British army and the innovation of private sleeping areas. Like more traditional longhouses, though, it was an essentially egalitarian living space within which individuals could freely move. Today, that longhouse is no more. Most of the young people have migrated to coastal towns and work in jobs related to the offshore oil industry. Most houses



MAP 8.6 Kelabit Region in Malaysia. The Kelabit people’s homeland is the Kelabit Highlands in Sarawak, a plateau ringed by mountain peaks that are forest-covered. One of Malaysia’s smallest indigenous tribes, they number around 6000 people, or 0.4 percent of Sarawak’s population of 1.5 million, and .03 percent of Malaysia’s total population of 22 million. Less than one-third of the Kelabit people live in the highlands.

are now single-unit homes with an emphasis on privacy. The elders complain of a “bad silence” in the village. No one looks after visitors with the old style of hospitality. There is no longer one common longhouse for communal feasts and rituals.

International migration is another major cause of change in household formation and internal relationships (discussed further in Chapter 14). Dramatic reductions in fertility can occur in one generation when members of a farming household in, for example, Taiwan or Egypt, migrate to England, France, Canada, or the United States. Having many children makes economic sense in their homeland, but not in the new destination. Many such migrants decide to have only one or two children. They tend to live in small, isolated nuclear households. International migration creates new challenges for relationships between parents and children. The children often become strongly identified with the new culture and have little connection with their ancestral culture. This rupture creates anxiety for the parents and conflict between children and parents over issues such as dating, dress, and career goals.

A modern-style Kelabit longhouse built in the 1990s (top). It is the home of six families who formerly lived in a twenty-family longhouse, seen in the background, which is being dismantled. Since the 1990s, houses built for a nuclear unit have proliferated in the highlands (bottom). These houses stand on the site of a former multi-unit longhouse. ■ (Source: Matthew Amster)



Change in everyday life in households is an understudied topic. Basic outlines of the near future in industrial societies point to the reduced economic dependence of women on men as wage earners and the possible decline of heterosexual marriage (Cherlin 1996: 478–480). These changes, in turn, will lead to increased movement away from nuclear household living and to increased diversity in household forms. During the second half of the twentieth century, household size in the Canada shrank from an average of 3.9 in 1961 to 2.4 persons in 2001. The current situation contains several seemingly contradictory patterns first noted in

the early 1980s by two sociologists (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1992 [1983]). They reported that the number of unmarried couples living together has more than tripled since 1970 and that one out of four children does not live with both parents. Other studies show that at current rates, more than one-third of all marriages in Canada will end in divorce (Campbell and Carroll 2007:123).

Early in the twenty-first century, three kinds of households are most common in North America: households composed of couples living in their first marriage, single-parent households, and households formed

through remarriage. A new fourth category is the *multigenerational household*, in which an “adult child” (or “boomerang kid”) lives with his or her parents. Roughly one in three unmarried adults between the ages of 25 and 55 share a home with their mother or father or both (*Psychology Today* 1995 [28]:16). Another variation of this type of household is the skip-generation household where grandparents care for their grandchildren. In Canada, First Nations families are disproportionably represented in this category with 17 percent of grandparents raising a grandchild without a parent present (Campbell and Carroll: 122).

Currently, adult offspring spend over 2 hours a day doing household chores, with adult daughters contributing roughly 17 hours a week and adult sons putting in 14.4 hours. Daughters spend most of their time doing laundry, cooking, cleaning, and washing dishes. Sons are more involved in yard work and car care. Parents in multigenerational households still do three-quarters of the housework.

Kinship and household formation are certainly not dull or static. Just trying to keep up with changing patterns in North America is a daunting task, to say nothing of the challenge of keeping up with changes worldwide.



Key Questions Revisited

HOW do cultures create kinship ties through descent, sharing, and marriage?

Key differences exist between unilineal and bilateral descent systems. Within unilineal systems, further important variations exist between patrilineal and matrilineal systems in terms of property inheritance, residence rules for married couples, and the relative status of males and females. Worldwide, unilineal systems are more common than bilateral systems. Within unilineal kinship systems, patrilineal kinship is more common than matrilineal kinship.

A second important basis for kinship is sharing. Sharing one's child with someone else through either informal or formal processes is probably a cultural universal. Sharing-based kinship is created through food transfers, including breastfeeding (in some cultures, children breastfed by the same woman are considered kin and cannot marry). Ritualized sharing creates kinship, as in the case of godparenthood.

The third basis for kinship is marriage, another universal factor, even though definitions of marriage may differ substantially. All cultures have rules of exclusion and preference rules for spouses.

WHAT is a household and what do anthropologists study about household life?

A household may consist of a single person living alone or may be a group comprising more than one person who may or may not be related by kinship; these individuals share a living space and, often, financial responsibilities for the household.

Nuclear households consist of a mother and father and their children, but they also can be just a husband and wife without children. Nuclear households are found in

all cultures but are most common in foraging and industrial societies. Extended households include more than one nuclear household. They are most commonly found in cultures with a unilineal kinship system. Stem households, which are most common in East Asia, are a variant of an extended household in which only one child, usually the first born, retains residence with the parents.

Household headship can be shared between two partners or can be borne by a single person, as in a woman-headed household. Study of intrahousehold dynamics between parents and children and among siblings reveals complex power relationships as well as security, sharing, and sometimes violence. Household break-up comes about through divorce, separation of cohabiting partners, or death of a spouse or partner.

HOW are kinship and households changing?

