

Exercise: Explore the cultural logic of the following marital practices that are observed in many cultures worldwide:

→ In other words, why do people in this culture engage in this behavior? Why might a person in this culture say she likes this practice?

* This is a brainstorming exercise. I will collect these sheets, but you will not be graded on their content

Arranged Marriage

- parents don't believe their children are old enough to make good decisions (parent always approves of the marriage partner)
- keeps clear structures.
- select a spouse from a worthy group/family.
- less divorce - do not want to upset families/parents.
- strategic links between families
- solidifies parent-child ties

- parents know children best - children trust parent children will pick
- no dating = no broken hearts.
- security of knowing you have a husband.
- convenience
- tradition - don't think of anything else.
- family pressure to follow tradition

Bridewealth

- woman is properly being bought
- compensation for loss of woman in family (for work)
- class status - shows woman's worth
- to show respect for Opposite family - solidifies relationship
- material contribution to the joint union.
- signifies publicly the worth of the bride.
- security to bride in case husband dies (his family maintained in her & will continue to support her & her children)

- tradition
- gift helps out wife's family economically.
- shows off status
- woman: happy about almost man's family willing to give her family.

Polygyny

- class status
- economic reasons
- man: power for more wives he has.
- more wives = more goods = more money
- wives = working force
- increases # of children (for ♂ only)
- if a wife is barren, can remain married with little to no shame (not get divorced)
- companionship

- satisfies sexual needs of male when can't have sex with 1 wife (due to kid)
- wives ease out workload between wives.