

# BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

---

## **Marriage Practices in Lowland South America**

Kenneth M. Kensinger, ed.

Illinois Studies in Anthropology, no. 14

Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1984. x + 296 pp. Maps, tables, figures, bibliography. \$19.95 (paper)

*Reviewer:* S. Brian Burkhalter

University of South Florida

Perhaps marriage most fascinates those who, like this book's editor, several contributors and the current reviewer, are unmarried. A major strength of this excellent collection is that it focuses more on practice than on theory, and probably because all of the authors spent several years in the field, the articles are rich in ethnographic examples. Although the authors differ widely on theoretical matters, they make little attempt to address their differences. An exception is Judith R. Shapiro's introduction, which discusses alliance theory and its critics and attempts a definition of marriage, but cannot bridge obvious gaps.

Ellen B. Basso describes two Kalapalo marriage histories and their respective strategies, and, in the process, sheds light on how Kalapalo marriages are arranged, shaped, and maintained. Gertrude E. Dole's careful examination of Kuikuru marriages concludes that the Kuikuru show too much variation in actual choices of spouses, postmarital residence, and even associated norms for their marriage pattern to be usefully characterized as sibling exchange. Most remarkable about William H. Crocker's account of Canela marriage are premarital and extramarital affairs, including the expectation that a young wife who had not yet given birth would "accompany male groups for the purpose of group sex," and that young males primarily confine their sexual encounters to women in their late forties and fifties (pp. 64-65).

Waud H. Kracke finds three important levels in Kagwahiv marriage: (1) a normative pattern of exogamous moieties; (2) a triadic system of three exogamous groups that is unacknowledged by informants, but emerges in practice; and (3) a system of alliances between patriline. Overlapping demands create sufficient ambiguity to allow considerable choice of potential spouses. Similar flexibility appears in Joanna Overing Kaplan's view of Piaroa marriage (cf. pp. 143-144). Kaplan sees Piaroa cosmology as loading social relationships with danger, creating risks ideally addressed when brothers-in-law within an endogamous communal household arrange marriages between their children.

Chapters on the Northwest Amazon by Jean E. Jackson and Arthur P. Sorenson, Jr. complement each other nicely. Jackson cites Tukanoan norms governing marriage, including prescriptive marriage, symmetrical exchange, preferred marriage with close genealogical kin, residential exogamy, language, group exogamy, and alliance, but finds that these do not adequately predict observed patterns in her sample of 684 unions (pp. 156, 161-162). She wonders whether such rules are hierarchically ordered, so that following some would mean breaking others. Sorenson gives an entertaining and insightful description of how young men seek wives in a society with prescribed linguistic exogamy and preferential cross-cousin marriage. Here, women may aggressively initiate affairs, as, for example, by ambushing young

men who are heading out alone to bathe (p. 185).

Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and Dorothea S. Whitten show how alliances between Canelos Quichua kin groups can influence the choice of spouse, and how such alliances form part of territorial groupings centred around powerful shamans. They also note the political considerations involved in postmarital residence decisions, all the more important since getting married is a three-year process among the Canelos Quichua (p. 207). Kenneth M. Kensinger carefully depicts Cashinahua marriage as best understood as processual. His emic model takes into account Cashinahua marriage stages and their varying willingness to accept matches which violate one or another of the rules favoring cross-cousin marriage, moiety exogamy, prescribed marriage sections, and village endogamy.

In a moving discussion of disrupted Wachipaeri marriage patterns following a smallpox epidemic, Patricia J. Lyon raises troubling questions concerning a young bachelor's dilemma. By 1955, only 71 Wachipaeri had survived, most of them male (p. 256). Clinging to their cultural traditions despite interference by Baptist and Catholic missionaries and Peruvian settlers, these few men find still fewer eligible Wachipaeri women to marry. If they find wives from other groups or do not marry at all, Wachipaeri culture could well face extinction.

Is this book's theoretical inconsistency a flaw? Perhaps. Yet as in the best marriages and most memorable trysts, there is still much excitement to be found between the covers.

### Police Images of a City

Peter McGahan

American University Studies Series Eleven, Anthropology/Sociology, Vol. 4  
New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1984. 217 pp. (paper).

Reviewer: François X. Ribordy  
Laurentian University

Peter McGahan, auteur du livre *Urban Sociology in Canada* (1982), s'est donné comme but dans cette étude, d'examiner, le contenu et le développement de l'image de la ville de St. John's (Terre Neuve) à travers la vision qu'en ont ses propres policiers. Cette sociologie des représentations, est urbaine au point de vue théorique, par sa méthode elle rejoint l'anthropologie, et enfin ouvre la voie à une nouvelle approche criminologique.

Les deux niveaux d'analyse, objectif et subjectif, se moulent dans un ensemble: les facteurs démographiques, sociaux et écologiques sont réinterprétés à travers leur représentation par le corps policier, qui à son tour les adapte à ses activités.

La méthode utilisée est l'interview en profondeur de 37 membres du Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, à l'aide d'un questionnaire ouvert laissant libre cours au répondant, de sorte que la plupart des entrevues dure de 1,30 heure à 2 heures. Tous les enregistrements ont été par la suite dactylographiés et catalogués. En plus de ce recueil des représentations de la ville par les constables, toutes les informations quantitatives sur la structure démographique, écologique et criminologique de la ville ont été recueillies et analysées.

L'analyse des discours démontre l'image qu'ont les constables de chaque dis-