The increasingly connected world in which we live is having marked effects on kinship formation and household patterns and dynamics. Matrilineal systems have been declining in distribution since European colonialist expansion beginning in the 1500s.

Many aspects of marriage are changing, including a trend toward later age at marriage in many developing countries. Although marriage continues to be an important basis for the formation of nuclear and extended households, other options (such as cohabitation) are increasing in importance in many contexts, including urban areas in developed countries.

Contemporary changes in kinship and in household formation raise several serious questions for the future, perhaps most importantly about the care of dependent members such as children, the aged, and disabled people. As fertility rates decline and average household size shrinks, kinship-based entitlements to basic needs and emotional support disappear.

KEY CONCEPTS

- avunculocality, p. 209
- bilateral descent, p. 205
- bride-service, p. 217
- cross-cousin, p. 214
- descent, p. 205
- double descent, p. 207
- endogamy, p. 214
- exogamy, p. 214
- extended household, p. 218
- family, p. 218
- genealogy, p. 203
- household, p. 218
- hypergyny, p. 215
- hypogyny, p. 215
- incest taboo, p. 213
- Isogamy, p. 215
- kinship diagram, p. 203
- kinship system, p. 202
- marriage, p. 213
- matrifocality, p. 219
- matrilineal descent, p. 205
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- monogamy, p. 217
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- nuclear household, p. 218
- parallel cousin, p. 214
- patrilineal descent, p. 205
- patrilocality, p. 209
- polyandry, p. 218
- polygamy, p. 217
- polygyny, p. 218
- stem household, p. 219
- unilineal descent, p. 205

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To reinforce your understanding of this chapter, and to identify topics for further study, visit MyAnthroLab at www.myanthrolab.com for diagnostic tests and a multimedia ebook.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Irwin Altman and Joseph Ginat, eds. *Polygynous Families in Contemporary Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996. This book provides a detailed account of polygyny as practised in two fundamentalist Mormon communities of Utah, one rural and the other urban.
- Dorothy Ayers Counts, Judith K. Brown, and Jacquelyn C. Campbell, eds. *To Have and to Hit: Cultural Perspectives on Wife Beating*. Champaign/Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999. Chapters include an introductory overview, and cases from Australia, southern Africa, Papua New Guinea, India, Central America, the Middle East, and the Pacific.
- Jamila Bargach. *Orphans of Islam: Family, Abandonment, and Secret Adoption in Morocco*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002. According to Islam, adoption is not legal. Many Muslim childless couples, however, secretly adopt children and cover up their identity. Most adoptees are second-class members of their new families and cannot inherit property.
- Amy Borovoy. *The Too-Good Wife: Alcohol, Codependency, and the Politics of Nurturance in Postwar Japan*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005. This book explores the experiences of middle-class women in Tokyo who participated in a weekly support meeting for families of substance abusers. The women attempt to cope with their husbands' alcoholism while facing the dilemma that being a good wife may be part of the problem.
- Helen Bradley Foster and Donald Clay Johnson, eds. *Wedding Dress across Cultures*. New York: Berg, 2003. Chapters examine the evolution and ritual functions of wedding attire in cultures such as urban Japan, First Peoples of Alaska, Swaziland, Morocco, Greece, and the Andes.
- Sara L. Friedman. *Intimate Politics: Marriage, the Market, and State Power in Southeastern China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. Village culture along China's southeastern coast is distinct from mainstream Han culture. Women have much autonomy, are important in production, and have strong networks with other women. This woman-centred culture conflicts with official state reforms.
- Irene Glasser and Rae Bridgman. *Braving the Street: The Anthropology of Homelessness. Public Issues in Anthropological Perspective*, vol. 1. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999. Fieldwork with homeless people reveals complexities of the problem that have been overlooked by public officials. The authors propose solutions.
- Laurel Kendall. *Getting Married in Korea: Of Gender, Morality, and Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California, 1996. The ethnographic study examines preferences about desirable spouses, matchmaking, marriage ceremonies and their financing, and the effect of women's changing work roles on their marital aspirations.
- Judith S. Modell. *A Sealed and Secret Kinship: The Culture of Policies and Practices in American Adoption*. New York, Berghahn Books, 2002. This book focuses on the increasing debate about adoption by reviewing case examples of parents, children, kin, and nonkin of adoptive families in the United States. The author addresses topics such as adoption reform, adoptee experiences of searching for their birth parents, current practices of placing children, and changes in welfare policy.
- Richard Parkin and Linda Stone, eds. *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. This collection traces the history of the anthropological study of kinship from the early 1900s to the present. It includes classical and contemporary works and situates them in the context of major theoretical debates.
- Peter H. Stephenson. *The Hutterian People: Ritual and Rebirth in the Evolution of Communal Life*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991. This ethnography investigates how the Hutterites have maintained a vital and long-lived utopian religious community. Many of them live in Western Canada.
- Nancy Tapper. *Bartered Brides: Politics, Gender and Marriage in an Afghan Tribal Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Based on fieldwork before the Soviet invasion, this study examines marriage among the Maduzai, a tribal society of Turkistan. The book looks at how marriage relates to productive and reproductive aspects of society and the role it plays in managing political conflict and competition.
- Margaret Trawick. *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992. This reflexive ethnography takes a close look at the daily dynamics of kinship in one Tamil (South Indian) family. Special attention is given to sibling relationships, the role of older people, children's lives, and the way love and affection are played out in a particularly Tamil way.
- Toby Alice Volkman, ed. *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. Chapters discuss Korean adoptees as a global family, transnational adoption in North America, shared parenthood among low-income people in Brazil, and representations of "waiting children."