So, we have seen that gender identity is socially constructed
- that takes us naturally to marriage and sex
- which will then take us to descent
- **descent**: rules by which we identify and categorize our ancestors and offspring
- which will then take us to kinship
- **kinship**: rules by which we categorize and interact with all our relatives (our **kin**)
- which in turn plays a big role in creating personal identities and structuring marriages…
- remember “culture is integrated” and “culture can be understood as a system”
- each of these parts (identity, gender, marriage, descent, kinship) is profoundly shaped by the others, and affects the others in turn
- you can’t really understand any one in isolation
- each only makes full sense in the context of all the rest

Marriage, family, and kinship are… socially constructed
- variable from one culture to the next
- we think of marriage as being
  - a personal choice made by two people
  - having largely to do with romantic love and sex
  - this reflects our egocentric concept of personhood in general
- many, if not most, societies see marriage very differently
  - as a choice made between groups (the kin groups of each spouse)
  - for social, economic, and political reasons
  - this reflects more sociocentric concepts of personhood
    - in which your identity and behavior depend crucially on your position in social networks, especially of your kin
- the view of marriage as a contract between two kin groups is shown by widespread practices of
  - negotiating approval from the family of each spouse
  - marriages being arranged by kin with only minor input from the spouses, sometimes even before they are born
  - negotiating exchanges of goods and/or labor between the groups
    - **relatives** of the spouses negotiate, not the couple!
  - rights and obligations of the kin groups
    - obligations to raise the children
    - rights to labor of one or both spouses and/or the children, etc.
    - replacement of a spouse if he or she dies too soon
      - if a wife dies, her relatives may be obliged to provide a replacement wife, typically the dead wife’s sister
      - this practice is called the **sororate**
- if a husband dies, his relatives may be obliged to provide a replacement husband, typically the dead husband’s brother
- this is the practice of **levirate**
- this fits with sociocentric concepts of personhood that stress the embeddedness of identity in social relations
- if a man dies right after his wedding binds two families together, it makes sense for his brother to step in and replace him…
- remember the Duo Donggo la Ninde who was reminded of how he did not own himself; he was owned by his parents, kin, village, and God…

- **kinship system**: a society’s system of classifying and relating to relatives
- depends in part on the **descent** system
- socially constructed
- based in part on biology, but largely arbitrary
- as in the Nuyoo of Oaxaca, who consider some people to have multiple mothers
- the one who gave birth to them, and the one(s) who nursed (breast-fed) them
- if even who counts as your mother is culturally constructed, clearly kinship is not made up only of biological facts
- US kinship system is very reduced compared to most societies
- kinship: who you are related to
- how you classify and name your relatives
- which relatives you classify as being the “same” or “different”
- we call a parent’s bother our uncle
- but are all uncles equivalent (related to you in the same way), or is your mother’s brother (your maternal uncle) different from your father’s brother (paternal uncle)?
- what about spouses of uncles and aunts… they are also uncles and aunts, right?
- yet the descent relationship between you and your uncle is clearly different from that between you and his wife, who is not biologically related to you at all
- point: how we lump people as being the “same” relatives or different ones is arbitrary and culturally constructed
- how you interact with different relatives
- do you interact to your father the same way as to his brother (your uncle)?

- **nuclear family**: parents and children (including adoptees: fictive kinship)
- US typically sees nuclear families as relatively autonomous, basic unit
- but other societies, the nuclear family really does not exist as a separate entity; always part of a larger network of kin

- **extended family**: variable meaning.
- Often, family with three or more generations living together
- Or, two or more nuclear families living together
- Or, a nuclear family with additional relatives living together
- **collateral family**: family with multiple siblings living together, with their spouses and kids
- that is, all your aunts, uncles, or both living together
- with their spouses
and their kids: you and your cousins

- **family** refers to two different things:
  - **family of orientation**: family one is raised in, usually one’s parents and siblings
  - **family of procreation**: family one forms with a spouse, including one’s children

- **descent**: how you classify ancestors and descendants
  - **patrilineal descent**: emphasizes male line and relatives
    - as we do for surnames
    - as my father does when he pursues genealogy
      - he follows up ancestors of male ancestors
      - he thinks of female ancestors as marrying into the family from outside
      - for him, the ancestry of his female ancestors is rarely worth pursuing
  - **matrilineal descent**: emphasizes female line and relatives
    - you are related to your mother’s kin - your father just marries in
      - his relatives are not as interesting or important to you
    - as Trobriand Islanders do
      - even denying that males contribute more than a little “food” to a fetus
  - **bilateral descent**: emphasizes both male and female lines
    - as we do in recognizing equal relatedness to both father and mother’s relatives
    - as in “uncle” for both mother’s brother and father’s brother
    - note: knowing that a society is matrilineal or patrilineal does not necessarily tell you much about how much power men or women have
    - note that a society can apply different descent systems for different purposes
      - inheritance of property might be patrilineal
      - inheritance of religious or clan affiliation might be matrilineal
      - surnames might be bilateral
        - Maria Vargas marries John Smith and becomes Maria Vargas Smith
        - possibly all in one society…

