**Rationale**

the development of new codes for marriage payments and inheritance in the SCCS

**General commentary:**
This recode is based on a specific set of definitions, some of which will diverge from those used in the ethnographic references. And, they may differ from conventional usages, such as your own.

Whenever possible, please explain your choices, using space provided. Always give page numbers and use extra pages as needed.

**I. Locating wealth assets in the society.**

A. With the exception of hunter-gatherers in extremely resource deficit environments, there will be some form of *wealth-asset*. I know of no case with more than two:
   1. *Fertility of women* (common in matrilineal systems)
   2. *Fertility & territory* (common to matrilineal and agrarian systems and to non-agrarian patrilineal systems where men are important as warriors)
   3. *Fertility of Animal stock* (where territory is almost never an additional wealth-asset, but indicate any exception that you believe that you have found.)
   4. *Capital* (which will not be a factor in this recode).

B. In order to be a wealth-asset, the resource must satisfy four properties:
   1. A capacity to grow in size, number, value over time
   2. A capacity to produce a flow of consumption values
   3. An absence of an ancillary resource that might pose a limitation to growth
   4. A process by which the resource is transmitted inter-generationally among kin by socially established rules (except under capitalism).

The Fertility of women and animal stock always satisfy the first and second property, but the other properties are contingent.

Usually, territory cannot grow except with the intervention of central power, such as a king or emperor who can use an army to extend the realm. Analytically and ideologically territory belongs to the king.

If fertility is restrained by infanticide, child spacing, and other birth restraining factors, then it is not a wealth-asset. (No one willingly limits his wealth!)
   Those restraints reflect lack of satisfaction of item 3.

If 1-3 are satisfied for fertility, then we can be sure that item 4 will be satisfied.
   Either the benefits of fertility are possessed by the group to which a woman belongs (matrilineal), or it will be *exchanged* for some other form of wealth (most often, in patrilineal organizations).

If territory exists as a wealth asset in conjunction with fertility.
   One must ascertain some efforts to defend existing territory or to expand it in the face of opposition for other territorial claimants (at a societal level).

Animal stock clearly uses territory, but territory is usually not claimed as an inherited asset by the groups who possess animal stock.
Reason: Herders want to be able to go where they can find food for the animals. We know that they will often claim special rights over water holes, but not the land around it. (If there is an exception on this, I would be delighted to know.)

C. Wealth-holding groups.

Corporate groups, such as families, lineages, tribes and states have been the primary controllers of wealth over the course of human evolution. A wealth-holding corporate group transmits wealth through inheritance and is thus an entity that, in principle, has indefinite life. It may include the dead and it always includes the yet-unborn, i.e., it is not a corporal collectivity. They are the socially recognized claimants to an asset by right of inheritance. It also includes people who by socially established rules might receive the asset if other rights holders do not exist. Inheritance is the instrument for defining types of wealth-holding groups.

*Matriliny* is a system of intergenerational transfer of wealth through women; and this means that the benefits of women’s fertility belong to the evolving multigenerational group of women and their sons. Leadership by males (sons, brothers) is irrelevant to this characterization.

Matriliny is also consistent with *patrilocal* residence. We must know who has rights to the *daughters* of the woman after her husband dies. There are no explicit rules of inheritance in most cases of matriliny, since they inherit automatically as a member of the natal group.

*Patriliny* is a system of intergenerational transfer through men (with women sometimes acting as intermediary agents). Men inherit animals, land and perhaps wives. In order for there to be a patrilineage, these transfers must be determined by socially established rules.

*Bi-lineal or duo-lineal inheritance*: It is possible that some wealth-assets flow through women and others through men. This would correspond to the case of matriliny AND patriliny. It is required that wealth is being transferred in both cases and by socially established rules.

*Bilateral inheritance* implies that a given wealth-asset will be distributed by social rules to both males and females. Do not confuse inheritance with *systems of bequest* (wills), where distribution is at the discretion of individuals.

