

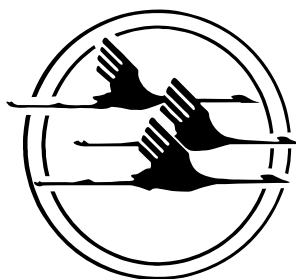
Elli Heikkilä and
Daniel Rauhut
(eds.)

Marriage Migration and Multicultural Relationships



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Institute of Migration
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Preface

The number of multicultural marriages and relationships are growing in our globalizing world, when people move more frequently from place to place and country to country. Marriage migration as itself is a form of migration. It can be defined as migration to join a spouse in another area within a country and, in international marriages, in another country. The actual knowledge about marriage migration is relatively low: the field of migration research has until recently paid little attention to this topic. The dynamics and social processes leading to a person marrying a person from another country are far more complex and multifaceted than what one might initially assume. There is an apparent need to know more about the dynamics of these relationships.

This book aims to increase understanding about marriage migration and its underlying processes and dynamics as well as the outcomes of such marriages. The chapters that appear in this volume represent original and individual thinking and insight into the marriage migration around the world.

We are thankful to the chapter authors for your valuable contributions. We would like to thank the Institute of Migration, Finland, particularly director Ismo Söderling for his insightful comments on the manuscript, and administrative manager Kirsi Sainio who organized the lay-out of the book. Thank you also for Professor David Newman, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, of the photo for the book cover.

Turku, Finland, and Trollhättan, Sweden May 20, 2015

Elli Heikkilä and Daniel Rauhut

Chapter 1.

**Elli Heikkilä
and Daniel Rauhut** ■



Over Time and Space: What Do We Know?

Introduction

Marriage migration is a form of migration. It can be defined as migration to join a spouse in another area within a country and, in international marriages, in another country, usually at or soon after marriage (see Stam 2011). For most people marriage migration conjures up images a low-educated man from a rural area in the Western world going to Thailand to marry a woman half of his age, or that he obtains a “mail-order bride” over the internet from a country in the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, the ordinary person on the street also has the perception that this is a relatively new phenomena originating from increased globalisation, i.e. that the practice started sometime in the 1980s. Needless to say, these are all stereotypes and it will be very difficult to find empirical evidence to back them up.

Contrary to common belief, what we call marriage migration today has a long history. Historical texts have mentioned kings and nobility marrying women from other countries since long before the ancient Greek or Roman Empire; wealthy merchants married off their daughters to merchants from other countries with the explicit aim of forming strong and competitive economic and political coalitions. This in fact happened quite frequently. While scholars have often noted that these

women did not marry of their own free will, seldom – if ever – have they placed such women in the same category as “mail-order brides” or discussed the fact that they married a man twice their age. Even today, it comes as little surprise when, for example, celebrities or the financial and political elite marry someone from another country and the woman moves to the country of the husband. One example of this is Princess Madeleine of Sweden, who recently married an American business man and then moved to the US. Swedish television even broadcasted the wedding live. Another example is the former Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Carl Bildt, who married an Italian woman who, after the wedding, moved to Sweden. She currently (2015) represents Sweden in the European Parliament. In Finland, to take another example, some politicians are in multicultural marriages and relations, as are sports stars and recent Formula-1 drivers. How many people consider these instances as examples of marriage migration?

On the other side of the social hierarchy, multicultural marriages have become almost as commonplace. The motive was often the economic necessity to form a viable economic unit for the sake of survival. In cross-border regions this was not uncommon at all, or in fishing communities. The foreign woman usually moved to the country of her husband. Sometimes when a low-educated man marries a foreign woman she suddenly becomes a “mail-order bride” and the man is seen as a person who is not able to find a native woman; as a consequence, they do not easily integrate with their social surroundings. Some of these marriages are met with distrust and considered to be fake marriages prompted by motives other than love (Kim 2011).

Globally, the middle class has always married within its own social group. Gaunt (1996) describes how the Nordic middle class arranged their marriages and how they despised such immorality as living together before marriage and marrying someone outside the same social group. Similar descriptions have been made by Stone (1990) with respect to England between the 1500s and 1800s.

Today, it is quite common to label anything unknown, i.e. things that we cannot explain or understand, as being caused by “globalisation”. This may be true in some cases, but not in others. The increase in the number of marriages where the spouses come from different countries does not necessarily have anything to do with “globalisation”; the “internationalization” of companies and university studies should not be confused with “globalisation”, nor should changing aspects of “regionalization”. An increase in the number of Finnish men marrying Russian and Estonian women cannot be considered an aspect of “globalisation”, since both Russia and Estonia are neighbouring countries. More likely, this is a result of a “regionalization” process taking place around the Baltic Sea region. A majority of all multicultural marriages in Sweden are between Swedish citizens and other EU citizens, which, again, has more to do with “European integration”

than “globalisation”. Many young people study abroad, and during their studies, they meet a number of persons of the opposite sex. Likewise, many international companies have offices in other countries and it is not unusual that the head offices send staff to their offices in other countries. Again, these people will meet many persons of the opposite sex during that time. The transaction costs for meeting a desirable partner will be relatively low for these persons (Östh et al. 2011). Most likely, nobody considers this an example of finding “mail-order brides”, right? To what extent we can explain this process as an aspect of increased “internationalization”? This is a topic for a research project unto itself.

The transaction cost is a very important cost when finding a partner. A common definition of the transaction cost on the marriage market is the time and money spent to find a partner (Becker 1993; Cigno 1994; Stark 1988). In practical terms, this means that the transaction costs for finding a partner will, more or less, be the same as they would be for finding a partner in the same town, even if it is on the other side of the planet. More and more people residing in the same town meet their partner over the internet. This leaves us with two questions: what does this have to do with globalisation and does anyone actually view the native women who sign up on internet-based matching sites as potential “mail-order brides”?

The aim and scope of this book

The actual knowledge about marriage migration is relatively low. The field of migration research has until recently paid little attention to this topic (Stam 2011). Over the last 20 years, only a limited number of studies have been done on international marriages and only a few of them try to theorise about the subject of marriage migration (Han 2003; Becker 1993; Cigno 1994; Stark 1988). Some “knowledge” and “facts” about marriage migration are based on prejudices and stereotypes. The dynamics and social processes leading to a person marrying a person from another country are actually far more complex and multifaceted than what one might initially assume.

This book aims to increase understanding about marriage migration and its underlying processes and dynamics as well as the outcomes of such marriages. We know that the aim of this book is bold, but, at the same time, our knowledge on the topic is still, at best, fragmented. Just by addressing this topic we have filled in a small part of the knowledge gap regarding this huge, complex and multifaceted issue.

In many countries, it is not necessary to be married in order to obtain a visa to live together with one’s partner; although such couples are not formal-

ly married, we consider them to be married since they live in marriage-like conditions. We will not focus on domestic violence to any significant degree as this issue has been examined in previous studies (Stam 2011). The scope of this edited volume will be to cover the multi-sided aspects of marriage migration: what types of persons enter into a multicultural marriage, i.e. a marriage where a native spouse has a foreign-born partner, and what underlying forces and processes are involved? Also, daily life in these marriages will be discussed. What are the challenging issues in being married to a person from another culture? While working with this project, we realised what an important role transaction costs actually play. Several of the contributions actually touch upon this aspect. Finally, we have the intention of theorising on the causes of marriage migration.

As stated above, the aim of this book is bold. We do not claim to provide a wide range of “truths”, but, rather, keys for increasing our understanding of this multifaceted and complex issue. We are fully aware that it is not possible to fill in the huge knowledge gap with a single edited volume, but hopefully we will be able to fill in a small part of it.

The contributions

This book looks at multicultural marriages from a wide range of viewpoints and takes into account the spectrum of dynamism. This is the main target of the book: to provide more information about and a greater understanding of how dynamic multicultural marriages are in different societies around the world. The number of international marriages is all the time increasing not only because of globalisation but also for other reasons, like population ageing or an imbalanced sex ratio in particular regions. The book includes chapters that look at the phenomenon globally but also provide views at the national and local levels.

In Chapter 2, Michael Bégin offers a multifaceted approach by examining the South Korean online introductions industry and the rationales and motives of its participants. As international marriage services have incorporated information and communications technologies (ICTs) to assist with introductions, the industry has furthered the globalisation of marriage markets and the opportunities for communicative exchanges among peoples in disparate nations and cultures. The uncertainties produced by the new assemblages of cultures, technologies, traditions, expectations, ethics, and aspirations are cause enough for further study and investigation into the effects of such industries on human decision-making and the perceptions of the opportunities they offer for making real improvements in one’s life.

In Chapter 3, Fumie Kumagai analyses the issue of international marriages as an outcome of depopulation in rural farming regions and the globalisation of the Japanese economy. Marriage, one of the most fundamental institutions in society, has become difficult to achieve in the rural farming regions of Japan. In-depth analyses of foreign brides were conducted in several municipalities of the Yamagata prefecture, which have high rates of co-residency and a large elderly population. In order to alleviate the acute shortage of brides in the rural farming areas of Japan, some local municipal offices have arranged to bring in brides from various Asian nations. In Yamagata in 2011, more than four out of ten of the foreigners living there were Chinese, followed by North and South Koreans and Filipinos. The success in bringing foreign brides to Tozawa-mura village in Yamagata was significantly enhanced by the active introduction of various supporting programmes by the Tozawa-mura municipal office, such as language programmes, health, welfare, and insurance programmes, educational programmes for children and international friendship programmes.

A minor, but significant and emerging dimension of international migration is the marriage migration of professionals. Stanley D. Brunn highlights this in Chapter 4. As part of the network of professionals involved in education, government and corporations, such women and men have created strong transnational links before marriage and maintain them through international travel and regular use of the internet and skype. Among the major findings of the study are the importance of friends and family members when couples first meet, religious and secular variations in the marriage ceremony, familiarity with multiple languages, familiarity with English, the extent of their pre-marriage and post-marriage international travel, and gender differences in terms of making social adjustments and retirement decisions. For example, the problems these migrating spouses faced were similar across the cultural, linguistic and geographical spectra. The major concerns that many women face include language difficulties, missing family and friends, not finding employment and thus not having an income, making transportation adjustments (going from public transport to a world of private cars), and becoming familiar with a different health care system. Male concerns also had to do with not finding employment and not having an income, missing friends and colleagues, and also unfamiliar foods.

In Chapter 5, Gaby Straßburger and Can M. Aybek's present a case study on the development of a border-crossing marriage relationship between two individuals and discuss it in terms of the effects that are brought about by spatial distance and migration regulations. The data for this case study come from a research project on the dynamics of marriage migration between Turkey and Germany. The data consist of repeated interviews with individuals engaged in a border-crossing relationship during a period of eight months covering the pre- and post-migration phases. One of the characteristics that might, if one

person plans to emigrate as a third-country national, be common to most of the couples concerns the imbalance in terms of the mobility chances of both partners. In most cases, the spouse residing in the destination country enjoys the freedom to travel. Their analysis, however, indicates that the spouse who initially lived in Turkey did not have the opportunity to visit his/her partner in Germany either before the marriage or immediately after it. Hence, the existing visa regime impedes the chances of these spouses to gather first-hand information about their prospective living conditions and assess their emigration plans more adequately.

Elli Heikkilä examines multicultural marriages in Finland, i.e. marriages between foreigners and a permanently residing citizen of Finland, in Chapter 6. The marriage market has expanded over time, going from being exclusively local to becoming increasingly global. Marriage, in turn, has become a significant factor that influences migration. This chapter discusses the role of the native spouse in helping the foreign-born spouse become more integrated. There are also challenges in multicultural marriages and certain important aspects, like values, the importance of language, gender roles and the upbringing of children, are raised in the chapter, as are views on these couples' everyday lives. International marriage migration not only impacts the first generation but also the second and following generations, and it reminds us of the process of chain migration. The potential of international marriage migration continues with successive generations, when multiculturalism and close contacts with more than one country through relatives' networks are present in children's lives.

Finnish men who have been in long-term relationships with a foreign woman are studied by Hannu Sirkkilä in Chapter 7. Here, the criterion for a long-term relationship is at least seven years. He has an interest in knowing how these men's relationships have developed and how they explain and interpret the success of their long-term relationship. As the spouses learnt to adjust to the changes, they find new solutions that strengthen their relationship and the need for two cultural practices and new solutions to everyday life. The interviewed men stressed their own life changes and how they have grown as men and become more flexible in their everyday life with a foreign wife. His interviews demonstrate that the most important elements in these discourses are the competence in locating cultural differences, an understanding of these differences, a motivation to learn from these differences and to take these cultural elements into account when creating the family's own reality and common intercultural life.

In Chapter 8, Carine Cools focuses on intercultural couples living in Finland and their perceptions of parenthood and childrearing from the relational-dialectics perspective proposed by Baxter and Montgomery (1996). Her research question is as follows: Based on what themes and during what particular rela-

tional dialectical tensions in their relationship do intercultural couples bring up the subject of parenthood and raising children? Through discussions and negotiations about these topics, she identified the following five themes: turning points, uncertainties, dilemmas, support and challenges and opportunities. The couples' commitment to their children growing up in an intercultural family is a source of both happiness and opportunity. Happiness and opportunity are portrayed, for example, by the richness of having two or more languages spoken and understood at home, which enables children to communicate with friends and family on both sides. The uniqueness of a couple's family composition allows for special privileges, such as travelling abroad, having a lot of celebrations (from both the mother's and father's culture), and having grandparents from different cultures.

In Chapter 9, Alexandra Stam discusses a specific aspect of marriage migration, that of vulnerability, which is further accentuated by migration. Set within the context of Switzerland, she draws on information about so-called vulnerable migrants, defined in this chapter as migrants whose right to stay in a country depends on their family situation and for whom return would be problematic. Due to their migration status and the precariousness of their experience of migration, vulnerable migrants are at higher risk of abuse. Of particular importance is the issue of domestic violence, and the lack of laws that protect the migrant population from such violence. Drawing upon migrant voices, the chapter demonstrates that the legal context, as well as the context of migration, contribute to generate experiences of abuse that are unique to the migrant population, hence the need to urgently address this topic that scholars have too long ignored.

In Chapter 10, Daniel Rauhut provides a theoretical discussion in line with the New Home Economics School on just how a disequilibrium marriage market functions as well as on its causes and implications. People marry to maximise utility and their personal well-being, but people also marry because they are expected to do so, both by themselves and by their social context. Marriage migration will occur if there is a demand for marriageable partners in one geographical area and there is a surplus of marriageable partners who are willing to migrate from another geographical area. Transaction or information costs play a central role in the type of match-making related to marriage migration. Membership in a global match-making site on the internet costs the same whether you intend to search for a partner in your own hometown or in another country, which implies relatively low search costs. The result will be a migration movement of (usually) women from geographical areas in which they cannot find a marriageable man to geographical areas with a surplus of men who, due to a shortage of women, cannot find a marriageable woman closer to home.

Lessons to be learnt

This study leaves us with several lessons to be learnt. The first one most definitely has to do with the complexity of the subject “marriage migration” and how multifaceted it is. The contributions in this edited volume show that marriage migration consists of something more than just a low-educated man from a rural area in the Western world obtaining a “mail-order bride” over the internet from a country in the former Soviet Union or going to Thailand to marry a woman half his age.

The contributions by Carine Cools, Elli Heikkilä and Hannu Sirkkilä highlight results from these marriages that are enriching and positive. Cools touches upon the cultural richness that children from mixed marriages experience and the opportunities to travel to visit their relatives abroad. Heikkilä finds that international marriage migration continues with successive generations. Multiculturalism and maintaining close contacts to more than one country via relatives are ever-present in children’s lives and influence their attitudes and preferences. How these factors influence and change men’s lives and the way they perceive they have grown as men and become more flexible in their day-to-day life with their foreign wives is something Sirkkilä stresses in his chapter.

Just as these marriages with a foreigner can be enriching and culturally rewarding, there is also a flip side to the coin. Stanley D. Brunn finds in his chapter that regardless of where the one spouse comes from, they appear to face six similar challenges to integration. The chapters by Michael Bégin and Fumie Kumagai also underline how cultural misunderstandings and cultural clashes can create tensions and problems in the relationships with two persons from different cultures.

The contributions by Alexandra Stam as well as Gaby Straßburger and Can M. Aybek highlight the impact of legal issues on marriages where one of the spouses is about to move to a new country and also how vulnerable they are when arriving there. Both the juridical framework governing the right to immigrate due to marriage and how this right is cancelled when the relationship has ended (prematurely according to the law) often appear inhuman. To some extent, these juridical frameworks may actually cause more problems and troubles for the involved persons than they prevent.

In the chapter by Fumie Kumagai, the importance of spouses who immigrated to the rural parts of Japan is highlighted. Without them, the rural areas would have experienced a rapid population decline. A closure of services, schools and public transport would have followed the population decline. It is our belief that this situation holds true not only for Japan but also in many other countries.

The last lesson to be learnt is how huge the knowledge gap is on this subject. It is not difficult to identify areas worth further research. One area that has

received little attention concerns men moving to another country to marry a woman. Is the migration of these men caused by the same processes as for women? How common is this “male” marriage migration? Another important theme to analyse is the migration propensity of multicultural couples, i.e. what country do they choose to live in and what factors affect their choice of country. Furthermore, one area deals with the theoretical model presented in this edited volume by Daniel Rauhut: Is it possible to test this model empirically? The list of interesting research topics generated by this edited volume can definitely be made longer. Hopefully, some of them will be explored in the future.

We would like thank the contributors for their erudite and original papers. It has been a stimulating experience working together, with many interesting and illuminating discussions. The support from the Institute of Migration in Turku, Finland, for making this work possible is also gratefully acknowledged.

It is our hope and desire that this edited volume has taken the first steps in exploring a relatively unexplored area in migration research. Many research activities still need to be completed in order to better fill in the knowledge gap.

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Chapter 2



■ Michael Bégin

The Globalization of Marital Opportunity: The South Korean Online Introductions Industry

Abstract

This article presents a multifaceted examination of the South Korean online introductions industry. As the preponderance of international marriage services is now online, the industry has furthered the globalization of communicative exchange for the purpose of dating or mate seeking. By way of cultural analysis and case study, this chapter examines how South Korean social organization, cultural values, and family traditions play significant roles in the negotiation of difference and inequality in such exchanges, turning to personal interviews with participants to better understand their motives and rationales. Consideration is also given to the processes and elements of globalization and postmodernism, as well as the unique geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that give rise to this phenomenon.

Introduction

Unlike the relatively small-scale, localized phenomenon it once was, the contemporary online introductions industry now employs technologies that permit the

efficient and instantaneous flow of information worldwide. This technological application has transformed the scope, density, and reach of the trade, creating a global enterprise that is vastly different, as photo catalogs of single clients now appear on Internet web sites (Figure 1). Moreover, in distinction from fixed forms of printed media, the Internet permits not only such innovations as audio sampling and streaming video for acquaintance-making, but also a more rapid rate of response and a higher degree of correspondence from a greater variety of people (Constable 2003). As electronic media have created new and unique *situational geographies* (Meyrowitz 1985; Pearce 1999) affecting the demographics, both real and perceived, of the industry's participants, such transformations have significantly enhanced the appeal and the incentive of electronically-mediated introductions and courtship. Along with many other forms of commerce that have since gone online, these changes have also significantly transformed the profit potential of the industry, attracting a greater level of investment while also introducing changes in marketing techniques, available services, and clientele (Bégin 2007). Also, from the perspective of the industry's clients, these services tend to level the playing field in terms of the accessibility and the transaction costs involved, as correspondence with locals in most cases becomes just as simple and inexpensive as online interactions with potential partners from halfway across the globe. This often comes as excellent news for those who are unable to make the significant financial and time investments usually required in more traditional methods of dating and courtship. This article examines the South Korean segment of this global and globalizing industry, focusing on the unique interplays between culture, technology, geography, and the social forces that fuel this fascinating and pervasive phenomenon.



Figure 1. The introductory page to the KoreanCupid.com online introductions site.

Social, cultural and geographical standpoints

Amongst the great variety of theories currently in broad circulation within academic feminism, perhaps one of the most appealing to geographers would be *standpoint theory* which, after Leeder (2004), posits that one's experiences in daily life are in so small way influenced and organized by one's social location. The sociospatial ontology that forms the bedrock of this theory resonates with the sociocultural attributes of contemporary phenomena that interact and overlap with globalizing processes in the age of the concurrent proliferation of information and the global and globalizing *implosion* observed by scholars and theorists such as Baudrillard (1996; 2000). The persistent relationship between space, place and culture plays an undeniable role in the everyday operations of decision making, and also in major life-changing decisions such as choosing a life partner, be it in the context of marriage or otherwise. In the Korean context, both culture and geography provide the standpoint *and* the structural forces, rendered nearly invisible by virtue of their pervasiveness, that constitute not only decision making itself, but also the very relationships that define marriage, family, security, and identity.

From the standpoint of women who identify themselves as primarily South Korean in terms of citizenship, birth, family lineage, language, and place of residence, conforming to social and family expectations is a constant challenge and a persistent reality (Kendall 1996; Bumpass 2004). To the extent that Korean women willingly participate and interact within social, institutional, and interpersonal hierarchies, the often patriarchal nature of these hierarchies constantly compels one to be situated within a fixed position. Within many Korean families, a daughter who marries becomes the "new daughter" of her spouse's parents and, by virtue of this new positioning and whether she likes it or not, must conform to her new family's expectations and demands while accepting a diminished status within her new family environment. In this relationship, respect is hard won in the sense that it usually enjoys mobility of the upward kind only.

From a young age, Korean women also endure tremendous social pressures to conform to standards of beauty, behavior, dress, communication, education, desirability and femininity, all of which are compounded by equally tremendous family pressure on young Koreans to marry, raise children and achieve social status and financial success by means of intense and constant competition. The pervasive ideology within Korean society that value and desirability are derived from competition is reflective of the Korean penchant for hierarchical social organization, which determines "winners" and "losers" in terms of one's position on any given hierarchy. With this, marriage itself becomes a competitive game that requires another kind of conformity: the value and desirability of one's spouse is largely determined by how valuable and desirable she/he is to others,

a phenomenon that concentrates both social and dyadic power to those who possess the resources deemed most valuable according to collective standards.

The rigid and dogmatic cultural picture painted here contrasts distinctively with the dynamism and change that characterizes contemporary South Korean society. The dramatic generation gap that rends Koreans asunder in terms of educational achievement, access to information and communications technologies (ICTs), political attitudes and leanings, career attainment and adherence to traditional values and practices (to name a few) is the primary reason why foreigners often hear “*well, yes...but it's changing*” as the standard response among Koreans to any number of complaints about life in Korea. Indeed, the major contributors to Korean social transformation – globalization, international cooperation, trade liberalization, scientific and technological achievement, and Korea’s status as an American client state and strategic partner in East Asia – have brought profound cultural and socioeconomic change to Korea (Jung 1998). However, in spite of all the change, time-honored cultural practices and traditions still retain a great deal of influence. Marriage is still regarded as an institution that lends social legitimacy and respect, for both individuals and families, and the tremendous social expectations and pressures to marry and raise children frequently raise eyebrows among observers situated along the sidelines.

The unique standpoint of the Korean perspective becomes further complicated with an understanding of Korea’s notoriously expensive, ultra-competitive and poorly balanced education system, which places inordinate emphasis on mathematics, English, science and university exams preparation – and often at the expense of arts, humanities and other valid and necessary subjects and disciplines (Park 2013). A very large component of university admissions requirements centers on English reading and comprehension skills, as measured by standardized English examinations. As the culturally homogeneous Koreans remain mostly monolingual, English continues to be a coveted resource that calls for expensive after-school training at private language institutes that often short-circuit public school curricula. The intense competition for English skills among Korean university aspirants, whose career destinies are frequently determined by the institutional ranking of their *alma mater*, imposes a tremendous financial responsibility for parents who are often complicit in underwriting the design flaws of their own education system. The net effect is that child rearing has become a very expensive proposition in Korea – a point that becomes important to bear in mind when Korean marriage decisions and opportunities are considered.

In addition to the exigencies of Korea’s competitive, high-pressure educational climate, another important situational factor in the Korean marriage arena is housing. Particularly in the major metropolitan centers of Korea, finding comfortable and affordable housing is a perennial problem for young newly-

weds who frequently conform to social and family expectations by marrying no later than their late twenties. As the mandates of higher education, in addition to the requisite two-year military service period for young Korean men, have kept these young couples out of the workforce for a longer portion of their lives, the prospect of raising the necessary capital for securing an apartment has become a burgeoning challenge. Especially in Korea's largest cities of Seoul, Daegu, and Pusan, private-sector housing corporations and high-rise apartment complex proprietors typically require large, lump-sum "key money" payments to secure two- or three-bedroom apartments that offer suitable living space for married couples and/or families with children. For relatively modern and comfortable apartment units suitable for professional couples, these lump-sum payments may range from KRW 80 million to 170 million (USD 74,000 to 157,000), which Korean landlords promptly turn into investments for the duration of the couple's residence. Depending on the amount of key money raised, a couple may also have monthly rent obligations in addition to utility expenses, repair fees, and monthly maintenance fees. With this, it is small wonder that many young married couples live with parents for years before amassing the requisite savings to afford them dignified addresses of their own.

In spite of its best intentions and the election of the nation's first woman president, Park Geun-Hye, South Korea has not made great strides of progress in securing gender equality in the domains of domestic rights, parental support, child care, elder care, hiring and promotion, and representation in government. Indeed, South Korea in 2014 ranked 117th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum 2014). This means that even for women with university education and training, the prospects and opportunities for career actualization remain significant obstacles. Korean women continue to face discriminatory hiring practices, glass ceilings, sexism and male-dominated interview panels and corporate leadership structures (Jones 2006). The net effect is to render marriage especially important for women who may otherwise lack independent means of social mobility and financial freedom (Kendall 1996).

These difficulties often recall the discrimination experienced during childhood, where the traditional favoritism exhibited toward boys continues to linger as yet another time-honored and disconcertingly stubborn cultural practice. As traditional family culture designates the eldest son as the primary insurance against old age, Koreans have typically made greater investments in their sons in terms of care, resource allocation and educational investment. The favoritism shown to Korean males during childhood frequently becomes an entitlement that constitutes a fundamental component of Korean patriarchy in adulthood. Still, Korean women are often remarkably accepting of this gender order, and those more likely to perpetuate it in their own relationships are those more like-

ly to see Korea's unique cultural realities as static, immutable, and perhaps even morally preferable to those of their western counterparts. The net effect is to render marriage an extremely important institution for Korean women, both as a form of social mobility and as a storehouse for Korean traditions and value systems.

Enter globalization

Korean values, family relationships, and patriarchal traditions may die hard, but they are not as reified as outside observers may surmise. The age of globalization has witnessed South Korea extending itself to the West (and vice-versa) economically, politically and culturally. Just as DaeWoo Corporation merged with General Motors in 2002 to create GM/DaeWoo in South Korea, similar mergers and hybridities have been observed at the interpersonal level as culture runs parallel with prevailing economic trajectories and an increasing percentage of Koreans marry non-Koreans. This can be significantly attributed to the corresponding processes, structures and ideologies of globalization that have permeated South Korean society. This section will elaborate upon these ideas.

Mediazation, postmodernity and global culture

As globalization is made possible through the proliferation and widespread application of ICTs, an important influence upon Korean culture and society has been those selfsame technologies that structure and re-form the way South Koreans communicate in the modern information economy. *Mediazation* refers to the increasingly mediated nature of social interaction in postmodernity – the technologically-induced transformation of the spatial and temporal organization of social life – and social scientists have acknowledged the importance of mass media as cultural environments and their influence on sexuality, identity and relationship behavior (Featherstone 1991; Carstarphen & Zavoina 1999; Meyrowitz 1985; Brod 1996; Ben-Ze'ev 2004; Pearce 1999). The mediated hybridization of culture and communication in South Korea reflects the prevailing tendencies of postmodern consumer culture, which is characterized in part by the commercial manipulation of images through advertising and the media, and the constant reworking of desires through images (Featherstone 1991; Baudrillard 1981,1983). The global cultural space produced by these mediated interactions intensifies the exchanges among otherwise disparate cultures, collapsing space, culture, and place, and resulting in new and often unanticipated cultural

assemblages, opportunities and hybridities. The South Korean online introductions industry is indicative of these processes and their consequences.

The extent that mediatization influences sexuality and relationship behavior is a function of both the depth and range of penetration achieved by ICTs (significant in South Korea) and the extent that technology mediates the exchange of information and communication on a daily basis. However, one of the largely unanticipated consequences of mediatization is that it often changes the way people play the relationship game. Globalization and global cultural space bring *"a far denser and faster system of diffusing ideas, values and perceptions, so that a certain self-consciousness about and understanding of sexuality is arguably being universalized in a completely new way"* (Altman 2001, 38). This resonates with Giddens (1992, 18), who sees globalization as altering "the very tissue of our everyday lives." The sexualities that write, and are written by, global cultural space experience increased pressures of social and cultural homogenization, yet are also subject to its ephemeral nature as it imposes the demands of risk-taking, opportunity assessment and decision-making (Bégin 2007). These denote the very ideologies embedded within transnational corporate behavior that constitute the bulk of globalizing processes, providing a measure of explanation for the extensive participation in this online industry among South Koreans.

Mediated introductions: playing the game online

That Koreans take marriage rather seriously is an understatement in view of the fact that many spend literally millions of Korean won on marriage agents hired exclusively for the purpose of finding the ideal mate for their clients. The fees charged by such agents provide others with an indication of the resources available to those who hire them, as well as their likely class standing. Online introduction sites such as the popular *KoreanCupid.com* do not exactly function in this way, although some interesting parallels can be observed. First, men participants may choose among different service packages of various price ranges. A standard subscription allows men to send introductory e-mails, although recipients must pay a fee to gain access to them. "Premium" subscriptions allow women recipients to read e-mails at no charge. As the men clients of KoreanCupid.com usually bear the brunt of the expense of this mediated correspondence, Korean women may find indications of a man's class standing and/or social status from his subscription type. "Min-Jung", a Korean medical assistant in her mid-twenties, was pleased to receive an introductory e-mail from "Marc", a French academic in his early forties living and working in Seoul. Unlike other introductions Min-Jung received from interested parties, she was not obligated

to pay a fee to gain access to Marc's e-mail. After a few casual messages, they adjourned to a popular social media site for further exchange until they agreed to a meeting. I had the opportunity to interview the couple about their experiences after they had been dating for a few months.

Min-Jung had initially approached the site on the recommendation of a friend, yet was not necessarily intent on meeting foreign men exclusively. Marc admitted that he was "too shy" and "lacked the self-confidence" to approach women at bars or clubs, finding in such sites a much more comfortable means of doing so. Marc had originally discovered KoreanCupid.com from a website advertisement, yet had been no stranger to online introduction sites. Tall, handsome and articulate, Marc seemed the type who needed no sort of technological aid to meet women, yet he vigorously advocated such means:

"I'm very shy and for me it was much easier to meet girls because in a bar, I wouldn't go up to talk to someone who I like...some guys they have the guts to do that. They like a girl and they go to talk with her but with me it's impossible. So I thought "oh my God, this is great!" when I saw the website because you can talk with some girls and if they don't like you, you can say "okay, fine! End of story" and then go meet someone else...there are thousands of women there. I would recommend it because there are a lot of people out there who are lonely but they have a lot of prejudice about these kinds of websites. Sometimes you have to provoke destiny...you have to use technology now. Some people, they are just so romantic. They say "I am single but I am just going to wait." They wait one year, two years, three years...the time is passing but we don't have time to wait. We have to use the Internet because this very innocent idea that things just happen by themselves is a mistake."

Despite Marc's position on dating sites, Min-Jung confessed to a bit of shame and embarrassment that they had indeed met online, and had chosen not to reveal to her parents exactly how they had met. At nearly 180 centimeters, Min-Jung easily satisfied Marc's height requirements, a concern that KoreanCupid.com was able to address through the personal profiles of its women clientele that include information pertaining to their physical dimensions. Min-Jung also satisfied Marc's expectations regarding education level, language ability, and physical appearance (also part of her profile), while Min-Jung made clear her own requirements in the description of the type of person she indicated an interest in meeting. Min-Jung had received e-mails from several other men through the website who had shared no photos or provided incomplete profile descriptions, and thus had enacted her own form of screening until she heard from Marc, who had clearly passed muster. Still, Min-Jung made clear during the interview that her initial interests were for casual friendship only.

The interaction Min-Jung and Marc enjoyed in virtual space eventually resulted in a meeting in real, physical space, creating new situational geographies for both predicated on the quality of their budding relationship. The intrusion of the virtual into the real created a fun and playful space for the two to interact and get further acquainted, allowing Min-Jung to use her extensive English language ability to transcend cultural boundaries and gain important insights into Western culture. Marc, fluent also in Korean, succeeded in making Min-Jung feel at ease and comfortable – necessary elements of the “chemistry” that Min-Jung had identified as being of utmost importance in any successful dating interaction. Whether these new situational geographies would result in migration was a moot point in Marc’s case (he was already in Korea when they had met), yet the new relationship clearly permitted him to feel more at home there, having gained the confidence that he could indeed meet Korean women through the website and thus overcome his admitted shyness about meeting people in “real” space.

During the interview, Min-Jung had indicated that Marc’s physical *location* was also important to her, even if it was less important to Marc. Min-Jung’s expectations and needs regarding proximity differed from those of Marc, who indicated that he was personally very willing to travel to another Korean city once or twice a week to meet a dating partner. “I have the time and the money,” he indicated, but Min-Jung’s work schedule was clearly the more demanding of the two, and thus the actual location of any potential dating partner was of greater importance to her. As emotional needs and expectations become functions of location and geography, the friction of distance becomes a hindrance to some and merely a nuisance to others. To the extent that electronic spaces exist to overcome this friction, relationships such as these will likely continue to be conducted online to varying degrees.

In Korea, technology continues to mediate even the most casual relationships, and the significant amount of communication and exchange that takes place on popular social media sites such as Facebook and KakaoTalk does have a way of collapsing time and space to no small degree. Indeed, messages, photos and web links can be sent instantly from anywhere on the Korean territory to any other user provided that the network linkages and software are shared, signal reception is reliable, and the electronic devices or servers involved are in proper working order. These services, however, are not free, and Koreans and foreigners alike often pay as much as 80,000 KRW (about 72 USD) per month to maintain this connectivity, depending on the service options they select. In Korea, the most popular purveyors of digital information and communications access such as LG, SK Telecom and Olleh vie constantly for clientele in a very competitive market, resulting in mobile service centers and “smart phone” shops on virtually every city block and in the smallest of towns.

I had the opportunity to meet Marc about a month after our initial interview. Unfortunately, he seemed less than happy with his new dating partner, complaining about her sexual inexperience with men – fairly common among Korean women Min-Jung's age given that many continue to live with their parents into their twenties and early thirties. It seemed a bit less likely at that point that he would stay with her, although he stated no intentions to break off the (still relatively new) relationship even though he continued to meet other women online and offline.

Negotiating patriarchy

While it is clear that gender equality is slow to arrive in Korea, nevertheless sufficient change has occurred for Korean women such that they have been able to attain a certain level of empowerment and self-actualization, and these benefits exist despite the persistence of Korean patriarchy. Ironically, the neo-liberal ideologies set into place by Korea's transition to free-market capitalism have maintained patriarchal structures while simultaneously affording many women the means to subvert them. The online introductions industry provides an excellent example of this subversive outlet – women can take greater initiative to create opportunities for themselves as a means of improving their lives. In western nations such as the U.S., these same processes contributing to the subversion of patriarchy have been in place for a much longer period, much to the dismay of patriarchal men who lament the disappearance of "traditional" women interested far less in advancement than in being nurturing wives and mothers.¹ Interestingly, the Korean online introductions industry presents to Korean men (at least in theory) an opportunity for a parallel kind of subversion – the circumvention of relations with women sufficiently empowered so as to challenge traditional notions of male dominance and patriarchal power. This was corroborated in an interview with Shahlo Abdullaeva, a multilingual counselor with the Korea Ministry of Gender Equality and Family's Emergency Support Center for Migrant Women, Gwangju Office:

"The agents in Korea find local agencies in other countries and contact with them. Clients can go there and there are many women and then they choose someone. And the agents network and communicate with each other...on the online networks, they show the women's profiles and the men usually have more choices than the women do because it's usually the men who pay for the service. On the Korean networks, you can specify what kind of woman you want and a lot of websites can be found. A lot of these are agency websites."

Abdullaeva continued with a description of the types of men and women typically involved in these exchanges, and some of the problems that commonly surface between them:

“Before about 2006, most of the men who would marry foreign women were from small villages and rural areas with low education because they just wanted someone to stay at home and raise children. Vietnamese women were the most popular among these types because it’s easier for these men to get used to them. They are physically similar to Koreans and have a similar lifestyle to Koreans...they eat rice, the food is also a little spicy...they believe that marrying a Vietnamese woman would be easier for the children because they are racially closer to Koreans and that would be easier for the children. After 2006, the more educated men started marrying foreign women because they believe the mixed-race children would be more attractive, more healthy, have better opportunities...but still most foreign brides here are Chinese, Filipina, or Vietnamese...When you see other cultures marrying with Koreans...there are similarities but they think that when they come to Korea everything will be okay because it is a developed country and husband has a good job and makes good money...it’s a little dream that they tell themselves...especially the younger women in their twenties...they think that maybe they will go to university and they can get a job and help their parents. Migrant women don’t understand that there are taxes and expenses and it’s not so cheap to live here. From a (monthly) salary of 2 million won they may think that they will live comfortably. They are not always so realistic, but their husbands try to explain how things really are. The women who have dreams before they come here may refuse to see the reality of things. This can make a lot of marital problems.”

Understanding patriarchy as a foundational structure of all contemporary societies, Castells (1997) observes that in order to maintain the institutionally-enforced authority of males over females and children in the family unit, patriarchy must permeate the entire organization of society – from production and consumption to politics, law and culture. The patriarchal family, however, is being challenged by the inseparably related processes of the transformation of women’s work as well as women’s consciousness (Castells 1997, 135). The driving forces in this transformation include the rise of the global informational economy, technological changes in reproduction and a multifaceted, global feminist movement. This is further supported with the observation of the massive incorporation of women into paid work (broadening the tax base in many countries) which has increased their bargaining power and undermined the legitimacy of men’s domination as family providers. As well, with greater

control over their bodies and their reproductive lives, and a stronger assertion of their rights and their equality with men, the emancipation of Korean women is understood to be nothing short of revolutionary, with profound implications for cultural change.

This is not to say that problems relating to the discrimination, oppression and abuse of women have disappeared. In fact, interpersonal violence and psychological abuse are widespread due to male anger, both individual and collective, in losing power. This loss of power, both in Korea and in many western countries, goes some distance in explaining why many men are turning to marriage agents or online introduction sites such as KoreanCupid.com: if men must accept the equality of women in the workplace or in the professional sphere, at least they can attempt to assert their dominance in the domestic one. This may explain why Marc selected a dating partner approximately fifteen years his junior. Again, Abdullaeva corroborates this in her testimony, based on her professional experience as a counselor working with migrant women in Korea:

"Sometimes these relationships don't work because of big age differences...for example, a 25-year-old woman marrying a 45-year-old man. The man just wants to settle down and have children and stay home, but the woman doesn't want to stay at home all the time cooking...she wants to get out and see the world, enjoy her life. And at this time they start having problems, because the Korean man may insist that her duties are to stay home and take care of the children. In the past, Koreans only had their own culture, they were the only ones who lived here...that's why older men cannot understand cultural difference...that's why they have problems."

Patriarchy is also undermined by changing family structures. The dissolution of marriage by divorce or separation – a rising trend in Korea as well – has resulted in the formation of single households and/or single-parent households, diminishing or even ending patriarchal authority in many families. Contributing to this is the increasing frequency of marital crises and the growing difficulty of making marriage and work compatible, associated with the delay of marriage and the establishment of partnerships without marriage. Also, the lack of legal sanction in the West weakens patriarchal authority, both institutionally and psychologically. If men are indeed losing ground as patriarchy continues to decline, then the online introductions industry seems to offer to western men a means of restoring patriarchal power. That western men, perhaps convinced that they already possess a decided advantage over the Korean "competition", perceive greater chances for success with Korean women partially explains the seductive nature of the industry – especially when we consider that, after Taraban (2002), the women who have taken the initiative to get involved tend to be better edu-

cated, more independent, more assertive and risk-taking, and more self-advancing than perhaps their online profiles seem to suggest.

