

CLASS GENERATED READING/STUDY GUIDE

Sociology 281-002 Spring 2009

Social Structure: socially created institutions and practices that governs behavior.

Example: Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality,

Social Institutions: the processes by which Social Structures are established and maintained. Example: Government, Education, Religion, Media

Social Constructions: socially agreed upon ideas or Norms that change over time and from culture to culture.

Norms: agreed upon expectations for behavior. E.g. “What is Normal?”

Chapter 1 The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love

Why have people found “love as the basis of marriage” such a radical idea?

- Plato: highest love between equals (men) Platonic Love
- Birth (natal family or family of orientation) more important than family by marriage (family of procreation or conjugal family)
- Love is problematic because: it interferes with other commitments to extended family, natal family, parents, as time progresses its problematic because it interferes with commitment to God.
- Love might be an outcome but not a reason for marriage. Marriages are made for political, economic and strategic reasons. And in the middle ages romantic love was outside of marriage.

Chapter 2 The Many Meanings of Marriage

What contemporary ideas about marriage are challenged by historical and cultural differences?

- Arranged marriages (by parents or other family members)
- Idea that children do not necessarily belong to their parents’ group
- Same sex marriage
- Marriage as between groups who are enemies
- Polygamy: polygyny (one man and several women) and polyandry (one woman and several men)

Chapter 3 The Invention of Marriage

What form did the marriages take in the earliest human societies?

- A flexible gendered division of labor – more role/job sharing in some groups

- Sharing of resources with the whole group, not just immediate family
- Economic cooperation with the whole band, not just nuclear family
- Marriage as a bond of exchanges between groups
- Lack of hierarchy and some relative equality.

What happens when historical changes bring inequality to human societies?

- Greater and stricter gendered division of labor.
- Endogamy (marriage within groups)
- Concerns over inheritance, heirs and “legitimacy”
- Stricter controls over women’s sexuality outside of marriage. (to preserve father blood relations, heirs)
- Patriarchal control over women and younger men. (father rule)
- Ruling circle establishes rules for marriage and divorce. (religion and law)
- Class endogamy (marriage within your class).

Chapter 4 Soap Operas of the Ancient World.

How did family fulfill the functions that governments and economies fulfill today?

- Marriage created bonds between aristocratic extended families.
- Marriage consolidated property and maintained wealth.
- Families performed most social functions: including, crime/justice, economic support, political maneuvering, religious hierarchies, and career job training,
- Think about how and why marriage between rulers consolidated power.

Chapter 5 Something Borrowed: The Marital Legacy of the Classical World and Early Christianity.

What factors led to challenges to the idea that kinship should structure society?

- Democracy, which gave individuals some ability to appeal to a central government
- The idea of universal law
- A government or ruling army not aligned to specific families.
- Christianity and the idea of universal brother and sisterhood.

What did the introduction of Christianity bring to the challenge to kin-based societies?

- Attempted to be the institution that governed and sanctioned marriage and divorce.
- Centralized definition of marriage
- Condemned divorce and polygyny

Chapter 6 Playing the Bishop, Capturing the Queen: Aristocratic Marriages on Early Medieval Europe

- After the breakup of the Roman Empire, there is a division into two sections... The Byzantium (eastern Europe) and the Western Lands.
- Byzantine- (Alexandrian, Antioch etc) has claim to legitimacy by Roman lineage. In Byzantium eunuchs appointed to court offices (also in China) who would not

- have children and families to rival him.
- Nobles- marries primarily for wealth and influence (ties to king).
- In the West though –Clan rules (small kingdoms) at war. So making peace by intermarriage. Also marriage and divorce even polygamous marriages to establish a hold on power base. Similar to pre-Roman.
- Women can own and inherit property and among the aristocracy have significant rights. Establishment of “Queens Court” that results in women as both peacemakers and Kingmakers. Can choose to leave husband, or Separate with him to join religious order.

THEN

- Christian reforms limit the nobles’ ability to use divorce and remarriage as strategies for accumulating wealth and power. Church prohibited divorce, except for adultery, heresy, or extreme cruelty and also prohibited remarriage after divorce.
- It becomes common for males to have multiple illegitimate children who are dependant on him, puts them in military or church. Provides allies. Monogamous marriage that would establish only “legitimate” children could inherit.
- Divorce becomes EVEN more difficulty re: church so extension of incest prohibitions to 7th degree. Also includes all in-laws (example brothers wife’s cousin) also includes family of all godparents of your children. Is generally ignored for practical reasons BUT if a divorce is desired generally a link can be found within the 7th degree.