I suspect that bilateral inheritance is imposed by the state, to the disadvantage of real people, because it threatens to break wealth into disparate groups. My guess is that people always find a way of avoiding this through quit claims and other devices for generating a more unilateral system. Examples: Bedouin practice—where the problem is imposed by the Koran, the Greek countryside and the Austrian case, discussed by White and Brudner.

*Ambilineal* allows a choice to affiliate and inherit “through one parent in each generation”. This makes no sense to me. We must be careful to avoid confusing residential choice with transfer of wealth. Ambilocal is feasible, ambilineal seems to be a contradiction. Prove me wrong!
II. Post-marital residential rules.

In coding these variables, we must distinguish between short-term residence that may apply to the first year of marriage and the longer term residential rule. The short-term residential practice should be noted.

*Temporary patrilocal residence*

*Temporary matrilocal residence*

*Patrilocal* and *matrilocal* apply to residing with parents of the groom’s patrilateral kin and with matrilateral kin, respectively.

*Virilocal* is location in the husband’s place, when it differs from location of his kin. This will often be called *neolocal*. I suggest the latter usage unless DRW can argue for preserving both terms.

*Avunculocal Residence* (as defined by Brian Schwimmer)

“The avunculocal rule is more complicated than the previous ones, since two residence changes are involved. Household formation begins with a virilocal rule, placing a married woman in her husband's household, where their children are raised. Upon reaching maturity, the men must relocate to their mother's brother's household, the actual avunculocal move. The result is an avunculocal extended family consisting of one or more elder men, their sister's sons, and the wives and immature children of all the married men.”

If this Schwimmer definition is accepted, it is clear that he is referring to a matrilineal system, where the product (sons) produced by wealth (fertility) reverts to the mother's kin. It is common for men to act as the managers of matrilineages. Calling these men "uncle" is arbitrary. The father's kin is exploited by being made to raise those sons to maturity. It seems to me that the system must be called patrilocal-matrilocal. Patrilocal is a reference to the post-marital residence of the wife. It says nothing about the relocation of sons and daughters at maturity!!! However, if the system is matrilineal, then we know that the product of wealth must be received by the matrilineage at some point. Take the case of the Tuareg. Here we have patrilocal-matrilocal, where the sons of the man return to his "mother's camp" when the father dies if the mother still lives or to the camp of another matrilineal kin if the mother is dead. Clearly, this is another version of your "avunculocal case" but it is not called avunculocal because no "uncle" is a defining element.

So, we delete this category and use the code: *matrilineal-patrilocal* and *patrilineal-matrilocal*. Again, a negative response to this suggestion by DRW would be interesting.

III. Resource transfers associated with marriage

*Bridewealth, brideprice, groomwealth and groomprice* are all forms of payment and all payments are elements of exchange. Indeed, we should be able to identify the nature of the benefits on both sides.

A. *Bridewealth*

Bridewealth is wealth that is transferred from kin of groom or groom to bride’s father or to his group. It must be a payment, meaning that it is negotiated or culturally prescribed in amount. It need not be paid at once, but it must be an agreed exchange for the bride’s fertility.

If the bride’s offspring will not belong to the husband’s group (if they do not inherit there), then the substance of the payment cannot wealth!
B. Bride price

If the negotiated wealth-asset transfer does not involve wealth, then it is to be called brideprice, not bridewealth.

There might also be transfers to bride, her mother and to others, but these generally will be gifts. So, how do we distinguish?

Bridewealth and brideprice must be received by the lineage that is releasing the bride. In a patrilineal system, the bride and her mother are members of a household, but not of the wealth-holding group and hence they cannot receive a payment for a transfer to value from the father’s patrilineage.

C. Groomwealth-Groomprice

Groomwealth is a transfer of wealth from the bride’s kin to the groom’s. Without doubt, such a transfer will be negotiated, if it exists. However, with the exception of groomwealth in the form of pre-nuptial agreements in contemporary US, etc, I know of no case of groomwealth. If there is a negotiated transfer to the groom’s kin or to the groom, it is more likely to be consumer durables and should be coded as groomprice. And in every case, the ethnographer will call it “dowry.” We must not copy that mistake.