The business of matchmaking in Korea

As single, marriage-minded Koreans often spend a great deal on professional matchmaking services in order to ensure the best possible marital results, it comes as no surprise that such services can now be accessed online. Indeed, Korea-based online matchmaking companies such as *Duo*, *Gayeon*, and *Noblesse Soohyun* earned as much as 29.2 billion won in 2011. The Seoul-based *Sunwoo* is a company that operates the popular couple.net website (Figure 2), which serves thousands of clients annually and enjoys an impressive rate of expansion. Uniquely Korean in its values, the website is the brainchild of Sunwoo's CEO, Lee Woong-Jin. A personal interview with Lee and his administrative officer and interpreter, Jeon Seon-Ae, revealed the somewhat universalizing tendencies of Sunwoo in that clients are expected to furnish not only basic personal descriptions for the benefit of matchmaking, but also information pertaining to family background such as age, education level and *alma mater* of parents, number and ages of siblings, and parent's occupations and income levels. As a family's social status is highly emphasized in Korea, these criteria are integrated into Sunwoo's formula for matchmaking: quite literally, a patented, software-based technology that integrates these more "vertical" elements of one's profile in keeping with

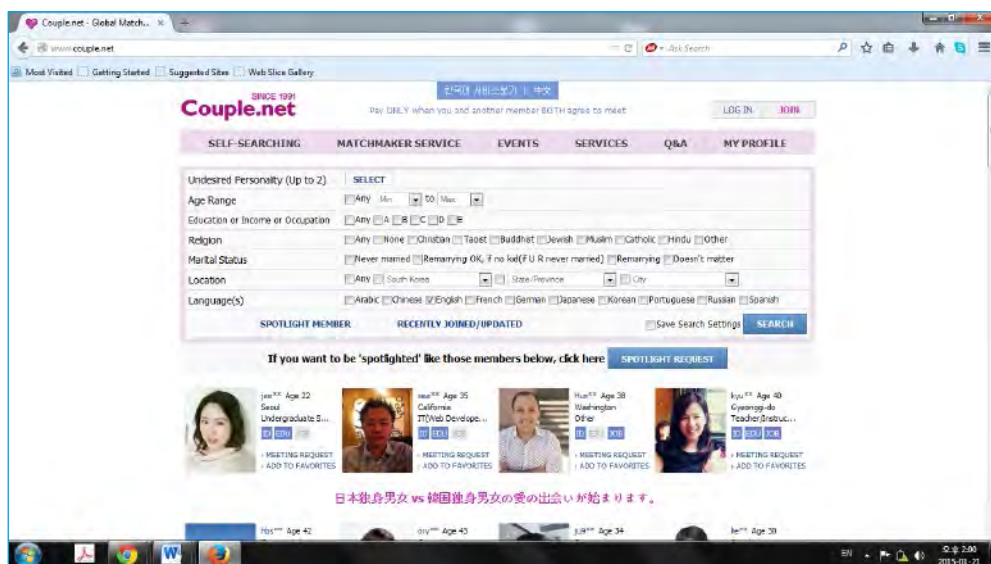


Figure 2. The fully searchable introductory page of Couple.net

Korean hierarchical and patriarchal values. Boasting a 50 % success rate, Lee's project is also to integrate into his matchmaking techniques what he sees as some of the more positive aspects of Western cultural values, and to be constantly on the watch for new and emerging markets (more recently, Sunwoo has discovered a new market in Ghanaian clients interested in meeting Koreans through couple.net).

When asked about the obstacles pertaining to cultural differences in forging new relationships across regions and borders, Lee insisted that such differences no longer really exist because of the universalizing and homogenizing tendencies of globalization. Speaking of a "global cultural reality", Lee insists that the differences between such disparate cultures are minor, and can be overcome through the daily frictions of a marital relationship. Lee also seems convinced that nations themselves are going by the wayside, thus creating a global, sociocultural implosion of a kind that brings unprecedented opportunity for those seeking to improve their lives through Sunwoo's matchmaking technologies.

The interview also provided a glimpse of the value systems often embedded in Korean marital decision making: the benefits of an emphasis on traditional values have more to do with marital and family stability than personal happiness, which is often seen as ephemeral and not conducive to lasting relationships. Jeon Seon-Ae attempted to explain the rationale behind Sunwoo's emphasis on this and on the more "vertical" elements of its clientele's family origins:

"You may think that (traditional marriage) is not important...and it may be good for a short-term relationship, knowing what your personality is, what your hobbies are and whether these are compatible and whether people are attracted physically...that may last for two or three years. But ultimately, when you want to keep a long-term, happy relationship...not happy, but somewhat long-term relationship...you have to know what this person really is."

Thus, in the Korean online or offline realm, security, status, and stability frequently trump personal contentment – and even love – on the long term. Perhaps not so paradoxically, a rising percentage of Koreans are marrying non-Koreans – a trend that Korea-based online matchmaking firms such as Sunwoo are fueling even as they purport to uphold traditional Korean values.

One of the primary problems with Korean introduction services, be they online or offline, is the problem of representation. Certainly not all online agencies are able, or even predisposed, to confirm every piece of information that clients provide about themselves online, and certainly there are some agents who are

beholden to clients who drop large sums of money for the sake of positive results, perhaps to overcome certain disadvantages assailing them in the marriage market, be they real or perceived. In the latter case, it may actually be in the best interest of the matchmakers to withhold certain details about their clients in order to expedite a match and get paid for doing so. Shahlo Abdullaeva of Gwangju's Support Center for Migrant Women was able to attest to the mischief sometimes perpetrated by marriage agents:

"There are many cases where the information is never even given, and even sometimes they do not tell whether someone is married or single, or has an ex-husband or a child in another country. A woman comes to Korea and then the new husband finds out that she has a child in another country and he never knew about it...and then they divorce. Agents should tell about these details...they believe that if I introduce someone... he's single, he's rich, they think it will be okay, but they never think what could happen after that...The agencies don't care about these things...I had a lot of, a lot of cases about these problems."

Abdullaeva's testimony makes it abundantly clear that individuals seeking a mate must be extremely cautious when working with introduction agents, both online and offline. Certain built-in assumptions about one's dating partner may be the result of the selective information provided by the agents, or details perpetually withheld by the clients themselves. As issues of representation are not extremely uncommon in the quotidian interactions of human relationships, abstracted profiles, outdated web pages, and disingenuous agents only serve to complicate those relationships that already enjoy a fair amount of complexity, and often with unfortunate and even disastrous results.

Conclusion

The ontological basis for the concept of the sociospatial finds support in the broader realm of human relationships, which are always situated in space and secrete unique spaces of their own. The introductions industry examined in this chapter, and its social, cultural, and economic milieu, underscores the significance of space and place in human relationships, and the place-based cultures that form the basis of the interactions therein. The unique dynamics of Korean culture cannot be taken for granted when examining such phenomena, and especially where cultural traditions, business transactions, or discrete human needs result in migration, marriage, or other significant, life-changing events. The Korean online introductions industry functions within very specific

cultural and geographical circumstances that must be scrutinized in order to understand the outcomes of mate-seeking behavior that is acquiring an increasingly electronic and/or cyberspatial veneer, producing a global and globalizing implosion of the kind that Baudrillard astutely calls to our attention. The uncertainties produced by the new assemblages of cultures, technologies, traditions, expectations, ethics and aspirations – and the unanticipated problems that result – are cause enough for further study and investigation into the effects of such industries on human decision making and the perception of opportunity to make real improvements in one's life, be they real or merely imagined.

Culture itself is understood as a primary engine in the examination of the Korean component of this global and very lucrative industry. Korean culture calls for the constant satisfaction of expectations imposed from without, rendering the institution of marriage still very influential even as social and gender dynamics continue to change in a country that has already witnessed changes so rapid and so profound that they would jeopardize the social and political stability of more powerful countries. The Korean proclivity for hierarchical organization persists as one of the most powerful structures for human progress in Korea, and determines much of how decisions and their outcomes manifest. The intensity of the resulting competition in Korean society makes plain why Koreans are some of the most stressed-out people in the world, yet this reality does not negate the importance of satisfying relationships, the desires for emotional fulfillment, and the imperatives of social belonging, acceptance, and legitimacy. The mediatization of human interaction in pursuit of these mandates is a somewhat predictable outcome of the Korean penchant for competition in the face of scarce resources, or resources made scarce by virtue of the overwhelming demand that is commonly a product of Korean sociocultural uniformity.

It is important to understand this industry also as fueled by a diversity of needs, resources, aspirations and expectations. Patriarchy itself may be a reason for one to establish a profile with a matchmaking company, and patriarchy may also be a reason why one avoids doing so. Whether the groups concerned are westerners entertaining fantasies of demure and submissive Asian women, or others experiencing great difficulties with dating and/or intimacy in their respective locales, it is necessary to avoid essentializing the participants involved and to withhold judgments about them. As there is no one recipe for human contentment, it is also quite possible to envision a plethora of success stories related to individuals who migrated through online introductions and saw excellent returns on their investments. Simultaneously, the industry presents a seemingly endless array of pitfalls, and policymakers would do well to practice vigilance regarding the human rights implications of marriage migration and mediated

introductions, particularly as they relate to immigration and citizenship. The potential for abuse is vast, and can destroy lives as easily as this industry can enrich them.

Last, the pervasive commodification of human interaction in Korean consumer culture leaves no stone unturned. The market-based fulfillment of human emotional and physical needs is an incomplete one by design: the "user" is consistently beckoned to return and try again; many unfulfilled clients remain paying clients as long as their aspirations go unrealized and their expectations unsatisfied. As perhaps in the case of Marc, a narcissistic take on dating, relationships and sexual experience is partially a function of an inability to accept intimate partners on their own terms, resulting in a series of consecutive attempts to find the "perfect" partner who does not exist. The relative discontentment that ensues becomes an unfortunate by-product of the expectations commonly placed on the machines employed to procure these relationships: powerful computing machines must yield results far beyond what we are able to achieve without them. Indeed, this is why we commonly employ such technologies.

Note

1. An unfortunate by-product of patriarchy in Korea is the response to it: many Korean wives take it upon themselves to use whatever means possible to gain control of the household's finances, becoming the "rulers of the roost" as it were, and such power of the purse often renders Korean men quite disenfranchised within family and society. Ironically, patriarchy itself becomes the indirect enemy of the Korean salary man or wage earner.

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Chapter 3



Fumie Kumagai ■

Intercultural Marriage Migration in Japan

Abstract

Although the intercultural marriage in Japan used to be a small portion of annual marriage cases, it has been on the rise recently. When Japanese Government made such statistics available, the majority was comprised of Japanese wife and foreign husband from the U.S.A. Today, however, reversal has emerged, and its great majority is the one between Japanese husband and foreign bride primarily from China, the Philippines, and North and South Korea. These foreign brides started to be brought into rural farming Yamagata initially through municipal efforts since the mid-1980s. Then, the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (Immigration Act) enacted in 1990 started to bring the new phase of the “New Comers” into Japan, bringing South-Americans of Japanese origins, especially of Brazilian, to Japan. In depth study of foreign brides in several municipalities of rural farming Yamagata prefecture showed the existence of high relationship between the proportion of foreign residents and that of three-generation households. Stated differently, foreign brides in the intercultural marriage in Japan today relate significantly to the intercultural marriage migration which contributes to the continuity of the stem family in rural farming Yamagata prefecture in Japan.

Introduction

The issue of intercultural marriage, foreign brides in particular, has been getting a broad attention throughout the world since the 1990s. However, the question arises as to the changes and continuity of the family institution over time throughout the entire life course of those who adopt such type of matrimony. Hence, there have emerged two opposing views to analyze the contemporary intercultural marriage, foreign brides in particular. One view holds negative attitudes toward this type of matrimony as it demonstrates the clash between two cultures, and suggests that foreign brides have come to be victimized of human right exploitation (Cooke and Baxter 2010; Constable 2003, 2004; Ishii 1995, 2003; Jang & Kim 2012; Kamoto 2001; Lanzieri 2011; Lee, et al. 2012; Nakamatsu 2003; Nakamura 1995; Ohara-Hirano 2000; Sadamatsu 2002; Takahata 2003; Wang & Chang 2002). The other view, however, despite the numerical predominance of the problematic issues associated with foreign brides, highlights positive impacts of such matrimony on the institution of the family and cross-cultural interaction (Gorny & Kepinska 2004; Garcia 2006; Heikkilä 2004, 2007; Jones & Shen 2008; Lauth Bacas 2002; Piper 2003; Pries 2001; Satake 2004; Sekiguchi 2007; Takeda 2011; Truong 1996).

In analyzing contemporary intercultural marriage in Japan, of foreign brides, in particular, the author of the present chapter holds the latter view. Within the framework of the latter view various terms have been coined to analyze these foreign brides. Some examples are as follows: reproductive workers (Truong 1996), transnational social spaces (Pries 2001), bridges between different cultures (Lauth Bacas 2002), linkages between government or elite politics and civil society activism (Piper 2003), an economic approach to human behavior (Gorny & Kepinska 2004), a dynamic family model (Satake 2004), multicultural links (Garcia 2006), CCK/TCK perspective (Sekiguchi 2007), ethnic bridges (Heikkilä 2007), and human capital of women and children of intercultural marriages (Takeda 2011).

The author of the present study presents a new way to look at such family institution as “a strategy to maintain rural farm households” effectively. The perspective seems to be akin to “reproductive workers” discussed by Truong (1996) in that women in industrialized society entered into the labor force outside home. As a consequence, there emerged an acute shortage of “reproductive workers.” In order to fill this gap, foreign brides are brought into these industrialized nations.

The hypothesis postulated in the present chapter, therefore, is that *“Should the traditional farm household have been revitalized by way of municipal efforts in bringing foreign brides into the farming regions, there would be a significantly high correlation between the proportion of foreign residents and that of three-generation households.”* Therefore, it is the purpose of the present chapter to test this hypothesis of intercultural marriage and marriage migration to maintain rural farm households in Japan.

Intercultural marriages

Historical development

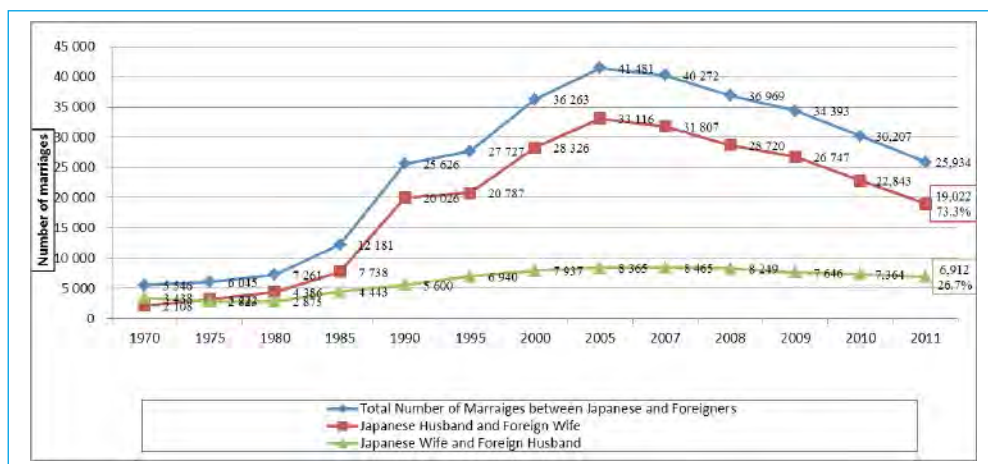
Intercultural marriage is a form of exogamy in which a person marries outside of their social group. This form of marriage has existed ever since Japan opened her doors to the world in the Meiji era. During the first half of the 20th century, Japan underwent strong influences of nationalism, and intercultural marriage was strictly controlled. Immediately after the end of World War II, quite a few Japanese brides married American soldiers who were stationed in Japan. The official statistics for marriages between Japanese and foreign nationals residing in Japan became available in 1965 for the first time. In that year, such marriages constituted less than one-half percent of the total marriages taking place (4,156 cases; 0.4 % of the total marriages).

During the bubble economy in the 1980s, a number of Japanese businessmen living abroad married foreign brides. With the bursting of the bubble and the rapid progress of globalization, a new situation relating to foreign brides in Japan has developed. That is, there emerged an acute shortage of brides in rural farming regions. To alleviate the situation, foreign brides have been brought in to farming regions in Japan. As a consequence, the annual number of intercultural marriages has continued to rise, to slightly less than six percent of the total marriage in 2005 (41,481; 5.8 % of total marriages) (IPSSR 2013, Tables 6–16 and 17; Ministry of Health, Welfare & Labor 2012, Marriage Table 2). This increase in the intercultural marriage rate from 0.4 to 5.8 percent of total marriages over the period of four decades is worthy of close attention.

Since then, however, with the decline in the total marriage cases in Japan, intercultural marriages among the Japanese people also have begun to decline. They decreased to 25,934 cases and 3.9 percent of the total Japanese marriages by 2011 (see Figure 1) (IPSSR 2013, Tables 6–16 and 17; Ministry of Health, Welfare & Labor 2012, Marriage Table 2).

Demographic features of intercultural marriages: foreign brides versus foreign grooms

Three demographic features of foreign brides in Japan today will be highlighted. First, as shown in Figure 1, of the total number of newly married couples, the proportion where one of the spouses is foreign has increased dramatically over the years (1965: 4,156, 0.4 % of total marriages; 1990: 25,626, 3.6 % of total marriages; 2005: 41,481, 5.8 % of total marriages) (IPSSR 2013, Tables 6–16



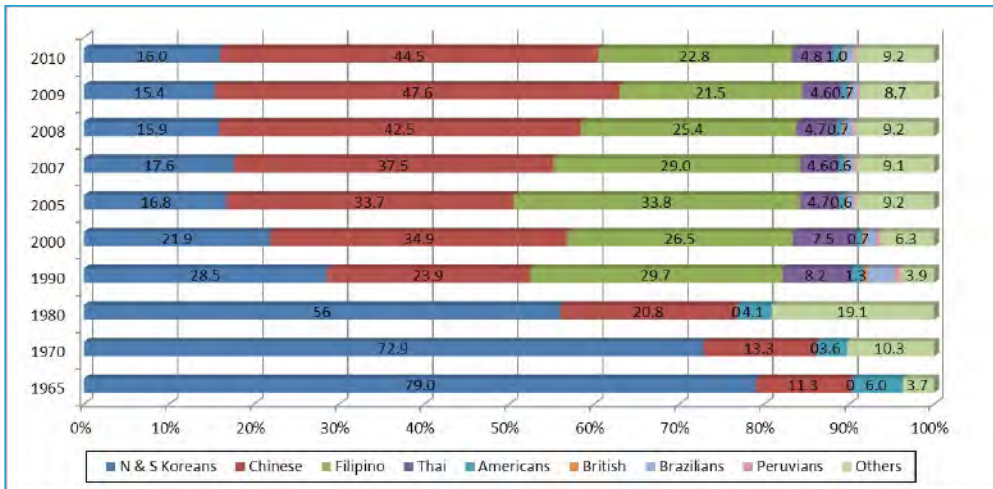
Source: Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor (2012). "Marriage" Table 2. Figures are compiled and constructed by the author.

Figure 1. Changes in Japanese marriages between Japanese and foreigners residing in Japan: 1970-2011.

and 17; Ministry of Health, Welfare & Labor 2012, Marriage Table 2). In other words, not only the total number of intercultural marriages, but also their proportion to the total annual marriages in Japan has been on the rise dramatically. However, this does not necessarily mean that Japanese society is becoming internationalized or has become a global society.

The second demographic aspect of these intercultural marriages to be highlighted is that more than two-thirds of them involve foreign brides (2011: 73.3 %) rather than foreign grooms. There has been a dramatic shift in the pattern of intercultural marriages in Japan, from the majority being foreign grooms to a majority of foreign brides, instead. Of the total intercultural marriages in 1965, foreign brides constituted a quarter of the total (25.7 %). This increased to one-half in 1974 (50 %), and rose to more than two-thirds in 1990 (78.1 %) (IPSSR 2013, Tables 6-16 and 17; Ministry of Health, Welfare & Labor 2012, Marriage Table 2) (see Figure 1). The reason for this dramatic shift in the pattern of intercultural marriages in Japan must be studied carefully. It might be due to the internationalization and globalization of the Japanese economy, and the rise in labor force participation of Japanese women in tertiary industries, rather than in the primary or secondary sectors.

The third demographic feature to be emphasized about foreign brides is the change in their nationalities. In 1965 they were mostly comprised of North and South Koreans (79 %), followed by Chinese (11.3 %), and Americans (6 %). Today the ethnic background of foreign brides has altered significantly. In 2010, these foreign brides came primarily from three regions in Asia, namely, China

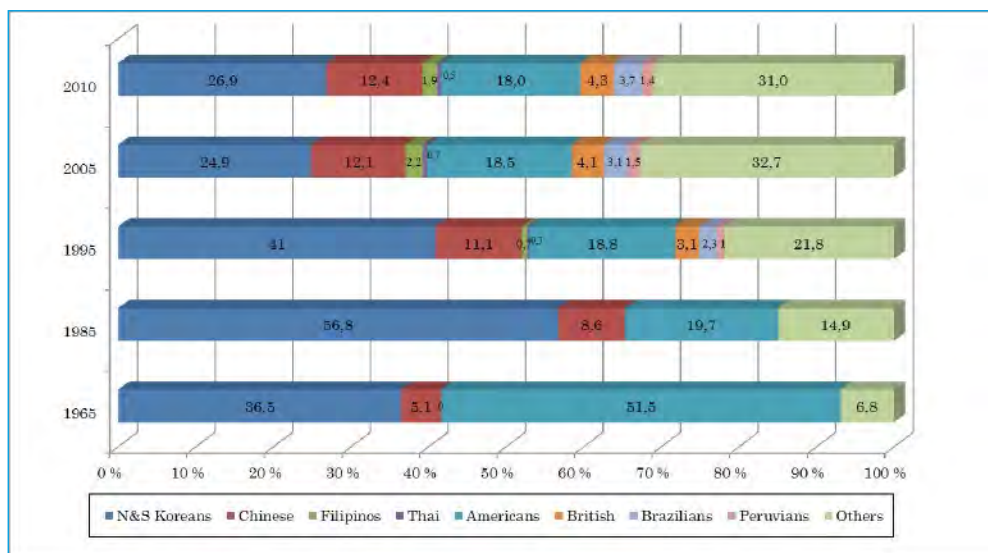


Source: Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor, (December 2011), "Marriage" Table 2. The figure is compiled and constructed by the author.

Figure 2. Changes in proportions of Japanese marriages between Japanese husband and foreign wife by nationality: 1965–2010.

(44.5 %), the Philippines (22.3 %), and North and South Korea (16.0 %). Moreover, the proportion of American brides in 2010 had decreased to only one percent (IPSSR 2013, Tables 6–16 and 17; Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor 2012, Marriage Table 2) (see Figure 2). These dramatic changes in the proportion of foreign brides from Asian nations, and the decline in American brides, became apparent in the early 1990s. These trends coincided with the abrupt decline in the Japanese economy.

The characteristics of foreign grooms, however, are somewhat different. In 1965 more than half of them were Americans (51.5 %), followed by Koreans (36.5 %), and Chinese (5.1 %). More than four decades later in 2010, although marriage cases between American grooms and Japanese wives have declined significantly (1,329) its proportion to the total intercultural marriages stays about the same (1965: 18.5 %, and 2010: 18.1 %). That would be because the nationalities of foreign grooms in Japan today have become truly diverse (Koreans: 26.9 %; Chinese: 12.4 %; Filipino: 1.8 %; Thai: 0.5 %; Americans: 18.1 %, British: 4.3 %; Brazilians: 3.7 %; Peruvians: 1.4 %; and others: 30.0 %) (IPSSR 2013, Tables 6–16 and 17; Ministry of Health, Welfare & Labor 2012, Marriage Table 2) (see Figure 3). It could be said, therefore, that Japanese men today have more opportunities to meet marriage partners in an international context than ever before.



Source: Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor (2012), "Marriage" Table 2. The figure is compiled and constructed by the author.

Figure 3. Changes in proportions of Japanese marriages between Japanese wife and foreign husband by nationality: 1965–2010.

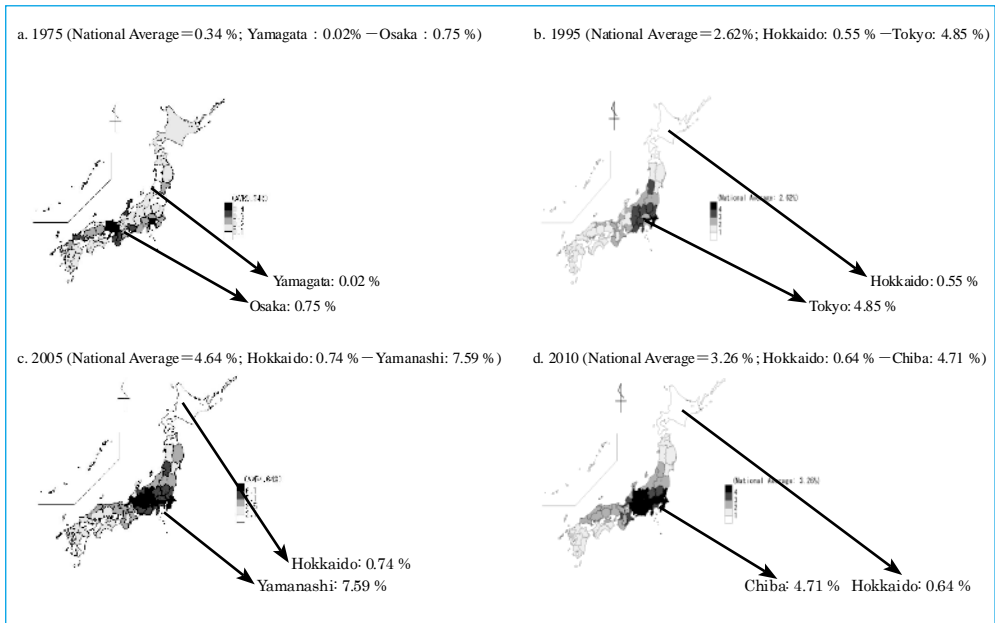
Regional variations of intercultural marriages by prefecture

Intercultural marriages: percentage of total

Earlier in the chapter it was noted that foreign nationals residing in Japan are heavily concentrated in urban regions in the vicinity of large cities. Would this fact also apply to intercultural marriages in Japan? In order to clarify this question, the study examined differences in the rates for intercultural marriages compared to total marriages in four points in time by prefecture, i.e., 1975, 1995, 2005, and 2010, respectively (IPSSR 2013, Table 12–38).

In 1975, the national average of intercultural marriages to the total marriages was 0.6 %, ranging from the highest of Tokyo (1.7 %), followed by Osaka (1.3 %) down to the lowest of Yamagata prefecture (0.1 %) ranked at the bottom of all the 47 prefectures. These statistics reveals that intercultural marriages in 1975 took place more frequently in regions where large cities were located, and rarely so in traditional farming regions such as Yamagata prefecture.

Two decades later, however, the rate for intercultural marriages for Yamagata jumped abruptly to 3.9 percent placing at the 11th of all the 47 prefectures. The reason for this abrupt jump needs close attention. The national average of proportion of intercultural marriages to the total new marriages taken place in



Source: IPSSR 2013, Table 12–38. The figure is compiled and constructed by the author.

Figure 4. Proportions of Japanese marriages between Japanese husband and foreign wife residing in Japan by prefecture: 1975, 1995, 2005, and 2010.

2005 and 2010 were 5.8 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively. Instead, proportions and rankings of Yamagata prefecture for intercultural marriages in 2005 and 2010 were at the 12th (6.3 %) and at the 28th (2.7 %), respectively.

Thus, we should pay special attention to Yamagata prefecture. By 1995 their ratio for intercultural marriages rose from 0.1 percent in 1975 to 3.9 percent, exceedingly high among the rural farming regions in the northeastern part of Japan. The high intercultural marriage rate in Yamagata prefecture is primarily due to marriages between a Japanese husband and a foreign wife, rather than between a Japanese wife and a foreign husband. As seen in Figure 1, by sometime around the year 1995 a great majority of intercultural marriages in Japan took place between Japanese husband and foreign wife. In this regard, Yamagata prefecture was not an exception.

Japanese husband/foreign wife: percentage of total

The average percentage for this type of intercultural marriage by prefecture in 2005 was 4.6 percent of total marriages, with Yamanashi being the highest (7.6 %), followed by Nagano (7.1 %), Tokyo (6.9 %), Chiba (6.6 %), Gifu (6.2 %), Shizuoka (6.1 %), Yamagata, Tochigi, Gunma, and Aichi (all at 6.0 %). Here again, Yamagata is the only prefecture that shows an exceedingly high proportion for

intercultural marriages between a Japanese husband and foreign wife in the rural farming regions in northeastern Japan. In 2010, the ratio for Yamagata was 2.48 percent (the national average: 4.7 %), and ranked the 25th of the total 47 prefectures. The rest of the rural farming prefectures in northern Japan ranked at the bottom layers of all. (IPSSR 2013, Table 12–38) (see Figure 4).

Of the total 47 prefectures in Japan today, Yamagata's rankings of this type of intercultural marriages were as follows: 1975: the 47th and the bottom, 1995: the 5th from the top, 2005: the 8th, and 2010: the 25th. Thus, it is speculated that something might have occurred in Yamagata prefecture, perhaps sometime during the 1980s. The issue will be discussed in detail later in the current chapter.

Japanese wife/foreign husband: percentage of total

Intercultural marriage between a Japanese wife and foreign husband residing in Japan occurs less frequently today than in previous years, and averaged only 1.1 percent of total marriages in 2010. Nonetheless, prefectures showing higher proportions for this type of interracial marriages were as follows: Okinawa (3.5 %), Tokyo (2.1 %), Osaka (1.7 %), Kanagawa (1.4 %), Kyoto and Chiba (1.1 %), and Aichi (1.0 %) (IPSSR 2013, Table 12–38). In this type of intercultural marriage, it is more often the case that the nationality of the husband is American (nine out of ten in Okinawa; eight out of ten in Aomori, seven out of ten in Nagasaki, and more than one third in Yamaguchi, Kanagawa, and Saga prefectures, respectively). There are American military bases in all six of these prefectures, and this fact likely contributed to their high rates of American grooms.

Yamagata prefecture – prefecture of intercultural marriage in Japan today

Foreign residents in Yamagata prefecture

In studying the topic of intercultural marriage in Japan, it is essential to pay special attention to Yamagata prefecture. This is because several municipal offices of the villages and towns in rural farming regions in Yamagata prefecture took the initiative to bring foreign brides to Japan from the Far East and South East Asian nations in the mid-1980s. Therefore, Yamagata prefecture, in a sense, could be regarded as a pioneering prefecture, which sought to revitalize rural farming households with the active participation of foreign brides from Asian nations.

Table 1. Foreign residents in Japan in 2011 by prefecture, sex, and objective for staying Japan.

	Total	Female	Female %	Objective-Spouse to a Japanese	Spouse %
All Japan	2,078,508	1,133,355	54.5	181,617	8.7
Yamagata	6,246	4,896	78.4	727	11.6
Tokyo	405,692	215,354	53.1	32,987	8.1
Kanagawa	166,154	89,392	53.8	17,914	1.1
Aichi	200,696	106,957	53.3	16,306	8.1
Osaka	206,324	109,892	53.3	11,065	5.4

Source: Ministry of Jurisdiction (2012), Alien Registration Statistics, Tables 3 and 5. The table was constructed and calculated by the author.

In looking at the total number of foreigners residing in Japan, Yamagata prefecture did not rank high in 2011 (there were 6,246 out of a total of 2,078,508 on October 1, 2011), and it ranked 34th of all 47 prefectures in this regard (Ministry of Jurisdiction 2012). Of the total population in Yamagata prefecture, the proportion of foreign residents was 0.5 percent (ranking 30th out of 47 prefectures), whereas the national average was 1.2 percent (Yamagata Prefecture Bureau of Planning and Statistics 2006, Table 15). Of the total number of foreign residents (6,246), more than two-thirds were female (4,896, 78.4 %) (Ministry of Jurisdiction 2012) (see Table 1). As shown in Table 1, in most of the prefectures where large number of foreign residents cluster the ratio for male to female is about 50–50. In Yamagata prefecture, however, a great majority of foreign residents are women, in fact the proportion is as many as eight out of ten. In other words, although foreign residents in Yamagata prefecture represent only a very small proportion of the total population there, their great majority is represented by women.

Statistics published by the Japanese Ministry of Jurisdiction breakdown foreign residents by their objectives for staying in Japan. Of them the category relevant to the current study would be “as a spouse to a Japanese person.” Thus, such statistics in 2011 for all Japan and Yamagata prefecture were compared and contrasted (see Table 1).

Statistics for foreign resident as a foreign spouse to a Japanese person, not identified if it is wife or husband, was examined. Here again, the actual number itself of foreign spouse living in Yamagata is as small as nearly negligible (0.4 %), but they represents a substantial proportion (11.6 %) of foreign residents in Yamagata prefecture, much larger than in other prefectures (see Table 1). This fact indicates that foreign women in Yamagata would be an integral force for sustaining the traditional farming households.

Nationalities

North and South Koreans and Chinese made up more than half (52.2 %) of the total number of foreign residents in Japan in 2011, followed by Brazilians (13.8 %), and Filipinos (8.0 %). In Yamagata prefecture, by contrast, more than four out of ten (42.5 %) of the foreigners living there were Chinese. The nationalities of foreigners in Yamagata prefecture other than Chinese included North and South Koreans (31.5 %), Filipinos (10.7 %), Vietnamese (2.9 %), Brazilians (1.8 %), Americans (3.2 %), and others (8.4 %) (Ministry of Jurisdiction 2012, Table 3).

One of the striking differences in the nationalities between these two groups is that, in Yamagata, there is a greater concentration of Asians. The nationalities of foreigners in Japan as a whole are more widely diverse than those in Yamagata prefecture.

Correlation between number of foreigners and household type by municipality

Yamagata prefecture has been known for its high proportion of three-generation households. This fact was confirmed by the 2010 national census data. The national average for three-generation households was 7.1 percent, whereas the rate in Yamagata prefecture was the highest of all 47 prefectures, at 21.5 percent (Yamagata Prefecture Bureau of Planning and Statistics 2012: 134 Table 1). The lowest rate of all 47 prefectures is found in Tokyo, at 2.3 percent. In other words, in Yamagata prefecture today, slightly more than one out of every four households still maintains the traditional three-generation lifestyle. When we compare the rate for Yamagata prefecture with the national average, and with those for other prefectures, we realize how high the rate is in Yamagata. Looking at households of all types, the odds of finding a three-generation household in Tokyo is slightly more than 2 in 100, as opposed to 22 in 100 in Yamagata in 2010.

As in other regions, Yamagata prefecture has been experiencing the problem of depopulation, and a growing shortage of women who are willing to become brides in a farm household. Therefore, in the mid-1980s, some municipalities in Yamagata prefecture introduced policies for bringing foreign brides from Asian nations such as Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippines into their farm households. These public policies contributed significantly to revitalizing the rural farming region in Yamagata prefecture.

We propose, therefore, the existence of highly positive relationship between the proportion of foreign residents and that of three-generation households, as stated at the beginning of the present chapter. As of March 1, 2007, there are four regions in Yamagata prefecture, namely, Murayama (city: 7, town: 7), Mog-

ami (city: 1, town: 4, village: 3), Okitama (city: 3, town: 5), and Shonai (city: 2, town: 3).¹ At the time of the national census survey in 2005 there were 38 municipalities in Yamagata prefecture. Based on the national census data for regional statistics of Yamagata prefecture by municipality, Pearson correlation coefficients are examined for five variables. These variables are: the rate for foreign residents to the total population; and those relating to the household, such as nuclear family household, three-generation household, single person household, and number of persons per household.²

The results of Pearson correlation coefficients reveal that except in one case, these coefficients are statistically high (see Table 2). When the number of foreign residents in the municipality is large, there is a tendency for the number of three-generation households to also be large ($r = .340, p < .05$). Furthermore, when there are many foreigners in the community, the number of family members in the household is likely to be large ($r = .322, p < .05$). At the same time, it is natural that the municipality with a high rate of foreign residents is less likely to have nuclear households ($r = -.408, p < .05$).

The impact of foreign residents in municipalities in Yamagata prefecture extends to other types of households indirectly. The municipality with a high rate of nuclear family households, for example, is likely to possess a high rate of single person households ($r = .588, p < .001$). Furthermore, it can be said that the municipality with a high rate of nuclear family households is likely to show neither a high rate of three-generation households ($r = -.876, p < .001$) nor large family size ($r = -.780, p < .001$). In addition, it is quite natural to expect the municipality with a high rate of three-generation households to exhibit large family size ($r = .980, p < .001$). It is also to be expected that the municipality with a high rate of three generation households is less likely to show a high rate for single person households ($r = -.896, p < .001$).

Upon examining all of these correlation coefficients, it is appropriate to say that foreign residents residing in municipalities in Yamagata prefecture have a significant impact on the formation of their family households – on the three-generation household, in particular. Therefore, we can validate the hypothesis that has been postulated for the current study. In other words, there is a high relationship between the proportion of foreign residents and the traditional three generational households in the farming regions.

It seems as if the multigenerational family and the aging society in Yamagata prefecture are highly related to each other. In 2005 the proportion of persons 65 and over in Japan was one out of every five (20.1 %), whereas that in Yamagata prefecture was slightly more than one out of every four (25.5 %), which ranked fourth highest of all 47 prefectures (Yamagata Prefecture Bureau of Planning and Statistics 2007a, Table 12). We have already noted that foreigners residing in Yamagata seem to contribute to the sustainability of the traditional three-

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients between foreigners and the type of family households in Yamagata prefecture by municipality: 2005. isompi kuva

			Foreigners/ Total Population (%)	Nuclear Family Household (%)	Three- Generation Household (%)	Single Person House- hold (%)	Number of Persons/ Household
Foreigners/Total Population (%)	Pearson r	1	-.408**	.340*	-.210	.322*	
	p		.006	.024	.171	.033	
	N	44	44	44	44	44	44
Nuclear Family Household (%)	Pearson r	-.408**	1	-.876***	.588***	-.780***	
	p	.006		.000	.000	.000	
	N	44	44	44	44	44	44
Three-Generation Household (%)	Pearson r	.340*	-.876***	1	-.896***	.980***	
	p	.024	.000		.000	.000	
	N	44	44	44	44	44	44
Single Person Household (%)	Pearson r	-.210	.588***	-.896***	1	-.948***	
	p	.171	.000	.000		.000	
	N	44	44	44	44	44	44
Number of Persons/Household	Pearson r	.322*	-.780***	.980***	-.948***	1	
	p	.033	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	44	44	44	44	44	44

***p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05 for both tails.

Source: Yamagata Prefecture Bureau of Planning and Statistics (2007b).

The table was constructed and calculated by the author.

generation household. Therefore, the rate for three-generation households is significantly related to indicators for the aging society, such as the elderly population 65 and over ($r = .554, p < .001$), “young olds” of 65–74 ($r = .488, p < .01$), and the elderly 75 and over ($r = .702, p < .001$). Here again, we can say that a high proportion of foreigners in Yamagata prefecture live in a traditional three-generation household. In other words, foreigners in Yamagata prefecture are a driving force to maintain the traditional multigenerational household in the rural farming regions of Yamagata prefecture.

A brief history of foreign brides in Yamagata prefecture

The high economic growth in post-war Japan was achieved only by shifting the Japanese industrial structure from its traditional agricultural basis to the cost efficiency of a highly productive technological structure. This technological development was achieved only at the expense of agricultural industries. As a consequence, the rural farming regions in Japan suffered from an acute depopulation problem, and farm households faced difficulties in succeeding with agricultural industry full-time.

With the influence of globalization, Japanese industries were eager to expand their markets abroad. In the agricultural industries, however, globalization meant the influx of foreign agricultural products into the Japanese market. Under these circumstances, marriage, one of the most fundamental institutions in society, has become difficult to accomplish in the rural farming regions in Japan. This problem of the acute shortage of brides (only 1 marriageable woman for every 5 marriageable men) will soon apply not only to Yamagata prefecture, but will extend throughout Japan. In other words, the shortage of marriageable women in Japan will have a significant impact on the marriage market to Japanese men for the selection of suitable marriage partners (Kumagai 2008; 2010).

In order to alleviate the acute shortage of brides in the rural farming areas in Japan, some local municipal offices have organized to bring in brides from various Asian nations. In the mid-1980s, the town of Asahi-machi and the village of Okura-mura in Yamagata prefecture both organized officially for the first time to introduce Asian brides to Japanese men wishing to pursue the institution of matrimony (Asahi-net 2000; Sato 1989: 47–69; Sato 2000).

There are several reasons why most Japanese women today do not wish to become a bride in a farming household. First, the traditional Japanese family system of *ie* generates hierarchical human relationships, not only in the family, but also in the village, rendering authoritarian power only to men. Second, women are placed on the lower rung of the ladder, without having any right to participate in important decision-making situations. Third, agricultural farm-

ing work is very challenging physically. Fourth, the income from agricultural farming is not very stable. Consequently, Japanese women today are not inclined to marry men engaging in agricultural farming (Sato 1989, 47–69).

Asahi-machi town

Asahi-machi town, with its population of less than 10,000 (8,593 in the 2005 census), popularly known as the “village of apples and wineries,”³ established a system to extend marriage consultation and matchmaking, beginning in the 1970s. In 2005, in Asahi-machi, more than one-third of all men in their 30s were not married, and the population has been aging rapidly (the proportion of persons 65 and over in Asahi-machi in 2005 was 33.5 %, compared to 25.5 % for Yamagata, and 20.1 % for all Japan). In the early 1980s the Asahi-machi town office made arrangements to bring in foreign brides from Taiwan and South Korea, followed by nine Filipinos a year since 1985.

The procedure for a week-long “arranged marriage interview tour” to the Philippines established by Asahi-machi was as follows: a single Japanese man seeking a Filipino bride was taken there for arranged interviews; a wedding ceremony was performed; they had a honeymoon trip; and then returned to Japan as a married couple. At that time it costed approximately \ 2,000,000 (\cong US\$ 20,000) for a Japanese man to successfully pursue all of these arrangements. Nonetheless, the acute shortage of brides is an imminent problem in the great majority of Japanese farming regions. Thus, it seems as if the demand for bringing foreign brides from the Philippines, and the national policy of the Philippines to seek adequate means for living by sending Filipinos abroad has been mutually beneficial. This was the reason for the success of the “bringing foreign brides” system by Asahi-machi town in Yamagata prefecture (Asahi-net 1987).

It should be remembered, however, that the foreign bride system could easily be interpreted as similar to “human trafficking.” That concern would be indicated if the human rights of foreign brides were not protected to a full extent, and if the marriages materialized as a result of a monetary transaction. Foreign brides are brought to Japan from Asian societies not because of mutual affection, but because of the interest of Japanese farmers in continuing to maintain their farming household and the family lineage. Therefore, the success of intercultural marriages between Japanese men in the farming regions and foreign brides from Asian societies rests upon good understandings and cooperation with Japanese relatives and the people surrounding the married couples. If the Japanese relatives impose their own ideas and ways of doing things upon foreign brides, it is evident that these marriages may end unsuccessfully (Asahi-net 1987).

Tozawa-mura village

A small village called Tozawa-mura in Yamagata prefecture is famous for its “Mogami River Boat Cruise” (Tozawa-mura Home Page & Mogami-gawa Funa Kudari 2007).⁴ The village has been suffering from problems due to an acute level of depopulation and the rapid progress of aging (the total population was 5,915, and the proportion of persons 65 and over was 30.1 % in 2005). The village is a typical example of the traditional farming village, which continues to maintain a high rate of traditional three-generation households (46.0 %, compared to Yamagata: 24.9 %, and the national average: 8.6 %) (Yamagata Prefecture Bureau of Planning and Statistics 2007a). Following in the footsteps of Asahi-machi town and Okura-mura village of Yamagata prefecture, Tozawa-mura village also established an official program that brings foreign brides from Asian societies in 1990. A total of eleven foreign brides from South Korea and the Philippines were brought into Tozawa-mura in 1990. Today, the total number of foreign brides in Tozawa-mura is 43 (0.7 % of the total population: 9 from South Korea, 10 from the Philippines, 14 from China, and the rest from other countries).

The success in bringing foreign brides to Tozawa-mura was significantly enhanced by the active introduction of various supporting program by the Tozawa-mura municipal office. The following four programs should be noted: language programs; health, welfare, and insurance programs; educational programs for children; and international friendship programs (Migiya 1998; Nomoto 2013; Sato 2000; Takeda 2011; Yabuki 2011).

Language programs

The Tozawa-mura municipal office offers language programs to foreign brides in Filipino, Korean, and Chinese, once a week for each language. Each of the foreign brides is encouraged to maintain her native language by conversing in her mother tongue. Japanese language education, and information on the mother country, as well, are given in the native language of the foreign bride. Furthermore, family members and employees are requested to make special efforts to enable these foreign brides to attend the language class once a week. Language programs organized by the Tozawa-mura office give opportunities for foreign brides to express themselves in their own language, and contribute significantly to curtailing the stress naturally felt by foreign brides. At the same time, these efforts extended by the municipal office are well received by the village people, and have become the driving force in enhancing the liberalization of their attitudes.

Health, welfare, and insurance programs

Special programs for foreign brides relating to health, welfare, and insurance have been established. In cooperation with local NGOs and the Japan Volunteer Center (JVC), the Tozawa-mura municipal office provides foreign brides with medical consultation manuals in their native tongues, and offers medical interpretation services. These programs have contributed significantly to reduce the psychological strains and stresses experienced by foreign brides in Japan (Kuwayama 1995; Migiya 1998; Nomoto 2013; Sato 2000; Takeda 2011; Yabuki 2011).

Educational programs

Educational programs incorporating the children of foreign brides, both for the children themselves and for the community as well, must be reevaluated. The number of children born to foreign brides in Tozawa-mura has now exceeded 300. Naturally, concerns about the adjustment of these children to the local school systems have been expressed. Fortunately, no serious problems of bullying were reported. It seems as if children in Tozawa-mura, both those of local and of foreign brides, know the rules and regulations as to how to interact with each other (Kuwayama 1995, 38). Nevertheless, it is an issue to be solved for children of foreign brides as to how to learn the foreign culture of their mothers, and how to form an identity of their own.

International friendship programs

Back in 1985, young farm leaders in Tozawa-mura started a training program for young Asian and African leaders in agriculture industries, long before the programs that bring foreign brides to Japan started. Since then, various programs of intercultural exchange have developed, not only through public offices, but also through the private sector. An outgrowth of these cultural exchanges is the Japan-Korea Friendship Theme Park in Tozawa-mura village called Korai-kan, which opened in 1997.⁵ The Korai-kan theme park is a comprehensive project aiming at introducing all aspects of Korean history, culture, and products. It extends over 12 hectares, and the buildings were constructed for 1,250 million Japanese Yen (equivalent to US\$ 12.5 million). This is an ideal location for intercultural exchange for both Japanese and non-Japanese people. Foreign brides in the rural farming village of Tozawa-mura were delighted to introduce their own cultures, took the initiative to participate actively in various events organized by Korai-kan, and started to form their identity as members of the local community. At the same time, the local people in Tozawa-mura village today are willing to welcome these foreign brides as members of the community. After two decades

for establishing various intercultural exchange programs, an internationally minded, multicultural village seems to have been materialized.

Two recent reports on survey research into family relations in Yamagata prefecture

As has been noted earlier, the family in Yamagata prefecture maintains the traditional family structure, in which three generations co-reside in one household (ranking at the top of all 47 prefectures). In addition, the rate for both married spouses participating in the labor force is quite high (ranking second highest of all 47 prefectures). At the same time, Yamagata is going through the process of population aging, and fertility decline. Nonetheless, the average number of children for married couples between 20 and 39 years of age has stayed pretty much constant over the past four decades. This indicates that the one of the major factors contributing to the declining fertility rate is, in fact, the lowering of the marriage rate. In fact, the rate for never-married men at 50 years of age today has come to be nearly as high as one in five (1960: 1.1 %, 2000: 11.4 %, and 2010: 18.7 %; IPSSR 2013, Table 12–37).

Two survey reports on family relations in Yamagata prefecture have been published. One is the “Survey Report on the Attitudes toward Families in Yamagata Prefecture” (Department of Health and Welfare, Yamagata Prefecture 2005), and the other is the “Report on the Questionnaire Survey Research on Foreigners Residing in Yamagata Prefecture” (Association for International Relations in Yamagata: AIRY 2006).

“Survey report on the attitudes toward families in Yamagata prefecture”

“Survey report on the attitudes toward families in Yamagata prefecture” (Yamagata Prefecture, Department of Health and Welfare, 2005) is the report of a study on people in Yamagata prefecture, detailing their attitudes toward marriage, the family, childrearing, and labor force participation. The questionnaire survey was administered in October 2004 to men and women between 20 and 49 years of age. (The total number of valid questionnaires returned was 1,390, yielding a valid return rate of 56.7 %.)⁶ The major objective of the survey was to identify the factors contributing to the difficulty in attaining matrimony, which, in turn, resulted in the fertility decline in Yamagata prefecture.

An overview of the attitudes toward the family among the people in Yamagata is traditional rather than liberal, and in favor of avoiding divorce and

raising one's own family of procreation. Although people in the marriageable age cohorts desire to get married, there exist factors that hinder them from getting into the institution of the matrimony. Examples of these factors are as follows: first, there exists very limited opportunities for these people in Yamagata prefecture to meet marriageable people of the opposite sex. Second, the family in Yamagata is characterized by a high rate of coresidency, in which married women live with their parents-in-law within the same household. Third, people in Yamagata feel strongly that care for elderly parents should be extended by their adult children, especially when they are co-residing. Fourth, delayed marriage of women results in delayed childrearing, hence bringing about a high rate of labor force participation among married women in Yamagata. At the same time, married women in the labor force are reluctant to impair their career prospects by raising a family, thereby lowering the fertility rate among the women in Yamagata.

“Report on the questionnaire survey research on foreigners residing in Yamagata prefecture”

Survey questionnaires were sent to a total of 793 foreign citizens who were 18 and over and registered residents of Yamagata prefecture as of the end of December 2004 (the sample consists of 750 out of the total number of 7,384 (10.1 %) registered foreign residents and 43 foreign citizens taking the intermediary level Japanese language course at that time with Association for International Relations in Yamagata, AIRY 2006).⁷

Of the total number of 180 completed questionnaires returned, more than two-thirds (141, 78 %) were women; and two-thirds were aged 30 and over (30s: 46 %; 40s: 24 %; 50s: 6 %). Similar to the report made by the national census, the origins of these foreign citizens in Yamagata were predominantly from Asian countries such as China, South and North Korea, and the Philippines. Approximately one-half of these foreign residents had been staying in Yamagata for less than five years; one-quarter of them for 5–9.9 years; and three out of ten for more than ten years.

Foreign citizens in Yamagata feel strongly that they are discriminated against, not treated properly, and not accepted by the community. They feel that Japanese people tend to lack appreciation for foreign ideas and values different from their own. Furthermore, foreign residents desire to have more opportunities for intercultural exchange between the Japanese people and foreign citizens residing in Yamagata, and would like to express themselves more frequently.

Foreign brides in Yamagata feel strongly that their husbands and family members do not understand the adjustment problems that they experience. Consequently, foreign brides are placed in a disadvantageous situation. They en-

counter psychological distress, physical hardship in their daily labor, and may become victims of physical or verbal abuse.

Success in intercultural marriage comes if and only if mutual understanding is generated. It is true that foreign brides must learn to adjust to Japanese society, culture, and way of life. At the same time, educational programs concerning foreign cultures, societies, and their way of life need to be provided for their spouses, and for family members as well.

Conclusion

The present study attempts to analyze the issue of intercultural marriage as an outcome of depopulation in rural farming regions and the globalization of the Japanese economy. We have discussed the historical development, current situation, difficulties, and possible solutions for this issue.

Intercultural marriage is a form of exogamy based on the intercultural population migration in which a person marries outside of their social group. This form of marriage has existed ever since Japan opened her doors to the world in the Meiji era. During the first half of the 20th century, Japan underwent strong influences of nationalism; at that time intercultural marriage was strictly controlled. Immediately after the end of World War II, quite a few Japanese brides married American soldiers who were stationed in Japan. During the bubble economy in the 1980s, some Japanese businessmen living abroad married foreign brides. With the bursting of the bubble economy, and with the rapid progress of globalization, a new type of problem relating to rural farming regions in Japan has emerged. That is, an acute shortage of brides in rural farming regions. To alleviate this situation, foreign brides have been brought in to farming regions in Japan.

Three demographic features of foreign brides in Japan today were highlighted. First, of the total number of newly married couples, the proportion with a foreign spouse has increased dramatically over the years (1965: .4 %; 1990: 3.6 %; 2005: 5.8 %; and 2011: 3.9 %). Second, of the intercultural marriages, foreign brides now constitute the majority, rather than foreign grooms (1965: 25.7 %; 1990: 38.0 %; 2011: 73.3 %). Third, these foreign brides come primarily from three regions in Asia, namely, China, the Philippines, and North and South Korea (in 2010, 44.5 %, 22.8 %, and 16.0 %, respectively).

Analyses of demography and the family in Yamagata prefecture confirmed that the traditional Japanese family structure still persists today. They also indicated that one of the major factors contributing to the declining fertility rate in Yamagata is the lowering of the marriage rate. In fact, the rate for never married

men at 50 years of age is as high as nearly one in five today (1960: 1.1 %, 2010: 18.7 %).

In depth analyses of foreign brides were conducted in several municipalities of Yamagata prefecture that have high rates of co-residency and elderly population. The study showed that there exists a high relationship between foreign brides and traditional three-generation households. Therefore, it could be said that our hypothesis postulated at the beginning of the current chapter has been approved.

Notes

1. Due to the recent enforcement of the reorganization of municipalities throughout Japan, Yamagata prefecture also went through the same. Therefore, the total number of municipalities in Yamagata at the time of the national census survey in 2005 was 38. Today, as of January 21, 2014, it has been reduced to 35 municipalities in total (Yamagata Prefecture Home Page 2014). To be precise, the reduction of three municipalities comes from Shonai region, with two cities and three towns, rather than two cities and six towns.
2. In the statistical analyses, data for the total sample size (N) is shown as 44 rather than 38. This is because six additional data for each variable were included. These six were the total (or average) values for the prefecture, each of the four regions, and one city (before merging three towns).
3. The Town of Asahi-machi Home Page. Retrieved March 13, 2007, from http://www.town.asahi.yamagata.jp/01shoukai/01gaiyo/gaiyou_a2.html.
4. Tozawa-mura Home Page. Retrieved March 13, 2007, from http://www.vill.tozawa.yamagata.jp/pc_site.shtml); and "Mogami-gawa Funa Kudari" [Mogami River Boat Cruise], retrieved March 13, 2007, from <http://www.vill.tozawa.yamagata.jp/funa/funa.html>.
5. Korai-kan Home Page. Retrieved March 13, 2007, from <http://www.vill.tozawa.yamagata.jp/korai/korai.html>.
6. The proportional random sampling methods by sex and population were applied to men and women aged 20-49 residing in Yamagata prefecture in October 2004. Of the total number of valid responses, 628 (M: 391, F: 236) were never married, and 762 (M: 316, F: 446) were married.

7. Questionnaires in Japanese, together with that of the native tongue of each respondent (either in English, Chinese or Korean), were sent to 793 randomly selected foreign residents in Yamagata in December 2005. Of the total number of questionnaire sent, 36 were returned as undeliverable, and 180 completed questionnaires were returned by the end of January 2006, yielding a return rate of 23.8 percent.

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Chapter 4



Stanley D. Brunn ■

Global Dimensions of Professionals in Transnational Marriage Migration: Courting, Adjustments and Ties to Homeland

Abstract

A minor, but significant and emerging dimension of international migration is the marriage of professionals. As part of the network of professionals in education, government and corporations, these women and men have strong transnational linkages before marriage and retain those through international travels and regular use of the internet and skype. I developed a survey sent to approximately 100 women and men; I use the results of 58 women and men who came from 23 different countries. Answers were sought about their meeting, their daily language usage, their social networks and life, their adjustments to their new countries and their contact with home countries.

Among the major findings are the importance of friends and family members in their meeting, religious and secular variations in the marriage ceremony, multiple language familiarity, familiarity with English, the extent of their pre-marriage and post-marriage international travels, gender differences in social adjustments and retirement decisions. Age, gender and nationality were important in responses. The results suggest the need to investigate further non-professionals who migrate, the daily lives of the migrating spouses and the social adjustments of children in transnational marriages in cities and in rural areas.

“In today’s globalized world, it has become very simple to meet people from all kinds of cultural backgrounds – and sometimes fall in love. Inter-Nations (2013) lays out a few scenarios of common issues and strategies to make your intercultural and international marriage work.”

“One of the consequences of easier access to other countries and increased intercultural communication is the increased incidence of bi-national marriages.” (Lauth Bacas 2002)

“In today’s rapidly globalizing world, marriage is a contract between two individuals based on love and commitment to each other is increasingly considered a norm.” (Lu 2007)

“Nowdays, the higher mobility, the freedom of movement within a large number of European countries (in particular, those adhering to the Schengen agreement) and – not-least- the new communication technologies and the orientation of globalization, make it easier the formation of personal relationships with and between foreigners, which may take the form of marriage.” (Lanzieri 2011, 1)

Introduction

The World International Migration map is a dynamic map that displays daily, seasonal, and long term movements of transnational corporation professionals, students and professors in colleges and universities, governmental personnel on long term and short term assignments, military forces assigned to peacekeeping or war zones, refugees seeking havens of freedom from oppression, humanitarian relief workers, and those engaged in leisure and pleasure pursuits. On a smaller, and less recognized scale, are those who cross international boundaries for courtship and marriage. Transboundary flows are significant because they represent an increasing global phenomenon that is changing the definitions,

compositions, identities and linkages of families and cultures. International migrations with a marriage component are not the subject of much scholarly literature at this time compared to the vast number of studies on Asian and African diasporas and the migrations of specific populations, such as students, aid workers, refugees and professionals.

Studying migration components of transnational and cross-cultural marriages is a legitimate and important focus for those in the social and behavioral sciences (Heikkilä & Yeah 2011). A number of disciplines, including sociologists, psychologists, anthropologist and geographers have contributed to the literature, albeit in far fewer numbers than one might expect considering the importance and timeliness of the topic. In regards to marriage topics, gender, cultural customs and norms, and legal issues have been studied. Among groups studied are ethnic groups in former Yugoslavia (Botev 1994), in Germany (Beck-Gernsheim 1998), Thais (Cohen 2002; Lapanun 2010); Mexicans in Atlanta (Hirsch 2003), Ahmedi Muslims in the United Kingdom (Belzani 2006) and Muslims in northern Ireland (Marracini 2006), British Pakistanis (Shaw 2006), South Asians in the United Kingdom (Cameron 2006), Iranian women and Afghan men (Zahedi 2007), Indonesian women (Lapanun 2011), Koreans and Chinese (Kim 2011), Chinese and Hong Kong (Newendorp 2011), Filipino-Japanese (2011), Taiwan-Vietnamese (2011), various groups in Belgium (Van der Bracht n.d.), Finland (Heikkilä 2011) and Sweden (Östh, van Ham & Nedomysl 2011), Chinese-American couples (Young 2012) and Turkish Belgians (Van Kerckem 2013).

With respect to migration Charsley (2012) notes in her recent volume on transnational marriages that *“marriage has until recent years been a neglected field in migration studies.”* Migration dimensions of transnational marriages have been the focus of a number of studies. General statements include Duleep and Sanders (1993) and Celikaksoy, Nielson and Verner (2003). Specific studies include those by Gallo (2003) on Malayali migrants in Italy, Górný and Kepińska (2004) on Ukraine-Polish connections, Charsley and Shaw (2006) on South Africa, Flemmen (2009) on Russians and Norwegians, Hofmann and Buckley (2013) on the Republic of Georgia, Plambech (2008) on Thailand, Wang (2007) on Vietnamese female migrants in Taiwan, Kalter and Schrodeter (2010) on Yugoslav and Turkish women in Germany, Chen (2011) on Taiwanese-Vietnamese marriages, Charsley, Storer-Church, Benson and VanHear (2012) on migrants to the UK, Ko (2012) on Asian-French couples in France, Balarajan (2013) on Indian software engineers, and a Danish research group (AMID 2013) studying Turks and Pakistanis in Denmark. Elites in the marriage/migration process are discussed by Balarajan (2013), by Howard (2011) more in a historical context and by Leinonen (2011a) in a study on Finns who migrated to America and lost much of their elite occupational status.

Many of the social and behavioral science disciplines can make valuable contributions to the study of the marriage/migration intersections. Sociologists might look at the occupational, age and gender components of those who migrate. Anthropologists could use ethnographic methods to focus on the cultural settings and backgrounds of both the originating and receiving communities and countries. Psychologists might look at children raised in such marriages, marital satisfaction and acceptances (nor not) of parents, siblings and wider family communities, and also the mental and physical health of the spouses and children of transnational marriages. And geographers, with their focus on locations and places and mapping, might specifically look at the directional flows of those migrations, the place settings of meeting and courtship, the acceptance environments of those settling in new countries, the extent of new country-homeland networks and adjustment satisfactions of those migrating. I approach transnational marriages as a human geographer interested in questions about migration flows, the meanings of place in transnational relationships, and the extent, networking, magnitude and composition of those included in these international human migration flows. Beck-Gernsheim (2011, 60) synthesizes succinctly the importance of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives in studying transnational migration and also the current national and international cultural and legal landscapes regarding the migration/marriage intersections. She writes:

As economic and political conditions in many parts of the world deteriorate, many people build their hopes on migration. On the one hand, Western countries try to limit migration by setting up very restrictive rules, with family unification becoming the last chance for entry. In response, many young men and women are placing their hopes on hopes on marriage, or more specifically marriage in accordance with migration rules.

The Wikipedia (2013) entry on transnational marriages similarly provides a useful context for this study. It states:

In an age of increasing globalization, where a growing number of people have ties to networks of people and places across the globe, rather than to a current geographic location, people are increasingly marrying across national boundaries. Transnational marriage is a by-product of the movement and migration of people.

Transnational marriage may occur when someone from one country visits or lives in another country for school, work, political asylum, refuge or due to their family relocating.

The term transnational marriage migration (TMM) implies crossing international boundaries for purposes of marriage. In my definition what constitutes as TMM is a marriage in which one member (husband or wife or partner) crossed an international boundary in order to get married or was married in one's home country, but then moved to another country (the home country of the spouse) to take up residence. What does not count are married couples from two different countries who met in the country of one of the spouses then got married. Since there was no marriage migration related to marriage, it does not fit my definition of an international marriage. In essence, I only considered marriages where there was a specific migration across an international boundary that was related to the marriage itself, either migration to get married or migrating to another country after marriage.

In the discussion below, I investigate the marriage/migration intersections by focusing on four major questions:

- 1) How and where did the couples meet?
- 2) Where did they get married, by whom and where did they spend their honeymoon?
- 3) What are the major adjustment issues the spouses have had to make? and
- 4) What is the nature of the migrating spouse's contacts and networks with her/his home country?

Before answering these questions, I provide a conceptual framework, look at the relevant literature on the topic, discuss the research problem in greater detail and describe the survey instrument.

Conceptual framework and background literature

As noted above, there are countless numbers of people who cross international boundaries daily, monthly and annually for general and also very specific reasons. While there is no current or uniform international census or database that provides the actual or approximate numbers who cross international land, air, or water boundaries daily for marital purposes, their numbers are probably miniscule compared to those who cross boundaries for work or for pleasure. Nevertheless, they are significant in that they represent an important demographic cohort who wishes to start households, families and careers, often those whose cultural, linguistic, religious and political backgrounds may be similar or sig-

nificantly different. How these couples met and where they met are among the intriguing questions that one would raise and discuss in any scholarly treatment of international marriages that focused on migration. Other important issues discussed include courtship, employment, social contacts with home countries and social and cultural adjustments in their new homelands.

Perhaps the reasons for the lacunae in the literature on this subject can be attributed to two main reasons. One is that there is no readily national or international available database on the subject that scholars can easily access for demographic, statistical or cartographic analysis. A valid attempt to incorporate both modeling and cartographic perspectives on marriage and divorce rates in Europe is Lanzieri's (2011) study on Europe. He finds the highest rates of transnational marriages are in Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and Iceland; the lowest in eastern and southeastern European countries. Using data from MIPLEX and Zaragoza integrative studies, he notes there were more than 300,000 marriages of foreigners in Europe in 2007 (the latest available data). A second is that defining the term "transnational marriage" in a contemporary national or global context can pose problem because of the multiple social and legal definitions of "family," "transnational or international" and "marriage" itself because of the changing demographics of many countries and regions (see Price & Zubrzycki 1962; Lidén 2007; Lucassen & Laarman 2009; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Constable 2003; Fast & Ozveren 2004; Beck-Gernsheim 2011; Balarajan 2013; Charsley 2012; Stevens, Ishizawa & Escandell 2012). Regardless of the reasons for the paucity of literature, transnational marriage migration is an important topic, as noted above, for migration scholars in several disciplines in the social, behavioral and policy sciences. These marriages will only increase in volume as crossing international boundaries becomes easier in an ever more globalized world.

Constructing a survey and identifying a sample

I developed a survey which asked a series of generic questions about the following topics: basic demographic data (age, sex, household size, employment, citizenship, place of birth, ethnicity, etc.), other personal information about the husbands and wives (own and drive a car, have and use a personal computer, a cell phone and iPad), courtship issues (where the couples met, conferences or classes as well as specific geographic location), language familiarity and languages used daily, the nature and extent of contacts with home countries (skype, internet, personal visits, etc.), what they like most about their new country and miss about their home country, and finally, their social contacts (with friends

and organizations). The survey was prepared in English. The sample was sent to those in professional fields, not those in agriculture, mining, construction work or those in domestic or civil service (police, fire, military, etc.).

In order to obtain names of potential couples who would qualify for the survey, I used my global network of friends to provide names and email addresses of those who might be interested and willing to participate. I adopted the snowball sampling procedure where I emailed friends and friends of friends on all continents. These individuals kindly provided names and email addresses of those they knew or thought would be interested in being part of this research. Some individuals provided the names and email addresses of both the husbands and wives or partners, while others provided only the name of the wife or the husband. If I sent the survey to one of the partners, I asked them to ask their spouse to also complete the survey. The survey requested information by both marital partners. A separate section in the survey was to be filled out by the migrating spouse. Thus, some of the surveys had complete information, while others were only filled out in part (that is, the non-migrating spouse).

I emailed a cover letter describing the project and the survey instrument to 84 individuals in August and September 2013. By mid-October I received 58 completed and useful surveys. Some were filled out by both husbands and wives, some by one member. For those who submitted the surveys without their wives/husbands/partners, the responding spouses promised to ask their mates to complete and send me the survey. Some did; others did not. The surveys came in equal numbers (29) of women and men.

In the discussion below I begin by focusing on demographic and citizenship/residence questions. This section, which provides an overview of the sample, is followed by a discussion of courtship (meeting place), marriage and honeymoon decisions. Next I examine some issues regarding the social life of those in new countries, what they miss most about their home countries and also the kind and extent of networking/contacts they have/retain with their home countries. On some topics I wanted to observe if there are any differences between women and men. I conclude by looking at what these results tell us about transnational marriage migration and suggesting some additional questions worth pursuing.

Demographics, personal characteristics and citizenship

As noted above, the sample was basically divided evenly between women and men. Most (31) of those who responded were between 31–50 years old; only a few (7) were less than 30 and only 9 were over 60 years. Almost one-third were

in households with only adults; more the one-third (25) had children under the age of 18. All but four of those in the sample identified themselves as husbands or wives. With respect to employment, 35 of the 53 were employed full-time; this included 21 men and 14 women. The remainder were either part-time employed (more women than men), retired, unemployed or students.

The ethnic identity question (self-identified) provided some interesting results: Caucasians (10), White (10), Russian (4), Saudi and Hispanic (3 each), Indian (Asian), Tajik, Chinese, Austrian and German (2 each) and one each for English, South Asian, Korean, Italian, Croatian and Armenian. Some listed combination nationalities. Others did not answer the question.

Several questions were asked about ownership of household and personal items. Three-fourths of the respondents stated that they own a car; the numbers were almost the same for women and men. Of those who did not own a car, women were more likely to fit in this category. Almost all of the respondents stated that they could drive and most of those who migrated stated they could drive in the country they came from. Almost 90 percent stated that they have a computer, a lap top and a cell phone. There were no major differences between women and men answering these questions. Only about 30 percent of all respondents stated they had an iPad, with the numbers almost identical for women and men. These results illustrate the familiarity and use of global professionals with the latest communications technologies.

The three questions about countries of birth, residence, and citizenship reflected the international composition of the sample. The respondents were born in 23 different countries, residents of 14 countries and citizens of 21 countries (see Appendix A).

Meeting and meeting places, courtship, marriage and honeymoon

The most common response to “where did you meet” was through a friend; almost one-third provided this answer (Table 1). Next were “at a social gathering,” “in a class” and “through a brother or a sister.” This frequency is not listed in Table 1. Other responses were: in a bar, a political event, on-line dating, at a religious event and as a result of faculty exchange. Someone indicated that they just met on the street. I did not calculate these responses with respect to country of origin. The geographic locations where these international couples met further illustrate the global dimensions of the sample. The women indicated they met in 27 different cities and the men in 23 different cities (see Appendix B).

Table 1. International migrating couples who married and where they met?

Major reasons	Minor reasons
Through a friend	Sports
Social gathering	On-line dating
In a class	Religious event
Work	Political event
	Conference
	Faculty exchange
	Bar
	American Corner

Slightly more than half reported they were married by a religious person, the remainder by a political official. Less than a handful of respondents stated that they were not legally married. “Where were you married” also yielded some interesting results. Almost half reported “in a public building” and 21 reported “in a religious building.” Seven reported being married “in a home” and 5 “in nature.” Singular responses were: “in a university building,” “in a hotel,” and “on a golf course.”

Two questions were asked about the honeymoon, the first “where did you spend your honeymoon” and “who made the decision?” The respondents listed 16 different honeymoon countries, which again shows the global familiarity of the sample; they included destinations in the U.S., Canada, the Bahamas, Switzerland, France, Austria, Croatia, Spain, Dominican Republic, Iran, India, Kenya, Chad, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Twenty-three of the couples stated that the honeymoon destination was a joint decision; 12 responded that the husband made the decision (only one wife reported making the decision for the couple); 3 reported their parents made the decision; the remainder reported there was no honeymoon.

Social adjustments

Languages

Answers were sought to the languages familiar to the respondents and used at home on a daily basis. Their responses again reflected the international and cross-cultural mix of those responding to the survey. Altogether they spoke 24 different languages; the most frequent responses were English (39), German (17), Spanish (13), Russian (12), French (11), and Italian (9). Less than a handful

spoke Portuguese, Arabic, Hausa, Tajik, Swedish, Korean, Chinese, Farsi, Tamil, Hindi and one each for Danish, Uzbek, Gaelic, Bengali, Icelandic, Croatian and Romanian; 95 percent spoke more than one language: English was usually one of the languages spoken by all those surveyed.

When asked about languages used in the home daily, 39 or two-thirds used English and another language. 17 used only English (not surprising considering the number of Americans and Canadians who responded to the survey) and 3 used only German and 2 used Spanish and Italian (each). Six individuals used three languages daily in their households.

Since language is a key issue in multicultural relations and also international marriages, 21 (15 women and 6 men) stated they took a language when they moved to their new country while 19 (12 women and 7 men) stated they did not. 15 did not answer this language question.

Social life

A number of questions were asked about other transnational marriages. The number of international marriages the respondents knew about varied widely. 19 knew less than 5 couples and 16 knew from 6–10 couples. At the other extreme were 19 couples who knew from 11–20 couples and 11 who knew more than 20. One couple entered the number 50 in response to this question.

Over half (32) acknowledged that they knew international marriages that had failed; no reasons were asked in the survey and no one provided any comments at the end of the survey. Another 21 responded they knew of no failed marriages. Two-thirds replied that they did not know any international marriages that had adopted children from other countries, which is an additional dimension of an international family.

When asked the category they would use to describe their social life, 16 (almost equal numbers of women and men) replied “very strong;” “moderate” was used by 17 women and 9 men and “weak” for 7 women and 4 men. Not all respondents answered this question. Most stated that they did not belong to any group or organization specifically for international married couples. It should be noted that more women responded positively to this question than men. Not many women (only 7) or men (only 4) indicated that they engaged in some voluntary activities for their neighborhood, community, church or some organization. Most chose not to answer this question.

However, when asked about what kinds of cultural events the husbands and wives engaged in, there were some gender differences (Table 2). Wives were much more likely to participate in festivals, sports, movies, music, holidays, and religious events. Bookstores were the only category where more men participated. Very few mentioned clubs.

Table 2. What cultural events do international married migrating couples participate: wives and husbands?

Wives	Husbands
Holidays	Holidays
Movies	Festivals
Music	Movies
Festivals	Sports
Sports	Bookstores
Religious events	Music
Bookstores	Parades
Parades	Religious events

Adjustments to the new country

As we have already observed above the “new countries” for these migrating spouses included countries in nearly all continents, not just Europe and North America. What is surprising is that there were many similarities both in the adjustments they faced and also the nature and extent of their contacts with their home countries.

When asked about what were their most difficult *adjustments* they faced, women were much more likely to respond to this question than men and to provide more adjustments (Table 3). The four most common reasons stated by women were: missed my family, lack of language, no friends during their first year, and no employment or income in the first year. For men they mentioned missing their family was followed by no employment and income source and the high cost of food. Less than a handful of women and men mentioned health care, TV-programs and security.

Table 3. What were the most difficult adjustments international married migrating couples faced in their new country: wives and husbands?

Wives	Husbands
Missed my family	Missed my family
Language	No employment or income source
No friends or very few	High costs of foods
No employment or income source	No friends or very few
Public transportation	Language
Health care system	High costs
Cultural events	
Holidays	
Foods	

When asked what they *missed* about their home country, the newcomers mostly missed their family and friends and local/familiar foods in their own countries (Table 4). Less than a handful mentioned security issues, weather and climate. Other single responses were religious activities, seafood, national parks, optimism, standard of living, hiking, the cemetery, the sun and also pubs, bread and sour cabbage rolls.

Table 4. What do international migrating couples miss most about their home country? (note: many single responses)

Many responses	Few responses
Family	Health care system
Friends	Tv and cinema
Food	Music
Culture	Nature
Job	Bread
Sunshine and weather	Friendly chaos
Ocean/Coastline	Religious activities
Nature and national parks	Simple life
Gatherings	Humor
Holidays	
Security	

When asked what they *like* about their new country, women provided 45 different reasons and men 34 reasons (Table 5). Wives were also less likely to not respond to this question and provide specific reasons than husbands. There were no major categories checked by husbands and wives, rather a variety of answers, the most frequently chosen were: multiculturalism, security and safety, the people, weather, nature, recycling, opportunities, food, jobs and organizations. There were also many single responses, including hospitality, humor, openness, the school system, career progress, religious activities, foods, less waste, lower ecological footprint, tolerance, prosperity, and middle class culture.

Table 5. What do international migrating couples like most about their new country: wives and husbands? (note: many single responses)

Wives	Husbands
People	Tolerance
Multiculturalism	Freedom
Security and safety	Less waste
Weather	Humor
Nature	Hospitality
Opportunities	Ease of travel
Food	Nature
My job	Career progress
Urbanization	Prosperity
Steady income	Work ambience
Insurance	Quality of life

Six adjustment stories

Below I provide six stories from the sample about their adjustments.

First, a woman 41–50 who was born in the U.S. and lives temporarily in the U.S., but usually lives in India. *“We married in the U.S. knowing that we may move to India. After 5 years we went to India for 18 months to see how I would adjust to life there. At the end of that time, we decided to make our home in India. We returned to the U.S., worked five years to save money, then moved to India in 1998. In the beginning I was mostly involved in language/culture learning and raising our two children. Later I got involved in a school for poor children, eventually becoming principal there. When my husband left in 2008, I was already so involved in the school that I decided to continue living in India. I am only in the U.S. now so my son can finish high school here (my daughter is in a German university). Once he is finished, I plan to return to India. I am not more at home there than I am here. My husband (born of an Indian father and American mother) splits his time between the U.S. and India.”*

Second, a man 61–70 who was born in the United Kingdom and now lives in Finland. *“The answers to the questions change over the years. In the beginning the language problem was the major problem – also the climate. Now, 40 years later, the language is no longer an issue and we live in the south of Finland where the weather is not so severe (Global warming also helps). Finland was also very much under the Soviet hammer in the early 1970s and even in the 80s. The way of life then was almost unbearable – and the poverty! There was zero respect for individuals. Nowadays with Finland being part of the EU life has improved and become quite western.”*

Third, a woman 21–30, who is Russian/Armenian and lives in the U.S. *“The problems people have here are not really very serious. They are more to do with personal comfort and how to do financial planning. All people have to do here to find some comfort is to make responsible decisions; they don’t have to worry about losing out just because of the corruption. In Russia they are working to fix such issues but still exist for the time being and everyone is affected by them. Finding a job was the only serious issue I faced here, but I have been able to make my own job. I like the comfort of no having to rely on public transit. I would much rather have nice roads and my own car than having to rely on any kind of public transit available in Russia. I love the fact that internet rates are reasonable and that anyone can start a business here; I’ve even figured out how to navigate the health care system. I do not believe my home country is a bad place, or that American is necessarily better, but I do not sit around and miss Russia. I don’t even really think about it at all. My husband and I could really live in Russia and would consider doing it if it made economic sense. However, when I’m Russia, it’s not comfortable to live. Just things like air conditioning, garbage disposal,*

washer/dryer, comfortable furniture or the ability to buy clothes and material items for a reasonable price."

Fourth, a woman 31–40, who was born in Italy, has citizenship there, and lives in the U.S. *"I don't know if this any interest to your research, but I feel compelled to share. I'm the foreign half of a binational same-sex couple in the U.S. At present only a few countries grant immigration rights to gay couples. I met my wife when I was applying to go back to college in the U.S. Later on, we experienced the difficulties of a relationship that at times was long distance. While these are the same for heterosexual and same-sex couples, a couple of years ago we faced a really big hurdle that most other couples don't: finding a country where we could live together. Italy, my home country, doesn't recognize same-sex couples, married or not. My wife is a U.S. citizen, and, at the time, she could not sponsor me for residency in the U.S. either. We did not want to break the law, but we wanted to be together, so we were ready to pack our bags and move to a country that neither of us called home, but that would have accepted us for what we were, a family (we got married in a haste to help this process). Just a few weeks before my visa expired the Supreme Court of the U.S. struck down the part of the Defense of Marriage Act that was discriminating against gay and lesbian couples (binational or not). The U.S. is now an option for us. We've just applied for a Green card (I'm currently waiting for Employment and Travel Authorization), and hopefully (keeping our fingers crossed) in a few months we will be able to set our roots. It's been and still is tough, but I feel very lucky."*

Fifth, a woman, 41–50, born in the U.S. and a U.S. citizen and lives in Panama. *"I did not speak much Spanish before coming to Panama, only had an intense summer course, but now am fluent and this has become indispensable. It is the main way that I gain "acceptance" by having people hear me speak with a "Panamanian accent" and also that I cook local recipes. While I do not know of many people who are international couples (and in fact do not know anyone from the U.S.), I know lot of people who have studied in the U.S. and this is helpful, may be interesting in your study to know of the role of higher education in forging and maintaining these kinds of connections. I always tell people that William Fulbright was responsible for introducing me to my husband."*

Sixth, a man, 41–50, who was born in the U.S. and is a U.S. citizen, but lives in Ireland. *"My wife and I were fortunate to deliver a son named Senan on the 5th of July 2012. I am happy that he will have dual citizenship, but sometimes fear that access to the Irish care system might be harmful to him. Once accessed at a hospital level, the Irish care system is as good as most systems I have experienced in the states, but Ireland simply doesn't have the resources to bear if a catastrophic illness should afflict my son, my wife or myself. I do worry about this. And I know that Irish people with means do come to the U.S. for care when such problems present."*

Contacts with home country

Almost 80 percent of both husbands and wives indicated that they used the internet, phones (including cell phones), skype and personal visits to maintain contact those in their home countries. Letters were mentioned by only 10 respondents. Those most frequently contacted, not surprisingly, were brothers and sisters, parents, friends and colleagues. Few contacted their children back home; many had children living with them. Slightly more than half contacted someone back home once a week. Only a half-dozen did daily. Those in the sample used the phone to contact friends in their home countries as well as their friends in new countries. There were no major gender differences in responses to these questions.

Travels and retirement decisions

It should come as little surprise that these international married couples like to travel and also can express ideas about where they would like to retire. Five responded had visited only one country since she/he was married, 8 had visited two, 4 had visited three, 5 had visited four and 7 had visited five countries. Also 7 had visited more than 11 and 8 had visited more than eight. The respondents collectively had visited 75 different countries (see Appendix C).

Retirement years, although some years off were for many in the sample, nevertheless evoked some interesting responses. Many freely identified specific countries, some even specific cities. Most mentioned only one city (see Appendix D).

Some of these cities were also listed in response to the question about their choice of an ideal country and city. There were 27 different cities mentioned (see Appendix E).

Explanations

This exploratory investigation into migration components of international marriages yielded some underlying similarities across diverse ethnic groups and cultures, and also some differences between women and men. The sample size was not sufficient to know if there are substantial and significant differences among those migrating, for example, from Europe to North America or from Europe to Asia or from Latin American to North America. Also it would be desirable to know if Europeans preferred other Europeans and Asians other Asians rather

than those from other continents. And do North Americans exhibit any extra-regional preferences or are they truly transnational? While we have insufficient data to answer these intriguing questions, we are in a position to make six significant points.

First, there were striking similarities among those professionals who responded to the survey. Most were in higher education or business. While over half in the sample were from Europe and North America, still the findings for Asians, Africans and Latin Americans were not that different. That the husbands and wives were professionals accounted for many similar responses; they met at conferences, attended classes together and frequently crossed international boundaries to visit family and friends or for leisure or to maintain contact with family and friends. Their use of the latest social media suggests that transnational networking is an integral part of their daily personal and professional lives.

Second, English came across as the dominant language of daily communication, if not the only language, but one of two or three spoken regularly in the home. The findings reveal that English was not necessarily the dominant language of many spouses, but they were living in non-English speaking countries. Still the fact that they used it regularly meant that one member of the family had to become familiar with English. The fact that more women than men took a language class, and this was usually English, underscored this fact. While I did not ask about the language children in their families spoke, I would expect many children were also learning English as well as another language (or two). And non-English speakers were also probably learning English from their children.

Third, international travel was shown to be a major underlying feature of most couples. Not only did one member have to cross an international boundary to get married, but together they had traveled internationally to more than a half dozen or more countries since they were married. In addition, their choices of "favorite cities" to live and places to retire show that they have some familiarity with global cultural and leisure environments. Some have very specific places they plan to retire, most being in tropical and mid-latitude countries. These features were reflected in those from all regions represented in the sample.