Chapter 7 How the Other 95 Percent Lived

- What were the marriage patterns among the non-aristocratic 95%?
- Gender roles meant that marriage was necessary to establish an economically viable household.
- Households needed the mutual assistance of neighboring households, who then also had a stake in who you married and how you behaved within marriage.
- Marriage, not children, conferred adult status. Thus a couple could have an existing child before marriage and “confer legitimacy” on it.
- Urban experiences-included economic dependence and shared links with merchants and artisans. Urban trades (Two person careers)
- Marriage among the merchant middle class-generally fell between the rules of the working and upper. Parents controlled marriage through economic gain/benefits and to make such benefits.
- Married women lost rights in property. Husband was responsible for wife and her actions. What would contemporary be defined as wife battering or domestic violence had no/little formal sanction. The concept of husbands as disciplinarians was central.
- Women were considered the more sexualized gender, and were often considered a

danger on this sense.

Chapter 8 Something Old, Something New: Western European Marriage at the Dawn of the Modern Age.

- Western Europe provides some of the most clearly established and stringent rules about marriage and family movement that are still evident in today's marriage practices. However, idea of shared consent still existed.
- Female dependant on males increased from later middle ages until modern era in West Europe.
 - A married couple established a separate economic household
 - Polygamy was prohibited.
 - Notion that a person should consent to marriage.
 - Later age at marriage (focus on marital business and mutual support rather than childbearing)
 - Unmarried young adults had to work to build a dowry or job training worked as servants or apprentices.
 - Higher rates of non-marriage.
 - When they did wed, they placed more emphasis on the couple rather than extended families. Couple made more decisions based on weakening of serfdom (post Black Death). However, not same as current nuclear family due to presence of servants, lodgers or absence of kids and teens (who worked independently or as servants)
 - A harmonious marriage was good for business.
 - More sharing of work and resources among fellow villagers, who were less likely to be kin because of the Church rules prohibiting marriages among kin to the 4th degree.
- Lower fertility-due to later marriages and women more likely to live older because of starting childbearing later.
- Women's job experience, living apart from parents, and later age of marriage made them more independent. Also resulted in larger pool of unmarried labor than elsewhere where women were more restricted to in home tasks. HOWEVER women still subordinate to men-women had for example lost the right to own property independently

Catholic Vs Protestant Marriage

- Catholics - Celibate clergy, marriage as necessary evil, Pope as boss
- Protestant - Married clergy, idealized marriage, no pope in control
- England and Germany-dissolution of catholic monasteries and convents - government gains land
- Protestant reformers begin to focus increasingly on ideals of love- Catholics soon follow along. Yet while parents were discouraged from pushing loveless marriages, the rights of individuals to not marry were eroded.
- Women couldn't establish independent households and parental consent needed for marriage was legalized formally.
- Increased penalties for sex before of marriage. Stricter regulations for parental

- consent were imposed.
- Love still regarded with suspicion and sexual double standard still in place. Violence against women still tolerated and expected. Love is an ideal but not in practice

Chapter 9: From Yoke Mates to Soul Mates, Emergence of the Love Match and the Male Provider Marriage

This is the beginning of the traditional “father provider” rather than “father ruler” family form in Western Europe and the US. Please note some of the reasons behind these changes

- Market economy: economic separation of parents from children with wage labor. Men have better access to well-paying jobs. This helped create the male breadwinner household and the ideal of separate spheres.
- Enlightenment: a more secular, scientific view of marriage as a private contract
- Revolutionary ideals of democracy and individual rights and notions of egalitarianism.

Chapter 10: “Two Birds Within One Nest”

What characterized the Victorian family values and structure?