D. Token bride-price

If "token bridwealth" does not contain wealth, as defined herein, then it is not bridewealth of any kind. Is it negotiated? Probably not. So, is it a payment of any kind? No. Maybe it is a conventional gift. But gifts are common to most systems of marriage. Hardly worth mentioning. Hence, it is likely that the ethnographer is trying to place the particular marital practice into a common frame, inappropriately.

I would delete this category.

E. Dowry

Dowry is a gift and all gifts are reciprocal, (exchange) in principle. However, the return gift is not negotiated nor is it customary and hence, is not known in advance. It is a gift (not negotiated) from the bride’s kin to the new domestic unit. Gifts to the domestic unit are various things of value to the residence, including things for the kitchen. They are not gifts to the bride or groom or other persons. If these exist, they should be noted as such. Dowry never includes wealth. It is defined as a gift to the new consumption group (domestic unit) and hence can contain only consumption goods.

F. Gifts to the bride

The bride’s trousseau and other things for her are traditional to many cultures. Gift to the bride might include a wealth-asset, either from the kin of the groom or from her own kin. When it contains wealth (such as precious metals) it should be so noted, especially wealth from her kin.

Gifts to the bride can be anything that people want her to have, including wealth in land, slaves, etc. It is HERS not theirs. So, the basic distinction between dowry and gifts to bride relates to rights of possession and disposition. A good ethnography will say something about how a woman's possessions can be placed at the disposal of the household (husband).

G. Other gifts

There may be an array of gifts distributed at marriage. These may be of great significance in the culture. Gifts to the mother, the groom, other relatives, etc. are part of a ceremony. Specific reference to any of these is important, especially if specific individuals are customarily special recipients.
F. Dower

A payment to the bride that may be promised at the time of marriage, with perhaps delayed delivery. It is intended as a means of subsistence in the event of divorce or after death of the husband, or for other purposes. The Moslem *mahr* falls into this category. So, while it may be in the form of money and hence be ambiguous relative to being wealth, it is not intended to grow in value, as is required for wealth-assets. The fact that it is not all paid at the same time is not a distinguishing feature. In Africa, it is common for bridewealth to be paid over long periods and often never finished.

**II. Forms of family (related to previous SCCS code 68)**

One of the existing codes (68) says that a society is monogamous if polygyny is less that 20%. I don’t understand this. Clearly, polygyny may be unreachable for the common person, even when it is the aspiration of all men. The important factor is the nature of the limitation.

a. **Strict monogamy.**

b. **Polygyny by rank:** If only certain men, such as chiefs, emperors, etc. are allowed to have multiple wives, then it should be so indicated.

c. **Polygyny for the rich:** If polygyny is severely limited by resources, then that too should be indicated, such as the exceptionally rich.

Since some other codes make reference to “stem family,” “extended family” and so forth and < 20% polygyny can be referenced in these cases, this would lead to a confused code. Again, I don’t believe that this 20% calculation has analytical significance. Because such previous codes exist, and such information should not be thrown away at this point, I would welcome the coder’s remarks on this matter.
Table 1: Elementary Characteristics of Marriage-Related Resource Transfers
(see definitions of wealth, wealth-holding groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>Distributed to rightful claim (Gift)</th>
<th>Payment (including “gifts” that are negotiated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Label</strong></td>
<td>Dowry</td>
<td>Inheritance (Bequest)</td>
<td>Bridewealth (Brideprice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td>Consumption goods</td>
<td>Wealth (Consumption goods)</td>
<td>Wealth (Product of work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From</strong></td>
<td>Bride’s kin</td>
<td>Groom’s kin or Bride’s kin</td>
<td>Groom’s wealth-holding group (Groom’s kin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To</strong></td>
<td>New conjugal unit; or to bride (see also Bequest)</td>
<td>Bride or Groom</td>
<td>Bride’s father’s wealth-holding group (Bride’s kin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In return for</strong></td>
<td>Alliance (if to bride strengthens the bride)</td>
<td>(N.A.)</td>
<td>Wealth (Conjugal services)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Search**      | Groom’s side  | (N.A.)                               | Groom’s side                                 | Bride’s side
