Class 2: Mate Selection
- Kick-off session
- Discussion of Buss & Schmitt, Surra & Hughes, and Xu & Whyte
- Reaction paper questions

Mate Choice
- Endogamy (homogamy) vs exogamy (heterogamy)
- Residential propinquity vs occupations propinquity

An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating
- Men and women face different adaptive problems and constraints on their reproductive success.
- For men, the major reproductive constraint has been the number of reproductively valuable and fertile women they can successfully inseminate.
- For women, one major reproductive constraint has been obtaining as mates men who showed an ability and willingness to invest resources in their offspring.

An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating
- Types of mating strategies:
  - Short-term mating
  - Long-term mating
- Mating is strategic
  - Human mating is goal directed and problem-solving

An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating
- Men and women have evolved to pursue both short- and long-term mating strategies.
- The problems they face differ when they pursue one strategy versus another.

An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating
- Parental investment- any investment by the parent in an individual offspring that increases the offspring’s chances of survival
- The sex that invests more in offspring should be more choosy or discriminating about who they mate with
- The sex that invests less in offspring should compete more vigorously for access to valuable high-investing members of the opposite sex
An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating

Historically, what was the reproductive benefit to men who successfully pursued a short-term sexual strategy?

- An increase in the number of offspring produced.

What are the costs of short-term mating for men?

- They risk contracting sexually transmitted diseases
- They risk getting a reputation as a womanizer;
- They risk violence at the hands of jealous husbands;

Why should men pursue a long-term mating strategy?

- It offers the possibility of monopolizing a woman’s lifetime reproductive resources
- May offer benefits of prolonged economic cooperation with the woman and her kin;

What is the cost of a long-term mating strategy for men?

- The primary cost is opportunity cost: the copulations that the man would have obtained if he was not committed to long-term mating.

What was the cost to women of pursuing a short-term mating strategy?

- Women risk contracting sexually transmitted diseases.
- Their long-term mate value may decline by acquiring a social reputation as promiscuous. Likely, this is more severe for women than for men.

What are the benefits to women of pursuing a short-term mating strategy?

- For the immediate extraction of resources.
- Short-term mating is used as a way to assess prospective long-term mates.
- Gaining protection appears even more important for women’s short-term mating strategies.
An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating

- What is the primary benefit to women of pursuing a long-term mating strategy?
- Gaining continuous access to a man’s resources and parental investment.

Sexual Strategies Theory

- In a cross-cultural perspective, marriages are usually regarded as formal reproductive alliances that contain the features of (a) mutual obligation between husband and wife, (b) rights of sexual access, (c) an expectation that marriage will persist through pregnancy, lactation, and child rearing, and (d) recognition of the legitimate status of the couple’s children.

Willingness to Marry Someone with Given Characteristics

- Same-Sex Unions
  - Three same-sex couples were denied marriage licenses in the state of Hawaii in 1990;
  - In 1993 the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled against a lower court ruling that did not allow same-sex marriage (Baehr v. Lewin);
  - The State of Hawaii had to show that it “furthers a compelling state interest” to exclude same-sex couples; the case of Baehr v. Milke began in 1996.
  - Two family sociologists figured prominently as witnesses for both sides:
    - In favor of granting same-sex marriages, Pepper Schwartz, University of Washington
    - Opposed to same-sex marriages, David Eggebeen, Associate Professor of HDFS, Penn State

- Same-Sex Marriage
  - Eggebeen: Well, to me it’s the… the conclusion is clear that marriage represents a gateway to becoming a parent. When people get married, by an extraordinary margin they intend to become parents.
  - Attorney for the State: So in the minds of people, marriage would be synonymous with having children?
  - Eggebeen: When 98 percent of the married individuals intend to become parents, I would say that is a very valid conclusion.
Same-Sex Marriage

- On Dec. 3, 1996 Judge Chang ruled that the State of Hawaii had failed to prove that prohibiting same-sex marriage furthered a compelling interest.

Surra & Hughes

- Outsiders perspective: factors that influence decisions about whom to wed;
- Insiders perspective: individual’s own explanations for their decisions to marry (subjective causes that influence marital decisions);

Surra & Hughes

- GOAL: identify the different subjective processes engaged in by different partners;
- Levels of marital commitment and the variation in level were assessed by having dating partners graph from memory how the chance of marrying their partners changed continuously over the course of their relationship.

Surra & Hughes

- Two types of commitment processes
  - Relationship-driven
  - Event-driven
- Respondents were recruited by announcements about the study made in large undergraduate courses and in letters to dormitory residents at a major Midwestern university. Individuals were asked to volunteer for the study if they were seeing someone of the opposite sex.

Xu & Whyte

- Throughout the world arranged marriages are increasingly giving way to freedom of mate choice, or “love matches”, in which young people play the dominant role in selecting who they will marry.
- “Individuals reared in the West… assume that this shift from arranged marriages to love matches is progressive and healthy.”
“..love matches start out hot and grow cold, while arranged marriages start out cold and grow hot.”

Robert Blood Tokyo Study, 1959
- Interviewed 444 married couples in nuclear-family households in three predominantly white-collar housing projects.

Xu & Whyte
- A probability sample of 586 ever-married women between the ages of 22-70

Xu & Whyte
- The shift away from arranged marriages should reduce the level of marital misery in a society.

Major Findings
- A shift away from arranged marriages;
- There is very little dating culture in Chengdu;
- A “stall” in the transition since the late 1950s;
What about marital quality?

- Women in free-choice marriages are consistently more satisfied with their marriages than are women in arranged marriages;
- Wives who have been married the longest report having the highest-quality marriages’

Blood vs. Xu & Whyte

- Xu & Whyte have a more representative sample than Blood;
- Xu & Whyte use multivariate analyses;
- Blood has data on both husbands and wives, whereas Xu & Whyte have data from wives only;

Xu & Whyte find that, regardless of marriage type, those who have been married for 20-25 years enjoy the highest level of marital happiness;

Hypothetical U.S. data to examine the relationship between marital duration and marital happiness: Does marital happiness increase with duration of marriage?

Data collected on a random sample of U.S. married women in 2002. Key information gathered from the respondents are: 1) how long they have been married, 2) marital happiness index;

Is there a relationship between the type of marriage system and divorce?

- Is the divorce rate always lower in more traditional societies that are closer to using an arranged marriage system than they are in societies that are more free-choice marriage based?
Basic Facts

- 198 inhabited islands
- 992 uninhabited islands
- 1999 population = 277,579
- Average household size = 7.1
- Population per practicing doctor 1,354
- Language: Dhivehi
- Religion: Sunni Muslim

Arranged Marriage by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni