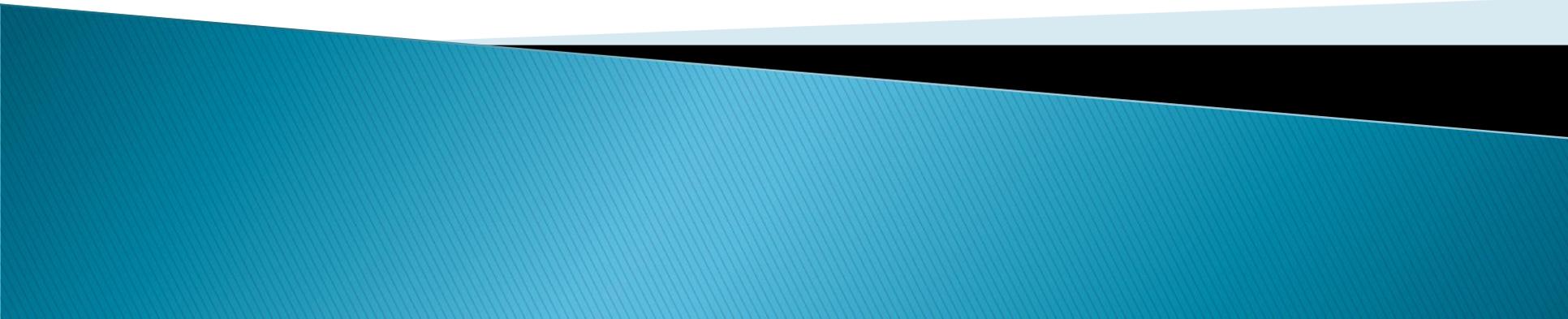


Introduction to Ugandan Culture



What is culture?

- ▶ Culture is not the same as nature
 - Eating
 - Drinking
 - Sleeping
 - Elimination
 - ▶ Culture is based on symbols
 - ▶ Culture is learned
 - ▶ Cultures are integrated
 - ▶ Cultures interact and change
- 

Elements of Culture

- ▶ Symbols
 - ▶ Language
 - ▶ Values
 - ▶ Norms
 - ▶ Physical environments
- 

Symbols

- ▶ Anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture.
- ▶ Societies create new symbols all the time.
- ▶ Reality for humans is found in the meaning things carry with them.
 - The basis of culture; makes social life possible.

Some Key Terms:

- ▶ Culture shock
 - Disorientation due to the inability to make sense out of one's surroundings
 - Domestic and foreign travel
- ▶ Nonmaterial culture
 - The intangible world of ideas created by members of a society
- ▶ Material culture
 - Tangible things created by members of society

Terms:

- ▶ Ethnocentrism
 - The practice of judging another culture by the standards of one's own culture
- ▶ Cultural relativism
 - The practice of judging a culture by its own standards

Uganda: Basics

- ▶ Colonized by the British
- ▶ Independence 1962
- ▶ President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
- ▶ Kampala Capital City

Idi Amin

- ▶ Ugandan President 1971–1979
 - Amin's rule was characterized by human rights violations, political repression, ethnic persecution, and gross economic mismanagement.
 - The number of people killed as a result of his regime is estimated by international observers and human rights groups to range from 100,000 to 500,000.

Geography

- ▶ Uganda is landlocked
- ▶ Bordered by Kenya, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Rwanda
- ▶ Mostly plateau with rim mountains



Geography

- ▶ Inactive and active volcanoes
- ▶ Water sources
 - Lake Victoria
 - Lake George
 - Nile River

Climate

▶ Dry Season

- *June to August and December to February*
- July Average temperatures hover around 27°C/81°F in the afternoon and 16°C/61°F in the morning.