Fourth, there were also striking similarities in the nature and extent of contacts with their home countries. The internet and skype were the most used means of communicating; phoning was less frequent and mail rarely used. Their contacts were mostly with parents, brothers and sisters and friends on a weekly, not daily basis. Professional friends were also included in this mix. The similarities were basically the same of all ages and for women and men and from rich and less rich countries.

Fifth, the problems these migrating spouses faced also were similar across the cultural, linguistic and geographical spectra. For women the major concerns

they faced were language (and more women than men took a language class), missing family and friends, no employment and thus no income, transportation adjustments (from public transport to a world of private cars), and a different health system. For the men who responded to this question their concerns were also no employment and no income, missing friends and colleagues, and also unfamiliar foods.

Sixth, the adjustment problems were again strikingly similar for those across the different regions, economies and cultures represented in the sample. Participating in festivals, sports, music and religious activities were the most popular; book stores and clubs, including of transnational couples, were not. Some gender differences emerged. Women were not only more engaging than men, but they also preferred music, sports, festivals and religious activities; men were less gregarious.

Summary and future directions

In this study on transnational marriage migration we have learned that this is a global phenomenon for professional educators and business leaders in many countries. It appears from the data that these transboundary couples share many common professional and personal interests, including their professional interests, common values, acceptance of cultural diversity, learning languages, having and treasuring international experiences (travels, honeymoon destinations and even retirement options). These attributes would separate them from large numbers of their own friends, families and others who probably do not share these experiences and values. As stated at the outset even though the number of those in transboundary movements for marriage is not large, it is a significant and emerging dimension of professionals with global and extra-regional interests, values, experiences and networks. I consider this exploration as an entry point from which to embark on additional studies on transnational marriage migration. Let me suggest six topics. One is to gather additional data from all major world regions to see if indeed there are significant differences in the transnational marriage dimensions, for example, for those from South Asia and the Greater Middle East or between East Asia and Latin America. A second study would look closer at gender differences of the migrating spouse; some differences are reported above (see Leinonen 2011b). For example, do the women who migrated from Southeast Asia have differences from those migrating from Sub Saharan Africa, or men from the same regions, or are there only significant differences from men who migrated from Latin America and East Asia? A third question that would be worth pursuing in great detail, among professionals and

non-professionals, is the importance of on-line courting and marriage arrangements. This topic, including “mail-order” brides, has only been touched on, but is recognized as being of increased importance (Narayan 1995; Simmons 2001; Constable 2003a; 2003b; 2004; Begin 2007; D’Aoust 2010; Nakamata 2011); Balarfajan 2013; Bélanger, Hong & Linh 2013; InternationalCupid 2013).

A fourth study would look at additional family and networking issues in these international marriages (Lam, Yeah & Low 2002). Questions could be asked about their children, their language usage, their health (Ho 2011), their ties to the homeland of the migrating spouse, and their own identities (Nowicka 2006). Especially, it would seem useful to know whether feelings are strong or weak attachments of young and teen age children to one or more than one country. Pollock and Van Reiken (2001) refer to these as “third world kids.” Questions could also be asked about the happiness or satisfaction in marriage by both husbands and wives; Sharaievskaya, Kim and Stodolska (2013) suggest that leisure activities are important in successful intercultural marriages; the *China’s People’s Daily Online* (People’s Daily 2013) reported that the meal was important. A group of Indonesian women belong to an Indonesian Mixed Marriage Society (Antonio-Jufri 2011). Fifth, gender issues, which are a focus of many of the above studies, merit closer study, especially there is a need to study those wives in neglected, abused or in abusive relationships and victims of human trafficking (see Anderson 1993; Chin 1994; Mand 2002; Yang & Wang 2003, Lung & Chen 2011; Wang 2011; Qureshi & Varghese 2011; WMS 2013). These studies might investigate the concept of “transnational patriarchy” (Jongwilaiwan & Thompson 2013, 363) and whether it is a regional or a global phenomenon. They write that “International marriage migration is a fraught terrain of gender and power relations.” A sixth challenging topic for those in the social and policy sciences would be to look at other groups who migrate across international boundaries to get married or who were married and then cross these boundaries. Labor and immigration issues could play a role in these discussions (Stam 2011; Thiévent 2011).

While this study looked at professionals, especially educators, there are other professionals, including NGO personnel, health care providers, or engineers who would be useful to study. And one might think of international construction workers, maids and nannies, agricultural workers (voluntary and forced), refugees from conflicts (Brunner, Hyndman & Montz 2012; Kassim 2012) and even students as examples of other groups who have regular or periodic transnational components to their daily lives. Rural areas and small towns should not be omitted from these discussions (Morén-Alegret 2011). Are members of these groups also using the latest communications’ technologies in their courtship, daily work and ties to homeland? The results in this study would and could provide a useful framework from which to study these groups in different geographical and cultural settings. Our knowledge of this important topic will be

more complete with additional survey and ethnographic data about women and men from major world regions and from urban and rural areas.

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Appendix

- A. The countries of birth included the following: the U.S., Canada, Germany, Austria, France, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Russia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Singapore, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Nigeria and South Africa. The countries of current residence included: the U.S., Canada, Austria, Iceland, United Kingdom, Panama, Finland, France, Portugal, Ireland, Nigeria, Tanzania, Tajikistan and Singapore. And, finally, the respondents were citizens of 17 countries: the U.S., Canada, Sweden, Italy, Croatia, Germany, Spain, Sweden, France, the United Kingdom, Austria, Russia, Venezuela, Panama, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Singapore, India and Chad.
- B. The cities mentioned by women include: Coimbatore, India, Salzburg, Australia; Lexington, Kentucky; New York City, Indianapolis, Rome, Riga, Uppsala, Ust-Kamenogorsk/Oskemen, Kazakhstan, Riyadh, Lagos, and specific cities in the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Tanzania and Kyrgyzstan. Some of the cities mentioned by men were Lexington, Kentucky, New York City, New Haven, CT, Calgary, Rome, Dublin, Vienna, Munich, Teheran, Lagos, Santo Domingo and Singapore.
- C. Most frequently visited countries were the U.S. (22), Italy (18), Germany (16), United Kingdom (11), France and Canada (10 each), Spain (9), Austria (8), China (8), Czech Republic (7), Croatia, Switzerland and Greece (6 each). India (5), Hungary, Slovakia and Sweden (4 each) and Costa Rica, Luxembourg, Taiwan, Bahamas and Ireland (3 each). There were single countries visited in Africa, eastern Europe, the Greater Middle East and Pacific Basin.
- D. Among the countries mentioned were the U.S., Canada, Singapore, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Croatia, Panama, France, Iceland, Sweden, Portugal, India and Vanuatu (Pacific island). Specific cities listed included Vienna, Rome, Venice, Seattle, Moscow, New York City, Tokyo, Paris, London, Oxford, and Madrid. One person wrote "Anywhere in the U.S." while others mentioned specific cities in Tanzania and Panama. Specific college towns listed were Bloomington, Indiana and Oxford, UK.
- E. Cities include Boston, Seattle, Atlanta, Phoenix, Tucson, New York, Washington, D.C., Lexington, Kentucky, Provo, Utah, Columbus, Ohio, and Charleston, South Carolina in the U.S.; Oxford and London in the United Kingdom; Azuero Peninsula, Panama; Rome and Salerno, Italy; Villach and Vienna, Austria; Via Island, Croatia; Varanasi, India; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Guadalajara, Mexico; Moscow, Russia; Kano, Nigeria; Tokyo, Japan, and Vanuatu (Pacific Island). One person indicated "Anywhere" and another college town. The places both for leisure and retirement years reflect both a familiarity with cities and living environments in many locations. Most mentioned one city; one person mentioned Phoenix or London and another Tokyo, Paris or New York.

Chapter 5

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Marriage Migration from Turkey to Germany: How Underprivileged Couples Cope with Immigration Regulations or Not

Abstract

In this article a case study on the development of a border-crossing marriage relationship between two individuals is presented and discussed in terms of the effects that are brought about by spatial distance and immigration regulations. The data for this case study come from a research project on the dynamics of marriage migration between Turkey and Germany. The data consist of repeated interviews with individuals engaged in a border-crossing relationship over a time period of eight months covering the pre- and post-migration phases. The overall goal was to develop a thorough understanding of the conditions of each partner before a marriage migration actually took place, and the ways by

which couples facilitate their relationship within a transnational social space during this period.

From this broader perspective, here we focus on a case study and the following questions: How do spatial distance and legal regulations concerning the family migration to Germany potentially affect the relationship of a couple? How do couples try to cope with upcoming challenges? Our case study illustrates that both spatial distance and legal requirements can create stress factors for a relationship and a marriage – particularly if the individuals leading this relationship have insufficient material, cultural and social resources and lack experience of how to deal with bureaucratic hurdles and immigration legislation. The lengthy period of separation and insecurity, induced to an important degree by conditions to be fulfilled in order to be eligible for family unification visa may – as illustrated in the case study – even result in a separation.

Introduction

Governments in Europe and elsewhere have been keen on regulating immigration in the last decades along utilitarian criteria and generally tended to ease up immigration possibilities in case of wealthy or highly qualified individuals. Many governments felt pressured also to introduce restrictive regulations for groups who are often referred upon in public debates as more difficult to integrate into mainstream society. This, in turn, often created immigration regimes that favor groups who are deemed to be “culturally close” to the society in the destination country. A rough, but often used proxy for identifying such “closeness” or “distance” has been the citizenship potential immigrants hold. Questioning the morals behind such criteria, Carens (2003, 26) puts forward, that citizenship *“in the modern world is a lot like feudal status in the medieval world. It is assigned at birth; for the most part it is not subject to change by the individual’s will and efforts; and it has a major impact upon that person’s life chances.”*

The regulation of family related immigration is a prime example for these selection and steering attempts of governments on the basis of citizenship (see Kraler & Kofman 2009; Kraler [in press]; Kofman 2004; Çileli 2008). By issuing the Family Reunification Directive (Directive 2003/86/EC) the European Union tried to set standards in order to protect the basic rights of resident immigrants and transnational couples or families who are third country nationals (TCNs) within the EU. However, since the Directive came into force in 2005 many member countries have been gradually moving toward a more restrictive immigration regime concerning TCN family members or spouses, as Block

and Bonjour (2013, 205–208) illustrate in their analysis of the developments in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Strasser et al. (2009, 166) point out that these changes have to be seen in connection with “[...] *current debates over the ethnic closure of migrant communities and over the alleged “failure” of integration, [in which; GS & CMA] the “migrant family” is more frequently being seen as an obstacle to integration – as a site characterized by patriarchal relationships and illiberal practices and traditions, such as arranged and forced marriages.*”

Forced marriages play a central role in a small, but very popular part of the literature about marriage migration to Germany (Ateş 2004, 2006; Çileli 1999, 2008; Kelek 2005, 2006). Most of the authors who contributed to this literature do not distinguish systematically between forced and arranged or semi-arranged marriages. One of the most prominent authors who contributed to the debate within the last few years was Kelek (2005). She claims that arranging marriages represents a common practice within the Turkish community in Germany but also among other Muslim immigrant groups. According to Kelek (2005), as a consequence of the marriage arrangement “imported brides” are taken out of the environment they grew up and exploited in Germany. She furthermore asserts that the reasons why parents of female marriage migrants agree with the arrangement are financial motives, whereas the parents-in-law in Germany regard the wife of their son as a slave and refuse her basic rights and self-determination. The women who conclude a border-crossing marriage are portrayed by her as individuals without self-initiative whose dependency from the husband and his family is further amplified by her missing knowledge of the German language and the overall conditions in their new living environment. As evidence for her assertions Kelek (2005) provides, however, only anecdotic observations which do not conform basic scientific standards.

The results of empirical analyses presented in the research community about the topic draw a quite different picture. Firstly, in the German context there are no reliable studies about the share of marriage modes concerning marriages between Turkey and Germany in a specific time period. Hence there is no evidence at all for claiming that arranged, semi-arranged or forced marriages represent a common practice among Turks living in Germany. Secondly, Straßburger’s studies (2003, 2007) about the second generation immigrants of Turkish background in Germany and the works of Charsley (2005, 2007) and Williams (2010) on immigrants of East Asian origin in the UK all point out that there are decisive differences between arranged, semi-arranged and forced marriages. These studies also indicate that during the arrangement process, in contrast to the concept of forced marriages, the self-initiative of the involved marriage candidates always remains and the parents of both parties generally follow the basic aim to support only a marriage that promises to last for a longer period

and therefore they take into account the concerns of their daughter or son when they are acting on behalf of them.

Even though arranged marriages only make up an unknown and probably a minor part of transnational marriages as a whole, the political debate in Germany very much focused on the arguments in the popular literature described above and introduced in 2007 new regulations concerning spousal migration to Germany. These regulations set up the conditions to be fulfilled by the incoming spouse as well as the spouse who resides in Germany. The most contested new condition was the proof of basic German knowledge by incoming spouses depending upon the citizenship of this person. Since the introduction of this legislation some TCNs are required to obtain family unification visa before their entry while others do not. Family unification, i.e. the possibility to be joined by a close family member who is a TCN, on the other hand can be regarded to be a basic right of every legal resident in Germany. Such a right to family life is not only protected by international human rights conventions, but in the German case is contained in the constitution itself (Walter 2009). According to article 6.1 of the "Grundgesetz", the German constitution, marriage and the family enjoy the special protection of the state.¹ This rights based perspective is, however, contested by political initiatives taken since the beginning of the 1980s and regulations introduced in subsequent time periods through which the possibilities for family migration have been restricted increasingly (Aybek 2012; Joppke 1999, 80; Koopmans et al. 2012).

Before the new German legislation on family unification was adopted in 2007 numerous disputes occurred. Those in favor of the new legislation argued that the language requirement enhances integration chances and prevents forced marriages of incoming spouses, thus has empowering and preventive potential. Not only opposition within the parliament, but also NGOs and other representatives of the civil society, such as academics and lawyers, however, criticized different aspects of the new law. The causal link put forward by the proponents of the law, regarding the aim of preventing forced marriages, was strongly questioned and the lack of empirical evidence concerning this link highlighted. Regarding the goal of enhancing integration, the critics pointed towards the more practical and accessible possibilities of learning German in Germany, also within the framework of the meanwhile obligatory integration courses for new immigrants. Much criticism also dealt with the practical (un)feasibility of the language requirement due to an potential lack of German language courses in some countries, the high costs to be carried by the couple, cases of uneducated or even illiterate spouses who simply are not able to fulfil the language requirement, and the additional time of separation of married couples (in some cases amounting to months or even years). Furthermore, the exemption of holders of

certain TCNs and of spouses of visa-free EU citizens have been heavily criticized as being discriminatory (Block 2011).²

Having outlined the political and legislative framework, this paper approaches the subject mainly from a family sociological point of view and poses the question, how the obligation to prove language proficiency and the respective time period necessary to obtain such a proof affects a transnational couple and their marriage. We will illustrate via a case study, that legal restrictions may have a rather problematic impact on marital life. The lengthy time of separation for a couple may aggravate financial problems and cause emotional stress which in turn makes separation more likely.

The paper is structured in such a way that we start off with a description of the research project and data that is used in this paper as well as the methodology employed to analyze these data. The main part of the paper consists of a presentation of the case study. This presentation follows a sequential order that aims to reconstruct the biographical perspectives of the couple in different time periods. We conclude the paper with the summary of our results and their implications for policy-making in the realm of family migration regulations.

Research design, data and methodology³

Several studies have been investigating various aspects of transnational marriages (Baykara-Krumme & Fuss 2009; Gonzáles-Ferrer 2006, 2007; Kalter & Schroedter 2010; Kreienbrink & Rühl 2007; Schroedter 2006). All of the sociological studies from the German context, to our knowledge, focus on the perspective of the partners residing in Germany. The data used for this paper, however, stems from a research project during which both perspectives, the viewpoint of the migrating partner in Turkey and the receiving partner in Germany were taken into account (Aybek et al. 2011).⁴ This project was a longitudinal multi-sited research with a dyadic sample consisting of partners, of whom one at the beginning of the data collection was living in Turkey and the other in Germany. Since the partners were repeatedly interviewed over a time period of eight months the pre- and post-migration phases could both be covered. The idea was to explore the experiences accumulated throughout time, turning points, and transitions in the life courses. Not only migration was the object of this study, but also spouse selection and partnership formation.

In terms of design, the project was fitted to the nature of our research interest: As joining a spouse abroad involves pre-migratory preparation as

well as post-migratory accommodation, the qualitative empirical research has been conducted in a longitudinal way, capturing the different experiences made by the involved spouses rather instantly, instead of collecting information in a retrospective manner (Scott & Alwin 1998). A longitudinal design was for these purposes advantageous, if not obligatory. By conducting qualitative research in this manner we expected to gather detailed data that contains an array of patterns. Our research interests went beyond a descriptive account of the phenomenon “marriage migration” and aimed for a comprehension of context and complexity in order to produce a finegrained picture of the phenomenon under study. This design had – compared to single-shot interviews – clear advantages in terms of reliability and validity of the information gathered (Corden & Millar 2007; Lewis 2007; Neale & Flowerdew 2003; Thomson & Holland 2003).

To our knowledge, it is the first time that a qualitative longitudinal design – starting before migration and covering the post-migration phase – has been used for investigating this topic in the German context. The project ironically profited from the legislative change in 2007 described above, obliging those who wanted to join their partners in Germany to obtain a German language certificate. This created in terms of access to the relevant group, the opportunity to contact potential marriage migrants while they were attending language courses in the country of origin instead of having to search for people within the general population who decided to engage in a transnational marriage.

Based on the assumption that the migration as well as the family formation process will be experienced in a highly gender-specific manner the initial sample contained an equal representation of women and men. 13 female and 13 male “migrating partners” were sampled from among students who had registered for a German course offered by a language institute in Ankara and volunteered to participate in the study. We primarily referred to the Goethe Institute in Ankara as one of the main providers of these preparatory language courses and – more importantly – as the main instance in Turkey organizing the language examination.

The interviewing method represents a combination of a narrative and semi-structured elements, as it contained initial parts with free (biographical) narrations as well as a set of themes that were addressed in each interview once the initial narration had ended (Rosenthal 2004). The interviews contained instant information about experiences before, during, and after migration at different time points, since both partners were interviewed several times (see Figure 1).

We focused during our data collection and analysis on the narrations of our interviewees, i.e. how they contextualize and explain their experiences and decisions. Following such a research approach, our aim is to get a “thick description” (Geertz 2000) of the marriage migration phenomenon.

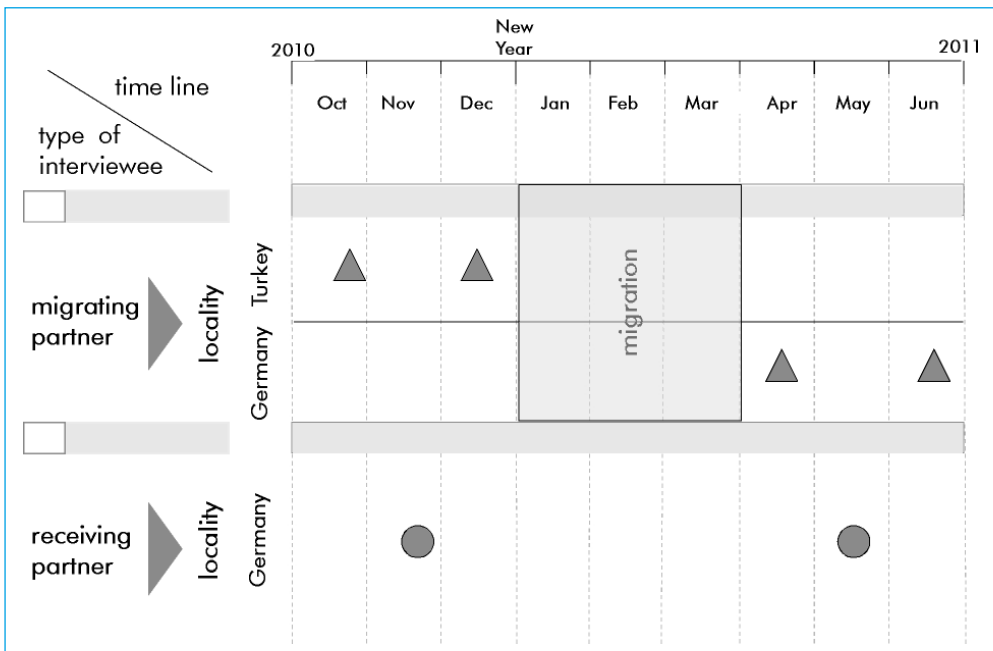


Figure 1. Research Design.

The general concern of biographical analyses, as elaborated by Rosenthal (2004), is to explain social phenomena in the context of their occurrence. Therefore the phenomena are studied in the overall context of the interviewees' life. The biographical case reconstruction pays particular attention to structural differences between what is experienced and what is narrated. The case interpretations are reconstructive, i.e. the interview transcript is not approached – as in a thematic analysis – with predefined categories. Here, the meaning of specific passages is interpreted through the overall context of the interview.

The biographical analyses follow a sequential approach (see Rosenthal 2004, 54) which in this context means that text units are interpreted according to the sequence of their occurrence. Step by step we reconstructed in small analytical units the progressive creation of an interaction (e.g. how two individuals meet) or the production of a spoken text (e.g. how individuals report about the first moment they saw each other). We started out by listing the data in its temporal order of appearance throughout the biographer's life course. Biographical data listed in this form is largely free of interpretation by the biographer himself/herself. Each individual biographical datum was initially interpreted independently of the knowledge that we had from the narrated life story about the further course of the interviewee's biography. The interpretation of the listed data was done sequentially, i.e. one datum after the

other, and informed us about the path the biographer actually took. This first step of analysis is independent of the subjective evaluations in the interview. This procedure demands from the researcher to adopt an artificial naïveté and thereby allows her/him to analytically reflect about the case. Rosenthal (2004, 55) describes this step as follows: *"[i]t is a great advantage to initially avoid looking at the interviewee's self-interpretations and their plausibility, but instead to first investigate other possible interpretations. When we later examine the text with this spectrum of possible interpretations in mind we will be able to find many more possible interpretations between the lines."*

The interpretation of the biographical data was a preparation for the second step of the analysis, the case reconstruction of the life history. In this step we contrasted our hypotheses on the individual biographical data with the biographer's own statements. Following the logic of sequential analysis, we moved through the biographical experiences in the chronological order of the life history. This meant to examine each event in terms of how the biographer refers to these events in the course of the interview. These two steps were accomplished for the migrating and receiving spouse separately. The focus of our analysis, as we have conceptualized it for this article, was on the dynamics of the couple relationship in the pre-migration period and the potential effects of the legislative framework for family unification in Germany. The results of the analyses done for each spouse separately in this step was combined in order to check for commonalities and differences between the both accounts or for missing accounts on one side. Then a selection of issues was made, that seems to be particularly interesting or worthwhile for further and more detailed microanalyses. In these microanalyses individual text segments were taken and interpreted with respect to the text's latent structures of meaning in order to go beyond the superficial message that is transmitted via the first reading. The final step is to bring together and organize the different analytical outputs, as in the case reconstruction presented here.⁵

The case study

In the following we present a detailed analysis of a couple whom we interviewed when they were leading a transnational marriage. As background information for the case analysis, we initially will provide the reader with some biographical data and describe how the couple actually met and decided to engage in a marriage. Afterwards we will focus on the experiences made by them during a time period that is assumed to be of temporary character, namely the phase during which the couple is already married, but is leading a spatially distant

relationship and preparing for the move of one partner, hence trying to cope with the immigration regulations of family unification. The case chosen to be presented here is especially suitable for illustrating under which circumstances a legal framework can become a stress factor for a relationship and marriage – particularly if the individuals leading this relationship have insufficient material, cultural and social resources and lack experience how to deal with bureaucratic hurdles and immigration legislation.

Biographical background

Sibel and Nejat married in September 2009 in Ankara, Turkey. Sibel was then 22 and her husband Nejat was 30. Both hold the Turkish citizenship, but in fact were born and raised in different countries. At the time of their marriage Sibel was living in Ankara while her husband Nejat grew up in a city in the southwestern part of Germany.

Nejat is the second son of a Kurdish family. His parents migrated from Eastern Turkey to West Germany in the early 1970s. He describes his childhood as a period that was heavily affected by his father's alcoholism. Witnessing a lot of conflict and violence within the family he began to stutter and showed other stress symptoms like being highly nervous. When he was around 16, Nejat left his parents' home and began a vocational training as a carpenter from which he after a while dropped out. Afterwards he worked as an unskilled worker in different types of jobs – many of them on construction sites and some in cleaning and security services. At the moment of the interview he was unemployed and desperately looking for a job, as he knew that being a Turkish citizen he had to provide sufficient income to obtain a visa for his wife.

Nejat reported to have had two German partners before he met his wife. These relationships lasted for 4 and 10 years including several years of cohabitation. During that period Nejat's network of friends did obviously not include any people of Turkish background. For him his family was the almost single connection to the immigrant community.

A particularly striking feature in Nejat's biography is the fact that he had visited Turkey only for one single time in his life. This was when he was twelve celebrating his circumcision (*sünnet*) there. His younger sister Tülay, however, apparently spends her summer holidays regularly in Turkey including the visit of relatives in Ankara. Thus, she became the linking person between Nejat and Sibel: when Tülay came back from Ankara in late summer 2008 Nejat happened to see on her cell phone some photographs of Sibel, his later wife, whom Tülay had met in Turkey. He tells that he immediately felt

attracted by her and asked his sister who she was. Since Sibel was a neighbour of his uncle (mother's brother) he asked his mother for assistance to get in touch with her.

Sibel is the elder daughter of a family from the Black Sea region in Turkey. She has five brothers and the youngest of them was just born in 2006. Her family is quite poor and, for instance, cannot afford to have a landline phone. Both of her parents suffer from chronic diseases. Thus, her family's situation seems to be economically quite precarious.

Sibel's biography is strongly affected by an accident she had when she was still a child. At the age of twelve hot oil burnt her leg so strongly that she could not attend classes for two years. Even when she returned to school she could not finish properly. She left when she was 17 and started to work, but changed her jobs quite often.

In the interview Sibel mentions that she already had some boyfriends, but did not manage to get married. However in 2007 she had been engaged, but decided to separate when she realized that despite contrary promises, she was supposed to live together with her parents-in-law. Thus, she broke off the engagement after some weeks. Still suffering from this disappointing experience she learned that Nejat was interested in her in January 2009.

Reflecting on the background information presented so far two aspects are of special relevance to our subject:

1. Neither Nejat's nor Sibel's pre-marital biography give reason to expect they will enter a transnational marriage, since none of them knows the country of the other: Although Sibel has some distant relatives in Germany, her friend Tülay is the only one in Germany she is in contact with while Nejat hasn't been to Turkey since almost twenty years. This makes us doubt he has a social network there. He does not even have social contacts with fellow immigrants in Germany and is therefore – as we will see later on – lacking certain knowledge, experience and resources to successfully manage the process of marriage migration.
2. The second aspect to be mentioned concerns the socio-economic background: Sibel and Nejat are unskilled workers with a low level of school education. Therefore their income is rather low and their employment is precarious. Since the financial situation of their parents is precarious as well they cannot expect to be supported by them. As we will see later on these socio-economic aspects are a disadvantage in the process of marriage migration.

Establishing a transnational relationship

When Nejat told his mother that he was interested in a marriage with Sibel, his mother called the wife of her brother in Ankara who was living just next door to Sibel's family. In February 2009 they collaboratively arranged a "surprise telephone meeting": Sibel who did not seem interested in talking to Nejat was called to the phone telling her that it was the mother of her friend Tülay. But it was Nejat who was at the other end. Obviously during this conversation that lasted for one hour Sibel changed her mind, became curious about Nejat. In the aftermath of this first conversation, they went on communicating via the online communication software Skype. This was also the first time they saw each other in real-time. Telephone and internet communication intensified between them in the subsequent period, sometimes lasting for several hours each day. This way they established their relationship. Meanwhile their parents arranged the engagement in March 2009. In September 2009 Sibel and Nejat got married in a register office in Ankara. One week after the civil marriage the wedding was celebrated and Sibel moved next door to the household of Nejat's uncle. After a honeymoon in Mersin, a city at the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, and two more weeks in Ankara Nejat returned to Germany.

There is a legal aspect that needs to be highlighted to fully understand the transnational dimension of the relationship: being a Turkish citizen, Sibel had to decide upon the marriage and a possible future life in Germany without having ever been there. The existing visa regulations for TCNs generally make it difficult for potential spouses who are living in Turkey to travel freely to Germany to have a firsthand impression about the living circumstances of their fiancé(e) as visiting a partner is not considered to be valid reason to get a visa. The rigid visa regulations in this way lead to an insufficiency of available information and increase the risk of making wrong decisions. We argue therefore that the visa regime itself creates a framework that exacerbates the already disadvantaged position of the spouse who is supposed to move to Germany. In the following further impacts of legal regulations on the marital life of Sibel and Nejat are going to be presented.

The transition period between marriage and migration

We met Sibel in autumn 2010. At that time she was living in Ankara and had started a German language course at the Goethe Institute in order to prepare for a language test that would enable her to obtain the necessary language cer-

tificate to obtain a visa for family unification. A common observation we made during our interviews with 26 couples (see Aybek et al. 2011) was that the condition to obtain a German language certificate generally led to a longer separation period of couples that were transnationally married. For some of the couples this waiting period led to various tensions between the partners that put their relationship to a test.

When we got to know Sibel in October 2010 she already was married for more than one year and she knew that she had to wait at least another six months before she could join her husband in Germany. Leading a transnational marriage meant for her first of all leading most of the time a spatially distant relationship and experience separation again and again when the partner comes for a visit, but has to return to Germany after some weeks. To live in different countries, to cope with legal and economic restrictions, while not being sure when and whether this situation will come to an end was an enormous stress for the newlywed couple.

Sibel: "I am married for more than one year. And for more than one year, and if you count in everything, 1 ½ years I am separated. I don't know – well, well one is not able to describe such a miserable feeling. It's a miserable feeling. Try to imagine, you're together for 1 ½ months. And later on suddenly you separate. And this is the third time I went through that. I couldn't get used to it at all." (Sibel_JS1_92:92)

While Sibel was still waiting for the possibility to establish a common household with her husband, she already experienced what it means to be a "*gelin*" (literally: a bride who moved to the household of her in-laws). After her honeymoon she moved to the household of Nejat's uncle. Although her new interim-home is located just next to her parents, she did not feel well there. Living with her family, respectively her relatives-in-law, she found herself all of a sudden in exactly that kind of situation which had caused her to break up her former engagement. To find a solution, she told Nejat that she would like to go back to her parents until she could join him in Germany. He first seemed to accept her suggestion, but then he asked her to stay. This was the moment when they had their first fight. For Sibel it is also the turning point in their relationship. While she was absolutely sure before, that she had met a partner who perfectly suited her, she afterwards had to realize that he did not, or could not, release her from a patrilocal living arrangement which turned out to be unbearable for her. Obviously conflicts about her desire to move back to her parental home overshadowed their marriage from that time on.

Sibel: "In the time period when I was engaged I really didn't have any quarrelling. About nothing. I thought to myself "I found the guy who per-

fectly fits me". He was thinking the same. After that, well, actually until we got married – right, until our honeymoon was over, it went on like that. And then, you know – two households [i.e. families; GS & CMA] cannot fit into one house. Even though you're only a guest and you only stay for two weeks, it doesn't work. You know, they were our neighbors. People whom I don't like particularly. Well I didn't know their internals before. I hadn't been very close to them. Once I became close \ \ hm \ \ they have a 17-year-old daughter. (...) Well we couldn't get on very well – I didn't like her. I openly told that to my husband. He initially was ...assumed a more humble attitude. He still was saying: don't think like that, don't do this, don't do that, and so on. And then he left me behind and went. I stayed there, until he came back again \ \ hm \ \ I stayed with them." (Sibel_JS1_128:128)

Sibel felt left behind by her husband when he returned to Germany. While she had to struggle with the daily difficulties of marriage life, he could escape. She started to question his promises. Several times she tried to convince him that it would be better if she would live with her parents as she and Nejat had agreed before their marriage. In the interview she refers to arguments she had with Nejat revealing that she believes it was not him, but his mother who wanted her to stay with his relatives.

Of course we may ask if not most couples are disappointed when the mundane side of married life starts. To some extent this may be the case but we have also to take into account the transnational dimension and legal restrictions of family migration. Following a patrilocal tradition in Turkey the wedding celebration is classically the event after which a bride moves to the household of her husband. Thereby the marriage becomes fully valid. However, a transition from the parental home to the new home is impossible in a transnational setting if the wedding is not postponed to a day when migration was possible. Many of our interviewees chose this option and clearly separated the time of the marriage at a registry office (*nikâh*) from the time of the celebration of the wedding (*düğün*). While legal marriage was the precondition to get a visa for migration, the wedding became also a symbol of having mastered the legal problems of family migration.

Sibel and Nejat took a different way. To signalize the transition to a married life she temporarily moved to his relatives. But what might have worked out for a short period of time, became unbearable when the interim solution seemed to become almost endless. For Sibel the only reason to stay in that family – although even living with her parents-in-law was unacceptable to her – is the forthcoming migration. She thought it might influence her future situation in Germany in a negative way if she would not do what her in-laws expected

her to do. She did not want to risk the support of the only and therefore important network she will have in Germany. Being afraid how she could cope with eventual problems after her migration to Germany, she held out for more than a year. Only when Nejat came to visit her a week before she started the language course, he finally gave in and accepted that she returned to her parental home.

The example of Sibel clearly demonstrates how transnational couples suffer from the delay of the migration. Instead of establishing a common household and “vitalizing” the marital union she has to cope with separation and manage a transition period which has an open end. After these reflections about impacts of leading a spatially distant relationship and being a *gelin*, the relevant question is why for the analyzed couple this process took so long.

Struggling with bureaucracy to fulfil the requirements of a marriage migration

Similar to Sibel, Nejat was faced with severe problems which started right after honeymoon. Economic and legal problems are his overall focus during our interview with him. He heavily criticizes the bureaucratic difficulties attached to a transnational marriage, the allegedly unreliable and unfriendly conduct of business of the public administration and the Goethe Institute, and the conflicts arising from this conduct or the respective dissatisfaction of him.

Being a Turkish citizen Nejat needs to fulfil some requirements that do not apply to receiving spouses with German citizenship. For TCNs, as the German government argues, it is reasonably acceptable that they establish a marital community outside of Germany. If they, however, want to live in Germany the livelihood of the incoming spouse must be secured before spousal reunification is granted. Therefore Nejat must be able to provide for adequate housing space and he needs to have a minimum income and not depend on social welfare.

In the interview Nejat wonders how naive he was before his marriage. He thought he had just to wait some months until he could welcome his wife at the airport. However, he had to realize that in 2007 there was a new legislation and his wife had to pass a German language exam before she could apply for her visa.

Nejat’s report (see below) why everything took such a long time is rather complex. Hence it remains quite unclear what really happened. This may partly result from the fact that Nejat might lack the appropriate Turkish vocabulary, partly from his way of facing the world by focussing on things that seem be di-

rected against him. However, his rather muddled way of telling is probably also reflecting his mental stress in a hopelessly complicated situation which finally puts his marital life at risk.

In his report Nejat is obviously mixing up what happened at the German consulate with what one expects to have happened at the Goethe Institute. He does not differentiate between Turkish and German institutions and he seems not to be aware that it makes a difference whether he was talking with a secretary or doorman or whether he talked to someone who is indeed responsible and able to deliver reliable information. Sometimes it is not even clear whether he really was talking to an official or just to anyone who did not know the legal requirements. However, Nejat says he understood that his wife had to stay in Turkey for at least one year before she could join him. He is still very upset about the delay which was caused by the incorrect information that was given to him.

Another aspect which becomes apparent from his report is his inability to successfully communicate with bureaucrats. An important reason could be his low educational background probably in combination with lacking experiences to solve bureaucratic problems and an irascible temperament. Nejat apparently got into trouble with almost everybody he was talking to. On the other hand, he does neither seek help at social service organizations in Germany, which are rather familiar with these matters, nor does he consult websites to check whether the information he got was correct or not. It seems that he also did not talk with fellow migrants. Otherwise he would have quickly understood that there was no waiting period but a list of other requirements which had to be fulfilled the sooner the better.

Nejat: "Well, we went to the consulate to find out and gather information. They did not give any information via phone. They gave an appointment for two weeks later – thanks indeed, we could get an appointment! Whatever – we went and while we explained this and that, the guy, the guy says like: "We do not let out folks so easily". The guy kind of, you know, really tries to provoke me there, talks with me about stuff that ain't no business of him. Anyways, I told him like, told him: "Look brother, we just got married. What should we do?" And he keeps telling me tons of things, but nothing what really would help me out. And you know what, after one hour, you know what he tells me? That those who newly marry have to stay at least one year there, in Turkey. I said: "Man, what are you talking about? What one year? Let's suppose one year is over, does that mean it's possible for her to leave?" He says: "If she fulfills the things, the conditions, she also goes to a course" and this and that. I said: "Good, OK, let it be this way".

One year passed, after that I wanted to apply for a course – I am calling from as far as Germany to some ministries. There one thing I did not like at all: Whenever I ring them up [...] picks up the phone. OK, that's normal, but everyone was telling something else. I was saying: "I want to apply for a course" and so on. They were telling me about the normal procedures. "Every two months you can register" they were saying and so on. I said: "Good, OK." And then, you know what he says to me? He said to me on the phone: "Anyways, why did you wait for one year?" I said: "What do you mean with »Why did you wait for one year?«" He said: "Well, but your wife" he says "could have done a course also one year ago". I said: "But it is like this and that" He said: "No, there is no such thing." I was so upset, I could have eaten the phone in that moment. I said: "Whatever – let's keep it this way." It was in March this year, she [i.e. Sibel] says to me: "I spoke to whomever. In May there are the registrations." she says. I said: "Good, OK, super." I call, a guy picks up the phone, I explain him, he says: "Well, the registration is over". I said: "Look brother, are you kidding me?" After that I get crazy – the guy tries to provoke me, like hangs up the phone on me. Well, I also got a bit upset, well, whatever, I call again, a different guy picks up. I explain and he says: "The registration is over." "It was till the twentysecond of October" he says. I again start to get crazy. I say: "Pal, I don't get you guys. One of you says this, the other says that." He says: "There is no such thing. It's written here before me, it's like this." I say: "You know, I called half an hour ago your colleague, and, you know, he was telling me –" He says: "He does not know any shit." Well, what I wanna say is, they do not cooperate with each other. Everyone works in his own fashion." (Nejat_RS1_125:125)

There are two important requirements which Nejat being a non-privileged TCN has to fulfil: he has to provide adequate housing space and he has to secure the livelihood for himself and his wife. To fulfil these requirements is a real burden for Nejat as it is for many socially disadvantaged people. At the moment of the interview he was unemployed and desperately looking for a job. As he told us his financial situation is rather precarious. He had to pay rent and had several other extra expenses due to the marriage and the forthcoming migration, but has no proper income. He said that he not only had been working in the construction business, but also in the facility management (cleaning) sector. Usually his acquaintances there offered him only contracts for two or three months. Being an unskilled worker, he seems to have access only to low income and temporary employment opportunities.

The extent of his financial problems became quite obvious when he said that he walked to the meeting point for the interview, because he had no money to take a bus. He also mentioned that he has to pay soon the second instalment for

Sibel's language course and wanted to send 400 €, but did not know how to do so. He said he would probably try to borrow the money from other people.

Obviously Nejat's financial problems pose a risk on the future migration of his spouse, since it is not sure that he will be able to provide appropriate housing and income. At the time of the interview with him it was not even guaranteed that Sibel may be able to finish the language course. On top of that, the communication between Nejat and Sibel had to be reduced since his laptop was broken and he had apparently no money to buy a new one, but attended an internet café to reach his wife. Besides, Sibel told in the interview, Nejat had meanwhile moved back to his parental home to reduce costs. Knowing that having a separate apartment is a matter which is very important for Sibel, we regard this as a further risk to their marriage.

Sibel trying to visit Nejat in Germany

In a follow-up interview with Sibel she reports that she tried to visit her husband in Germany, but failed to get a tourist visa. Nejat could not send her an official invitation, because he could not guarantee that he could meet her expenses. According to Sibel he therefore had to have an employment which lasted more than five months, which was not the case. So she was invited by her mother-in-law, but her application was rejected. Then she tried to get a tourist visa for the Netherlands where a cousin of Nejat lives. But although Sibel had heard that it would be much easier to get a visa for the Netherlands, she failed again and lost hope.

After a while, Sibel's family started to ask what was going wrong. They did not understand why Nejat cannot arrange a visit for his wife. Sibel argues that it was not his fault, but her fate. She found out that at the time of her application to the Dutch embassy almost everybody was being rejected, but what exactly the reasons were she does not know.

The end

In February 2011, two months after her successful language exam, we called Sibel to find out when she would go to Germany. This is how we learned about the separation of the couple. Sibel did not go into details, but promised to call back when things have settled again. Regardless of how Sibel might explain why they separated, we want to point to some aspects which probably have contributed to the divorce.

