

Polygamy and Polyamory

1. What are the two kinds of polygamy?

Polygyny – One husband and multiple wives

Polyandry – One wife and multiple husbands

2. T/F Few human societies permit the practice of polygamy.

F – 85% of cultures in the world (one-third of the world population) practice polygamy

3. In what parts of the world is polygamy practiced today?

a. Mexico b. Middle East c. Africa d. New Guinea e. Thailand f. France

B, C, D, E (Mexico has casa grande and casa chica practices while France widely practices the keeping of a mistress)

4. T/F Polygyny is common in societies with a long postpartum sex taboo.

T – otherwise the husband might need to wait many years to have sex again..

5. T/F In societies that allow polygyny, only a minority of men actually practices it.

T – about 20%

6. T/F Polygyny is rare in societies where men marry at an older age than women.

F – older aged men marry many of the young women

7. T/F When was polygyny banned in the state of Utah?

1890 – when Utah became a state

8. T/F Upwards of 50,000 fundamentalist Mormons practice polygyny in the U.S. today.

T – largely in Utah, Arizona and Idaho

9. T/F The number of wives belonging to a polygynist is often a measure of his prestige

T – demonstrating he can afford to support many wives and all the children that will be born

10. Why is fraternal polyandry chosen in Tibet?

It enables families with Highland Farms to keep them productive in that each brother would be responsible for an activity like Yak trading, Yak raising, and crop production. If these farms were subdivided where each brother had his own wife, the farms would not be a profitable.

11. What happens to women who don't marry in societies that practice polyandry?

They may join convents or may have children, but on average much fewer than their married counterparts. Married women average three children while single women average just one.

12. Monogamy:

a. is found only in Western society b. often coexists with polygamy c. is morally superior to polygamy d. prevents sexual jealousy e. is universally regarded as the ideal male-female relationship

B – in polygamous societies 80% of men have just a single wife

Adding A Co-Wife

1. T/F Monogamy is the same as fidelity.

F – Monogamy is being married to one wife/husband; fidelity is being sexually faithful.

(Some people have monogamous, yet sexually open marriages)

2. If your partner started dating someone else, what would you do?

(Discussion) – Many people think this is reason to break up; get divorced yet in some cultures it is what happens in the practice of polygamy.

3. What is a co-wife?

Women who share the same husband.

4. Why are resources so important to African co-wives?

They need to have sufficient funds to maintain their households and their children. If additional wives are added, there may not be enough to go around.

5. Why do African co-wives endeavor to produce sons?

Wives depend on a successful son to house and feed them in their old age. Son's function like a social security system. A woman without a son may starve and be homeless. In her son's compound she cares for her grandchildren and is receives meals prepared by his wives

6. How is African polygyny different from polyamory in America?

African polygyny is a complex reproductive and economic system that enables husbands to have multiple wives and wives and children to benefit from living in a compound with multiple caretakers and extensive resources.

Polyamory in America is an expression of non-possessive consensual open relationships amongst people who value honesty, transparency and living in integrity.

7. Why do African men seek to marry additional wives?

To further their prestige – to potentially increase their resource base by working in family enterprises, to expand the kindred (by producing offspring), and to provide mothering insurance should one of the wives pass away by caring for her children.

8. Why is favoritism more important in monogamous vs. polygamous cultures?

In a monogamous culture, if one is not the favorite they must divorce and thus sever their connection to their husband and family. A divorced woman can become impoverished....

In a polygamous culture, the father continues to live in proximity to all of his children and all of his wives.

9. What is mothering insurance?

Care to children which is provided by surviving co-wives when a co-wife passes away.

Prevents children from being orphaned or fostered in families that do not know them.

10. Why might marriage be experienced more as a *status* than an *experience* by some Africa co-wives?

Some co-wives rarely see their husbands. These men may live in distant communities, but they nonetheless receive remittances from these men and hold the *status* of being married. The valued American *experience* of marriage involves spending time together doing things such as going to parks, beaches and taking vacations.

11. What does the levirate ensure?

It ensures the survival of the patrilineage. When a husband dies, his brother will marry the surviving wife or wives and thus provide family continuity for his sisters in law and his nieces and nephews.