▶ Wet Season

- *March to May and September to November*

Tribes and Languages

- ▶ National Languages
 - English
 - Swahili
- ▶ Tribal Languages
 - Include languages from the Bantu, Nilotic, and Central Sudanic language groups.
- ▶ Buganda largest tribe (16%)
- ▶ Basoga (5%)

Major Agricultural Industries

- ▶ Coffee
 - ▶ Cotton
 - ▶ Tea
 - ▶ Sugar
- 

Ugandan Food and Culture

- ▶ Cooking is usually done over an open fire.
- ▶ Men and boys over 12 usually stay out of the kitchen.
- ▶ Kitchen is often times separate from the main house.
- ▶ Main meals – lunch and super
- ▶ Breakfast – consists of tea and porridge

Traditional Food:

- ▶ Matoke – Staple dish made with bananas.
- ▶ Posho (polenta)
- ▶ Beans
- ▶ Goat meat
- ▶ Rice
- ▶ Sorghum
- ▶ Millet
- ▶ Tomatoes
- ▶ Mangos





Traditional Dress

- ▶ Fabrics are made with silk and cotton.
 - ▶ Very bright beautiful colors and patterns.
- 

The Gomesi

- ▶ Is a floor-length, brightly colored cloth dress with a square neckline and short, puffed sleeves.
 - ▶ The dress is tied with a sash placed below the waist over the hips.
 - ▶ The Gomesi has two buttons on the left side of the neckline.
- 



The Kanzu

- ▶ Is adapted from the typical Arabian dress “**thobe**”.
 - ▶ The traditional kanzu has maroon embroidery around the collar, abdomen, and sleeves.
- 



Family and Kinship

- ▶ All cultures have family.
- ▶ The function and structure of families are various and diverse in each culture.

Family and Kinship

- ▶ In the USA, we tend to think of immediate family members rather than extended family members.
- ▶ In the USA, we need clear blood or legal relations to consider someone a family member.
- ▶ In many African cultures, people do not need direct blood lines or legal relations to consider someone a family member.
- ▶ Kinship is through not only laws and marriage but through ancestry.

Traditional Family Culture

- ▶ Line of descent is followed through the male line.
- ▶ Line of descent is important because it determines inheritance and identity.
- ▶ Oldest born son also head of household.
- ▶ Last born son stays with parents.

Traditional Family Culture

- ▶ After marriage, women usually move to the husband's family home.
- ▶ Bride price/Dowry – payment made by the groom or groom's kin to the bride's kin.
- ▶ On average Uganda women have 5 children.