On the one hand again the legal requirements, on the other growing tension due to the long waiting period have to be taken into consideration in order to assess these factors. Even though Sibel passed the language exam, it was unclear whether Nejat would be able to provide adequate housing space and an income that would secure their livelihood. As indicated above, his lacking job qualifications keep him in a precarious segment of the labour market. Even though the local job opportunities in the construction business were rather good in the time period the interviewing took place, Nejat was facing problems to find regular employment. In addition, extra costs aggravated his financial problems. He had not only to bear the expenses for the language course and the exam, but had to contribute to the livelihood of Sibel when she lived in his uncle's household. Besides, there were additional expenses for travelling and communication while they still had to live in spatial distance.

Sibel felt left behind in an unbearable situation which she could hardly improve by her own means. Legal restrictions prevented her from checking the situation in Germany – also in order to obtain an idea when the whole process would be likely to be completed. Eventually Sibel started to doubt whether Nejat would ultimately be able to fulfil the requirements of a spousal migration. As we have seen, she already doubts that the agreement to establish their household apart from her in-laws will be realized. Having in mind that this was the reason why she already once had broken a previous engagement, we suppose that it may also have contributed to the separation from her husband.

Some months earlier Sibel had told us in the interview that her and Nejat's love was strong enough to withstand all the difficulties they were faced with and that it even got stronger while waiting for the time when they finally will be able to live together. Yet, the problems the couple faced during this time period impacted their relationship to such an extent negatively that their marriage finally failed.

Conclusion

Like any in-depth case study, the case of Sibel and Nejat contains many singularities that cannot be transposed to other transnational couples who plan a marriage migration in order to establish a common household. Peculiar in the above presented case, for instance, is the circumstance that before Sibel enrolled in a German language class, one year had to pass. Yet our above analyses also reveal a number of important aspects that go beyond case specificities and can be regarded to be common experiences of many transnational couples. Especially relevant in this context are experiences that can be regarded to be "side effects" of the existing legal framework and the administrative practices of spousal migration to Germany.

One of the characteristics that, if the partner planning to emigrate is a TCN, might be common to most of the couples concerns the imbalance in terms of the mobility chances between both partners. While in most cases the spouse residing in the destination country enjoys the freedom to travel, those spouses, as indicated in our case analysis, who initially live in Turkey neither before the marriage nor immediately after it have the opportunity to visit their partners in Germany. The existing visa regime, hence, impedes the chances of these spouses to gather first-hand information about their prospective living conditions and assess their emigration plans more adequately.

The legal requirements that have to be met in order to be eligible for a family unification visa represent important additional challenges for most couples. Meeting these conditions, as illustrated above, depends to a great extent on the cultural and economic resources that are available to couples and often also on the financial support of their families. In legal terms through this conditionality – one might argue – that the basic right to family life is put into question. With regard to Germany this conditionality undermines a constitutional right and therefore the legal requirements and bureaucratic procedures may be questioned for their constitutional compatibility.

As our case study indicates, in this context especially the obligation to prove German knowledge prior to immigration appears to be problematic. This condition affects less privileged couples in particular ways. Next to the fees for courses and exams, during the course periods, that last for eight weeks and more, often travel and accommodation costs as well as daily expenditures have to be paid. These expenditures can represent, as illustrated above, a serious challenge for some couples, especially if the partner attending the language course has to move temporarily to a different city.

In addition, from a family sociological point of view we would like to emphasize that the obligation to provide a language certificate has to be evaluated in terms of its effects on couples whose relation is generally not fully consolidated. Elements of uncertainty in the early phase of a couple relationship are anyhow typical and concern many issues, such as discovering and handling different interests and preferences of partners, forming an identity as a couple and figuring out how to represent the couple relationship to the outside world, etc. (Lenz 2009; Bulcroft et al. 2000). The necessity to pass a language examination and the burdens that occur in the context of trying to acquire the necessary knowledge can affect, as illustrated above, the couple relationship in a negative manner. These risks in this phase can be put into two categories (see Aybek et al. 2015; Williams, Baláz 2012): risks which are related to spatial distance in a relationship in general and risks which arise due to specific legal regulations concerning family unification. The language proof obligation obviously is a risk of the second type. And therefore it is at least doubtful whether this precondition, as stated by the political parties

in favor of the legislation, fulfills the function of promoting integration or has an altogether positive effect from the point of view of transnational couples. Based on our above case study, we would conclude that the conditions to be satisfied in the context of family migration to Germany seem to be rather instruments of a selective control of marriage migration than instruments of supporting a smoother integration of incoming spouses into the host society.

Notes

1. National Constitutional Law Related to Article 9 – Right to Marry and Right to Found a Family. Available online at http://infoportal.fra.europa.eu/InfoPortal/infobaseShowContent.do?btnCat_233&btnCountryBread_174, checked on 6/17/2013.
2. The German Residence Act (section 30.1) exempts several groups of persons from the obligation to provide a proof of basic German language knowledge. Exempted are individuals who are citizens of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, or the USA, or are themselves EU citizens or are spouses of foreigners who have a residence permit as highly skilled workers, researchers, business people and recognized refugees. In addition to that, highly educated individuals (i.e. university or college graduates) do not have to certify their German knowledge. Exempted are furthermore individuals who have a physical or mental illness or handicap that would prevent them from obtaining a language certificate.
3. For further information on the methodology see Aybek et al. 2015 and Aybek et al. (2011).
4. The data used in this paper originates from the project “Marriage Migration from Turkey to Germany (MarrMig)” initiated and coordinated by the Siegen University (Can Aybek), funded by the Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoc) in Istanbul, and carried out collaboratively by the Siegen University (Can Aybek), the Hacettepe University, Institute of Population Studies (İsmet Koç & İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu) and the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Berlin (Gaby Straßburger).
5. A word of caution in terms of the presentation of quotes from the case study: The translated quotes in the following have to be seen as mere approximations of the original interview material in Turkish and German in order to help the reader to get a better grasp of the raw data. They are also

not meant to be unit of analysis that have an autonomous meaning, but only make sense as part of the whole case reconstruction.

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Chapter 6



■ Elli Heikkilä

Integration and Challenges in Multicultural Marriages: Finnish Experiences

Abstract

With human mobility on the rise, multicultural marriages have become noticeably more common in the past decades. The marriage market has thus expanded over time, going from being exclusively local to becoming increasingly global. Marriage, in turn, has become a significant factor that influences migration. This chapter discusses the role of the spouse in the integration of the foreign-born spouse. Multicultural marriages also pose challenges, which the article addresses; the article also offers views on the everyday life of multicultural couples. The number of multicultural marriages in Finland i.e. marriages between a foreigner and a permanently residing citizen of Finland, have also increased. This article examines multicultural marriages and some of the subsequent divorces in Finland. It investigates whether there are gender-related differences, namely, the typical countries of origin of the spouses of Finnish men as opposed to Finnish women. The research data consist of official statistics by Statistics Finland.

Globalization and multicultural marriages

International migration, technological advances and tourism are some of the visible signs of globalization. In different ways, greater means for intercultural communication also increases the number of multicultural marriages – individuals encounter one another in different environments with increasing frequency. Finding a partner in a nearby destination has today become more of a global phenomenon. Other terms are also used for multicultural marriages, such as bicultural marriages, international marriages, mixed marriages, transnational marriages, intercultural marriages, intermarriages and transcultural marriages, indicating the change in the structure of marriage towards new dimensions (see, for example, Stam 2011). These definitions reflect dynamism, variation and change. Studying or working abroad can often lead to a romantic relationship with a resident of the host society or other resident of foreign origin. Marriage may be a consequence of international migration, but it may also be the cause of migration. Multicultural marriages help build bridges between different cultures (Lauth Bacas 2002; Kofman & Kraler 2006, 4; Robinson 2007, 493; Skrbiš 2008, 231).

Whether or not a person consciously chooses to seek a spouse from the same background or from another background, the possibilities for marriage across different ethnic backgrounds increase after international migration. The geography of a particular group matters, i.e. the chance of encountering a member of one's own group or another group does not depend on group size alone, but also on the way a group is dispersed geographically. The smaller the group, the more difficult it is to marry within the same ethnic group (see Kalmijn 1998; van Tubergen & Maas 2006, 1068).

The effects of international migrations in destination countries also create possibilities to have more contacts with people from different ethnic backgrounds. The probability of inter-ethnic contacts in cities is usually higher than in rural areas owing to the more diverse composition of urban populations (see Komarova 1980, 31). The probability of making such contacts in urban areas is nowadays even higher since the urbanisation process is continuing quite rapidly in many countries around the world. For example in Finland foreigners prefer cities: 84 per cent of those who moved to the country in 2013 chose to live in urban municipalities. The same trend has been noted during recent decades (Heikkilä 2014, 19). When immigrants do not speak the host language well, there are naturally fewer opportunities for social interaction with natives, and as such, the cultural distance with the native population can be higher. Differences in language skills affect the level of endogamy (Kalmijn & van Tubergen 2006, 375; van Tubergen & Maas 2006, 1070).

The border areas of countries are also dynamic regions, places where cross-border marriages are common. It should be understood that the mobility process is not a single movement, but rather a series of back-and-forth movements between the two countries. This is particularly important when we talk about marriage migration, when a couple has family members on both sides of the international border. The question of the place of residence is rarely resolved once and for all (Flemmen 2008, 116).

This article deals with multicultural marriages from different perspectives. First, it studies multicultural marriages and divorces in Finland. It examines whether there are gender-related differences, namely, differences in the typical countries of origin of the spouses of Finnish men as opposed to Finnish women. The article also determines which marriages have been the most vulnerable, i.e. those which most often faced the prospects of divorce. It discusses the role of the spouse in integrating the foreign-born partner. The multicultural marriages also pose challenges, which the article addresses; the article also offers views on the everyday life of multicultural couples. The main research data consist of official statistics by Statistics Finland.

Statistics on multicultural marriages and divorces in Finland

Multicultural marriages in Finland, which are defined in this article as marriages between a foreign national and a permanently residing citizen of Finland, have become more common. Approximately three per cent of the married population in Finland is in an intercultural marriage, but about eight per cent of new marriages are formed between a Finn and a foreign national, and in the capital of Helsinki the proportion of such new marriages is double that rate (Lainiala & Säävälä 2012). In 2013, there were 3,682 marriage contracts: of these, Finnish women entered into 1,698 of the marriages with foreign citizens and Finnish men 1,984 of them (Statistics Finland 2015). In the early 1990s, more Finnish women than men married foreign citizens, but the situation has since reversed (Heikkilä 2011).

In total, 27,441 foreign-born women who were married with a Finnish man were living in Finland in 2013. Similarly, 21,112 foreign-born men who were married to a Finnish woman were living in Finland at the time. In all, 48,553 people born abroad were living in Finland and married to native Finns in 2013. This figure also includes those multicultural couples who were in a registered partnership. When cohabiting couples are added to this figure, the total number

of relationships between foreigners and Finns rises to 68,946 (Statistics Finland 2015).

Among Finnish men who entered into multicultural marriages in 2013, their wives were most often from Thailand (379 marriages), Russia (364), Estonia (115), China (100) and the Philippines (90). Where do the spouses of Finnish women tend to come from? The most common countries of citizenship for the spouses were Turkey (124 marriages), the United States (98), Sweden (91), Great Britain (88), and Russia (66) in 2013. Some of these countries are associated with tourism, while others are often destinations for employees, au pairs and exchange students. In contrast to Finnish men, the foreign spouses of Finnish women are most often from Western countries.

According to Kartovaara (2003), of the Finnish men who have married foreigners, those with the highest average level of education have Chinese wives. One plausible explanation is that the men sent to Finnish industrial companies operating in China tend to be well educated. Of the men who have a foreign spouse, the least educated tend to be those whose wives are Thai. Also, a low average level of education has been observed among men whose wives are from Estonia and Russia.

Kartovaara (2003) found that the most highly educated Finnish women in the early 2000s were those whose husbands come from the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States. Differences in education among Finnish women in multicultural marriages were smaller than those among Finnish men, as the educational level of Finnish women is, on average, quite high. The least educated women tended to be those whose spouses were from Tunisia, Morocco, Estonia and Japan.

It is worth mentioning that multicultural marriages also occur in the border areas of Finland. Russian-born wives are one special phenomenon in the eastern part of Finland, and some single men living in the countryside have found spouses from the other side of the border. Also in the border area of Finland and Sweden, and more precisely in Länsipohja in the Tornio-Haparanda area, many multicultural marriages occur. Thus, border areas are experiencing increasing levels of communication between countries and people, which can lead to closer personal relationships and marriages.

There were 936 divorces for Finnish men in multicultural marriages in 2013 (SVT 2014). The highest numbers of divorces for Finnish men have been among those married to women born in Russia (including the former USSR), Sweden, Thailand and Estonia. The divorce rates of multicultural marriages are useful to look at as indicators of the relative divorce rates compared to the number of those who stay married. The rates provided by Statistics Finland were calculated such that the numbers of multicultural divorces occurring in a certain year are proportional to the number of multicultural marriages during the pre-

vious year. In this way, a divorce percentage can be obtained for each country-of-birth group. Finnish men most commonly divorce Brazilian women (divorce percentage 4.4). The next highest divorce rate, 4.2 per cent, has been from those marriages involving Finnish men and women born in Estonia, and in the United States (3.8).

In 2013, Finnish women in multicultural marriages divorced their spouses in 985 instances. The divorce rates for Finnish women in multicultural marriages have been the most noticeable among those married to men born in Sweden, Turkey, Morocco, and Russia (including the former USSR). Divorce rates for Finnish women in multicultural marriages have been highest with respect to men born in Algeria (divorce percentage 12.3), Nigeria (12.1), and Tunisia (12.0) and Morocco (11.5).

Overall, the divorce rate of Finnish-born women (divorce percentage 4.8) in multicultural marriages is higher than that of Finnish-born men in such marriages (3.5). Furthermore, the average number of divorces is clearly greater in the case of multicultural marriages than in marriages in which both spouses were born in Finland: only 1.3 of marriages in which both partners were Finnish led to divorce in 2013 (SVT 2014).

Spouse's role in the integration process

Ethnic intermarriage is considered both an important indicator and force of integration (Kalmijn & van Tubergen 2006, 372). According to Górný and Kepinska (2004, 354), the population of foreigners married to citizens of a destination country also constitutes a particular element of settlement migration. Family ties pertaining to immigration actually play an important role in the motives for immigration. These motives account for 60–65 per cent of such decisions in Finland, and one important reason for families is multicultural marriage (Heikkilä & Pikkarainen 2008, 19). Ethnic intermarriage also forms a very strong basis for integration in the new country when a foreign-born person marries a native-born person since he/she gains access to the networks of the native-born spouse, too. Through these channels, it is easier to make friends, learn a language and even find a job. Integration may flow, however, in both directions, with the native partner also taking on some of the values of the migrant partner (Stam 2011).

However, there are also cases where the spouse does not help for example the wife's integration into a new society by, for example, banning her from learning the official language of the destination country or by preventing her from searching for employment. The spouse can take personal control of the income

that a foreign spouse has earned. In addition, he/she can prevent the spouse from social interaction with others. Some immigrant women's vulnerability and ill-treatment can result from a number of reasons, such as immigrants' ignorance of their rights and different cultural beliefs about women's roles (Pikkarainen & Wilkman 2005, 24; Merali 2008, 282).

One of the first important decisions for a multicultural couple from different countries of origin is to determine a place of residence. Sometimes the decision-making process is not limited to the couple. There can be many other parties involved in this process, including peers, children, families of origin and community members (Crippen & Brew 2007, 108). Those in multicultural marriages are likely to choose to settle in the country where the perceived opportunities are greatest and, usually, this is expected to be the country in which the household can generate a higher income. The division of labour within a marriage will also influence this decision. In a household where only one partner is active in the labour market, a couple tends to settle in a country where the job prospects for this person are better (Górny & Kepinska 2004, 355, 370).

According to Lauth Bacas (2002), the enlargement of the family network to encompass affinal kin after marriage is seen as one of the major advantages and social gains by both parties, i.e. by both the bride's and the groom's family. Räsänen and Tuomi-Nikula (2000, 424) point out, however, that positive or negative attitudes towards multicultural couples often occur in relation to a persons' ethnic and cultural distance. The smaller the cultural distance, the easier it is for the relatives to accept the multicultural marriage.

Viertola-Cavallari (2004) emphasises that in a multicultural marriage, the immigrant spouse becomes a part of the non-immigrant family, and that such integration is almost mandatory if the marriage is to last, for example for the sake of future children. Socially, multicultural marriage works as a status symbol as well: it functions as a strong and effective mechanism for turning a stranger into "one of us" in the eyes of a specific kin group (Lauth Bacas 2002; see Järvinen-Tassopoulos 2005, 138–139; Kalmijn 1998). As a result of the immigrant spouse's integration, according to Viertola-Cavallari the non-immigrant spouse's nuclear family, extended family and circle of friends all become more receptive to cultures other than their own. It is not rare that several multicultural marriages occur within the same nuclear or extended family.

Furthermore, whatever happens within the family circle must, in some way, manifest itself in the surrounding society, which is the basis for Viertola-Cavallari's (2004) idea of a catalyst. Her premise is that the greater the number of foreign children-in-law, the more open, multicultural and tolerant of differences the family becomes, and through them, the mindsets of more distant relatives, friends and acquaintances likewise change. Little by little, the whole of society changes. We may predict that the same will happen, to some extent, in the im-

migrant's home country, where the couple will spend time with the immigrant spouse's family and friends. Likewise, Jaakkola (2005, 86) has discovered that those Finns who have more personal contacts with foreigners living in Finland adopt more of a positive attitude towards marriages with people of different ethnicities. Also, Sjöblom-Immala (2013, 70–76) has noticed that the attitudes of university and high school students in Finland are positive towards marriage migrants: the more a person has contact with immigrants, the more positive is his/her attitude towards that particular group of immigrants.

Challenges in multicultural marriages

In multicultural marriages, some subjects may be sources of disagreement, such as values, gender roles and child-rearing. Unemployment causes economic dependence on the spouse. The language barrier is another challenge. Likewise, disagreements can be induced because of remittances as a help for relatives in the country of origin. In this context, it is possible to talk about emotional labour, which has an economic dimension but also broader meanings. Financial support and tangible assets are often a way to replace the physical absence of a family member (see Skrbiš 2008, 238; Kuczynski 2013). However, multicultural families have a greater diversity of perspectives and options in different life situations (see Crippen & Brew 2007, 112).

Emotions are always involved in migration of any type. Migration is invariably a process that dissociates individuals from their family and friendship networks as well as from other socially significant referents that have strong emotional connotations. They may include familiar surroundings, such as landscapes, and a familiar language. Migrants are linked with experiences of adjustment, settlement, feelings of rootlessness, loss, renewal, new beginnings and new opportunities (Skrbiš 2008, 236). International marriage migrants have also encountered these processes.

The list here presents broader topics (see Viertola-Cavallari 2004; Interracial Marriages 2005; Youakim, 2004, 159; Roos 2007; Lainiala & Säävälä 2012), which can cause differences in spouses' opinions in multicultural marriages. It would be good to discuss them already when dating. The actions of individuals are affected by their values and expectations adopted from a cultural context. In multicultural marriages it is important to understand both spouses' background and the process of communication between them in order to bring the possible horizons of understanding closer. Mutual understanding can be reached gradually after exchanging opinions and negotiating, both of which are always part of having a dialogue (see Kuczynski 2013, 157).

1. Values: What is or is not acceptable? What is more important or less so? Differences in values may lead to differences of opinion and to misunderstandings within the marriage.
2. Importance of language: What is the common language of the spouses? Is it the language of only one spouse or maybe a so-called third language?
3. Meals: What type of food and drink will be consumed? How will it be prepared? What is expected in terms of mealtimes, table manners, and so forth? One possible source of conflict is that in some cultures, the amount of time spent by the spouse in preparing meals demonstrates the deepness of love, while other cultures have no major objections to fast food.
4. Sexuality: Birth control, virginity, premarital relations, a person's sex life, number of children, dancing, the holding of hands, makeup, dress, etc. Some or all of these issues may be taboo, which would discourage their discussion beforehand.
5. Gender roles: Each spouse has his/her own ideas about how the other should behave. For example, a Western man might expect a non-Western wife to serve him in more ways than he would expect a Western wife to. A non-Western woman, on the other hand, might expect more personal freedom from a Western husband than from a non-Western husband.
6. Friends: It is recommendable to find friends who are also in multicultural marriages, with whom one can share experiences. Such friends would understand the problems faced by the couple and can give positive feedback for the couple's solutions.
7. Relatives and in-laws: Different conceptions of the family and extended family, a patriarchal family, etc. What is the opinion about helping family members with remittances and other personal matters?
8. The upbringing of children: Approaches to raising children differ according to religion and nationality. One problem arising from different cultural codes is the question of the christening and naming of children. From which language will the names be drawn? What language or languages will the children be taught, and so forth?
9. Religion and celebrations: What is the role of religion in the family? Does the family celebrate Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, etc., if the spouses have different religious background?

According to Oksi-Walter (2004), a multicultural relationship provides the building blocks for a rich, multifaceted marriage and for personal growth. Though it involves many risks, there is also an opportunity for a more fulfilling relationship. The entirely different cultures and circumstances of growing up that define each spouse individually can still leave room for interaction between the couple and their family in such a way that it will produce a “third culture”. Moreover, since there are simply no routine responses, and since they cannot easily make decisions on the basis of assumptions, a multicultural couple will arrive at solutions with greater awareness.

Collet (2012) points out that mixed couples are able to invent new family lifestyles. They do not produce the major pre-established cultural features, but are creative in several sections of life, elaborating new, reciprocal gender and cultural exchanges. Communication is the principal characteristic of these couples, and nothing is taken for granted: lifestyles, language use, rituals, education, holidays, etc. are discussed and negotiated.

There is also the concept of dual biculturalism at play, which characterises a symmetrical process of acculturation to the culture of both partners. Those who pursued this strategy emphasised that their respective sets of cultural values, rules, norms and behaviours be learned and transmitted to their children (Crippen & Brew 2013, 269).

Everyday experiences within multicultural marriages

In their study of marriages between Finnish men and Russian women, Warkentin and Mikkonen (2004) found that the experiences have been quite positive. Finnish men speak favourably of multicultural marriages and are glad to have a spouse from a foreign country. With the help of their Russian spouses, they learn about a culture new to them and gain contact with people from a different background, and that all in all, the foreign spouse introduces them to a new world.

In everyday life, an immigrant is quite dependent on his or her Finnish spouse. Among others, Jaakkola (1994) has made this observation in her study of Finnish-Polish marriages. Unemployment causes economic dependence on the Finnish spouse. Moreover, the disorientation experienced in a new environment leads to informational dependence. Finally, often in the beginning phase of the marriage, the Polish spouse is socially dependent on the Finn, which becomes pronounced in this new phase of life. On the other hand, the Polish spouse benefits from finding more social relations through the Finn. The language barrier is another challenge. Often at the beginning of a marriage the couple uses a

language foreign to both, such as English or German. However, after the Polish spouse learns Finnish, the couple uses this language to converse. Another significant difference between the spouses is religion, as many Poles are Roman Catholic.

Sirkkilä's (2005) dissertation concerns Finnish-Thai relations on the basis of interviews with Finnish men. They oppose stereotypes of Thai women as "exotic" or "subservient". They consider their wives and marriages "ordinary", and they describe their wives as active, aspiring women. In the men's opinions, Finnish-Thai marriages are generally difficult and often end in divorce. In statistical terms, in 2013 the fourth highest divorce rate was that of Finnish men who had been married to Thai women (SVT 2014). The men in Sirkkilä's study, however, describe their own marriages as successful. The greatest problems are caused by the language barrier, financial difficulties and disputes about sending remittances to the wife's relatives in Thailand.

According to Pikkarainen and Wilkman (2005), loneliness and language difference are major problems among women who have come to Finland because of marriage. Because of the language difference, integration into Finnish society is difficult, which exacerbates the individual's loneliness. Whenever the marriage proves difficult, the wife feels excluded and powerless. Rifts in the marriage are often caused by the language barrier, culture and age. Many immigrant wives suffer in silence, and they are not always aware of their options. They may not know when and from whom to seek help.

In terms of Filipino women's experiences of marriage to Finns, Ruutu (1996) describes certain cases in which the marriage has gone to extremes. In other words, the women were denied the right to complain or resist, they were not told of their rights, they had been unable to go out freely, choose their friends, etc. Ruutu observes, however, that aside from these extreme cases, compromises are usually found and Filipinos, especially women, endure the difficulties with a good attitude. In the end, the differences in traditions, customs, language, sayings, dress, eating habits, division of labour in the house and children's upbringing all even themselves out.

It is interesting to highlight one couple's ideas about a Filipino-Finnish relationship (Tala 1999, 32–35). A certain Finnish man had married a Filipino woman in 1973 and they were still happily married at the time of the interview. The desire to understand the spouse's cultural differences has been a key to the success of their marriage. The Filipino wife reported that while living in Finland, the Finns sought out the sun in the summertime, while she was sitting under a tree in the shade or protecting herself with an umbrella. When the Finnish husband asked his wife to go for a walk the first time, the wife asked, why? Why should we go for a walk? The husband could not justify it in any other way than by saying that, "*In Finland, it is a habit to go for a walk in the evening.*"

The couple believes that it is a privilege to learn new things about the spouse and her/his background, but in spite of the attractiveness of diversity it is sometimes tiring. On the other hand, if expectations about everyday life in the home country of a spouse are false, there will be disappointments for sure. During their long marriage, the couple has learnt to see that few things are black-and-white, either-or choices. Life is more of both.

Pikkarainen and Wilkman (2005) recommend certain practices that could diminish the difficulties associated with multicultural marriages. Basic language training can begin in the foreign spouse's country of origin, before he or she moves to Finland. Also, the foreigner should, as soon as possible, become informed about Finnish society and his/her basic rights. The Finnish spouse should take more responsibility to help the immigrant spouse adapt to the country beforehand, if the spouse's cultural background differs to a significant degree. Though there is no formula for the success of a multicultural marriage, adopting an open and realistic attitude from the beginning of the relationship will prevent many misunderstandings.

In the context of multicultural marriages, the development of a so-called "EU marriage" has been suggested. This type of marriage could bind people of different EU member nations, and the legal terms of reference pertaining to marriage would be the same for all EU citizens. The standardisation of legislation within the EU would improve its citizens' legal security. Discrepancies in legislation can lead to situations in which quarrelsome spouses seeking to divorce one another refer only to legislation that would best serve his or her interests (Bode 2005).

Wider perspective on multicultural marriages – forthcoming generations

The identity of children within a multicultural family is worth focusing on. Lähteenmäki (2004) has investigated children's experience of living in a family in which the parents differ in language and cultural background. Does diversity enrich the child's life, or does the child feel torn between the parents' cultures? When a child develops an identity, he or she is forced to decide whether to accept, reject or blend the differing norms and role models. Forming a middle ground between the parents' cultures on which to base an identity is not always easy. According to Lähteenmäki, a child's pride in his/her own identity is possible when the child has a sense of belonging to both family and the surrounding culture, and when he/she gets positive feedback from peers.

In more favourable situations, the children of multicultural marriages naturally learn at least two and sometimes even three languages. These children

are predisposed to go into professions where intercultural communication and understanding cultural differences are essential (see Räsänen & Tuomi-Nikula 2000, 425). Finally, multicultural families can also promote broader and stronger social and cognitive skill sets for each member of the family as well as personal strengths, such as cultural adaptation, intercultural effectiveness, greater interpersonal flexibility and less ethnocentric attitudes. The presence of more than one culture within a family provides greater richness and variation when seeking potential solutions (see Crippen & Brew 2007, 112).

International marriage migration not only impacts the first generation but also the second and third generations and so on, and it reminds us of the process of chain migration. The potential for international marriage migration continues with successive generations when multiculturalism and maintaining close contacts with more than one country through relatives' networks are present in the children's lives (see Kofman & Kraler 2006, 7; Nottmeyer 2009). For example, second generation immigrant children might also choose a multicultural marriage – the spouse may be from the country of birth (a partner with the same or a different ethnic background), but also from his/her parents' country of birth, or even some other country. This process is quite dynamic and includes more and more people in a more broadly globalized world, at a time when international marriages are increasing around the world. Finally, when the life stories of successive generations cover so many different origins and roots, the idea of a person having one and only one specific point of family origin will be increasingly difficult to hold onto (see Beck-Gernsheim 2007, 274–275).

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Chapter 7



■ Hannu Sirkkilä

Finnish Men in Intercultural Marriages: Experiences and Competencies

Abstract

This study focuses on a group of Finnish men who have had a long term (7 years or more) relationship with a foreign woman. The research is based on interviews with ten subjects. The basic topics are how their relationship has developed and how they interpret its successful longevity. The aim is to explore the challenges involved in intercultural marriages and find out which resources can promote their duration. The main focus is to explore the meaning of cultural differences in intercultural marriages, and how these differences can be transformed into resources in the long run. The subjects detail their own changes, their growth as men as they have become more flexible and understanding in their common lives with their foreign wives.

Introduction

This study focuses on Finnish men who have been in a long term relationship with a foreign woman. In the study, "long term" relationship is defined as one that has lasted at least seven years. I am interested in finding out how these men's relationships have developed and how they explain and interpret the success of their long relationships.

I shall specifically investigate the concept of cultural differences, their relative importance in intercultural relationships, how these problems between two different cultures appear and how the spouses try to solve them. I will also consider how the men change over the course of their relationship as well as how the length of the relationship can be associated with positive changes (enhancements) of the men's lives and identities.

The study's source material is a series of interviews conducted with ten Finnish men all of whom are over fifty. Their wives are from Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Poland, Russia, Thailand and Ukraine. One of the subjects has been with his wife for eight years, while all others have relationships of more than ten years duration. Five of the couples have more than twenty years of life with each other. A point of interest is that five of the men are more than ten years older than their wives. Spouses have quite similar social and educational backgrounds, with most men and their wives having a high level or professional education. The men have spent their childhood in urban or semi-urban areas. At present, all of the couples live in cities in Finland.

This study utilises the concepts of intercultural marriage (Romano 2007), intercultural relationship (Silva, Campbell & Wright 2012), cross-cultural marriage (Breger & Hill 1998) and/or bicultural partnership (Beck-Gernsheim 1998, 166).

We can define these kinds of partnerships or marriages as the union between two people of different nationalities, which may or may not include differences in race ethnicity, religion, and language (Silva, Campbell & Wright 2012, 857). When we talk about intercultural marriage, we define the examined object clearly in the intercultural context of two different or separate cultures, and provide a foundation for examination focusing on what kind situation there is when a Finnish man is married with a foreign woman. We can also describe these kinds of partnerships using the transnational concept, referring to cross-border relations and practices, which are unofficial and are based on the activities of individuals, families and unofficial groups (Huttunen 2002; Martikainen, Sintonen & Pitkänen 2006, 24). Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2011, 25) also use a concept named "world family" ("Weltfamilie") which describes these kinds of transnationalities.

The beginning of intercultural marriages

The reasons why people marry someone from a different country and culture can vary from the macro-level situation to very individual explanations. These underlying factors may also influence a relationship's success and duration. On the macro-level, this kind of marriage is possible, and nowadays more prevalent, due to globalisation. A second reason has to do with individualisation, the fact that people are exerting more influence on their lives and partnerships by making their own decisions (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1990, 12). The concept of individualisation can include, for example, people's competence for intercultural communication. For instance, individuals from middle-class backgrounds or from families with previous cross-cultural marriages tend to be more attracted to people from different cultural backgrounds (Khatib-Chahidi, Hill & Paton 1998; Silva, Campbell & Wright 2012, 857). These people generally have a higher tolerance for ambiguity, a greater understanding of cultural blending and are better able to live with cultural differences.

Among my interview subjects, quite many of them have this kind of background and orientation. For example, before their current relationship, they have been involved in a relationship with a foreign woman; or they have been working abroad for a long period and therefore had become familiar with one or more different cultures. These men possess a multi-faceted interest in different cultures; they have the motivation to gain a better understanding of their wives cultural background in order to develop their own relation to elements of this other culture.

One motivation for this kind of relationship can be a lack of interest in the characteristics of mates from the same culture, particularly when individuals feel marginalized within their own cultural group (Khatib-Chahidi, Hill & Paton 1998, 57; Silva, Campbell & Wright 2012, 861). This marginality can take three different forms: structural marginality leading to feelings of exclusion, marginality or isolation induced by the situation within their family, or escape from cultural gender roles (Khatib-Chahidi, Hill & Paton 1998, 58–61). In my interviews, some of the men have had these kinds of experiences in their personal history before their current marriage. One example is Heimo, who experienced discrimination during his childhood because his mother was Ingrian (a Finnish speaking minority, part of nation living near St. Petersburg) and because his father had active contacts and a strong attachment to the former Soviet Union. This background and these experiences have increased Heimo's motivation to better understand both his wife's situation as an immigrant as well as cultural differences in general.

Another case is that of Kari. Kari has a Belgian wife and when they began their life together, they lived in Germany. For Kari, it was very easy to move to

Germany because the atmosphere there in the eighties was more tolerant than that in Finland. Kari's marginality in Finnish society was based on his values, the social atmosphere and partly also on the prevalent gender roles. Kari believes that both he and his wife are not typical citizens in their home countries; that was the reason why they felt a need to emigrate and it was very easy to settle in Germany. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2011, 56–57) describe how the initial aim when marrying someone from another country and culture can be to separate from one's own culture and nationality. Marginalisation may be one possible reason why some people may gravitate towards inter-cultural marriages, but my research shows that it is not the only explanation.

Cultural differences and their influences

A very common belief is that intercultural marriages are usually full of problems and they end in divorces. Breger and Hill (1998, 27) question how important cultural differences really are because they are often given as an all-too easy explanation for divorces in mixed marriages. Differences in "cultural baggage" do not seem to be a major point of contention in mixed marriages, although they can of course act as effective symbols of domination or resentment.

What is the meaning of the concept of cultural differences? The concept in itself is varied in meaning and full of ambiguity. Liisa Malkki (2012, 55) describes, how common understanding, the idea that people are people, relies on an inconclusive view of diversity to thoroughly describe national differences. Sanna Kivimäki (2012, 37) states that when we analyze differences, we also produce them by specifying their categories and genders, ethnicities, social classes, ages, and so on.

Malkki (2012, 76–77) refers to how we see the differences as taxonomies, so that they are part of a whole which includes variations of categories and types, or classifications or scales, which then form the totality of humankind. So an individual represents some nationality or culture, and can be perceived as a sample or model of this nationality or culture. Staying in one's own country is natural and moving away from it requires justification because people and cultures get their identity when they are placed in some special situation and place (Huttunen 2012, 9). If we adopt this view of the world, where moving abroad bypasses the natural national order of things, we might end up with a slightly critical interpretation of the general concept of culture. The concept of culture, however, is important because the processes of cultural significance are central in the lives of emigrants, ethnic minorities and also in the lives of a majority people (Keskinen & Vuori 2012, 17).

Are cultural differences real and what is their meaning? Liisa Malkki (2012, 26) describes the crossing of borders as giving a perspective not of physical movement but rather of how people, goods and cultural products succumb to cultural displacements. In intermarriages, these kinds of displacements are common to the one who emigrates. If the couple lives in some third country, both have this kind of experience and it connects them. After this period in some third country, if they move to one of their home countries, the one moving back can also experience feelings of not having roots, of being like a foreigner. Kari described these kinds of feelings when he moved back to Finland after twenty years in Germany.

The studies of intermarriages include many descriptions of the problems which can be common to these kinds of marriages. The causes or sources of these problems can be, for example, the different family backgrounds which can influence people's expectations when they are starting family life (Pöllänen 2008, 153). Concrete problems can be economic, work or unemployment related situations as well as one's duties to one's own family (Breger & Hill 1998, 24). Romano (2008, 30) gives a list of 19 different problem types. Tuomi-Nikula (1997, 277) identify four different problem fields which are: 1) the family's homestead and legal situation; 2) family life, which includes things like language, religion, traditions and roles; 3) the reactions to the family's outside relationships, and 4) parenting. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2011, 228) detail the necessity of forming the elements of normal everyday life, including everything from eating habits to the giving of gifts, time and punctuality concepts, who is and who is not admitted into the family, which values are important and why, and so many different kinds of issues which are conceptually linked to living as part of a family.

These kinds of problems are the basic background idea of my study, how they factor into the couples' everyday lives. But because I have the desire to understand how the long term intercultural marriages are possible in spite of these common problems, I hope to find the practices and experiences that have helped couples resolve these difficulties.

Attitudes toward cultural differences

When considering the feasibility of long term intercultural marriages, the main precepts are the partners' attitudes toward cultural differences as well as their abilities to resolve problems resulting from these differences. One step is that the partners should identify their differences and not assume they understand each other (Crohn 1995). This identification of the differences then allows for a deeper

exploration of their meaning. Many of the men interviewed stated that they easily noticed different types of cultural differences in everyday life. The men thought this process helped them because, when noticing cultural differences, it caused them to reflect on their own principles and prejudices; this reflection allowed them to begin to change and open to their wives' values and culture. Kimmo, who has a twenty-four year relationship with his Thai wife, believes that it is not necessary to sacrifice one's relationship because of differences in values and habits; he adds that there is no need to try and change your partner's behavior.

Hardach-Pincke (1988) point out that within these marriages, the awareness of cultural differences and changes depend on the couple's place in their life cycle as well as their socio-economic situation. She also shows how the couple's awareness of cultural differences gradually becomes individualised, meaning that differences are perceived as being linked to an individual's personality rather than to cultural variation.

By contrast, during the course of everyday life, differences may become more defined creating either a veritable minefield of conflict, a rewarding source of diversity, or both. Sometimes there may be conscious awareness of differences from the start, with deliberate negotiation and choices agreed to by the families about which customs they prefer. (Breger & Hill 1998, 19.) Cultural differences can be found in small details, habits, everyday actions and communication situations. Esko has an eleven year marriage with his German wife. He describes the kinds of differences that exist between the two countries and cultures. He sees these differences in sauna culture, celebration days, food and eating culture, and in how we describe our work and speak about it to our spouse or other people. Esko is of the opinion that these kinds of details could be irritating compared to larger cultural differences which are more easily understood.

When a relation develops, it forms a "third reality". It should not be about creating an undifferentiated "mix" of the partners' cultures and personalities, but rather about creating room for each person's separate self while remaining connected to and respectful of the other partner's cultural self (Perel 2000). Here we can see the dialogic and dynamic nature of the cultural differences, where the differences give rise to new meanings, new identifications and cause changes in the individuals themselves (Bhabha 1990, 313). Rosemary Breger and Rosanna Hill (1998, 20) called this phenomenon "cultural bricolage", whereby the couple reconstruct a micro-identity through a negotiation about which customs and rituals from each parental cultures will be included in the new family.

Partners should not underestimate their cultural differences; instead, they should rule out language incompetence and communication handicaps, and consistently reflect upon their cultural differences. It is also helpful for partners to understand each other's preferred mode of conflict resolution (Silva, Campbell & Wright 2012, 865). Ville and his Polish wife have such experiences after nine

years together: his opinion is that it is very important to maintain good communication relations from the beginning, and to always be honest with one's partner.

Although Kimmo doesn't believe that there is any great need to learn about a partner's different culture, he does think it useful that one has a basic understanding of cultural elements such as behavior, use of language and communication, voice and accent. He stresses the importance of not offending one's spouse, as well as the need for flexibility and good nerves which can help to avoid conflicts. Risto, who has a Russian wife, believes that in conflict situations it is better to remain flexible and search for creative solutions. In practice, this means that Risto is the one who agrees to compromise. Over the course of a longer time span, it can be observed that intermarriages begin to resemble other long-term marriages and that their hopes, dreams and conflicts are similar to those marriages where the partners are from the same culture (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2011, 36).

Challenges and transitions

Over the course of these marriages, there have been numerous challenging situations and incidents. During the interviews, these situations comprised the narrative highlights which the men spoke about at length and emotionally, including many detailed facts in their accounts. These transition periods in their family-life act as a sort of mirror allowing them to evaluate the history of their entire marriage, their current situations and perhaps most importantly, the overall success of their marriage. Komulainen (1998, 156) believes that the rhetorical form of personal narratives, where the speakers rarely describe their life stories factually but instead usually include details about expectations and their subsequent fulfilment or disappointment, are transitions in a person's life. These descriptions of transitions show how the narrator chooses to interpret a perspective on their life, so that the transition contrasts with their life up to that point (Löyttyniemi 2004, 49).

When describing narratives, the core episodes are of prime importance; they are like break points in the story which identify changes relative to what has been told previously (Komulainen 1998, 161). Some of the men mentioned that these break points in their lives were related to unexpected accidents or illnesses. Janne has been with his Estonian wife for many years and they had two children. Before the birth of their third child, Janne was involved in a serious car crash which changed his life completely including their family life. He had time to reflect on his values and one catalysing factor was that their third child was

born at around the same time that Janne was released from the intensive care unit. After the accident, his main concerns were his family, the children and his wife. Here we can see quite a significant change from an individual perspective to a more responsible outlook (Sevon & Notko 2008, 20).