- Separate spheres –public/male sphere and private/female.
 - Male breadwinner, female homemaker
- Emphasis on personal morality as defined by sexual purity, especially **female sexual purity** in what Coontz called the “cult of female purity”
- Women were considered more moral than men and the home more moral than the world outside.
 - Women were not considered to be sexual, if they were “normal”
 - Women, since they were thought to be more moral, could refuse their husbands’ demands for sex.
- Class differences because low-income families needed the wife to be employed.
- Veneration of same-sex friendships (desexualized love between same sex friends due to ideas of natural or inherent differences between the genders)
- Some women took the idea of their greater morality into the public sphere in social purity movements against slavery, against alcohol and drug use, against prostitution, and against child labor.
- Labor union used the male breadwinner model to argue for a “family wage.”

Chapter 11: “A Heaving Volcano” Beneath the Surface of Victorian Marriage

What issues arose from the middle-class ideal of a good Victorian Marriage?

- Fear of sexual impropriety
- Love and intimacy as ideal but in practice this is thwarted by the idea of separate spheres and separate personalities.
- Sexual pleasure condemned and considered “unnatural” for women.
- Male dominance is no longer understood as a “men are stronger than women” argument and now understood as a “women are better suited to moral (home) spaces” Men had legal and practical power over women
- Women needed to marry for economic and social survival, which ran counter to the ideal of marriage for love.

- As girl's education advanced they wanted more involvement in the public sphere.
- More demand for birth control, but a conservative backlash against it in the Comstock Law of 1873, which banned contraception and abortion and made it a crime to advertise.
- A growing women's rights movement

Chapter 12 "The Time When Mountains Move Has Come": From Sentimental to Sexual Marriage

- The flapper (loved dancing, short hair, and short skirts and abandoned the corset)
- More sexual relationship between husband and wife
- More dating and informal heterosexual socializing.
- Sex was a focus of scientific and popular research and analysis (Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis)
- The car as a route to coupling.
- Alcohol and drug experimentation
- More pre-marital sex and affairs during marriage
- Movies were a source of popular ideals about dating and sex
- Rejection of close same-sex relationships
- Socializing in couples
- Backlash against feminism
- Women were to date and experiment with intimacy and to control men's advances
- Eugenics movement and prohibition against interracial marriage (by 1913, 42 states had passed anti-miscegenation laws)
- Rise of marriage counseling

Chapter 13 Making Do, Then Making Babies: Marriage in the Great Depression

- What effects did the Depression and WWII have on love and marriage?
- Ended the Jazz age and its emphasis on experimentations with dating, love, and intimacy
- Abortion available to marriage women, who couldn't support so many children
- More married women got jobs
- Married women's housework increased in order to make do with less
- Reaction against women's employment, esp. if her husband had a job.
- Government programs to support families
- Social Security Act of 1935: two-tier system of entitlements for some families and "welfare" for other
- Social security payments were greater for married couple than for singles.
- GI Bill

Chapter 14 The Era of Ozzie and Harriet: The Long Decade of "Traditional Marriage"

What characterized the era of the 1950s and 60s and why does Coontz call the culmination of two centuries of change?

- Never before had so many people found their own mates.
- Emphasis on marriage and married couple socializing.
- One "normal": male breadwinner, female homemaker family

- Single people were not “normal”
- Women turned to marriage and homemaking as the only source of their own happiness
- Introduction of family entertainment with the TV, and its programs focused on families
- The Baby Boom: Increase in number of children (from the pre-war period).
- More people in own homes separate from extended family in the suburbs.
- Mass consumption, but with the homemaker and nuclear family as the focus of advertising
- More women in college, but to get their MRS degree
- Economic boom period but rapid expansion of jobs
- Laws still restricted married women’s rights with husband as head of household
- Beginnings of sexualization of mass culture.

Chapter 15: Winds of Change Marriage in the 1960s and 1970s and a. Marriage less central to young women’s lives

- Emphasis on youth culture and mass consumption focused on younger people
- More pre-marital sex and more cohabitation
- More divorce, which began to level off and decline in 1981. Introduction of no-fault divorce.
- Later age of marriage and fewer children
 - Availability of contraception and abortion
- More education and careers for women thus women less dependent upon men.
- 1967 end to anti-miscegenation laws as Supreme Court overturns Loving v. Virginia
- 1968 End to legal distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children in Supreme Court ruling Levy v. Louisiana
- Challenges to the gender roles
- Dual earner families (as opposed to male breadwinner, female homemaker family)
- More single-person households