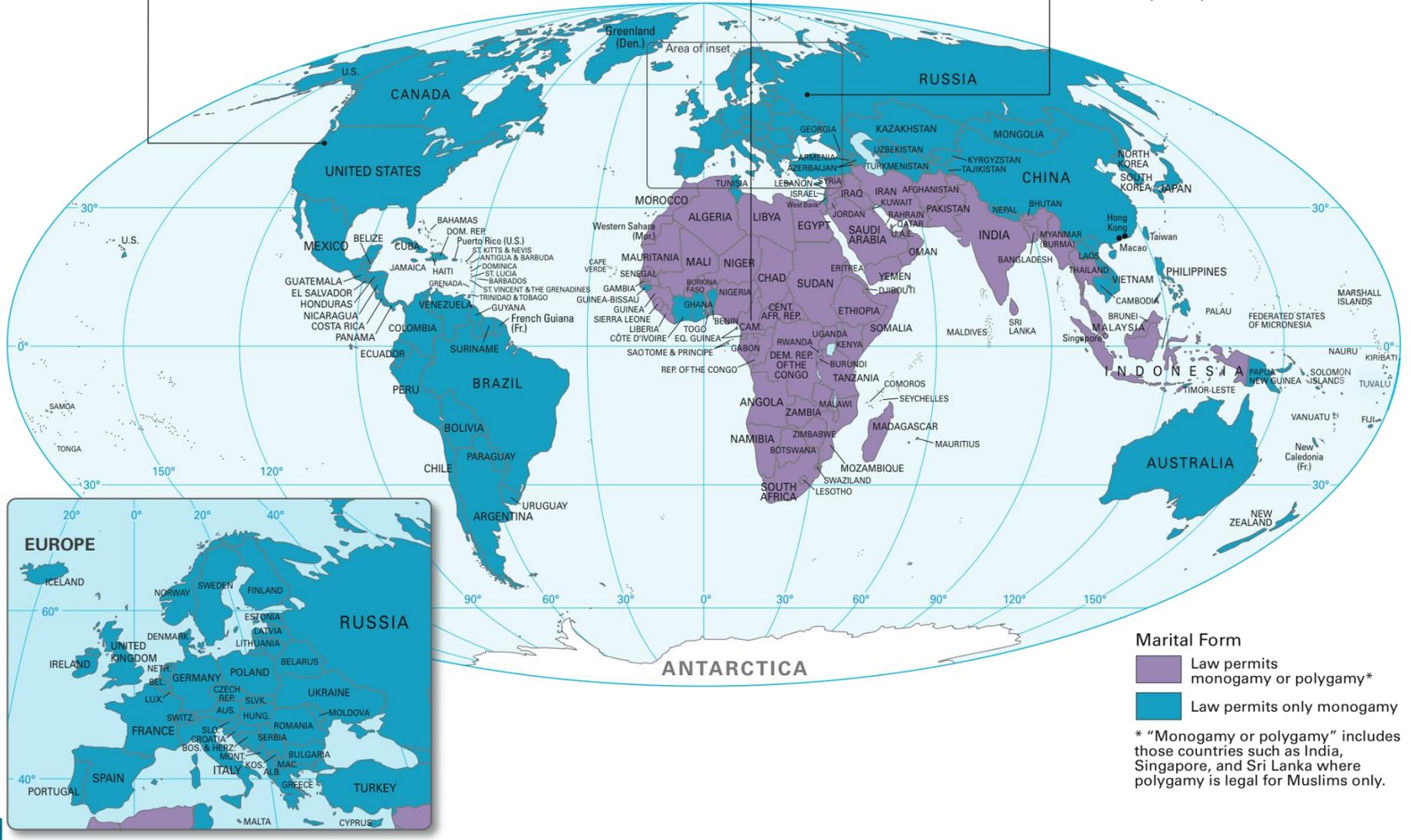
Marriage Patterns

- ▶ Polygamy–Marriage that unites a person with two or more spouses
 - Polygyny–Marriage that unites one man and two or more women
 - Polyandry–Marriage that unites one woman and two or more men

• Sol Marston, who is 55 and lives in Eugene, Oregon, has been married three times and divorced twice.

• Ndumbe Monkua lives in Yaoundé, Cameroon, with his four wives and their fifteen children.

• Dimitriy and Irina Marchenko in Moscow will celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary this year.



Why Polygamy?

- ▶ Economics
 - ▶ Insurance policy
 - ▶ Identity and name
 - ▶ Social Prestige
 - ▶ Care of family
- 

Women and Social Status

- ▶ Traditionally, women's roles are subordinate to those of men despite the substantial economic and social responsibilities of women in traditional Ugandan societies.
 - ▶ Until recently (90's), it was custom in some regions to kneel when speaking to men in public.
- 

Women's Roles:

- ▶ Care takers
 - ▶ Farmers (70% to 80% agricultural production)
 - ▶ Cooks (90% of food processing)
 - ▶ Water carriers
- 

Women's Rights

- ▶ Women make up 52% labor force.
 - Much of this labor is unpaid.
- ▶ Women are underrepresented in leadership roles in government and business.
 - 35% of parliament
 - Source World Bank
- ▶ Women own roughly less than 20% of land.
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006220215.html>

Literacy and Gender

- ▶ Estimates project around 70% of the country is literate.
- ▶ But there are gaps...
 - Rural – Urban
 - Women – Men

Women and Violence

- ▶ 48% of women experience physical violence from their partners.
 - (Source: [Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2011](#)).
- ▶ 36% of women experience sexual violence from their partners.
 - (Source: [UN Women 2011–2012](#))

Culture: Access to Education and Human Rights

- ▶ There is a direct link between poverty, violence, and lack of education.