In Vesa's family, change was brought about because of their child's illness. A very difficult surgery was needed and that was the main reason why their family settled in Finland rather than staying in Thailand, his wife's homeland, where they had met and had been living for many years. Kari's family moved back to Finland due to economic factors as he had been experiencing difficulty getting work in Germany. A second reason was that they already had one child and were expecting a second. While living in Germany, a third country to them, they were happy enough having many friends there; but with the children, they felt that being close to family and contacts as well as living nearer the grandparents would be invaluable. However, Kari describes the move to Finland as being rather dramatic: after ten years abroad, Finland had changed and he himself had changed also. It was not easy starting over and trying to create contacts. Furthermore, Kari's mother did not provide the kind of support that they had hoped for.

Heimo underwent a serious surgery ten years ago here in Finland. He had met his Ukrainian wife when they shared a common workplace in Russia. They had decided to end their relationship before his surgery. During their breakup, they realized how much they cared for each other and longed to reunite so she moved to Finland. A second reason for her to move was because of the poor economic situation and lack of work possibilities in Russia at that time.

Contributing factors to the longevity of intercultural marriages

Many kinds of factors can contribute to the longevity of intercultural marriages: knowledge of different cultures as well as positive interactions with people from other cultures can positively influence an individual to consider an intercultural relationship (Khatib-Chahidi, Hill & Paton 1998; Silva, Campbell & Wright 2012, 859). During a long term intercultural marriage, those differences can cease being a risk and instead turn into a powerful catalysing element. On the other hand, after many years together there are no longer such deep cultural differences needing to be dealt with and the spouses must then start dealing with their increasingly similar values. A significant point worthy of notice is that the wife's cultural background can activate the Finnish man into developing a genuine interest in this new culture which continues to deepen during their years together.

During the interviews, the men frequently mentioned that, although from different countries and cultures, they shared similar values with their wives. Individuals from different cultures are more likely to become involved in intimate relationships with each other when they have comparable attitudes, values and beliefs. It means that intercultural partners have typically been socialised in different macro-environments, and having similar or complimentary orientations facilitates their intercultural relationship's development (McGoldrick & Preto 1984). For example, Kimmo mentioned that although he himself had no specific religious world view, he feels connected to his Thai wife's Buddhist beliefs and has adopted those life values and attitudes. Esko considers that having similar life dreams and ambitions is very important and strengthens the relationship's bond. When comparing the values and customs in Finland and Belgium, Kari is of the opinion that Belgium is a more conservative society and he doesn't care for its traditional, hierarchical or patriarchal elements. He does, however, appreciate its greater familism. These kinds of family ties and the many forms of interaction between family and kin are a good fit for Kari. On a concrete level, Kari enjoys the well-mannered Belgian way of being together.

If the spouses' cultures are similar, this can strengthen their relationship. Esko pointed to the similarities between German and Finnish societies in terms of how the societies function, the kinds of structures they have, and the kind of individual power their citizens have. The Western juridical inclusion, the definitions of what is right or wrong, are elements that can also strengthen the marriage. It is also important that the spouses have similar interests. Ville recounted that he and his wife enjoy similar hobbies as well as sharing similar tastes in culture and art. They like similar types of music, and films and had already enjoyed similar literature prior to having met.

One powerful contributing factor of a husband's openness to his wife's culture may be found in his earlier pre-marriage experiences. Vesa remembered that he had since his youth been an Asia-phile and during his teenage years, he had a relationship with a Japanese exchange student. Heimo spoke about his numerous travels around the former Soviet Union.

Many men commented that the process of learning about their wives' culture had increased in importance and become a permanent influence on their perspective of life. Erkka stated that thirty-one years of marriage with his Ukrainian wife has broadened his cultural outlook. He has learned Russian, he has witnessed the immense changes in the Ukraine over the last thirty years, and how his long term marriage has given him a new perspective and ability to feel the culture and its heritage. Risto also is of the opinion that he now has a greater and deeper understanding of Russian culture. For Ville, this has been an ongoing learning process:

"You can begin to consider these things from a non-Finnish perspective and maybe also start to question your own culture: I mean, is everything here so perfect or can we start to think about the reasons why we have this style and these elements in Finnish society? Being involved with a foreigner is no longer strange, but a natural thing. I have been exposed to an alien culture so do not worry about such relationship matters as other Finns might. A relationship with a foreigner is an educational experience. It has helped me grow as a person more than any other part of my life here in Finland."

Other important factors are the interaction between the spouses and the functionality of the marriage: Kimmo emphasised the need for flexibility and transparency in interactions and discussions. He believes that the Finnish style of speaking very directly can be a challenge when dealing with a Thai wife, but that it is important to quickly address all problems. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2011, 229) say that in these kinds of world families, there is a need for such reflexive negotiations in order to understand the other's point of view.

Many of the men interviewed underlined that children were a unifying element which contributed to strengthening the relationship. Risto has a Russian wife thirty years younger than he is; this type of difference in age can cause problems and challenges but Risto believes that their two small children have helped them to stay together through the ups and downs. Heimo also believes that children are very important and that they can be a supportive part of a marriage.

A couple's life history of memories and common experiences also form a solid base, as attested to by Kari who spoke about the years spent with his wife in Germany, where they were both foreigners, as giving them a similar outsider's perspective:

"We have been foreigners together so we formed our own culture; she shared her Flemish culture and I shared my Finnish one. And so they were mixed in German society and where we made our own connections and concrete forms."

Vesa believes that the years they spent in the same workplace early in their relationship gave them a lucky advantage: they quickly began attending all parties and work-related events together. In addition, they shared a common motivating desire to increase their earnings and standard of living. During the years spent living in Thailand, he and his wife both began forming new networks which have also been important when they settled in Finland and his wife integrated into Finnish society.

Many of the men emphasised that it is important to activate the wives after emigrating: this means that the wives quickly learn to manage their own affairs.

In intermarriages where one partner moves to the other's home country, the host partner has to provide extra care and so we see a significant transfer of power (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2011, 42). The men I interviewed have tried to accelerate this adaptation process so that their wives could start to use their own skills and competences in Finnish society as quickly as possible.

Men's gender roles

During the early stages, spouses in intercultural marriages must face different attitudes, practices and expectations pertaining to gender roles. Gender complementarity is not necessarily present in cross-cultural marriages since the partners may come from two cultures with very different definitions of male and female roles. If this is the case, the marriage's success will depend on the successful negotiation of a new kind of gender complementarity acceptable to both partners (Refsing 1998, 193.) My own study shows that a man's own view of masculinity, of what it means to be a man, as well as a foreign wife's values and attitudes toward gender roles can contribute to creating a framework which strengthens the marriage. The most important factors are the openness to change, the amount of flexibility present and the agreed upon results (Sirkkilä 2005).

Gender culture and the gender-related division of labor within the family may be traditional in the wives' home countries, or at least partially different from that which exists in Nordic countries. These differences may have an impact on the day to day life of the partners involved in an intermarriage. Heimo explained that in the Ukraine, men don't usually make food, clean or take care of children. They followed this model when they first began living together, but nowadays he and his wife divide the housekeeping duties equally, with whoever has more time contributing more.

Kari describes a different situation where his wife's more traditional Belgian gender practices have blended with his own experiences. They lived in Germany when their first child was born and were frequently visited by members of his wife's family.

The Belgians considered me as being very strange because I changed diapers and was very actively involved in caring for our child. My mother-in-law was quite pleased by this. This was my own initiative, my own approach to being a father because in Germany, there were no models for me as to how to be a father. So during that time, around 1988 to 1990, I was a new-style father, actively involved in taking care of our child.

Kari continued, that within their relationship, he described himself as being more like a central European woman while his wife was more like the stereotypical silent Finnish man, which blurred the traditional gender roles even further. Ville's experiences have been different because, although his Polish wife expects him to be a masculine man, she also values the fact that they share an equal division of housework. Ville's role includes having to be the decision-maker and resolving issues and any problems they encounter. Ville's wife expects him to demonstrate strength, courage, perseverance, as well as leadership, planning and decision-making abilities. Ville considers that the background for these types of gender expectations may be found in Polish culture where the men's role seems to be more traditionally associated with decision making and providing for the family.

These kinds of gender descriptions demonstrate the increasing variety of definitions of the masculine role and its practices. Masculinity is being constructed within the context of the couple and is adopting elements which are stereotypically from patriarchal norms (Badinter 1993). Jeff Hearn (2009, 183) refers to the idea of patriarchy in the transnational context. He also uses the concept of "trans-sectional ties" referring to the difficulty of discussing gender or any other social division in isolation. It is important to notice, in these kinds of intersectional ties, the formation of different identities not limited to gender (Kivimäki 2012, 36).

Intersectionality means that gender, nationality, culture and the added differences are affected by numerous factors more specifically related to the ways in which gender relationships develop. It is therefore possible to observe that gender related emigration, coupled with the varying unstable employment possibilities can easily lead to the traditional bread-winner type family attitudes and practices even though normal everyday family life is not necessarily like that (Davydova 2012, 84). Manuela Westphal (2000, 186–188, 191) states that emigration always means changes in gender identification and results in a stronger orientation toward the family and a strengthening of patriarchal structures, because the family becomes a central resource and source of protection.

Summary

To these men, long term inter-cultural marriage has meant an opportunity for growth and positive development. They seem to particularly emphasise improvements in their lives' balance, tranquility as well as an increased sense of understanding. Kimmo describes how he is more patient and has a greater tol-

erance of cultural differences; he can appreciate the many aspects of their life together and is less self-centered than he was twenty years ago. His ability to resolve conflict situations has also increased and it is much easier for him to understand his wife's point of view. Kari states that the long term relationship has, in many ways, freed him and afforded him the possibility to grow: the many years with his Belgian wife have allowed his better side to emerge. They have developed the skill to negotiate in every situation and can discuss everything. This has been their symbolic journey and Kari has achieved a level of satisfaction resulting from the fact that he now has the ability to share his emotions more openly, something which is not so common in Finland.

This kind of personal growth as well as the reflections about it, are increasingly becoming a more common part of the new approach to talking about long term intercultural marriages. This is an innovative cultural approach to the topic. Ilana Aalto (2012, 32) writes that when we speak about something, we are not making random statements. Rather, our statements form parts of a cultural sum, a discursive code which enables single instances and exchanges to be viewed as part of a greater whole.

In this study, the core of this cultural sum is the success of the intermarriage, its basic elements, its strengths and a mixture of personal desire. The interviews in my study show that the principal elements in these discourses are the identification of cultural differences, the understanding of these differences, and the motivation to learn from and incorporate the results of this learning into the family's own reality and intercultural life.

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Chapter 8



Carine Cools ■

Intercultural Couples' Perspectives on Parenting and Child Raising

Abstract

This chapter focusses on intercultural couples living in Finland and their perceptions on parenthood and child raising from the relational-dialectics perspective by Baxter and Montgomery (1996). The research question is: what themes, and during what relational dialectical tensions in their relationship the intercultural couples bring up the subject of parenthood and raising children? Following the interpretive research tradition, data in this qualitative study were collected from 18 heterosexual intercultural couples (36 persons), utilizing the multi-method approach. The multi-method approach includes theme interviews (5 couples), concept map interviews (six couples) and e-mail interviews (seven couples). The data were analyzed following an inductive content analysis approach. Through discussions and negotiations about parenthood and child raising the following five themes appeared: turning points, uncertainties, dilemmas, support and challenges and opportunities. The themes raised by the intercultural couples reside in two internal and three external dialectical tensions, and are

relevant to the dialogue between the two partners, and between the couple and their social network.

Introduction

Whereas thirty years ago it was still fairly unusual marrying a partner from “abroad”, nowadays it has become quite an ordinary action without much upheaval. Everyone has traveled; everyone has friends overseas, so why not share your life with a “foreign” partner? Yet, despite its commonness, studies into intercultural couplehood have increased at a steady speed during the last decade (e.g. Crippen 2011; Crippen & Brew 2007; Heikkilä & Yeoh 2010; Järvinen-Tassopoulos 2005; Karis & Killian 2009; Molina, Estrada & Burnett 2004; Pearce-Morris & King 2011; Piller 2010). The common thread among these studies is mostly problem-oriented in that they incline to focus on the troubled aspects intercultural couplehood entails, such as cultural dissonance (Crippen 2011), crisis control (Sandberg-Peppas 2007), divorce (Viertola-Cavallari 2007) and culture-related stressors (Pearce-Morris & King 2011) to name a few. Some studies clearly refer to constructive features of living in an intercultural relationship, e.g. the process of negotiating cultural stressors leading to transformative opportunities (Crippen 2011), and success factors such as shared values helping couples to build a solid base (Molina et al. 2004, 143). Whether it is about babies being born, talking about children and their achievements, it tends to be an issue parents are proud of and very willing to talk about. Typically it is usually on top of the list most couples mention that makes their marriage a blissful one. To continue in this positive realm, my focus in this chapter lies in how intercultural couples bring up the topic of parenthood and raising children. This means that I investigate what themes, and during what relational dialectical tensions in their relationship the intercultural couples bring up the subject of parenthood and raising children. The data for this study stem from a larger research on relational dialectics in intercultural couples (Cools 2011).

The corpus of three kinds of interviews is described in detail in Cools (2011). To summarize briefly: the data were collected from interviews with 18 intercultural couples living in Finland utilizing the multi-method approach (five theme-, six concept map- and seven e-mail interviews). In the theme- and concept map interviews the couples were interviewed together; in the e-mail interviews they were asked to give separate answers. The interviews were carried out in Dutch, English, Finnish, and German. The main focus in the theme and concept map interviews was to investigate the tensions the intercultural couples experienced in their relationship, and the emphasis in the e-mail interviews was to examine

how the intercultural couples saw their different cultural background affecting their relationship. Snowball sampling was the technique used to recruit the couples (Frey et al. 2000). Every couple consisted of a Finnish and a non-Finnish partner. The non-Finnish partners came from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Nigeria, Slovakia, Switzerland, USA, and Venezuela. The duration of the theme- and concept map- interviews varied between 54 and 126 minutes. The couples consented their participation to the study and their anonymity was guaranteed. See participants' background information in Appendix 1. The data were analyzed using inductive content analysis.

The chapter is structured as follows: I first outline the scope of intercultural parenting and raising children by focusing on research done in the field. I then present the main idea of relational dialectics theory (RDT) as the lives and experiences of intercultural couples' relationships are approached using this line of inquiry. Then I move on to the current study and its findings. In the concluding section I summarize the issues that this study indicates.

Intercultural parenthood and raising children

Challenges and changes appear when emerging real-life issues occur (Rosenblatt 2009). Some of these challenges include all *firsts* to which belong first childbirth and life with the child. These *firsts* can also be the so-called turning points in life, a point at which a decisive change takes place. Children bring a different dimension to couplehood in general, and to intercultural couplehood in particular. In addition to the delightful experiences of becoming a family, parents' dissimilar unconscious and conscious attitudes and beliefs concerning child rearing may appear and need negotiation (Rosenblatt 2009, 15–18).

Besides the turning points or the *firsts*, identity issues and belonging are more persistent and recurring topics, considered important for the partners in an intercultural relationship, and are also of significance for the couples' children (Cools 2011). This means, according to Breger and Hill (1998) that children from intercultural couples may choose to integrate features from any or all cultural aspects their family contains, and need not necessarily be burdened to choose between one or the other. In this way they learn that the process of personal identity, ethnic or otherwise, comprises, that feelings of belonging change according to social, economic and political contexts. (Breger & Hill 1998, 23–24.)

Considering biracial couples' feelings of ethnicity of being unique or different, Gibbs (1998) raises the fact that parents of biracial children often feel a level of inadequacy in helping their children understand and identify with their bi-cultural being. It is suggested that parents of biracial children who acknowledge

the differences between heritage can help create a sense of pride in the "doubly rich" heritage of their children. Ensuring that children have the opportunity to participate in the cultural activities of both parents can create a sense of normalcy and comfort in their dual heritage (Gibbs 1989; Kenney 2002; McClurg 2004).

In addition to ethnicity, identity and belonging, choice of language is a contributing factor most intercultural couples face during couplehood and parenting. All what concerns the children of intercultural couples also concerns the couples and vice versa. Empirical research (Engfer 1988; Erel & Burman 1995) suggests that tensions from the marital relationship, for instance what language(s) to choose in the family, can carry over into the parent-child relationship, and is called the spillover hypothesis (Pearce-Morris & King 2012, 902). Whether one prefers the education practices of one or the other intercultural partner, or both, or whether one opts for something in between, parents negotiate these ideas on child rearing to make informed decisions. These decisions can include language choice, patterns and expectations of communication, and expected behavior in various contexts to name a few (Breger & Hill 1998; Romano 2008).

Couplehood is often seen as a transitional stage on the way to starting a family (Fitzpatrick & Caughlin 2002; Piller 2009). Already when couples are in the planning stage to have children, says Piller, they start to think about language and what shall be spoken by whom. Bilingualism or even trilingualism may come up as language desires in wanting their children to be perfect speakers of two or more of the languages they share as a family. For the parents and the family it requires a strong commitment and effort, especially if the children are raised in a monolingual environment. This commitment can also be understood as a hope to find a way into the second language community. Parents want to give their offspring the extra enriching a second or third language can present, or offer them "the best of both worlds" (Piller 2002, 62). Raising bilingual children is not only a romantic desire or a dream of the intercultural parents (Abdelilah-Bauer 2008, 171); it can also be an overwhelming process with parents having fear of doing wrong linguistically. Parents in the planning process of having children seem to have the highest hopes for their children's bilingualism whereas parents of older children may show a tangible sense of linguistic failure. (Piller 2009, 63.)

Continuing with the language factor, there are various types that constitute how bilingualism can be learned, and they have been categorized by Romaine (1995). She classified the main types of early childhood bilingualism which have been studied, depending on three main factors: 1) the native language of the parents, 2) the language of the community at large, and 3) the parents' strategy in speaking to the child. Each of the six types of early childhood bilingualism has a brief descriptive name based on some aspect of the strategy employed by the parents coupled to the support from the community/society. For instance,

according to Romaine (1995, 287–288) in type 1: “one parent-one language”, the parents have different native languages with each having some degree of competence in the other’s language. The language of one of the parents is the dominant language in the community. Therefore the strategy consists of the parents each speaking their own language to the child from birth. Also De Houwer (2009, 175), in tackling bilingual first language acquisition, indicates, among other things, that the beliefs and attitudes children encounter in parents, caretaker, and the environment, generally are likely to have an impact on differences in multilingual development. These factors point to the support needed to achieve and to maintain a second or third language. Additionally, intercultural parents tend to stimulate the bilingualism of their children by making a conscious effort to spend time in each other’s countries, long summer holidays, visits to and from grandparents. Still it is the language and culture in which the children reside that tends to dominate the child’s linguistic fluency and overall way of thinking (Visson 2009, 164).

A study by Moriizumi (2011) aimed at examining identity negotiations of intercultural Japanese-USA families particularly in terms of how they negotiate the relational, family, and cultural identities in their relationship. Interviews with intercultural families revealed among other things, that particularly in talking about their childrearing process, the parents negotiate multiple identities and manage dialectical tensions of their children’s possible future identities.

Intercultural parenthood includes many questions for the parents and children. These can range from language choices, manners and etiquette, educational practices, values, food, place of residence, to children’s citizenship. One can say that intercultural parenting involves ongoing negotiation of family and cultural boundaries. Raising children is the real check of how well a couple has learned to handle their many differences; with children all the issues surface and must be confronted. (Llerena-Quinn & Baciagalupe 2009; Romano 2001.)

As the study on intercultural couples uses the relational dialectic approach I present a brief outline of what relational dialectics theory entails.

Relational dialectics theory

The lives and experiences of intercultural couples’ relationships are approached using the relational dialectics theory (RDT), by Baxter and Montgomery (1996). It is a model of traditional intracultural couple interaction that is being extended to the context of intercultural couplehood. Relational dialectics supports the idea that tensions in a relationship (relational contradictions) are a fundamental characteristic of a relationship, and are therefore distinct from conflict or prob-

lems. Thinking dialectically about relationships, means that in every relationship exist natural tensions between opposing tensions or dialectics. These tensions, and how the relationship parties respond to them, are the central dynamics that explain how relationships function and how they change over time. The ongoing interplay between oppositional features is what enables a relationship to exist as a vigorous social unit. It is also argued that a healthy relationship is not one in which the tensions need to be distinguished because they are essential. An inspiring relationship is one in which the partners manage to satisfy both oppositional demands. According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), couples face a common set of contradictions or paradoxes that must be negotiated. Three fundamental dialectics: integration-separation, stability-change, and expression-privacy, are most visible in relationships, each being established in internal and external contradictions. Internal contradictions are constituted within the couple relationship between the two partners, whereas external contradictions involve a dialectical tension between the couple and the community. This means that relational partners do not live in a vacuum but also interact with the outside world. (Baxter & Montgomery 1996). Table 1 summarizes the three fundamental tensions as well as the tensions that are internal and external to the relationship (Baxter 1993).

A brief explanation illuminates the typology of Table 1. The fundamental dialectic (Baxter 1993) of integration-separation refers to the tension between social solidarity or unity on the one hand and social division or separation on the other hand. In its internal appearance this dialectic refers to the tension between connection and autonomy. In its external manifestation, the inclusion-seclusion dialectic involves a couples' management of coping with demands to withdraw from or interact with others. The way inclusion and seclusion are perceived by intercultural couples points to the dynamic processes in a relationship, in which the meaning of inclusion and seclusion are likely to undergo changes in different relationship contexts, and in interaction with their social network.

The fundamental dialectic of stability-change refers to the opposition between stability and flux. In its internal manifestation it captures the predictability-novelty dialectic constituted in the relationship. Externally the conventionality-uniqueness dialectic suggests that the relationship is marked by a struggle about how to conform to the expectations and beliefs of others in the social world.

The fundamental dialectic of expression-privacy focuses on what is expressed or disclosed versus what is not expressed or disclosed. Internally it captures the extent to which partners display openness and caution in their interactions with each other. Externally the revelation-concealment dialectic deals with how the relationship partners reveal and fail to reveal information about the nature and status of their relationship to outsiders.

The Table 1 shows the three fundamental tensions in their internal and external form.

Table 1. Typology of internal and external dialectical contradictions (Baxter 1993, 1997; Baxter & Montgomery 1996).

	Dialectic of Integration-Separation	Dialectic of Stability-Change	Dialectic of Expression-Privacy
Internal	Connection-Autonomy	Predictability-Novelty	Openness-Closedness
External	Inclusion-Seclusion	Conventionality-Uniqueness	Revelation-Concealment

The qualitative study on which this chapter is based aimed at investigating intercultural couples' relationships in Finland from the relational dialectics perspective. It showed that the intercultural couples experienced internal and external dialectics. *Internal* dialectics were specifically related to intercultural adaptation, e.g. need of support, uncertainty about the future, and identity confusion issues. *Externally*, the couples encountered challenges of inclusion and exclusion regarding, e.g. family support, access to a social network, which are facilitated through disclosure, which is at times problematic regarding the host community's language. The effects of the couples' background on their relationship involved continual negotiations, which constitute their lives – internally and externally – and entail repeated decision-making and compromising about friends, religion, traditions and celebrations, and their acceptance in the larger social network, the upbringing and education of their children, values and gender issues, and adaptation. The common thread surfacing in the couples' accounts of how different their cultural backgrounds are reflected in their relationships is undeniably the continual re-negotiation between the two partners themselves and between the couples and their social networks. In a sense these define their intercultural relationship in that all their moves are *negotiated moves*. Intercultural relational dialectical forces residing in the intercultural couples' relationships include continual-renegotiation, cultural identity and belonging, increased sensitivity to differences and similarities, social power, social support, and uncertainty. (Cools 2011.)

The foundations of this interpretive study on intercultural couples' views on parenting and child raising, and the framework of relational dialectics have been established. As I am interested in the themes the intercultural couples' raise in their accounts about parenting and raising children, and in what relational tensions these themes reside, I now present the themes analyzed from the interview data that specifically deal with parenthood and child raising.

Parenting and child raising

Discussions and negotiations is the instance through which five themes come about, i.e. turning points, uncertainties, dilemmas, need of support, and challenges and opportunities. Each of the themes will be elaborated. Figure 1 depicts the intercultural couples' discussions and negotiations about parenting and child raising, involving five themes.

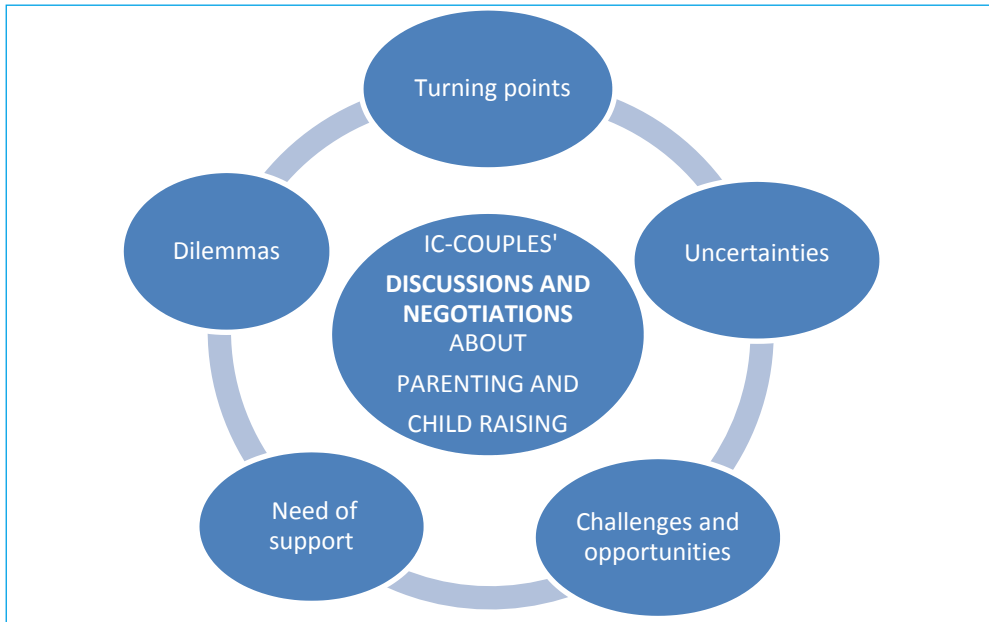


Figure 1. Intercultural couples' accounts about child raising constitute five themes captured in discussions and negotiations.

Turning points

Researchers have used the concept of turning points with different wordings to stress the “transformation” factor: relational transition (Conville 1988, 1998), and transition phase (Masheter & Harris 1986). Conceptually, a turning point refers to a transformative event in which a relationship is changed in some way (Baxter & Erbert 1999). One can also say that turning points capture a critical moment, an event or incident that has impact and import. Turning points trigger a reinterpretation of what the relationship means to the participants. They can also be viewed as symbolic interpretations and evaluations of events and circumstances that give meaning and definition to a relationship. (Graham 1997, 351.) Typical examples of turning points in a partner's relationship are the birth of a child and different stages in the children's upbringing.

The intercultural couples in this study brought up the issue of raising children several times as something that has an impact on their relationship. The coming and presence of children also influenced the way they, the couples, perceived togetherness and separateness. For instance, jealousy, and questions about having together time and separate time often came up. None of the couples could manage to have pure couple time without the help of grandparents (in Finland) or annual trips to the non-Finnish partner's home country. The following excerpt shows how Silja perceives change and transformation in her relationship with Simon.

Excerpt 1

CC: So, about the changes, you said you need more your space now, and with him it has switched as well, how does it work right now?

Silja: It works fine now, we are a lot together [...] I see friends, he might sometimes join me, often he likes to stay home or take our daughter somewhere [...] we don't get to go out together very much [...] I don't know, the spark is still there but it's transformed, let's say over the years. [Ever since the children came] of course, obviously, like affection-wise you transfer the affections on to the children and you can't really demonstrate as much to the other one. That, I'm sometimes missing. [T12]¹

Here we have a turning point: the couple (the twosome) has become parents. Silja describes this event as an expected (she uses the word “obviously”) feature of change in the relationship process. Significant in this example, though, is the factor of change, articulated by Silja using the words “transfer” and “transform”. This indicates that “turning points” in the relationship can be experienced as changes in both degree (with every newborn child coming into the couple's family, and over the years) and in kind (where affection in the case in point changes qualitatively into a different kind of affection, i.e. it is transformed). In its internal manifestation, stability-change (“the spark is still there” versus “but it's transformed”) captures the predictability novelty dialectic constituted within the relationship. It shows how partners handle certainty and uncertainty in their relationship and how change in the couple's relationship, when becoming parents, leads to alterations in the bond of intimacy.

Uncertainties

Intercultural couples' most distressing worries lie in their ignorance about the future. Whereas this is quite commonly the case with everyone – no one really knows what lies ahead – it is a very serious concern for these intercultural couples, lack of knowledge about the future being insistently and constantly on

their mind. This covers such issues as whether or not to move away from Finland to the other partner's home country, or to a third country. Sari and Silvio, who were utterly certain about their strong relationship, had a dispute over Sari's wanting to move to Italy when Silvio would like to stay in Finland. The final decision would be made by others:

Excerpt 2

CC: When you think in general about the future, do you feel certain or uncertain?

Sari: I am certain we will stay together

Silvio: I could never imagine we break up, I don't have this possibility in my mind, I never have, I know I live with her so I need her, I live with these decisions. But work, we just have to work hard and try to find our ways [...] I want to stay here, work is more possible here than in Italy. She would like to go to Italy. We can plan many things, but the children will decide. [C14]

With other intercultural couples too, children were a decisive factor to take into consideration when deciding where to live and work. The partners' negotiations dealt with communication of these uncertainties, so that reasonable long term planning could be done, whatever the decision was (Anita, TI1). Others talked about the possibility of going abroad to the partner's country or to a third country, which was considered "a worry of 20% and an opportunity for 80%" (Sami, CI3). Many of the intercultural couples interviewed had young children, and this made some couples decide to postpone these decisions of "where to live, and "what to do" for a few years.

Fay and Heikki perceived uncertainty as a dominant constant in their life, but they also recognized the positive sides of it. Fay reports:

Excerpt 3

CC: What are the specific issues in your relationship that need negotiation due/thanks to your different cultural backgrounds?

Fay: I guess to the most basic issue, "where are we going to live?", "how often" and "for how long are we going to be in the other person's country?" [...] This issue affects pretty much everything: jobs, school, vacations, relationships with family and friends, holidays etc. I could go on forever about this and actually it is a very fun part of the dual culture family, the children get to learn and experience the fun of two cultures, there really is no downside to this except a little extra work for the parents. [E16]

Fay succeeded well in portraying the uncertainty in their intercultural relationship, and in describing how it can be simultaneously both problematic, and smooth and uncomplicated. Besides the question of where to live, how often to move, and how long to live in a particular place, she brings up various actual ordinary everyday issues that intercultural couples have to consider, such as celebrations (where and how), work, children's education, holidays, and maintaining relationships with family and friends who live a long way away. Some of these issues are considered to be fun things for "dual culture families", in which the children encounter and learn about both sides of biculturalism, and this is perceived as an advantage which only demands some extra effort from the parents.

Dilemmas

Besides acknowledging the wonder and pleasure of having their children, several couples talked about the coming of children into a relationship and the time needed to raise them as a new and unsettling factor when considering the time couples spent together. Some couples reported that uniting couplehood with the presence of children seemed difficult. At times children were seen as disruptive, and they also provoked feelings of jealousy by some partners, for instance when the partner came home and inquired about the baby first. It was also noted that young parents lost both couple time and individual time, although they actually greatly needed both; the couples agreed that they need to find ways to have both. For instance Marika and Martijn did the following²:

Excerpt 4

Children

Martijn: [...] You lose your free time [...]

but we need to, we want to enjoy things together [...]

Our idea is with the backpack, [...] walking, having a small tent and we go to the woods and set up our tent if we want to, this has never happened [...] we can terrifically enjoy eating out in a restaurant. The times that we, now that he's here (the baby), we take him with us. [C12]

Kinderen

Martijn: [...] Je bent daar toch tijd aan kwijt [...] maar wij moeten ook samen, willen ook samen wel genieten [...]

De idee van ons is met de rugzak, [...] lopen, we hebben een tentje en we gaan het bos in en zetten het tentje op als we zin hebben, dat is nog nooit gebeurd [...] we kunnen erg genieten als we in een restaurant gaan eten zijn. De keren dat we hem, nu dat hij er is, (de baby) gaat ie mee met ons. [C12]

Other ways to achieve this couple togetherness or connection are manifold. For instance, they expressed desire for connection by first taking care of their

autonomy, i.e. having some time of one's own. Autonomy can literally mean changing the furniture around, or agreeing on certain activities on certain days a week. Next, Helena and Hugo talk about their experience of trial and error in achieving autonomy and connection. They re-organized their house and changed furniture so they each had their own space in the house, and also had a place to be together:

Excerpt 5

Culture

CC: and those collisions you mention, is this due to a lack of space for yourself, or is it because you are too close at certain moments, that you need that space, or does it concern other issues?

Helena: I think a lot is due to the fact that we both would like to have more time of our own. We don't have such clear roles of who takes care of the kitchen or who puts the children to bed [...]

Hugo: yes, that's what all our arguments are about, I personally think, I think (sighs) I think we should be more concerned about the quality of being together [...].

We're also always at home together, always us two always taking care of the children, I have very few hobbies and then you never have the feeling that you have the world to yourself [CI1]

Cultuur

CC: en die botsingen waar ge van spreekt, is dat door een gebrek aan ruimte voor uw eigen, of is dat omdat ge te dicht opeen zijt op bepaalde momenten, dat ge die ruimte dan nodig hebt of gaat dat over andere dingen?

Helena: Ik denk dat heel veel is dat we alle twee meer eigen tijd zouden willen.

Wij hebben niet zo'n duidelijke rollen van wie zorgt voor de keuken of wie zorgt voor de kinderen in bed te krijgen [...]

Hugo: ja, daar gaan ons discussies ook allemaal over he, ik denk van mijne kant denk ik dat (zucht) ik denk dat we meer zouden moeten werk maken van de kwaliteit van het samen zijn [...].

Wij zijn ook altijd samen thuis, altijd met ons twee zorgen wij altijd voor ons kinderen, ik heb zeer weinig hobbies en dan hebt ge nooit zo'n gevoel dat ge de wereld voor uw eigen hebt [CI1]

They indicate that too much togetherness as a couple, and as a family with the children, together taking care of the children, leaves them no individual time or autonomy. Then again some couples did not manage to create autonomy at all, and others had different notions of autonomy. Some of the intercultural couples felt that they had to wait a year in order to enjoy "time off" as a couple, and this happened when they visited the non-Finnish partner's family abroad. Others consciously tried to create time and space for themselves in their daily lives, e.g. Helena and Hugo. Dilemmas like these probably come to all couples who have children, but for these intercultural couples

not being able to have regular parents/grandparents' visits, it was especially difficult: children to get to know their grandparents, and above all a chance for the couples themselves to have some space for "real couple time" without the children.

Partners with children trying to achieve togetherness and separateness in their relationship also face dilemmas linked to this: raising children, spending time with them, studies, work, and even holidays, all of which reflect a postmodern flexibility on which to build praxis. For several intercultural couples, connection can only be achieved at certain times, perhaps some weekends, or even only once a year on their holiday abroad to the parents of the non-Finnish partner. This means that togetherness is often directly dependent on the goodwill and support of the parents-in-law.

Need of support

It is apparent that all partners in their relationships sometimes need support. Intercultural partners, however, definitely seem to have an extra need for support. Besides the bonding which intensifies intercultural partners' together time, the partners experienced tensions related to togetherness and separateness which pulled them in two directions. The intercultural couples felt that some of this excessive togetherness was experienced by the non-Finnish partner's intense need for the support of her/his partner. This need for support is presented as the partner's dependence on the Finnish language, and therefore on her/his partner. Some of the non-Finnish partners were partly or totally unable to communicate in Finnish and therefore the spouse needed to help out. This means that for most partners the Finnish spouse is the cultural mediator in terms of language for dealing with everyday tasks.

Besides the support of their spouse, the intercultural couples also need their family (both the Finnish partner's family and the non-Finnish partner's family living abroad) and their friends and acquaintances, all of whom are significant for their "connection and inclusion" as a couple and also for keeping family ties alive. For many couples, visiting the non-Finnish partner's family abroad was only possible during an annual holiday. The idea of holidays, however, was approached with mixed feelings, as most couples claimed that the annual visit was not always perceived as a holiday. On the one hand the couples want holidays as a "real couple, not always holidays for and with the (couples') parents". On the other hand they admit that during these yearly holidays they need the parents in the non-Finnish partner's homeland to take care of the children, as this gives them a once-a-year opportunity to be together as a whole family. Some couples considered the support of the non-Finnish family abroad to be very important, especially as a help with the children:

Excerpt 6

Conflicts

Marika: Without that support [of the non-Finnish partner's parents], their surprise visits, and help with the children we would long ago already have separated [CI2]

Conflicten

Marika: Zonder die steun (van zijn ouders), hun verrassingsbezoekjes, en hulp met de kinderen zouden we al lang uit elkaar geweest zijn [CI2]

Whereas for some couples the in-laws were seen as a definite support, for other couples it was different. On several occasions the intercultural couples mentioned that meeting the Finnish family was complicated and demanding; irregular and sporadic visits, for example, were said to be often unsatisfying, and sometimes the family did not meet in a long time. Reasons given for not meeting were distance (within Finland), traditionally loose family ties, and religious differences between the Finnish in-laws and the non-Finnish spouse that led to conflict and made meetings impossible. Finnish partners missed their parents' visits as they mean support and appreciation in the child-raising process. This concern points to a lack of emotional support from the parents, and more specifically to a lack of appraisal support. According to Israel and Schurman (1990), emotional and appraisal support lead to a need for feedback and reinforcement, which will enable them to carry on. Friends and acquaintances are seen as essential by the intercultural couples. Especially when one is in a different country one has to leave friends behind, and as a result one's whole circle of friends becomes different. The couples claim to have both individual and mutual friends and acquaintances who support their relationship. Friends who are mutual friends of the couple were said to support the couples' relationship, whereas friends of just one of the partners were sometimes said to put stress on the relationship. The intercultural couples also actively bond with other couples with the aim of providing and receiving relationship support. They want to take care of each other's marriage and to support each other.

Challenges and opportunities

The intercultural parents brought up challenging issues, some that were essentially pointed to opportunities at the same time. Bilingualism, choices to make, traditions and celebrations, and adaptation issues were said to be challenging, yet also having a positive side.

As for the question of bringing up children, the intercultural couples see the richness, the advantages, and the joy of raising bicultural children as the most wonderful project in their lives. A strong commitment to their children's bilingual education unites all the intercultural couples (except those who are childless). In addition to bicultural child raising, they learn from each other while

living in the “other’s culture”, and because of the growth and development they have undergone and achieved thanks to their intercultural lives in Finland. Fay for example, in her short description below, describes how she gives up being herself for a while, being American, which at the same time, in the eyes of her Finnish environment means being the foreigner, and she blends in and speaks Finnish. These are relevant everyday matters for people living in these multicultural realities. Fay tells about the language use in her family:

Excerpt 7

CC: When considering your relationship and your life in Finland, how are your different cultural backgrounds reflected in your everyday life?

Fay: In our household there are always two languages being used. I speak English to the kids and H. speaks Finnish with them. In my opinion it is nearly impossible to switch the original language a relationship starts in. Of course when we are around Finnish people who do not speak English we all speak Finnish. Perfect example is Heikki’s family, they only speak Finnish so when they are around or we are visiting them, we all speak Finnish. This gets a little strange, when the kids ask me something, they will ask in English then in order not to make Mummi, for example feel left out of the conversation, I will respond to them using Finnish which I would never do at home. Shopping is another challenge, sometimes I just feel like blending in, it does get tiring always being “the foreigner”, the kids and I will speak Finnish together but it is not a natural feeling. The children have not had any problem with either language and seem just as comfortable using one as the other. The languages do get mixed, for example “Mommy, I want to wear my valkoinen hame!” [E16]

Another side of bilingualism is fact that the couples very consciously agree to maintain the non-Finnish partner’s native language so that the children learn a second language besides Finnish. The non-Finnish partner’s mother tongue often is the most important means of revealing relationship and family issues to the family “abroad” as a means for inclusion. Hugo expresses it as follows:

Excerpt 8

Language

Hugo: [...] yes but I think of course it has a lot of advantages that we speak Dutch and the children hear it constantly too, and otherwise, I wouldn’t speak Dutch anymore I think if we wouldn’t do this now at home, so this functions well when we go to Belgium, then I can always tell [stories] to the family [C11]

Taal

Hugo: [...] ja maar ik vind het zo dat heeft natuurlijk heel veel voordelen dat we Nederlands spreken, als de kinderen dat ook constant horen, en anders, ik zou geen Nederlands meer spreken denk ik, als we dat nu niet thuis zouden doen, dus dat marcheert goed als wij naar België gaan dan kan ik met de familie altijd vertellen [C11]

Intercultural couples also suggested that a native language can be maintained with the intention of consciously concealing information about certain topics from other people, especially from the children; it can be used as a secret language, to temporarily exclude children from the conversation.

Another choice some couples need to make concerns the religion of the child. Child raising and religion are often linked and are common concerns for the partners. For instance, Gabina illustrates the religious issue in their relationship:

Excerpt 9

CC: What are the specific issues in your relationship that need negotiation due/thanks to your different cultural backgrounds?

