

Definitions of Marriage

Lecture 8

Marriage according to Haviland (2000) is: a relationship between one or more men (male or female) and one or more women (female or male) recognized by society as having a continuing claim to the right of sexual access to one another.

Marriage is a transaction and resulting contract in which a woman and a man are recognized by society as having a continuing claim to the right of sexual access to one another, and in which the woman involved is eligible to bear children (Haviland 1996).

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both partners (RAI, 1951).

Edmund Leach said that marriage can, but doesn't always, accomplish the following:

1. Establish the legal father of a woman's children and the legal mother of a man's.
2. Give either or both spouses a monopoly in the sexuality of the other.
3. Give either or both spouses rights to the labor of the other.
4. Give either or both spouses rights over the other's property.
5. Establish a joint fund or property—a partnership—for the benefit of the children.
6. Establish a socially significant “relationship of affinity” between spouses and their relatives.