12. What does the sororate ensure?

The sororate ensures that marriage agreements are maintained even after the passing of a wife. The marriage contract which offered a brideprice is honored by having the bride's sister or cousin take her place in the marriage

13. What might cause a woman to seek multiple lovers?

She might seek attention from men with whom she shares interests and mutual attraction. She might seek resources from these additional men and she might enjoy sexual variety.

14. How is paternity assessed amongst the Luo of East Africa?

Whoever a woman is married to is legally considered the father of her children. (No DNA tests are done to ensure this to be true)

15. Why might a married person keep a lover?

For sexual variety, special attention, the excitement of being with someone new and uniquely different.

16. Is it possible to love just one person for one's entire adult life?

Certainly. This was more common when humans had shorter lifespans. Also as women become increasingly financially independent, they may prefer to leave marriages that are no longer satisfying.

Polyamory

1. What is polyamory? How is it different from polyfidelity?

Consensual multiple partner relationships practiced in the Western world. Polyfidelity refers to a closed group of people being faithful to each other whereas polyamory is more free form. There may be separate dyadic relationships; not everyone is involved romantically with everyone else.

2. How many people practice polyamory in the U.S.?

About 50, 000 – could be more...especially amongst people who engage in the practice but do not associate with the subculture

3. For whom might a polyamorous lifestyle be appealing?

People who choose to have multiple partners and be in integrity. Often people in long term home relationships enjoy the excitement of engaging someone new.

4. What are the benefits of practicing polyamory?

One can have the stability of a home relationship plus the excitement of new ones.

Brain chemistries can be expanded with oxytocin from the home relationship and dopamine from the new one(s).

5. T/F Both the Oneida Community and the Kerista Commune banned pair-bonding.

T – Oneida in the 19th c. focused on group activities; Kerista in the late 20th c. focused on connections between all those who shared the same partners.

6. How do polyamorous people view the attraction phase of romantic love?
They consider it short-lived and not to be trusted as a measure of relationship reliability nor a reason to leave their current relationship(s)

7. In what ways might American society's engagement of romantic love be considered adolescent?
They heavily focus on new loves, enjoying movies, songs and stories that celebrate the excitement of falling in love. Most world cultures do not place such focus on the new, but rather see value in sustaining long-time marriages.

8. What is NRE?
New Relationship Energy (otherwise known as the attraction phase of romantic love).

9. In what ways might people be fighting Mother Nature in their practice of polyamory?
Humans by nature have favorites and if left to their own devices would likely practice serial monogamy; focusing intensely on their newest love and leaving all others in the dust. Polyamory imposes maintaining all existent relationships despite that one has become smitten with someone new and exciting.

10. T/F Polyamorous people are rarely troubled by jealousy.
F – they just don't consider jealousy a reason to not engage in multiple partner relating

11. What is compersion?
Having loving empathy for one's partner having new sexual/romantic relationships ..something quite antithetical to mainstream Americans who would consider this very difficult and extremely uncomfortable to hear about.

12. How do cultural beliefs impact the experience of compersion?
People who believe compersion is a good thing, endeavor to practice it...

13. The majority of people who practice polyamory do so as:

a. triads b. members of intimate networks c. open couples

d. independent single people e. there is no typical way of being polyamorous

C

14. T/F Polyamorous people in America tend to be well-educated professionals who seek to better realize all who they are emotionally, sexually and artistically.

T

15. In what ways do polyamorous people practice *Polyamory*?

They try to prevent the loss of status in their home/current relationship(s) by keeping tabs on what their partner is doing with other people. By giving their partner permission, they "own" the encounters their partner has with others and thus retain their place in their partner's life.

16. T/F A significant hallmark of polyamory is a desire to be truthful to one's partner and one's lovers.

T – very much defines the unique practice of polyamory.

17. Should polyamory be legalized?

(Discussion) With the legalization of gay marriage in the U.S. and the practice of polygamy in 85% of the cultures of the world, perhaps legalization would provide an important status to those who share significant intimacy with multiple partners.