

Studyguide 4. 2020

Asante Market Women

Review/Background: Asante are matrilineal, which means that inheritance (and property) is passed down through the female line: your matrilineage would include your siblings, your mother and her siblings, etc.). If you are female, your children would also be part of your matrilineage, but if you are male your children would belong to their mother's matrilineage. In this society, children do not inherit from their father, therefore, but rather from the men of the matrilineage (e.g., mother's brother).

1. Marriage ties are usually not strong in matrilineal societies, perhaps because of the low paternal investment associated with it. Is this so for Asante? Are a woman's closest relationships to her children and matrilineal kin, or her husband?
2. Women have a lot of economic independence in this society. Does this give them power in the home, or are they subordinate to their husbands?
3. What do men and women think of polygyny in this society? Are co-wives competitive?

Men's long-term mating strategies

the questions below are in the order in which they are addressed in the text.

- Buss lists several reasons why men might benefit from commitment (understand, don't memorize). One caveat is that a cross-cultural study of traditional societies found that a father's absence had little or no effect on child survivorship, though even here they may be important later in the child's life, as Buss notes.
- What is reproductive value? What does it have to do with the sex differences in preferred age of a mate? (lecture and text)
- Buss's 37 cultures study found that men prefer wives about 2.5 years younger than themselves (with much cultural variation). How does the preferred age difference vary with the man's age? What does this tell us about the reason for the preference? (p. 134-5).
- Among the Kipsigis, an E. African agro-pastoral group, men must give their wife's family a brideprice before they can marry. The ethnographer used the amount of priceprice as a measure of women's attractiveness. Which Kipsigis women cost more to marry? (lecture slides).
- What facial features do men find beautiful in a woman? Why? Are these preferences found cross-culturally? What is the evolutionary explanation for these preferences? (lecture, text)
- Which men prefer heavier women? (138-9)
- What is the adaptive advantage of having (and preferring, if you are a male looking at a potential mate) a low waist-to-hip ratio? (lecture, text)
- Do men have a preference for ovulating women? Do women behave differently when ovulating?
- Although there is a lot of cross-cultural variation in the trait, men in most societies value chastity in a mate more than women do. There is also more societal tolerance for adultery by men than by women. What is the evolutionary basis for this sexual double standard?

- There are many evolutionary explanations that have been proposed to explain homosexual orientation in men, and no consensus. The most intriguing, in my opinion, is what Buss refers to as the “female fertility hypothesis” (box 5.1). Lisa Diamond (UofU psych) has also argued that in traditional societies everyone is expected to marry and have children regardless of sexual orientation, which would mean the fitness costs are low in such a society.
- How does seeing pictures of attractive women affect a man’s view of his own relationship? Is it adaptive? Media exposure is a lot like refined sugar – a modern novelty that turns an evolved adaptation into something harmful.
- Testosterone facilitates competition among males and rises in anticipation of it, as well as in response to mating cues. How is testosterone in men related to relationship status and to fatherhood (text and lecture)? How did it differ between the Hadza (foragers) and the Datoga (pastoralists), and why? (lecture slides).
- Does behavioral data support men’s preferences for youth and attractiveness?
- How do male preferences affect what women compete over? 155-6. Note, though, that male attention isn’t the only thing women compete over – remember those Asante market women? They also compete over resources, especially for their children.

Scelza, “Choosy but not chaste”

- The role of parental investment in shaping sex differences in mating strategies is a subject of considerable theoretical debate and a lot of early assumptions have been criticized. This was not discussed in the text, and only briefly alluded to in lecture. Scelza briefly reviews arguments that female multiple mating can lead to selection on males for reduced parental care.
- In many societies, mothers get a lot of support from their mothers and other matrilineal kin (we will talk about this more when we discuss alloparenting). How might this affect the degree of investment by fathers?
- In developed nations, is a female-biased sex ratio (more women than men) associated with more or less teen pregnancy? strong or weak marital bonds? (and lecture)
- Formal polyandrous marriages are rare cross-culturally, but culturally-accepted polyandrous matings, such as South American “partible paternity” societies, are more common. Review (264 and lecture slides).
- Cross-culturally, who is more likely to be punished for infidelity: wife or husband? why? (discussed also in lecture).
- How is inheritance of property related to sexual constraints on women? why? (264, 3rd column).
- Review the possible benefits women might gain from multiple mating, which she subsumes under (a) genetic benefits and (b) material benefits; a similar framework was given in lecture. Does multiple mating enhance reproductive success for Himba women? Pimbwe women? Sami women? US women? Swedish women? Don’t memorize each society, but get a sense of the variation, and when it does enhance RS, understand why. Pimbwe women were also discussed in lecture.
- Do women’s mate preferences differ across the menstrual cycle? In what ways, and how might this bear on women’s propensity for extra-pair matings? (note: the evidence here is controversial).