- **kinds descent groups**
  - these are a subset of kin groups in general
  - **lineage**: people related by descent from a known shared ancestor
  - **patrilineage**: people related through fathers (in US, the people born with a given surname, like “the Smiths”)
    - theoretically traceable to a known male founding ancestor
  - **matrilineage**: people related through their mothers
    - theoretically to a known female founding ancestor
  - **clan**: like a lineage, but the founder is too far back for people to trace their known genealogies back that far
    - the founder may be mythical, even an animal or other non-human
      - a non-human founding ancestor is a **totem**
        - eagle clan, lightning clan…
    - clan membership may be matrilineal or patrilineal
    - example: Scottish clans
– MacAlays, Fitzpatricks, etc.
– patrilineal, identified by last name
– theoretically descended from some shared, founding ancestor, but most or all cannot actually trace ancestry to such a person
– since early 1800’s, also identified by a shared tartan (plaid pattern in cloth)
– if you are a Fitzpatrick and meet someone wearing the Fitzpatrick tartan, you immediately feel kinship with him/her

– rules about who you can marry:
  – **incest**: prohibited in all societies
  – except special cases like within some royal families, Egyptian pharaohs, etc.
  – one of the very few apparent universals in human culture
  – but specifically *which* relatives are considered too close to marry varies
  – some societies see cousins (parent’s sibling’s kids) as too close, thus incestuous
  – other societies see cousins as the *ideal* marriage partners - not too close to marry, but not strangers, either - still within the trusted circle of well-connected relatives
  – note that the genetic risk of first cousin marriage is pretty small
    – only serious if a seriously harmful recessive allele (gene) is present
      – in that case, a child of a first cousin marriage will have a 1/16 (6.25%) chance of being affected
      – not good, but not disastrous, either
    – a 2002 meta-study (Bennett, Motulsky, et al., *Journal of Genetic Counseling*) found that first-cousin marriages have about a 1.7 to 2.8% higher risk of producing children with genetic disorders than do marriages of non-relatives
  – first cousin marriage is legal in about half of the US states
    – fully allowed: 19 states, including California
    – limited (requires counseling, older couples, etc.): 15
    – not allowed: 16 states
  – no other western country prohibits first cousin marriage
  – the Lakher (or Mara, of Mizoram in easternmost India) are extremely patrilineal; a child is not considered related to mother’s relatives at all
    – if a boy’s mother divorces, remarries, and has a daughter with a different man, the daughter is not related to the boy through any male relatives
    – so he can marry her - what we would consider incest between half-siblings
    – point: even the prohibition of incest, a cultural universal, is culturally constructed

– **exogamy**: rule that you must marry outside of your own group
  – must specify what group is meant
    – matrilineage exogamy (marry outside your matrilineage)
    – clan exogamy (marry outside your clan)
    – village exogamy (marry outside your village)
    – etc.

– **endogamy**: rule that you must marry within your own group
  – again, must specify what group is meant
  – rules may combine both exogamy and endogamy
as in clan endogamy with village exogamy, etc.

