**Marriage in the Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America**

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Marriage as an institution is viewed and implemented both similarly and differently in different countries of the world. Marriage, being a legal process also has different legislations and requirements depending on which country you are in. This paper aims to compare and contrast marriage in the United States of America and marriage in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Religion plays a very crucial role in marriage all over the world. Saudi Arabia; being an Islamic state, only recognizes marriages under the Muslim faith (Prohibition of Interfaith Marriage, 2020). America is often termed as the “free world” for its acceptance of diverse practices. On this basis, in America, there are no religious restrictions placed on marriage. Marriage in America is actually and a legal agreement between two individuals and the state. The only aspect of religion that comes into marriage in the USA is if the officiating ceremony is done by an Imam, rabbi, or pastor (Marriage in the U.S. isn’t a religious issue, 2015). There are however no legal requirements leaning towards any specific religion. Unlike Saudi Arabia where there is strict adherence to the Sharia Law, the USA does not have a preference towards any religion

Consent and age of marriage have been a worldwide discussion with different views coming from different stakeholders on the matter. In Saudi Arabia, the legal age for marriage is 18 years old for teenagers with exceptions if approved by a special court. This decision was arrived at in an attempt to curb child marriage that was a rampant practice in the country (ABDULMALIK, 2020).In the USA, the age of marriage is regulated at the state level and most of the states have set the legal age for marriage at 18. At 18, one can marry without consent but in fifty of the states, one can marry while still below 18 years old provided they have consent from parents, guardians, a judge, or a court clerk. In 9 of the states, a person who is above 21years of age cannot marry an individual under 18years. (Syrett, 2017) Therefore in the two countries, the age limit for marriage is 18years with the exceptions made in the USA

Same-sex marriages have been a subject of debate in many parts of the world. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is clear on this and prohibits same gender marriages and you can never get approval to do such. This is founded on the strict adherence to Sharia law (Max Bearak, 2016) On the other hand, the United States of America accommodates same-gender marriages through a ruling made by the US Supreme Court in 2015 that lifted all bans imposed on same-gender unions. Same-sex marriages are now legally recognized (A Timeline of the Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage in the U.S., 2021)

A polygamy is a man marrying more than one wife. Saudi Arabia; being an Islamic state, strictly follows the Quran and therefore makes it one of the few countries where polygamy is still legal. Data however shows that most men prefer marrying one wife (Francis). In America, polygamy is an illegal practice in all fifty states and is a punishable offense (Countries Where Polygamy Is Legal 2021).On matters of polygamy, the two countries do differ

Cohabitation is where a couple lives together but out of wedlock. In sharia law, cohabiting is not permitted and is a considered an offense that will have you prosecuted (Nabbout, 2019)In the USA, it is still illegal to cohabit in 4 states while it remains legal in the other 42states (Living Together Before Marriage Still Illegal In 4 U.S. States) The two countries, therefore, have different laws of cohabiting couples

Some of the time, marriages fail to work out and couples decide to divorce. In Saudi Arabia, couples are allowed to part ways and divorce provided that the man will support the wife and her children. In the USA couples also can easily go ahead and divorce provided that they take care of children in marriages where children have been born. Divorce is therefore legal in both countries provided you follow down the laid down procedures

The two countries, therefore, have several similarities about marriage especially around the age of marriage and divorce but differ strongly on the issues of same-sex marriages, cohabitation, and polygamy. It is therefore an informative paper for individuals planning to get married in the two countries

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