Short-term and polygynous sexual strategies (text and lecture)

- Men, like most mammalian males, benefit reproductively from multiple matings, and their minds and bodies show adaptations for it. Review carefully the evidence beginning p 162 (including sperm competition, attitudes, choosiness, mate preferences, sexual fantasies, behavior). There is a lot here; table 6.1 is a good summary of the evidence. Sexual fantasies were also discussed in lecture.
- Why, and under what circumstances might short-term matings be adaptive for females? What is the evidence? (text, lecture, & Scelza). There is a lot here also, and a lot of overlap in these 3 sources. What evidence in the text supports the “resources” argument? What evidence supports the “good genes” argument? Caveat: the text notes that the ovulatory shift hypothesis in mate preferences is not supported by recent studies, and this lack of support has continued since the book was published.
- One reason why females might solicit extra mates is to get resources and investment. This is not limited to humans. Hrdy has said that chimp females who seek sex from many males are being “assiduously maternal” because it confuses paternity and ensures better treatment of their offspring. Why do female dunnocks (birds discussed in class) solicit extra-pair copulations (EPCs) from beta males, and how do we know? (lecture)
- The Bari are a society with beliefs of “partible paternity”. What is that? Does having a secondary male benefit a Bari woman? (lecture).
- How do women’s mate preferences differ for long vs. short-term mates? What does this suggest about the reasons for engaging in short-term (or extra-pair) mating?
- There are trade-offs between paternal investment and seeking additional matings. Under what circumstances would it make adaptive sense for males to invest more in offspring? What is the operational sex ratio, and how does it affect sex and mating patterns? (text and lecture).
- What is the “polygyny threshold” argument discussed in lecture, and how does it explain when it might be advantageous for a female to mate/marry polygynously?
- The Kipsigis women studied by Borgerhoff Mulder (discussed in class) chose men who had the most resources available after division among co-wives, rather than the most resources overall. This suggests polygyny by female choice (polygyny threshold argument) rather than male coercion

Life history theory (lecture)

- How does father absence shape mating strategies and age of sexual maturity in daughters? (161 and Ellis lecture). Ellis and the text point out that it is hard to know whether it is the environmental experience of father absence, or genetic factors, that is responsible for these associations. What did Ellis do in his research to try to address this gene-environment confound?
- What are the fundamental trade-offs that shape life histories?
- What characteristics are associated with fast life histories? slow life histories?
- Short life expectancies are associated with traits suggestive of fast life histories, including increased homicide rates and earlier reproduction (see lecture slide on this).
- Evolutionary psychologists have argued that harsh and unpredictable environments predispose to fast life histories. Explain why.

- Most of the attention in EP on life history strategies concerns the effects of early environment on reproductive strategies, but Mittal (assigned reading and lecture) argues that aspects of cognition also respond adaptively to early life experiences. What aspects of cognition? How are early life experiences related to these aspects of cognition? In Mittal's study, these differences were evoked only in participants who were primed to think about – what?

Parental investment and disinvestment (Hrды, lecture, and ch. 7)

Note: The Hrды article is a bit confusing because of all the sidebars. The latter are wonderful but optional; the quiz will not cover these sidebars (e.g. “hormonal cocktails for two,” “milk: it does a body good,” “prenatal power plays” or “liquid assets”). There will be another lecture on parenting, so not all the material in chapter 7 will be on this quiz.

- Hrды has argued that maternal care in humans is not automatic, because a mother must make choices in her allocation of investment. Although people often point to non-human species as giving automatic and unconditional mother love (sometimes arguing that people should emulate their example), Hrды disputes this in the article “natural born mothers,” arguing that infanticide, abortion, and cannibalism are very natural indeed. How do mother mammals cope with the dilemmas of food shortages, social exploitation, and infanticidal males?
- Infanticide and infant abandonment are not rare in human history. Review the examples, including those from 18th and 19th century Europe. Why should mothers ever withdraw investment, and under what circumstances is it more likely? (also discussed in lecture)
- Mothers in all societies provide more parental care than fathers. Why? Buss gives two reasons that have been proposed, at least for mammals (190ff).
- Under what circumstances might we expect fathers to invest more? less? The text mentions three things for parental care generally (193ff): (a) genetic relatedness, (b) the degree to which fathers can make a difference to the offspring (“offspring’s ability to convert parental care into reproductive success”, and (c) alternative uses for the resources.
- What is the evidence that genetic relatedness affects paternal investment? Whom are newborns said to resemble, the mother or father? Why? (text and lecture). Note also data from Flinn’s study (lecture).
- What evidence indicates psychological adaptations for parenting that differ between men and women? (text)
- Cross-cultural data on infanticide show what three conditions make it more likely? (these also apply to parental disinvestment generally). What is the evolutionary rationale for this? (lecture; also text). NOTE: Remember the “naturalistic fallacy” (just because it is an evolved adaptation doesn’t mean it’s good for you, or others).
- Are young children equally at risk from natural and step-parents? What do Daly and Wilson’s data show? Do they think child abuse is an adaptation? (no). What do they think?
- Poor infant quality is one reason given for infanticide. However, one might also argue that it would be adaptive to give poor-quality infants more investment rather than less, in order to compensate for their poor condition. Did the examples given in lecture support the former argument (cut your losses), the latter (compensation), or both?
- Is the risk of infanticide higher for young mothers or older mothers? Why?
- What does the Trivers-Willard hypothesis predict, and why?