- Economic aspects of marriage
  - **bridewealth** (formerly called **brideprice**): payment from groom or groom’s relatives to relatives of bride
    - compensates the bride’s relatives for the loss of her company, work, property, and future children
    - often incurs long-term obligations
      - Trobriand Islanders example: groom’s matrilineage pays bridewealth to bride’s matrilineage
        - groom has to get his matrilineal relatives to loan him this wealth
        - he then has to pay them back
        - they won’t make the loans if they don’t think the marriage will last
        - he will stick with the marriage, since he has to repay, regardless
        - he is grateful to his relatives for helping him to marry
        - they support his efforts to pay back the loan
        - social bonds are built…
    - adds to stability of marriage
      - prevents marriages where groom has few resources himself and/or lacks support for the marriage from relatives
      - creates bonds of appreciation and debt between the relatives
      - may have to be repaid in case of early divorce - incentive not to divorce
    - remember how economic exchange is embedded in social relationships – that an exchange creates an obligation, thus a relationship?
      - here, the economic obligations create and strengthen the social relationship between bride and groom, and especially between the bride’s family and the groom’s family
  - **brideservice**: work the groom has to do for the bride’s relatives (usually her parents)
  - **dowry**: goods, wealth that the bride brings into the marriage
    - in societies where women are highly valued, usually little or no dowry, just personal items for her own family life
    - in societies where women are less valued, often large dowry
      - it is compensation to the groom and/or groom’s family for accepting the responsibility of caring for the bride
  - **partible inheritance**: family (or one side’s) land, etc. is divided up among heirs
    - often leads to conflict over the division of property
    - ever-smaller plots, need to marry to get additional land, etc.
  - **impartible inheritance**: family (or one side’s) land, etc. must stay together, goes entirely to one heir
    - a common form is **primogeniture**: all of the inheritance goes to the first-born son
    - means other children have to make it on their own, through other careers, marriage, etc.
    - allows for continuing large holdings, facilitates long-term aristocracy (as in England)
  - **Residence**: where a newly married couple lives
    - **virilocal** (sometimes imprecisely “**patrilocal**”): lives with groom’s relatives
      - as in Chinese case
uxorilocal (sometimes imprecisely “matrilocal”): lives with bride’s relatives
– as in Ju’hoansi case
– neolocal: sets up household apart from both sets of relatives
– Crucial in the economic exchange aspect of marriage
– Crucial for which relatives are most involved in rearing children - and have claims on them
– Dou Donggo (Sumbawa, Indonesia) example (Monaghan & Just pp. 83-84)
  – groom’s family pays part of bridewealth (see below) to bride’s family
    – newlyweds live in the house of the bride’s parents until her first child (uxorilocal / matrilocal)
    – groom works for bride’s father as brideservice (see below)
    – wife has first child in a familiar place, with mother handy
  – then the groom’s family pays the rest of the bridewealth
    – the couple moves out to their own house (becomes neolocal)
    – usually near the groom’s family (broadly virilocal / patrilocal)
    – that is, the transaction is completed
      – the full bridewealth and brideservice has been paid by the groom’s relatives and the groom
      – the bride has demonstrated that she will, in fact, produce children for the groom’s people
      – the bride is transferred from her relatives to the groom’s relatives
– These rules concerning marriage can have effects far beyond individual families
  – consider the British Empire
    – its marriage and inheritance rules contributed to its formation and persistence
  – patrilineal descent
  – virilocal (patrilocal) residence
  – impartible inheritance, specifically primogeniture
    – with the practice of the second son usually going into the military
    – third usually going into the clergy
    – any additional sons into commerce…
  – this set up conditions for a durable, wealthy aristocracy run by lines of first sons
    – living on large estates that had been owned by generations of their ancestors, a seemingly legitimate and permanent situation
    – this aristocracy would have interests in a strong state and military for internal stability, to maintain their positions
  – and set up conditions for an empire
    – created a military led by well-educated men from privileged backgrounds
    – who would tend to sympathize with the aristocracy’s interests, and to have their support
    – but would also have interests in military exploits and foreign venture that could gain them their own wealth, too
    – leading to imperial expansion
– Kinds of marriages and families
  – monogamous (monogamy): a person may have one spouse at a time
    – typically one man and one woman at a time
– but also other pairs of different gender identities
  – legal or not, two gay men can be monogamous, for example
  – **serial monogamy**: one spouse at a time, but OK to divorce and remarry

− **polygamous (polygamy)**: a person may have more than one spouse at a time
  − **polygynous (polygyny)**: one man, multiple women
  − **polyandrous (polyandry)**: one woman, multiple men
  − plus more complex combinations of genders…
− Murdoch 1949 study comparing several hundred societies
  − 18% allow only monogamy
  − 82% allow monogamy and polygyny
  − <.05% allow polyandry

− Ford and Beach 1951 study of 185 societies
  − 84% of societies allow monogamy and polygyny
  − polygyny is allowed in a majority of societies, but is usually not common
  − only a small percentage of families are actually polygynous
  − most families are monogamous, even where polygyny is allowed
  − because if many men had multiple wives, many other men would have no wife at all
  − a society with a large subset of sexually frustrated men with no family, children, heirs, or long-term future might not be very stable…
  − having multiple spouses may require more wealth or work
  − typically, only well-off men can afford to maintain multiple wives
  − Islam allows a man up to 4 wives, but requires him to provide for each equally and decently
  − often creates tensions within families, even in societies where it is allowed
  − in conservative Iraqi Muslim families, first wives usually resist additional wives, especially at first - jealousy, etc.
  − but in many societies, women are not always against polygyny
  − in the same Iraqi Muslim families, many women approve of polygyny because
    − it prevents divorce by allowing a man to take a younger wife without divorcing the first wife
    − it allows a widow to become a second wife, providing her with necessary economic support and restoring her to a viable role in society
  − in many African polygynous groups
    − first wives want younger wives to do some of the work for them
      − but younger wives often cause conflict and jealousy, because the husband might prefer the new, younger wife

− In a speech in February of 2004, President G. W. Bush supported a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman.
− He complained that “After...millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of civilization.”
− do you see some naïve realism here?
− **naïve realism**: the assumption that an idea, value, practice, etc. is inherently human, “real”, thus universal, rather than culturally constructed, thus arbitrary and variable