Gabina: One of the most sensitive areas that required the most negotiation has been religion. I am a Roman Catholic, whereas he belongs to the Pentecostal church, so we had to compromise and find a common ground as to how to raise our daughter: in the catholic or the protestant faith. Nowadays, we have found a "fair" common ground for both in which both faiths are acknowledged [E17]

Also the integration of each partner's traditions and celebrations into the intercultural couple's daily life reflects negotiation. In some cases they improvise, re-create or vary certain traditions with such means as are available in the host country (Finland). For instance the US Christmas man who usually comes down the chimney after everyone is asleep happens to come on Christmas Eve in Finland. These issues are seen as the fun part of being an intercultural family, where the children get to learn and experience the pleasure of two cultures. Where family and friends are concerned, intercultural couples are often disappointed. They feel that friends and family do not understand that they reflect on, transform and re-create rituals and their festivities in order to integrate and respect both partners' backgrounds. Family and friends fail to see the efforts the couples have made, are at times inconsiderate and insensitive towards the non-Finnish partner's special ways, and tend to be ethnocentric in their own perception of how festivals "should be" celebrated. Whereas the intercultural partners encourage each other to bring in their own cultural heritage, it seems more complicated to do this with family and friends.

Intercultural families also think what they maintain as conventional and as unique in their relationship. The partners can adhere to the conventional views of partnership, and accept that it is a stable, traditional, "ordinary" relationship, but they also hold on to the view that their relationship is a distinctive and unique matching of two individual relational partners. The both/and issue becomes very clear in the words of Anita and Alan, when they are discussing

and reflecting on their relationship. They see it as quite conventional on the one hand, and unique and different on the other:

Excerpt 10

CC: Ok, then there's this dimension called uniqueness and conventional-ity like that you feel at times that as a couple you like to be noticed as a unique unit, and at other times you just want to be like all the others, very conventional

Anita: I think that in some parts we're an extremely conventional couple, that we have husband and wife married for a long time, no – laughs – extra affairs, kids at home, a very conventional home, in that kind of traditional thing

Alan: I have to be conventional in terms of, for instance I care very much what these neighbours think, that I really wouldn't like if something makes them feel uncomfortable but at the same time I really wouldn't like if I felt that I have to give up what I regard as unique about us, I absolutely wouldn't bend, that's more important, that they might think it's funny that I speak with the kids in a different language but the thing is I want to be, like with this, I want to conform to the extent I want to fit in, but only up to the point that I don't have to sacrifice my integrity, that is what I feel is very important

Anita: I like the idea of difference [...] in that way, what this interculturalism for example offers, that the language, and the part that we go visit across the world, and our kids speak two languages and they have two sets of grandparents from different cultures, I like that kind of difference [T15]

Cross-cultural adaptation, a complex process in which a person gradually becomes capable of functioning effectively in a culture other than the one into which he or she was originally socialized (Kim 2001), also affects the intercultural couples in this study.

Adaptation issues are seen as a challenging feature of the adaptation process of the immigrant spouse and their Finnish partner. Non-Finnish partners describe the use of a second, third, or shared foreign language in their relationship as the biggest difference and greatest challenge in their life. These differences and challenges are concerned with language and communication, about blending in, about adapting, about feeling excluded and at times displaced, and about belonging and having a place in society. It is about negotiating, which always means having to give something up while gaining something else.

The couples also learn to accept and appreciate each other's cultural background, they learn from each other and complete each other in many ways. Mari-

ka (CI2) says: *"I often think my life started after our marriage, I became more free [...] we learned new things about love"*. On a personal-emotional level the partners praise each other's character as being *"most caring"*, *"loveable"*, *"most sensitive"*, or *"gentleman-like"*, for instance. Besides the partner himself or herself, also their own core family (the couple and their children), the partners' relatives (Finnish and non-Finnish), and both partners' friends are said to bring an *"enriching"*, *"surprising"* and *"fun"* element as well as a *"new dimension"* to their life.

Identity issues

Adaptation also raises issues of identity. The intercultural couples in this study expressed issues connected to identity in terms of searching for, and coming to terms with "who I am". This indicates that identity is something uncertain but also something changeable. The search for identity is associated with feelings of anger, doubt, frustration, humour and separation. Feelings like those above related to the search for identity illustrate what Ting-Toomey (1990, 30) calls the *"emotional significance that we attach to our sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger culture"*, which she defines as cultural identity. It seems that only when one finds oneself in another culture or in interaction with people from another culture does one start to reflect on and become more aware of the influence of one's cultural identity. Utterances such as "enough belonging here" and "enough belonging there", "belonging to a certain part", "belonging and being a stranger", are part of "the liminality of belonging", which is described by Greenholtz and Kim (2009, 67) as *"the state of existing in the gap between fixed realities; a state of ambiguity and indeterminacy"*.

Identity is a concept created through our communication with others (Kim 2001). Our identity, or self-image, is influenced and formed by our culture and through interaction with those of our own culture (Ting-Toomey 1999). As a result, our self-image is affirmed and feels safest when we are communicating with those with whom we are familiar. How one experiences intercultural encounters such as those in intercultural relationships is decided by the security and vulnerability of one's identity. Unfamiliar situations and different communication styles can create a crisis in which one fails to feel the identity security, inclusion, boundary regulation, adaptation, and communication coordination that is desired. (Ting-Toomey 1999, 26.) It is clear that issues of adaptation, belonging, boundaries and inclusion are part of the concept of identity.

Considering the "in-betweenness" or intercultural couples' liminality, their feeling of "not really knowing where they belong" raises questions like "Do they feel at all that they belong?" and "Where do they belong?" A typical comment by the intercultural couples in this study about "belonging" is made by Sami and Sabine:

Excerpt 11

Adaptation

Sami: I actually belong there where Sabine and [son] are

Sabine: uhm, right now I have the feeling I rather belong in Helsinki, but even stronger is this family, that I belong in these two [CI3]

Anpassung

Sami: ich gehöre dahin wo Sabine und [Sohn] sind eigentlich

Sabine: hm, also ich habe im Moment das Gefühl dass ich eher zu Helsinki gehöre, aber stärker ist noch diese Familie, dass ich zu den zwei gehöre [CI3]

The intercultural couples' sense of belonging is not really defined by a place or a country. It seems, however, to be strongly relationship related, as one spouse states: "home is where my family is", which is also what Sami and Sabine claim in the previous interview excerpt. When talking about belonging the couples point to family, meaning the spouse and children or the nuclear family, and this can be considered the "primary or internal sense of belonging" since it occurs within the boundary of the couple – including possible children. Hence, one can say that the intercultural partners' primary sense of belonging appears to be *the place where their close relationships are*; where they feel most at ease and secure. This implies that primary or internal belonging refers to a non-geographically labelled place, *a space defined by relationships*. Besides the boundary of couplehood and/or the nuclear family, the couples also feel a sense of external belonging to groups that share certain similarities.

In this study the intercultural couples have various senses of belonging, internally and externally, partly belonging "here and there", and an awareness of fractional but fluid belonging between the fringes of encapsulation and constructiveness. According to Schaetti and Ramsey (2009, 5), the experience of liminality, or "*living on the border*" (Miller 2003) can serve as a powerful liberating force for intercultural couples, because understanding it allows them to celebrate their boundaries with their diverse perspectives, and not to be confined by either/or thinking but to embrace the both/and (Schaetti & Ramsey 2009, 5). This can be applied to the couples in this study.

Having presented the themes that derive from the intercultural couples discussions and negotiations about parenting and raising children I now focus on the dialectical tensions in which they appear.

Tensions

The dialectical tensions in which the intercultural couples give account of their discussions on parenting and child raising take place in five internal tensions, and in six external dialectics (see Table 2).

Table 2. Overview of the intercultural couples' accounts of their discussions on parenting and child raising and the respective dialectical tensions in which they appear.

Excerpt nr. and couples' names	Internal dialectics	External dialectics
1. Silja and Simon	predictability-novelty	
2. Sari and Silvio	predictability-novelty	
3. Fay and Heikki	predictability-novelty	
4. Marika and Martijn	connection-autonomy	
5. Helena and Hugo	connection-autonomy	
6. Marika and Martijn		inclusion-seclusion
7. Fay and Heikki		revelation-concealment
8. Hugo and Helena		revelation-concealment
9. Gabina and Kalle	predictability-novelty	
10. Anita and Alan		conventionality-uniqueness
11. Sabine and Sami		inclusion-seclusion

We can see from Table 2 that in the internal dialectics, predictability-novelty and autonomy-connection were mentioned. In the external dialectics all three tensions appear: inclusion-exclusion, conventionality-uniqueness and revelation-concealment.

Many of these tensions are linked with each other, for example in excerpt 1 Silja tells about the changes in her relationship with Simon, ever since the baby came. And she points to change and transformation, thus obviously this account falls under predictability-novelty. However, at the same time she mentions the change in her relationship with Simon, this automatically also indicates the autonomy-connection dialectics as these changes influence the “togetherness” as a couple. This phenomenon is also called the *integrally linked dialectics* as both influence each other. The same phenomenon can be noticed for instance in excerpt 8 where Hugo and Helena talk about the language choices in their family. Also this external dialectic of revelation-concealment has an integrally linked one, i.e. inclusion-seclusion. This means that in their case making use of two languages automatically points to the aim thereof, to find inclusion with the family of Hugo when they visit his family. Another example by Marika and Martijn in excerpt 6 features the need for social support lying in the inclusion-seclusion dialectic. But it is also relevant to the revelation-concealment dialectic as couples see support as evolving through interaction or revealing. In the external as well as in the internal version support is explicitly linked to revelation-concealment and to inclusion-exclusion. Social support refers to two interrelated interpersonal skills: the ability to provide social support to others, and the ability to recognize and make use of the social support others provide.

The intercultural couples brought up themes on parenting and child raising that reside in internal and external tensions. They feature two internal (connection-autonomy, and predictability-novelty) and the three external dialectics. Actually, one can say all three internal tensions are present in the couples' discussions as the connection-autonomy and predictability-novelty dialectic originate in the openness-closedness dialectic. In fact all the five tensions found originate in intercultural couples' discussions on parenting and child raising; they stand on their own but are also interrelated, as are the dialectical tensions.

Conclusion

How to raise their children is a constant concern for intercultural couples. The five themes the couples brought up related to turning points, uncertainties, dilemmas, need of support, and challenges and opportunities. The couples' commitment to their children growing up in an intercultural family is a source of both happiness, and opportunities. Happiness and opportunity are portrayed by the richness of having two or more languages spoken and understood at home, which enables the children to communicate with friends and family on both sides. Also the uniqueness of the couple's family composition allows for special treatments such as travelling abroad, having a lot of celebrations (from the mother's and the father's culture), and having grandparents from different cultures. In addition the couples are aware that they can offer their children a wide range of experiences: "life is not only like this, but it can also be done in different ways". In a similar vein, also the couples' accounts involving the challenge concerning the children's upbringing and bilingualism contain an element of delightfulness. They raise many questions too. How well does my child perform at school, and how well can she/he make use of being bicultural? What are the benefits for the child when she/he knows more than one language, and can these issues be discussed at school?

The intercultural couples' stories discuss parenting and its consequences on togetherness and uncertainties especially after a child or children come to the family. They also display uncertainty about the future in terms of where to live, where to find work, traditions, and long-term planning. Parenthood and raising children thus can be both a challenge and an opportunity for intercultural couples. Being forced to think and revisit issues concerning their own particular upbringing, for instance when they become parents, compels the partners to renegotiate their value system, to think about issues that they consider important or unimportant, child raising issues that will be passed on or then not, or traditions that will be taken over or not or in a different form, and so on. Uncertain-

ties and dilemmas like having to choose between countries, languages to name a few, have their toll on the couples' relationship. Sometimes there is no time for togetherness and / or autonomy and they have to make choices once again. Also, support evoked through interaction, and understanding between partners, calls for discussions and negotiation, which are the generators for support and a means to capture the essence of an intercultural relationship. The challenges and opportunities of raising children involve many choices about their upbringing, education, and religion. Challenges create opportunities and vice versa. Adaptation also presents demands, and includes for example issues of belonging and of identity. The non-Finnish partners in this study identify with a sense of belonging to their close family, or a need to orient towards others with whom they share commonalities that eventually make them part of a group.

The themes raised by the intercultural couples on parenting and child rearing reside in internal and external dialectical tensions. They are part of and have relevance in the dialogue between the two partners, and also in the dialogue between the couple and their social network.

This chapter focused on the intercultural parents' view only. Future research could include and shed light on the intercultural couples' children and on the couples' surroundings in order to capture the whole picture.

Notes

1. [EI], [CI] and [TI] stand for e-mail interview, concept map interview and theme interview. The number represents the couple. For instance [TI2] means theme interview, couple 2. For myself I use CC in the interview excerpts.
2. Excerpts of interviews in English are presented in one language, i.e. in English. Excerpts of interviews conducted in Dutch, Finnish, and German are presented together; the original language is in the right column, the English translation by the author is in the left column. The parallel transcriptions are offered to allow for transparency.

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Appendix

Participants' background information

	Participant couples (<i>Pseudonym</i>)	Gender	Age	Length marriage / years	Country of origin	Languages spoken at couple's home
Data 1	Tutta	F	43	6	Finland	Dutch, English, Finnish
	TI 1 Theo	M	43			
TI 2	Silja	F	30	4	Finland Canada	English, Finnish
	Simon	M	35			
TI 3	Kristel	F	33	12	Finland Netherlands	Dutch, Finnish
	Kornelis	M	42			
TI 4	Riitta	F	29	6	Finland Japan	Finnish
	Rokuro	M	26			
TI 5	Anita	F	39	17	Finland USA	English, Finnish
	Alan	M	40			
Data 2	Helena	F	39	14	Finland Belgium	Dutch, Finnish
	CI 1 Hugo	M	42			
CI 2	Marika	F	29	4	Finland Netherlands	Dutch, English, Finnish
	Martijn	M	34			
CI 3	Sabine	F	30	4	Germany Finland	Finnish, German
	Sami	M	33			
CI 4	Sari	F	32	4	Finland Italy	Finnish, Italian
	Silvio	M	29			
CI 5	Annaliisa	F	39	10	Finland Nigeria	English, Finnish
	Anthony	M	27			
CI 6	Lasica	F	52	20	Slovakia Finland	Finnish, Slovakian
	Lasse	M	50			
Data 3	Anna	F	61	11	Germany Finland	German
	EI 1 Ari	M	51			
EI 2	Bea	F	28	4	Netherlands Finland	Dutch, English, Finnish
	Petri	M	37			
EI 3	Kersti	F	37	4	Finland Greece	English, Finnish, Greek
	Kostas	M	32			
EI 4	Dóra	F	31	8	Hungary Finland	Finnish, Hungarian
	Timo	M	32			
EI 5	Eeva	F	34	7	Finland Finland/ Switzerland	Finnish, French
	Éric	M	30			
EI 6	Fay	F	36	9	USA Finland	English, Finnish
	Heikki	M	35			
EI 7	Gabina	F	37	7	Venezuela Finland	English, Finnish, Spanish
	Kalle	M	41			

Chapter 9



Alexandra Stam ■

Migration-related Vulnerability: the Example of Domestic Violence among Marriage Migrants in the Swiss Context

Abstract

The concept of marriage migration has often been used to depict situations whereby migrants (usually female) from poor background seek marriage to escape situations of vulnerability. Not only does such view ignore more complex interactions between marriage and migration, little attention has been given to daily life issues.

In particular scholars failed to consider how migration status further increases the vulnerability of migrants. This will be illustrated with the example of domestic violence in the Swiss context. While some citizens may experience domestic violence during their life course, stakes may be differ-

ent for marriage migrants, both in terms of the nature of the abuse and the consequences of leaving the abuser. Drawing on migrant's voices, this chapter demonstrates that the legal context, but also the context of migration contribute to generate experiences of abuse that are unique to the migrant population, hence the need to urgently address this topic that scholars have too long ignored.

Introduction

The concept of marriage migration often conveys a negative meaning. Set within the context of an ever increasing suspicion of abuse, it is widely used as a synonym of the mail-order bride (Östh 2010), or to describe situations whereby migrants deliberately seek marriage to achieve a better life and gain benefits (Alber 2000; Constable 2006; Niedomysl et al. 2010).

As such, marriage migration is often seen as a female phenomenon by which migrants use their sexual capital to achieve migration and resultantly better economic opportunities. Literature has mainly concentrated on structural reasons that made vulnerable migrants want to leave their home country, and the channels used to achieve migration, stressing the role of brokers or partnering websites, and sometimes linking marriage migration to the industry of prostitution (Piper 2003; Constable 2006) and human trafficking (Gates 1996; Saroca 2002; Flemmen 2008). Marriage migrants are depicted as following the same life trajectories, and answering the same, economically driven, incentives. Little is however known about daily life issues, and the role of migration in enabling/limiting peoples' actions.

This chapter discusses a specific aspect of marriage migration, that of vulnerability that is further accentuated by migration. Set within the context of Switzerland, it draws on so-called vulnerable migrants, defined in this research as migrants whose right to stay depends on their family situation and for whom return would be problematic. Due to their migration status and the precariousness of their experience of migration, vulnerable migrants are at higher risk of abuse. Of particular importance is the issue of domestic violence, and the lack of laws that protect the migrant population.

While there is a large body of literature on domestic violence, few scholars have specifically linked it to migration. Domestic violence, considered here in its broad sense as encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, economic and social forms of abuse, may express itself in different ways when it comes to the migrant population, in particular those whose right to stay depends on the marriage. Indeed, should migrants experience domestic abuse within the first five

years of their relationship, they often face the following dilemma: either reveal the situation they face and be most probably deported or accept situations of abuse.

This chapter draws on narratives of marriage migrants who faced deportation after leaving their abusive partner. What forms of abuse did migrants face? How did they eventually walk away from it? What were the consequences of doing so? Answering to these questions will help to reflect on the “uniqueness” of domestic abuse when it comes to the migrant population. Before listening to migrant’s voices, the following will briefly set the framework of the research. In particular, it will address how literature considered domestic violence in relation to marriage migration, as well as set the legal context in which this study is based.

Domestic abuse and migrants

While domestic violence has been well-researched, few are those who specifically linked it to marriage migration. As Merali (2008) notes, domestic violence as a unique form of immigration abuse is a widely un-researched aspect of marriage migration.

Following Moreno’s (2003, 4) observation that “*There is very little observation in regards to the plight of battered immigrant women and even less on battered immigrant brides*”¹, an increasing number of scholars (Belser 2005; Pence & Das Dasgupta 2006; Erez et al. 2009) have investigated domestic violence in the context of migration. Although it is difficult to assess the importance of domestic violence among bi-national couples, “*Most scholarly authors agree that the immigrant bride population has a higher rate of domestic violence than the American female population in general, even though there appears to be very little research in the area*” (Moreno 2003, 2).

While some authors, such as Raj and Silverman (2002) showed that immigrants are less likely than non-immigrants to seek help when facing domestic violence, few scholars have investigated the reasons behind this. As Erez et al. (2009, 36) note: “*Immigration intensifies domestic violence and creates vulnerabilities that impair immigrant women’s management of domestic violence, preventing them from successfully challenging men’s violence, from securing decreases in rates or types of men’s violence, or from leaving their intimate partner*”.

Migrants not only face “traditional” forms of abuse, they also suffer migration-specific forms of abuse. In particular, “*Immigrant women can be in vulnerable situations because the legality of their stay in the receiving country is linked to their spouses*” (Menjívar & Salcido 2002, 908).

The legal context, and also the wider context of migration, have important implications, which Raj and Silverman (2002, 367) explain as follow: *“Immigrant women’s cultures, contexts, and legal status (a) increases vulnerability for abuse, (b) are used by the batterers to control and abuse immigrant women, and (c) create barriers to women seeking and receiving help”*. More work is needed to *“identify those immigrant-specific factors that make the experiences of immigrant women in domestic violence situations unique to the rest of the population in the host country and, in some cases, unique to the individual immigrant group”* (Menjívar & Salcido (2002, 900). As authors have demonstrated, migration-related abuse needs to be understood as part of the prevailing legal system.

Research context

In Switzerland, bi-national marriages kept increasing over the years to become in many regions more important than marriages between two Swiss (Riaño 2011). “Family” is nowadays the most commonly stated ground for migration to Switzerland. With the “New Federal Act on Foreign Nationals” (LEtr), which came into force in 2008 and restricted non-EU migration to highly skilled migrants, marriage is for many the only realistic way to migrate to Switzerland. In such climate, the State increasingly aims to monitor bi-national marriages.

This has two implications. First, migrants who wish to live with their partner are often obliged to get married earlier than they would have chosen to, was this possible. Second, their migration status depends on the relationship for at least five years. Should the relationship break up (whether by the death of the Swiss partner, or as decided by the partners), then the ground for migration no longer exists, and the migrant is most likely to lose his/her right of stay. As Robinson (2007, 490) notes, *“The state imposes a particular view about the necessary qualities of a relationship that can be the basis of a marriage. Western states presume a model of attachment defined in terms of romantic love and are suspicious of marriages where the intimate bond cannot be demonstrated.”*

Domestic violence comes under criminal and private law. While until March 31st 2004, victims had to press charges against their partner, with the revision of the Swiss Criminal Code, prosecution now takes place as a matter of course for offences like ordinary bodily injuries, threats and sexual abuse. From April 1st 2004 onwards, third parties could denounce violence. This change in the legislature was followed by another important change in the Swiss Civil Code on June 23rd 2006. Specific measures were adopted, including the eviction of the abusive partner from the household as well as the banning, for the abuser, to approach or contact the abused. These measures, which came into force on July

1st 2007 have important repercussions for migrants who are victims of violence. By forcing the abusive partner to leave the household, protective measures precipitate the break-up of the household, therefore annihilating the ground for migration (Reets 2005).

As an unintended consequence, migrants get involved in long legal procedures. Although some progress has been made since interviews were carried out, domestic violence in Swiss law still fails to be considered as sufficient on its own to grant a right to stay that is independent of marriage. With the adoption of the new law on foreigners (LEtr) in September 2006 (one of Europe's most restrictive immigration policies), it has become increasingly difficult to get a permit on the basis of an "individual case of extreme gravity". Victims not only have to demonstrate that they have been subjected to violence, but also that reintegration into one's country of origin would be "seriously prejudiced". More recently it has been accepted that domestic violence "of a certain intensity" can on its own suffice to grant a right to stay. This is in reality subject to much interpretation: authorities still enjoy great freedom of assessment. The legal context is such that the most vulnerable are still highly likely to face deportation or life as undocumented migrants.

Listening to the voices of vulnerable marriage migrants

Interviewing vulnerable marriage migrants

Interviews with vulnerable migrants were part of a broader doctoral project, which sought to theorize the various links between marriage and migration.

Out of a total of 33 interviews that were transcribed, 13 concerned vulnerable migrants, of whom 7 experienced domestic abuse. All migrants whose narratives are presented in this chapter come from countries outside of the European Union. The economic dimension was an important factor in their decision to migrate to Switzerland but did not exclude feelings for their Swiss partner. Voices presented here are mainly female, overall more likely to publicly express situations of domestic violence (FOGE 2012). Abuse in its broadest sense is however also a reality for males, perhaps even more so when it is related to migration. As the issue of domestic violence is most personal and sensitive, organisations dealing with victims of abuse were contacted and migrants were approached through snowballing. As such, they were encouraged to participate in this research by someone they trusted. Interviews were conducted in the place of their

choice, either a public space, such as a quiet café, a social institution or at their home. The choice was made not to tape the interviews, since taping highly sensitive issues would likely have affected the quality of reporting. Interviews lasted between one and two hours and were carried out either in French or in English, depending which language migrants spoke best. With the exception of Yoanna's narratives, all quotes presented in this chapter have been translated into English.

Exploring narratives of vulnerable migrants

At the time of the interview, migrants were no longer living with their abusive partner. Some had secured their right to stay following long legal battles, other were still undergoing legal procedures. The following focuses on three aspects: the experience of domestic violence, the escape from the situation of abuse and the consequences that follow the break-up of the relationship.

Experiencing domestic abuse

To start addressing narratives of domestic violence, and to pull out some of its main characteristics, let us consider two quotes, these of Maja (Cuba) and Theodora (Brazil). Maja came over to Switzerland in 1998 following a nine months letter exchange with her partner to be, whom she met through her sister who was already established in Switzerland. Once her three months visa expired she had no other alternative than leave, or stay and get married. She chose the second option and moved in with her partner and his mother. Her story contrasts with that of Theodora, a Brazilian migrant who spent a few years in Switzerland as an undocumented migrant with her son before meeting her husband to be. For both Maja and Theodora marriage became the nest of domestic violence.

"I had to pay everything, the petrol, the trips. He wasn't working, he had left his work. He lived on his savings, was on benefits, was enjoying an easy life... [...] I had to do all, pay all, I had to work like crazy. He was doing the taxi. I was working as a cleaner from 7 am to 7 pm, working on the side. In the evening, I also had to work in a restaurant, I was washing the dishes... Days were endless, horrible. The mother was showing jealousies, she couldn't accept me. I couldn't touch anything in the house. She had looked after the house her whole life. She was cooking for her son and used to forget about me... I then had to eat bread. And she used to say things like "in your country, people eat in rubbish bins". For her, it was not a problem if I spent two or three days without eating..." [Maja, Cuba]

"My husband was aggressive. He couldn't talk without shouting, he was a mean person, he wanted to hit me in front of others... it was the hardest time of my life. [...] He was hurting my child, I was not allowed to make phone calls... and on the top of that, there was a woman in the house, they locked each other up in the kitchen, in the living room... it was very hard, it was horrible. When I had a day off and I wanted to go out, she would come with us." [Theodora, Brazil]

Intertwining forms of abuse

Maja describes her husband as someone aggressive, who cannot speak without shouting and who is a mean person. However, as Maja's quote further illustrates, other actors may intervene, such as family members. As she recalls, her mother in law, also living in the house, not only took her son's side, she also became an abuser. Maja's mother in-law indeed forbade her access to the kitchen (thereby restraining her actions and movements), only cooked for her son (ignoring Maja), deprived her of food, sometimes for days (harming her body) and finally assaulted her verbally with comments such as: *"in your country people eat in rubbish bins"*. Violent actions did however not end there: she was treated like a slave and had to work all day as an undeclared cleaner and at night as a washer up in a restaurant, while her husband had left his job and received benefits. All her husband did was to drive her to her work places and manage her money, over which she had no control.

Theodora's narratives highlighted other aspects of violence: her partner physically hit her, sometimes in front of people; hurt the child she had from a previous relationship, forbade her access to the phone, and came to the house with his mistress. As Theodora's quote illustrates her husband used various strategies to abuse her.

As both accounts have shown, various forms of abuse may coexist within one narrative. It is usually not a matter of "physical abuse" versus "emotional abuse", nor is it "just" the story of one particular form of abuse. The stories recalled above are extreme examples of violence and defamation that highlight the multiple strategies used by the perpetrators. Isolation, physical violence, emotional abuse and economic abuse were also the most frequently cited forms of abuse in the literature that considered the migrant population. Isolation, as the *"individual's perception and reality of being emotionally and socially alone, economically confined, and culturally disconnected"* (Abraham 2000, 222) was particularly present in the narratives, as it was a way to prevent migrants from seeking help. Not only is the migrant, who left his/her kin behind and who often is not familiar with the system and the language isolated due to migration, the partner often deliberately maintains and provokes further isolation, *"to increase his power and control over his*

wife in a social environment that is alien to her" (Abraham 2000, 227). Abraham (2000, 235) goes on to describe such isolation as "one of most painful and disempowering aspects of marital abuse in a foreign country".

Theodora further describes the sense of profound isolation she was experiencing, with her husband keeping her away from knowledge and from being part of the society as a way to exert full control over her being and over her actions:

"My husband didn't want me to learn because I was dependent on him, even to write a letter. It was him who spoke for me, he used to say I didn't need to learn French. He wanted me to depend on him... I wanted to work, but he didn't want me to work. [...] When I was with him, I had to put my salary on his bank account. He said he was paying the rent. I was not allowed to have a bank account. I had to ask my husband for money. I was under his control. It was also him who chose with whom I could talk..."
[Theodora, Brazil]

Theodora was most eager to learn French, but her husband forbade her do so, arguing she did not need to learn French. Instead, he would write and speak for her, taking the lead over her very existence and exerting his control in all spheres of her life. He reluctantly ended up letting her take over a job as a housekeeper, however not without controlling all her expenses and have her wages being paid on his account. There was nothing she could do without asking him, to the extent he was the one who decided who she could speak with or not.

Isolation, in the form of geographical and social confinement was also expressed by Yoanna, a Thai migrant.

"My husband was jealous. I had to cut all contacts with Thai people. We lived in the countryside. I couldn't drive, I couldn't talk and I lived in the middle of the countryside. I had to stay in the house; I was not allowed to have contacts with the others. When I asked for study, he cut me off, he didn't want me to have a friend." [Yoanna, Thailand]

Yoanna's narratives can be compared to the experience of imprisonment. Living in the middle of the countryside was a most isolating experience for someone coming from Bangkok, even more so in an area where access was difficult without a car. As a result, Yoanna had to stay in the house. The feeling of imprisonment was further accentuated by social isolation. Yoanna had indeed to cut all contacts with Thai people, those she shared language with and who could potentially have provided her with some help. Furthermore, to prevent her from making contacts with others, she was not granted access to French classes, a situation also experienced by other interviewees.

Migration-related abuse

The above narratives stressed the constant effort of the abusers to prevent their partners from accessing knowledge and help. This was both achieved by confining their spouses in the house and limiting their access to employment, social networks, and courses, including French classes. When migrants could work outside the household, as was the case for Maja and Theodora, not only would they be exploited at their workplace, their salaries would be managed by their abusive husbands. Migrants were both prisoner of the house(hold) and treated like slaves.

Although forms of abuse such as isolation, physical violence, emotional abuse and economic abuse apply to all victims of violence (whatever their origins and social classes), the narratives considered so far present some additional features, which may be specific to the migrant population. First of all, the examples highlighted some extreme forms of abuse, which may be compared to imprisonment and slavery. Such examples are however not exceptions, as acknowledged by the few scholars who considered migration-related domestic violence (see for instance Raj & Silverman 2002).

What makes them “migration-specific” are the efforts of the abuser to prevent migrants from having access to basic social capital, a key knowledge that is needed for “escaping” abusive relationships, and that is inherent to the non-migrant population. What is also probably specific to migrants is the sustained intensity of the abuse as well as the extended tolerance level they show. Although only hypothetical as it goes beyond the scope of this research, the intensity and frequency of the situations of violence recalled above may differ from those encountered in traditional studies of domestic violence. It is likely that for marriage-dependent migrants, abuse takes a more lasting dimension, while traditional research on domestic violence has reported sporadic outbursts. Following the same line, it is also most likely that the tolerance level shown by migrants, accepting to be treated as slaves, is higher than for native people facing domestic violence. While cultural values may, to some extent, explain tolerance to violence, the core reason is undoubtedly the dependent-nature of migration. The stakes are indeed high as migrant’s rights to stay depend on their relationship.

In such a context, it is no wonder that the key issue for the abused was to escape their violent partner, while, at the same time, not officially leaving their partner. Migrants were not only kept within a certain space (the house), or structure (the situation of abuse), they were imprisoned in the relationship. Migrants therefore had to try by all means to remain married if they wished to stay in Switzerland.

Aware of the binding nature of marriage when it comes to migration, and their power to control migration, the Swiss partner or lawful citizen exerts

further forms of abuse. As Raj and Silverman (2002) acknowledge, marriage dependent migrants often face additional forms of abuse than their non-migrant counterparts. The following will consider two migration-unique forms of abuse. These are: a) threats of deportation and b) attempts at deportation.

Threats of deportation are mainly used to maintain migrants in the situations of abuse described above. Erez et al. (2009, 47) explain: *“Abusers commonly convinced immigrant women that they have no rights (or that they are not entitled to any rights in this country) or that the abusers have the power to cancel their status at any time”*. As Theodora illustrates, *“It was horrible, he threatened all the time that he would be given custody of the baby, that he would ask the judge to withdraw my permit. It was horrible”*. Partners threatening their spouses with deportation would sometimes exaggerate the situation making their partner believe that not only will they face deportation but also lose the custody of their child. The power of such argument may lead to dramatic situations, whereby the abuser can almost require anything from his/her spouse. Whereas in most cases it is used to keep someone, it can also be used to get something from someone or to “get rid” of someone.

When despite isolation and threats the migrant wishes to leave the household, or seek help, then perpetrators often accentuate violence or make threats come true. Yoanna recalls:

“I wanted to leave him, but then, he wanted to kill me... [...] My husband had become very mean. I didn’t know he was like this. At the beginning he was very nice, but then, when he heard I wanted to leave him, he tried to crash me with the car.” [Yoanna, Thailand]

Yoanna illustrates here a situation of extreme violence, when her husband threatened to kill her, the ultimate way to control her life, other strategies of keeping her isolated and threatening her verbally having failed. Following Pence and Das Dasgupta (2006, 8) *“battered women’s risk of serious injury goes up significantly in the process of leaving or taking legal action against their abusers.”*

In most cases, however, the ultimate revenge is that of making threats come true, even if this implies lying to the authorities. This is illustrated by the case of Adrian. Knowing it might be difficult to have Adrian deported since, despite his precarious migration status he had a good job, was well integrated and had two children with his wife, Adrian’s wife turned him into the authorities as a drug dealer. It then took one year for the police to prove he was innocent, one year during which time Adrian’s friends, family, colleagues and boss were all interrogated. Most likely Adrian’s partner felt offended when he decided to leave her, and therefore sought his deportation.

Walking away from domestic violence

Pence and Das Dasgupta (2006, 10) showed that victims have three types of reactions to battering: a) they cope, for example by placating the abuser; b) they manage (i.e. they anticipate the abuser's mood, divert attention, control situations that lead to violence) and c) they resist (i.e. they create consequences for the abusers such as arrest and seek help). Migrants whose narratives were recalled above showed amazing levels of resilience, coping and managing abuse for months, if not years. As Weissman (2000, 13) explains: "*For many women, deportation is a prospect to be avoided at all costs. It may mean a return to a life of malnutrition, poverty, and disease for them and their children. For women who have fled political persecution, it may mean torture, jail, or even death.*" (Raj & Silverman 2000, 385).

This was the case for Maja who had left Cuba to escape extreme poverty and to earn enough to sustain her child left behind in Cuba. For others, such as Yoanna who now had a right to stay, it was the idea of returning as a divorcee to Thailand after some twenty years that could not be conceived of. Xuan who was still battling to get a permit, showed how this issue is still a matter of concern in contemporary China: "*It's been 10 years I've lived here, I cannot return to China as a divorcee. If you go abroad, achieve qualifications and then return to China, that's very well thought of. But returning as a divorcee, that's just not possible... One has to place my situation in the history of China, in the Chinese tradition*". When leaving China, Xuan had hoped to be able to financially help her poor family, including her sick brother. Her father placed all his hope in her, and as she recurrently expressed, she felt too ashamed to return: "*I feel ashamed for myself; I feel ashamed for my family. I cannot return to my city of birth... There is great pressure on me, my whole family laid their hopes on me. Since I lost my permit and I am undocumented, I accept any job, I work as a cleaner... Luckily nobody knows me... I do not dare telling it to my family*".

Resilience is not always a strategy though. For some, resilience is the outcome of the state of dependency in which the abuser kept them, and the resulting ignorance of the language, but also legal protection and other available services, points also observed by Raj and Silverman (2002).

Not knowing where to go, and the fears of repercussion should they leave the household may deter migrants from seeking help. Shelters only provide temporary accommodation. Furthermore, for some communities, it may be culturally unacceptable to seek help from public institutions for what is a private matter. As Menjívar and Salcido (2002, 905) explain, "*Often, when a woman is involved in an abusive relationship, social service providers expect her to leave her home and ties to receive assistance at a shelter. But if she leaves the abusive partner, she runs the risk of being ostracized by her family because she left and thus could not*

possibly be a “good wife” and she feels profoundly guilty. These women face the difficulty of challenging traditional gender structures.” As a result, “when battered immigrant women do seek help or support, it may be primarily from female family and friends in the community” (Raj & Silverman 2002, 384). Not having relatives nor friends in Switzerland further hinders access to help.

Finally, some other reasons may influence migrants’ reluctance to seeking help. It may be that for some cultures, domestic violence is more acceptable, or at least acceptable longer than for others, as inscribed in their tradition or their personal story. It may also be that migrants feel ashamed to admit they are victims of violence as this may reinforce stereotypes (Menjívar & Salcido 2002).

All migrants whose narratives are presented here eventually sought help when abuse transgressed the limits of what was bearable, and when their lives were seriously threatened.

For Xuan, it was after a violent outburst, when she feared for her life, that she left her husband: “*At this moment, I told my husband that if I left, I would not come back. And I left. I believed my safety mattered more than my permit*”. Similarly, Yoanna found the strength to walk away after her husband tried to kill her. For Maja the decision to leave was also taken after a particularly violent episode of physical violence.

For many, denunciation of the situation was the start of a long battle. Not only do migrants face the difficulties of relocation as discussed in the literature (Fyfe 2005; Fyfe & McKay 2000), they also face revenge by their partner and the subsequent juridical battle to stay in Switzerland.

Knowing that divorce leads in most cases to deportation, extra pressure was put on the migrant. Theodora shows how both attitudes of revenge and blackmail are often intertwined:

“He also denounced me for having worked on the side during our marriage. [...] He wanted to divorce, he blackmailed me. Even with the pension, he said he would agree to give me a pension as long as I divorce.”

[Theodora, Brazil]

On the one hand, her husband denounced her for having worked illegally prior to their marriage, and on the other hand, aware that divorce would strongly increase risks of deportation, he started to blackmail her: he would only provide a pension for her child if she accepted to divorce. Maja’s husband used divorce as a threat “*He threatened me to divorce, called me an indigenous, claimed the money he had spent on me and all these things*”.

To avoid divorce Maja had to give him money and continue to be mistreated, even though she had been granted protective measures and was no longer living with her husband. As she later raised in her narratives: “*I’m still married and this is what helped me. Were I divorced, I couldn’t have stayed. Now he asks I reimburse*

the money he spent to have me come over... One needs to have lived this to know how it feels... I tell it coldly". At the time of the interview, after years of endless procedures and uncertainties, Maja had just received a right to stay independent of the marriage. However, she was still married and this is what allowed her to win the battle, reinforced by other factors like that of having obtained a job and showing good integration.

Vulnerability to violence

Migrants face the double injustice of being victims of "migration-related" forms of violence, while not being able to denounce such violence, for fear of losing their right to stay. Legal procedures, and the resulting insecurity, sometimes lasted several years, as stressed by Maja:

"During several years, I had to fight, with the fear I had to leave, wondering how I would manage to live... I had nothing, not even a roof. [...] Here I have my job. Over there I have nothing. Here I have a roof, I can pay my rent. Over there I am on the street, I have nothing." [Maja, Cuba]

After finding the strength to walk away from a situation of extreme abuse and dependency, the prospect of losing what she achieved was hardly bearable, the more so as she would have to return to a situation of economic deprivation. The years of procedures that follow the break-up of the relationship, and the uncertainties migrants face, are often experienced as a most profound source of suffering. It was striking in some cases how narratives of the experience of abuse were short compared to those that recalled the associated legal procedures. The second injustice hurt migrants even more: while they could make sense of domestic violence, they could not understand the absence of protection of the state. By coming out as victims, they were treated like criminals. After having sought help in a refuge, years of suffering started for Maja:

"I have been harassed by the police, it was horrible, as if it was me, my fault, as if I had killed someone. I was summoned at the police office of the canton of Vaud, they were only focused on the fact I was a foreigner, not on my drunk husband who could have killed me. We were summoned several times together, we had to tell how we had met each other, I had to tell the whole story, from A to Z." [Maja, Cuba]

Maja's words are most meaningful: *"I have been harassed by the police, it was awful, as if it was me, my fault, as if I had killed someone."* From being a victim, she suddenly becomes portrayed as the offender, solely on the ground that her status depends on the relationship. Just like a criminal, she has to undergo questionings, where she had to relate all the private details of her encounter with

her husband. The attention, she felt, was all on her and not on her husband, who under the influence of alcohol could have killed her, as she emphasised.

Gáida, a Brazilian migrant, particularly suffered from the attitude of the police, who treated her “like a criminal”. With tears in her eyes, she many times used words like “nightmare” or “hell” to describe *“These three years of my life. Still today, when I speak about it I cry, it has traumatised me”*. One policeman in particular *“He has made of my life a nightmare, went at me fiercely and unrelentingly, never will I forget his name”* left deep scars on her. As she stated *“Receiving an order of deportation is terrible, I told myself “my God, I’m a criminal, but I never sold any drugs”. I do not wish anyone to live with such a fear in the stomach, it’s terrible”*. A notice of deportation, and the years of legal procedures that follow are already a most difficult situation on their own, but when it follows domestic violence, it raises a feeling of profound injustice. Maja voices that injustice:

“Why can a Swiss couple live separately? A Swiss couple is allowed to have problems and live separately. Why can’t a foreigner couple do so? We are not allowed to have problems with our husband. Why, if I’m foreigner, I need to bear all the things my husband does to me? Whether it applies to couples of same nationality or mixed, sometimes there are problems. The system enables local people to take advantage of it. But because we are poor, because we come from a poor country, people can do whatever they want with us.” [Maja, Cuba]

Just like Maja, migrants do not understand why, on the ground of their nationality, they are not allowed to have relationship problems. Xuan takes the issue further, revolting against the lack of protection migrants receive. Xuan indeed felt she had been abandoned in a way one would not abandon animals: *“People who take a dog do not abandon it that easily... we are supposed to be protected human beings in Switzerland... There are many associations that deal with animals, why don’t people deal with that unfair situation?”*. At the core of her anger, is the fact Swiss people can so easily marry a foreign spouse, but similarly, they can easily and without repercussions get rid of their spouse: *“Why does the police grant marriage permits so easily, a visa to enter, and then no one looks any longer after me? Why am I undocumented and my former husband, who abused of me, he is peaceful? I made many efforts and in the end, it’s all my fault. It’s too easy to make someone become undocumented, one needs to have her/him sign a document”*.

Most of the time procedures are most complex and often last months, sometimes years, leaving migrants under constant fear and pressure, as Maja noted earlier on. Seeking marriage again was for many the only option, as illustrated by Xuan: *“It’s been over 10 years I haven’t found the way out. I make many efforts to stay, but I don’t accept to get married in order to stay. All my friends want me to get married. I’m not willing to get married for the sake of staying. Even the police,*

the foreign office told me I had to get married again... a country that claims to be so fair and that tells me things that are not fair...” As Xuan noted, even the police told her to marry again, pushing her to do something that she viewed as being wrong, further raising her indignation. While at the time of the interview this may still have been an option, from January 1st 2011, undocumented migrants are no longer allowed to get married in Switzerland, a measure that attests of the ever growing climate of suspicion.

Discussion and conclusion

While the topic of domestic violence has been widely researched, only few scholars have specifically linked it to marriage migration. And yet, immigration policies may have dramatic consequences for migrants who face domestic violence. Set within the Swiss context, this chapter explored the narratives of vulnerable marriage migrants who faced domestic violence, and who eventually left their abusive partner. By exploring three dimensions of their experiences – the situations of abuse, ending the abuse and the consequences of leaving the partner – it sought to explore the extent to which narratives of domestic violence were “migration-related”.

As the chapter has illustrated, narratives of domestic violence relate to migration in two ways. Not only may the nature of the abuse be linked to migration policies, migrants’ responses to domestic violence may also be migration specific.

At the heart of migration-related domestic abuse is the legal system, and in particular the fact that for many non-European marriage migrants, migration status depends on the relationship during the first few years that follow marriage. Should the relationship end for whatever reason, migrants’ risk losing their right of stay, a situation that is for many unconceivable, making domestic violence a more “tolerable” option until it reaches a certain point. Such legislation empowers the abusive partner, who may resort to “migration-generated” forms of abuse. Threats of deportation, as well as attempts of deportation were indeed widely used by the abusive partner to respectively prevent their spouses from leaving the household or to seek revenge after their partner had left. Such forms of violence are unique to the migrant population.

Narratives stressed other forms of abuse, which even though not unique to the migrant population were probably intensified when it came to migrants. In particular, narratives demonstrated the constant effort of the abusers to isolate their partners. While isolation as a form of abuse is well-known, the nature of migration makes migrants particularly vulnerable to isolation. Migrants, and the

more so those who come from a poor background, often have little social, cultural and economic capital upon arrival. Not only are they socially removed from their family and kin, they often have only little knowledge of the language as well as the host society. Furthermore they often depend financially on their partner, a situation that makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse. As narratives highlighted, partners are aware of their hold and often prevent their spouses from working and socialising.

Also striking in the narratives, it was the extreme intensity and character of the abuse. Whether economic, emotional or physical, abuse was often omnipresent and took extreme forms, generating situations that may compare to slavery. While literature on domestic violence often refers to sporadic outbursts, it may well be that when it comes to marriage migrants, domestic violence takes a more permanent dimension, an aspect that needs to be further investigated.

Turning to the victims of domestic violence, narratives stressed extreme levels of tolerance. Abusive situations lasted months if not years, and migrants often stayed with their partner until their life was threatened. As narratives demonstrated, migrants were well aware that they risked deportation if they should leave their partner. For the migrants whose voices were presented in this chapter, return was not conceivable. They clearly evoked economic reasons, but also shame towards their family and social repercussions in the home country. Being a divorcee is in some societies not tolerated, offering only little prospects for a future. Some had already secured a job in Switzerland, making it the more so difficult to go back to a life of precariousness. Other reasons, though not stressed by the interviewees, may contribute to explain resilience and extended tolerance. It may well be that for certain nationalities and personalities it is culturally unacceptable to seek help. It may also be that domestic violence is more culturally acceptable for some. The sample size, but also the questions raised during the interviews did not enable to further assess resilience to abusive situations.

Thanks to recent changes in the legislation, victims of domestic violence may nowadays obtain a permit under certain conditions. Although the relaxing of the measures represents an important step forward, it remains in many ways problematic. While offering some rights to the victims, it does not address the reasons behind domestic violence in the context of migration, in particular how the laws contribute to support such migration-related forms of abuse. Furthermore, not only does it require migrants to be aware of their rights, they must also start legal procedures that may reveal very long and emotionally distressful. Migrants are expected to provide strong medical evidence of the abuse, and prove the sincerity of their accounts to officials who remain suspicious of abuse. It is likely that the most vulnerable migrants, those who are kept in isolation and for whom such procedures are daunting, may not take advantage from protective measures.

There is therefore an urgent need for migration scholars and other social scientists to address this topic that remained almost invisible, despite the dramatic consequences it may have. Although difficult to quantify, situations such as those recalled in this chapter were often raised by social workers. There may be many more migrants who do not seek help and suffer in silence. Furthermore, this chapter mainly considered women's voices. Male migrants may also face migration-related vulnerability, an issue that needs to be further investigated. Finally, this research considered the most vulnerable group of migrants but it should be stressed that privileged migrants, too, are susceptible to suffer from migration-related forms of abuse. A better understanding of how it affects different groups of migrants and how it compares to the non-migrant population still needs to be achieved.

Note

1. Almost all literature considering migrants in abusive situations have concentrated on female victims, often ignoring the fact that males, too, may be victim of violence.

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Chapter 10



■ Daniel Rauhut

The Disequilibrium Marriage Market and Migration: A Theoretical Exposition¹

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to have a theoretical discussion concerning the causes and implications of a disequilibrium marriage market. Previous studies have focused on equilibrium marriage markets despite the fact that disequilibrium marriage markets are common.

Four causes of disequilibrium marriage markets are identified. The sex in excess supply will face very high search costs for finding an acceptable match. If men are in surplus on a marriage market the rational behaviour is to import a matching woman from another marriage market; if women are in surplus, the most rational behaviour is to leave for another marriage market.

Introduction

The works of e.g. Becker (1973, 1974a, 1993) and Cigno (1994) have shown us how people will act on an equilibrium marriage market when an economic approach is used. Some readers may find it cynical, insensitive or unemotional to analyse love, matchmaking and marriage with economic theory, but, as Cigno (1994, 1) puts it, *“it is, essentially, a method of generating empirically falsifiable predictions about human behaviour under the assumption that, on average, individuals and organizations behave coherently with their own preferences (which need not to be selfish), and verifying the mutual comparability of decisions taken by different individuals and organizations”*.

Studies on economic theories of marriage – e.g. Becker (1973, 1974a, 1993), Becker et al. (1977), Cigno (1994), Freiden (1974) – generally assume that the marriage market is in equilibrium in the sense that equal numbers of men and women participate in the marriage market. This is a theoretical simplification (Becker 1973, 813). Freiden (1974, S44) stresses the importance of the ratio between the sexes on the US marriage market and concludes that *“the proportion of females married is positively related to the ratio of the sexes”*.

Although the disequilibrium marriage market is more common than the one in equilibrium relatively little attention has been paid to the disequilibrium marriage market or to how people act on it.² Becker (1973) mentions, *in short*, two causes of disequilibrium marriage markets – wars and immigration – and he also concludes that if the number of men increases relative to the number of women, men with low incomes will find it difficult to find a marriage partner. Income levels for women in disequilibrium marriage markets will increase, while income levels for men will decrease. This will induce a relatively larger share of women to marry, according to Becker (1973, 838ff.). Thus, we must bear in mind that Becker assumes that it is not possible for the partners to change mates in order to become better off, and Becker (1973, 841) narrows the definition of the term “income” to just monetary income. If this is a short- or long-term effect of a disequilibrium market is, unfortunately, not discussed at all by Becker.

Becker (1993, 119–121) spends only three (3) pages out of 378 on describing a marriage market where men outnumber women and concludes that (a) some men will be rejected by the market and remain single, (b) others will be forced into “inferior” marriages, i.e. marrying lower quality women, and (c) the lowest-quality men are the ones being rejected by the market.³ Cigno (1994, 58ff.), on the other hand, argues in his study that it is not necessarily only “low-quality” men who are rejected by the disequilibrium marriage market.

In a study by Oded Stark the topic of marriage and migration is explicitly discussed. His theoretical study explicitly focuses on the prevailing conditions

in LDCs (less developed countries). Young women from the countryside move to the metropolitan areas to be better off not only at the labour market, but also at the marriage market. “*The reason for migration is an expectation that the rate of ‘marriageable’ men will be higher*” (Stark 1988, 25).

The work of Richard Easterlin and the relative income hypothesis also contain theoretical reasoning of interest to this paper. In “*Birth and Fortune*” Easterlin (1987, 97ff.) argues that a large cohort will suffer from high unemployment, high divorce rates, low fertility and relatively low incomes, and *vice versa* for small cohorts. Members of the large cohort will face difficulty in attaining the life they would like to, and this will be translated into mental stress, but also bitterness and despair. Higher criminality rates, higher suicide rates and increases in drinking and drug use will also follow. Easterlin (1987, 98) also points out that to have been “*put off marrying and childbearing can also be frustrating*”. Therefore, it can be assumed that those who are unable to find a partner will suffer from the mental stress described by Easterlin.

The aim of this paper is to initiate a theoretical discussion, in line with the work of the New Home Economics School on the functioning of a disequilibrium marriage market, on its causes and implications. Four questions are proposed for further enquiry: (1) why do we marry?, (2) How do disequilibrium marriage markets arise?, (3) Who will remain single? and finally, (4) what implications can we expect of a disequilibrium marriage market?

In this chapter it will be not assumed that the actors are unable to change partners to become better off, or that it necessarily has to be the low-quality men that are rejected by the market. A distinction between the short- and long-term effects of disequilibrium marriage markets will also be discussed. A number of exogenous elements, such as employment status, clearly affect the decision to get married, this paper will however limit itself solely to the *demographic* aspects, e.g. the ratio of men to women on the marriage market and how this will affect the marriage market behaviour. The discussion will primarily deal with the prevailing conditions in the developed world.

Information about a presumptive partner is not free: time and money is needed to get information while searching for a partner. In a market with perfect competition information will be available at a fair price, which makes it difficult for the seller to over-charge when selling. In a market characterised by imperfect competition information is not always available, or at least not available at a fair price, which increases the risk of over-charging when selling. *Search costs* play a central role in this paper. The role of *substitution* is also of importance: a rise in the price of item *A* can cause a shift in the demand curve for another item. If item *B* satisfies similar needs and demands, and is less expensive, item *A* will be substituted by item *B*; unless item *A* becomes less expensive, item *A* will become uncompetitive at the market.

The chapter will start by discussing why we marry while also outlining the functioning of the equilibrium marriage market. This is followed by a discussion on who remains single at the equilibrium marriage market. After this we will turn to the main issue of this chapter: the disequilibrium marriage market. Here our discussion begins with an exposition of the causes of the disequilibrium marriage market, the functioning of the disequilibrium market is then outlined, and, finally, the issue of who will remain single at the disequilibrium marriage market is discussed. Once this preparatory work is done it will be possible to identify the short- and long term effects of disequilibrium market. The chapter, ends by summarising the findings while also providing some concluding remarks.

Why we marry?

In *“A Theory of Marriage: part I”* Gary Becker (1973, 813ff.) formulated an economic theory on why people marry. His theory is based on two assumptions: (1) each person tries to find a mate who maximises his (her) well-being measured by the consumption of household-produced commodities, and (2) the “marriage market” is assumed to be in equilibrium. Becker (1973, 816) defines household-produced commodities by saying that they are *“numerous and include the quality of meals, the quality and quantity of children, prestige, recreation, companionship, love and health status”*.

The theory was developed further in *“A Theory of Marriage: part II”* where Becker (1974a, S11) assumed that no person could change mates and become better off. Later he argued that *“participants [at the marriage market] prefer to marry if, and only if, their utility from marriage exceeds their utility from remaining single”* (Becker 1993, 82). According to Becker (1974a, S22) the actor will continue to search for a partner as long as the expected gains from marriage exceed the information costs in the search for a partner. If the actor believes that he (she) has failed in his (her) search for a partner at the marriage market, that the search costs for a continued search will be too high, or that he (she) has become too old and fears that the demand for persons from his (her) age group is likely to be extremely limited, their willingness to marry a person who belongs to another class, religion, race, age etc., increases. Becker (1993, 337f.) claims that the utility of these marriages will be lower, that the fertility will be lower, and that the risk of divorce will be higher. The utility of a low-utility marriage may nevertheless however be higher than the utility of remaining single.

Cigno (1994, 7f.) argues that *“two persons marry and stay married because, on balance, they are better off that way”* and assumes that their marriage is the result of *“a free, informed, and optimizing choice”*. This however requires an equi-

librium marriage market, i.e. there is no excess supply of one sex. The search for a partner is not without costs, and an individual will stop searching when the marginal cost of the search equals the marginal benefit (Cigno 1994, 63).

Vandenberg (1972, 128ff.) identifies two opposing views on the selection of a good partner for marriage: psychological similarities and complementarities between the needs of a husband and wife. The study refers to previous work done and concludes that the average distance between the birthplaces of a husband and wife in the USA and Brazil has increased between 1900 and 1950.

According to Becker and Cigno people marry to increase their personal well-being. If an actor does not get married, he will be “unhappy” about not being able to maximise his well-being. This is however a somewhat simplified explanation of how a person will feel when he (she) is unable to find a partner. Easterlin (1987, 97f.) provides a more satisfactory explanation. Most adults expect themselves to be married and to have a family one day. Easterlin argues that people have expectations in respect of potential careers and acceptable standards of living. The result of a failure to fulfil these expectations will be a deep frustration, and the person concerned will likely question his or her own capabilities. But this level of frustration can also occur when the person is ejected from the marriage market: *“[h]aving been put off marrying or childbearing can also be frustrating [...] A damaged self-image may result from failure to come up to society’s and one’s own expectations”*, says Easterlin. This will happen to both sexes regardless of whether we are talking about material things, such as material standards of living, or non-material things, such as marriage and being a parent. Becker (1993, 80) also discusses this and concludes that most people want to marry though he does not link the crushed dreams of marriage with frustration. The feeling of being a failure would most certainly be the result when a person is unsuccessful in finding a partner, since the person has failed to fulfil his or her own expectations or the expectations of friends, family etc.

The transfer of well-being through social interaction is also discussed by Becker (1974b). According to him, the transferred goods could be love, friendship, altruism etc. This transfer will be reduced if, let us assume, friends only socialise in couples, which leaves the single person outside the web of social interaction. Another example could be that a person has to be married to be promoted in his (her) career. A single person thus runs the risk of getting this kind of “social disease”.

In sum, people marry to maximise their utility and their personal well-being, *but* people also marry because of the level of social expectation on them to do so, a level of social expectation that is instilled from within and buttressed from without. A failure to match socio-cultural expectations, or to maximise personal well-being, may lead to a damaged self-image. This failure may also lead to the contraction of various “social diseases” or other impairments.

The equilibrium marriage market

Becker (1993, 83) argues that the marriage market tends, just like any other market, towards equilibrium. If the same number of men and women want to marry the marriage market will be in equilibrium and it will be an efficient market. On the marriage market all actors are buyers and sellers simultaneously, argues Gray (1987, 366). *“An efficient marriage market develops shadow prices to guide participants to marriages that will maximize their expected well-being”*, says Becker (1993, 81).

Every time the searching actor gets in contact with a presumptive candidate for marriage, the actor has to decide whether he should accept the person or continue to search. *“The cost of continuing to search for a better match is the sum of search costs and income foregone by remaining single rather than marrying an available match”*, according to Becker et al. (1977, 1147f.). They define search cost with the resources, measured in time and money, used by an actor in his search for a partner. To Cigno (1994, 63) search costs are *“the utility forgone as time and expenditure [...] diverted from home production to sampling the opposite sex, net of any utility that the searcher might desire from the search itself”*.

If a person remains single in a monogamous equilibrium marriage market, despite a search for a partner, the person will have to lower the minimum-level of acceptable offers from presumptive partners, i.e. lower his (her) price. The age of an actor may have an important impact when the searching actor is confronted with the choice of a marriage or a continued search. According to Becker et al. (1977, 1151) this is especially crucial for women over 40, since their ability to have children becomes increasingly time limited. The actor will continue to search for a partner until *“the value to him of any expected improvement in the mate he can find is no greater than the cost of his time and other inputs into additional search”* (Becker 1974a, S22).

Two interesting aspects in the functioning of the marriage market occur: (a) the information costs might become so high that the searching actor hesitates to continue the search, and (b) that the actor has to lower his minimum-level (price) to receive any acceptable offers from presumptive partners. If a person is facing this kind of problems, he (she) has to solve them if he (she) wants to get married.

Becker (1993, 337) explains why persons enter mixed marriages⁴ because they do not expect to do better by engaging into further searching or in waiting. Since they have been unsuccessful in their search for a partner, perhaps because they become pregnant during the search, or they fear diminishing market opportunities because they have become older, and thus the option facing them is the only marriage option likely to be available to them. The probability of marrying

someone from a different class, religion, race, age etc., increases if the searching actor has passed 30 or has become pregnant during the search. The utility of this kind of marriage will be lower and the risk of divorce will increase.

Who will remain single?

There are persons who never enter the marriage market voluntarily: they want to remain single. According to Gray (1987, 365) *“there are also people who are so restricted by permanent or transient situations, such as illness, imprisonment, handicap, or study, that they, would not consider themselves to be a part of the marriage market nor be so considered by others”*. We assume that the number of men and women, who belong to this group, are the same, and that the rest of the participants want to get married.

The second group of persons who will remain single are those who had been unsuccessful in finding a partner at the market. In Becker’s world there are high- and low-quality persons. High-quality persons are “better”, more productive etc., than low-quality persons. *“Imputed prices are also used to match men and women of different qualities: Some participants [...] choose to be matched with “inferior” persons because they feel “superior” persons are too expensive”* (Becker 1993, 108ff.). He argues that high-quality men marry high-quality women, low-quality men marry low-quality women, and that high-quality men marry low-quality women, but high-quality women do not marry low-quality men.

But does this mean that high-quality women do not marry *lower* quality, though still high-quality, men too? Logically, yes. Since all actors are utility-maximising, a high-quality woman will not mate a lower quality, though high-quality, man, if her utility will not be maximised. Consequently, a low-quality woman will not mate with a lower low-quality man if her utility is not maximised. The result is that low-quality men and high-quality women will be left over. In Figure 1 we see an example of this. Figure 1A and 1B are fully consistent with Becker’s reasoning.

In Figure 1B we can see that f_1 and m_{10} have been rejected by the market: the price of f_1 is too high and the quality of m_{10} is too low. In Figure 1C f_1 and m_4 have been rejected by the market: the price of f_1 is too high for m_1 , so he mates with f_2 instead; f_1 is also too expensive for m_4 , which means that he remains single. The observant reader may raise an objection here since Becker claimed that a high quality man marries a high-quality woman: Both f_1 and m_4 are high-quality persons. This is correct, but we have to bear in mind that if m_4 finds f_1 too expensive, there is no deal and he has to remain single. This too is consistent with Becker’s reasoning. The result will be that two high-quality persons will remain single, more or less involuntarily, m_4 will probably be forced to marry a person from

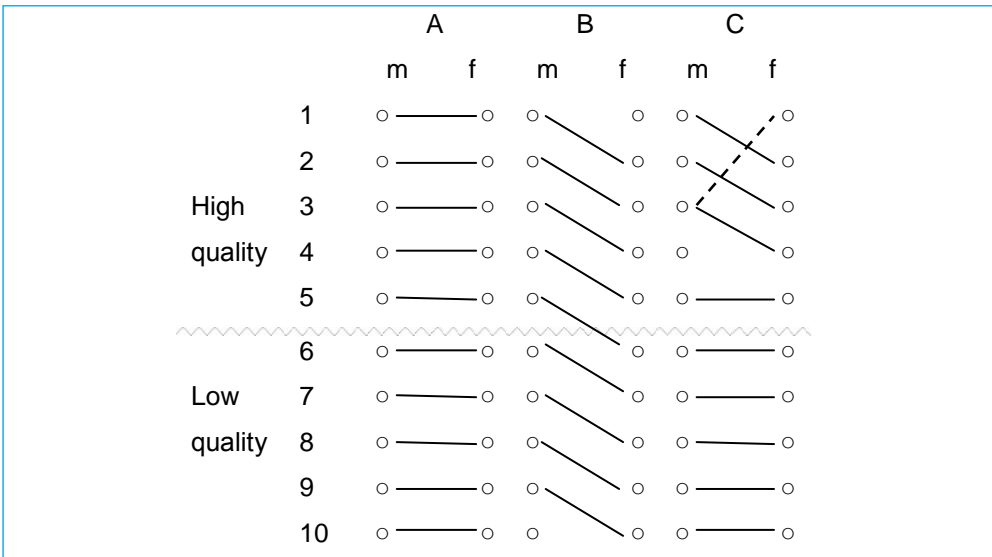


Figure 1. Assortative mating in an equilibrium market in line with Becker’s reasoning.

another class, religion, race, age etc; f_1 must lower her price, otherwise she is running the risk of pricing herself out of the market.

With a simple game theory, Cigno is able to show who marries whom. In Figure 2 the utility of the match between m_1 and f_1 will be 10, 5 between m_1 and f_2 , and 2 if m_1 remains single. The output-maximising sorting is A2, where m_1 matches f_2 , and m_2 matches f_1 . “Notice that the superior man gets a better deal in A2, while the superior woman gets a better deal in A1, but in each case both do better marrying the inferior member of the opposite sex than they would do otherwise”, says Cigno (1994, 57f.). Then he changes the variables in the game, Figure 3, and finds that the more capable a person is in producing goods of his (her) own, the more likely they are to remain single. “Factors which increase the productivity of singles [...] are thus likely to reduce the incidence of marriage” (Cigno 1994, 58f.). The output-maximising sorting gives us an interesting result: Both B1 and B2 have a utility of 14! If m_1 matches f_1 , and f_2 wants to be single, m_2 has no choice but to remain single too.

	f_1	f_2		
m_1	10	5	2	$A1(m_1f_1, m_2f_2)=12$
m_2	9	2	1	$A2(m_1f_2, m_2f_1)=14$
	2	1		

Figure 2. Assortative matching in an equilibrium market according to Cigno (1) (Source: Cigno 1994, 57).

	f_1	f_2		
m_1	10	5	2	$B1(m_1f_2, m_2f_1)=14$
m_2	9	2	2	$B2(m_1f_1, m_2f_1)=14$
	2	2		

Figure 3. Assortative matching in an equilibrium market according to Cigno (2)
 (Source: Cigno 1994, 59).

Those rejected by the market in Becker’s and Cigno’s examples will face very high search costs for a continued search. They will continue their search as long as the expected benefit of a continued search exceeds the costs. If the costs exceed the expected benefits, the actor will leave the market (Becker 1974a, S22; Cigno 1994, 62f.).

Becker’s high- and low-quality model thus seems to be of dubious value. As shown in Figure 1C a high-quality man can be rejected and remain single, though he should be married according to Becker. Cigno stresses the utility of a match as the most important factor for marriage or continued search. Since both Becker and Cigno argue that people get married when, for them, the utility of being married exceeds the utility of remaining single, Cigno’s reasoning thus seems to be more convincing.

The conclusion here is that a person will remain single at an equilibrium market if (1) the actor decides voluntarily not to participate, (2) the search costs for an acceptable match are too high, (3) the utility of remaining single exceeds the utility of the available matches, e.g. there has been an increase in the productivity of singles, which reduces the incidence of marriage, and (4) the prices are too high for the available matches.

The disequilibrium marriage market

In a disequilibrium marriage market there is an excess supply of one sex, i.e. someone will not be able to find a partner at that marriage market. The excess supply of one sex is considered a market disturbance. The causes of the market disturbance, how the disequilibrium market will function, and who will be rejected by the market will now be discussed.

The causes of disequilibrium

Becker (1973, 838, 840) discusses two kinds of disequilibrium marriage markets: the first is when the number of available men has been reduced due to War.

The women of marriageable and fertile age have to marry the relatively few men available. Some women will be rejected by the market and remain single. The second cause of disequilibrium occurs through selective labour immigration. Becker argues that a good example of this is the selective labour immigration of young men. That the selective labour immigration of young men might cause a disequilibrium situation is hard to argue against, but this is not the only example of migration causing a disequilibrium situation.

More examples can actually be found: (1) a large number of refugees, dominated by one sex, will cause an excess supply of one sex, and (2) theoretically an excess supply of one sex may also be caused if there is a constant market leakage of one sex.⁵ If all fertile women of marriageable age leave the local marriage market in rural areas, an excess supply of men will be created. This hopefully shows that different kinds of migration can cause a disequilibrium situation. (3) A third cause could be triggered if more persons of sex A are born than of sex B. An excess supply of persons belonging to sex A will be the result.

Individually, these factors would probably not create a severe disequilibrium. Over time, moreover, possibilities for adjustment are likely to emerge. But if two or more of these factors present themselves at the same time, the disequilibrium effect could be significant. Over time this could even be self-generating: if more male than females are born together with a selective immigration of young males, the disequilibrium could be large. If females think that the utility of the matches with “inferior” men will be too low, they will leave the market. But if an actor is unable to lower the price to a competitive level, though there is excess supply of one sex, he (she) is running the risk of pricing himself (herself) out of the market.

A fourth potential cause of disequilibrium is that parents may prefer to have one sex of children, e.g. boys, and get rid of the other sex, e.g. girls, by abortion or infanticide. This habitually occurs in countries like China and India. Parents can also abandon their child by simply leaving it to die somewhere. The ability of the marriage market to recover by itself from this type of disequilibrium situation is not very large.

The functioning of the disequilibrium marriage market

It can be assumed, as in an equilibrium market, that there are some persons who voluntarily decide not to participate, and that the actors participating at the market are, at the same time, both buyers and sellers. Shadow prices exist to guide them to maximise their expected utility of marriage. All actors at the market are assumed to be seeking marriage.

Cigno (1994, 58, 62) notes that if one sex outnumbers the other someone will remain single. If the search costs are very high some people will exit the marriage market before they find themselves a partner. When the benefits of a

continued search are lower than the costs of a continued search this will happen. As noted above, Becker (1973, 838ff.) argues that, where a disequilibrium marriage market exists, women's incomes will increase and induce them into marriage, and that the income of men will decrease. It will not be so costly for women to substitute men with other goods, and the low-quality men will find it difficult to get married. Analogous with the previous discussion above it is possible to construct the following reasoning: if the marriage market is in disequilibrium due to an excess supply of one sex, the over-represented sex will undoubtedly face very high search costs to find an acceptable partner. According to the very simple model of demand and supply, the price of the over-represented sex will fall since the supply is higher than the demand. The result of this will be that the over-represented sex will have to lower its minimum-level of acceptable offers from presumptive partners. At the same time the price of the under-represented sex will rise since demand is higher than supply, with, as the result of this, the under-represented sex at the marriage market having the possibility of raising their minimum-level of acceptable offers from presumptive partners.

The negotiation power of the under-represented sex will be very strong at a disequilibrium market. An asymmetric power relation between the negotiating actors arises: when two actors both know that one of them would very much like to have a resource that the other possesses, the actor in possession of the highly valued resource effectively controls the negotiation process. Elgström (1990, 147) notes that *"unequal power usually leads to unequal outcomes, for the stronger actor can impose its conditions upon the weaker"*. The under-represented sex at the disequilibrium marriage market may use this situation to e.g. impose claims on gender equality. An example of this might be a change in the division of labour as regards domestic work: *"You have to help with the cleaning and washing. I'm not going to do it alone..."* Other potential examples might include claims on the right to work and study.

Is it possible for the under-represented sex to set their prices too high, thereby running the risk of pricing themselves out of the market? Yes, if the under-represented sex set their price too high, and if they are, unable to lower their price later on, they will be substituted with other women. The over-represented sex will face high search costs, regardless of whether the under-represented sex has priced them out of the market or not. Rational behaviour would see the over-represented sex try to find a similar market, but with lower search costs, or substitute the under-represented sex with other, less expensive, potential matches. This kind of compromise may perhaps be one of the mixed-marriages Becker (1993, 337) was talking about above, i.e. when a person marries someone from a different class, religion, race, age etc., because he or she does not expect-to do better by either further waiting or search.

	f_1	f_2		$C(m_1, m_2, f_1, m_3, f_2) = 17$
m_1	10	5	3	
m_2	9	2	1	
M_3	2	5	1	
	2	1		

Figure 4. Assortative matching in a disequilibrium market according to Cigno (3)
 (Source: Cigno 1994, 59).

Who will remain single?

The persons who remain single at the disequilibrium marriage market will, as Cigno (1994, 58) puts it, “*not necessarily be the ones who have less to contribute to married life*”. The utility of the match between m_1 and f_1 will be 10 (Figure 4), 5 between m_1 and f_2 , and 3 if m_1 remains single. The output-maximising sorting of this game will be $C(m_1, m_2, f_1, m_3, f_2) = 17$. The most productive man will remain single, though he is the “best” partner.

Figures 5A and 5B are fully consistent with Becker’s reasoning. In Figure 5C the model is more complicated: m_3 finds f_2 too expensive and/or f_2 finds the utility of a match too low. In any case, if f_2 will not lower her price, both f_2 and m_3 will remain single.

The model is even more complicated in Figure 5D: m_4 finds f_3 too expensive, and m_8 also finds f_1 too expensive. The most rational behaviour would be if m_4

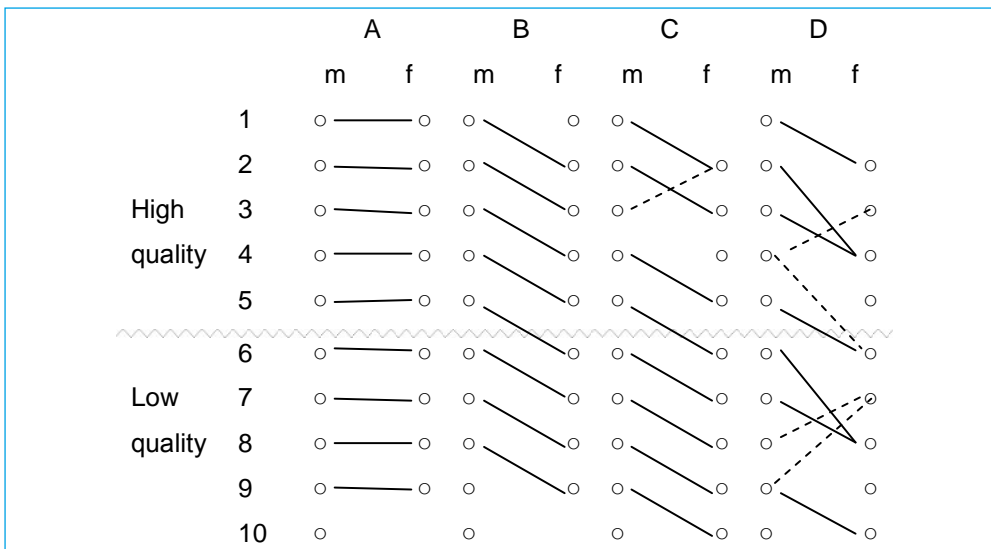


Figure 5. Assortative matching at a disequilibrium market in line with Becker’s reasoning.

chose f_1 . In this case this model would be a slightly revised version of 5B or even 2B. But, m_4 may find the utility of remaining single higher than the utility of marrying f_1 (she could be too “inferior”), or m_4 just does not want to lower his price any further. In this case m_4 would price himself out of the market, just as f_3 (with the m_4 -match) and f_1 (with the m_8 -match) did. It can be assumed that the information is incomplete, and that the search costs are high, since the actors show a willingness to over-charge when they are about to sell.

In Figure 5 we can see that basically anyone, it does not matter if they are high- or low-quality persons, can remain single, more or less involuntarily. This is an interesting observation. Furthermore, it appears to be quite easy for the actors to price themselves out of the market in a disequilibrium market if they are unable or unwilling, to lower their prices.

A person remains single in a disequilibrium marriage market has nothing to do with whether they are a high- or low-quality person, but rather, whether those at the market are able to maximise their utility with each other or not. If a single persons’ productivity has been increased, the incidence of marriage will be reduced, and the situation may be as in Figure 4 and 5D.

Implications of disequilibrium marriage markets

Some of the possible implications of a disequilibrium marriage market will now be outlined. Firstly however a distinction between the short- and long-term effects of a disequilibrium market has to be made. The period necessary for complete adjustments to a price change is the long-term effect, and the period immediately after a price change – but before the long-term adjustment can occur – is the short-term effect.

The short-term effect will undoubtedly be as Becker (1973, 838ff.) described: the earnings of women will increase and the low-income men will find it difficult to get married. He also suggested that women will be induced to marriage in this situation.

If reality works as suggested in this theoretical discussion, an asymmetrical negotiation will take place, where men will have to accept the claims of women for e.g. some gender equality and increased wages. In economic terms women are able to raise their prices. If a man is not interested in maximising the well-being of his partner, that woman will simply seek to marry someone else who is willing to maximise her well-being. Two questions must be raised here: will this strategy work in the long run, and will women really be induced to marriage when their earnings rise and the utility of marriage gets lower, as Becker suggested?

In line with consumer choice theory, the long-term effects may be rather different from the short-term ones. A period of adjustment to the new conditions will take place. During the dramatic oil-price rise of 1973–74 many households discovered that they now had fuel-inefficient cars. The immediate response to the rise in oil-prices was either to buy a more fuel-efficient car, or to plan to buy one. A third alternative was to use the car less often. In the long run the more fuel-inefficient, and thus expensive, cars were substituted for more fuel-efficient models. If the producers of fuel-inefficient cars wanted to remain competitive they had either to lower their prices or to build more fuel-efficient cars. If the consumer wanted their old, fuel-inefficient car they had, probably, to change their lifestyle in other ways in order to be able to afford it.

Since the search costs for the over-represented sex at the marriage market will be very high, and the under-represented sex is able to raise its price, there is a risk that the under-represented sex will become uncompetitive. The over-represented sex will leave the market, and either search for a competitive substitute at another marriage market, or become frustrated over their seeming inability to get married. Or both.

If the actor starts to search for a less expensive and more competitive woman, he will probably “import” her to his geographical area. This has been done at numerous local marriage markets in various European countries.⁶ If such schemes have been proved successful at the local disequilibrium marriage market level then this can also be done at regional or national disequilibrium marriage markets. If the import of more competitive women becomes institutionalised, the native high-price woman runs the risk of pricing herself out of the market, and, even more unpleasantly, perhaps losing some of the advantages she had gained through the leveraging of her previously strong negotiation position (the short-term effects). Perhaps a substitution effect will also be seen to arise here. It is likely then that native women will appreciate the imported women just as much as American car producers appreciate Japanese car producers, i.e. like a hole in the head.

There are also men who will become frustrated over their failure to get married. They will become destructive and perhaps even self-destructive in their behaviour: Higher criminal rates, higher suicide rates, an increase in drinking and drug use can be expected, moreover, these men will die earlier than married men. This behaviour has also in fact been described in relation to theories of conflict behaviour; when a dramatic fall downward occurs, especially economically or socially, the unfulfilled expectations of the person concerned will manifest itself as extreme frustration (Wiberg 1986, 54ff.).

Thus far the discussion has focused on a surplus of men and on the implications that this may have on assortative mating at a disequilibrium marriage market. Of course there can also be a surplus of women in the marriageable

and fertile age range. Will women, given that they are in surplus, behave the same at the disequilibrium marriage market? This answer to this question is, to a large extent, yes. While men in a surplus situation at a disequilibrium marriage market chose *substitution*, i.e. to replace a native woman with an imported one, women can be assumed to chose to *leave the disequilibrium marriage market* on which they are in surplus, i.e. migrate to a marriage market where the chances of getting married are higher.

Becker (1974a, S22) predicted that the actor will continue to search for a partner as long as the expected gains from marriage exceed the information costs in the search for a partner. To start looking for a partner on another marriage market is rational as long as the search cost remains acceptable to the actor. Some empirical evidence exists to support Becker (1974). Ortiz (1996, 478f.) studied the migration behaviour of Puerto Rican women in the 1980s. The findings indicate that these women used migration to counteract limited marriage possibilities in Puerto Rico and to escape the traditional family pattern. In a study of Afro-American women in the USA, covering the period 1979–1986, McLaughlin and Lichter (1997, 591f.) conclude that marriage can be used as a means to escape long-term welfare dependence and poverty. To have access to economically attractive men is also important in explaining marriage behaviour among the analysed group of poor Afro-American women. Although McLaughlin and Lichter (1997) do not analyse what impact migration has on the marriage behaviour of poor women the findings do not contradict the predictions made by Becker (1974a, S22). Stark (1988, 32) argues that marriage migration can be seen as a means for women to plan for a better life in a life-time perspective.

If surplus men on a disequilibrium marriage market substitute native women for imported ones and surplus women on a disequilibrium marriage market chose to exit through emigration one of the main implications of these decisions on disequilibrium marriage markets will be marriage migration. If the marriage market tends, as do all markets, towards a state of equilibrium marriage migration can mitigate (or even solve) the state of disequilibrium on marriage markets in both the country where there is a surplus of e.g. men and in the country where there is a surplus of e.g. women. In line with neoclassical macro theory on migration such migration will continue until the differences between the two marriage markets have levelled out.

$$M_{A,t} = D_{A,t-n} + \frac{1}{l} + S_{B,t-m} + \varepsilon \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

This reasoning can be formalised into a model (Equation 1). Marriage migration to geographical area *A* at time *t* will depend on three things: (1) if men are in surplus at a marriage market in the geographical area *A* there will be a demand for women of marriageable and fertile age. This demand *D* will probably arise

after the men have realised what options they have available to them, i.e. a time lag $t-n$ is expected; (2) simultaneously there must be an excess supply of women of marriageable and fertile age, S , in another geographical area, B . Again a time lag can be assumed, $t-m$, as it will take some time for them to realise what options they have before entering another marriage market; and, finally, (3) the information cost, I , for meeting has to be low. This is especially important if the actors in geographical areas A and B are distant. An error term ε is also inserted in the model.

Concluding remarks

The aim of this chapter was to discuss some theoretical ideas concerning the qualitative causes and implications of a disequilibrium marriage market. It was assumed that the actors wanted to get married and that they were able and willing to change partners in order to become better off; that not only low-quality men would find it difficult to find a partner, but any man could, potentially, be rejected by the disequilibrium market; and that there was a distinction between the short- and long-term effects of a disequilibrium marriage market. The theoretical discussion was based on Becker (1973, 1974a, 1993) and Cigno (1994), and their toolbox of New Home Economics; Easterlin, and consumer choice theory have also contributed to the discussion. The use of economic theory to analyse marriage and migration provides a method of generating empirically falsifiable predictions about human behaviour.

The four causes of a disequilibrium marriage market are as follows: (1) a reduction of men through war, (2) migration, (3) if more males than females are born, or *vice versa*, (4) the existence of social or cultural mores which lead parents to seek to rid themselves of unwanted of the “wrong” sex, either through abortion or infanticide. Any man, if there is an excess supply of men, runs the risk of being unable to find a partner. Furthermore, they will face high search costs for an acceptable match. Since the women on the disequilibrium market have the opportunity to raise their prices, women in general will become more expensive. In the long-term, when the price ceiling is reached, a rational man will start searching for a less expensive and more competitive match and will seek to import her to his local marriage market to substitute for the more expensive local option. Unless the native woman lowers her price she will price herself out of the market. If she remains “uncompetitive” she runs the risk of losing some of the gains from the short-term effects of a disequilibrium marriage market such as, for example, the various gains made in respect of gender equality. Other men may become frustrated and eventually exhibiting destructive and/or

self-destructive behaviour. Surplus women on the marriage market will look for a partner at a marriage market where they perceive they have a higher chance of finding a good marriage partner. This may be in another part of the country or even abroad.

An empirically testable theoretical model was constructed in this chapter. Marriage migration will occur if there is a demand for marriageable women in one geographical area and there is a surplus of marriageable women who are willing to migrate in another geographical area. The transaction or information costs play a central role in the match-making related to marriage migration. Membership of a global match-making internet site costs the same whether you intent to search for a partner in your own home town or in another country. This implies the existence of relatively low search costs.

Analogous to the neo-classical macro theory of migration we can then expect the outlined model of marriage to continue until disequilibrium has been reached at the marriage markets in the geographical areas of origin and destination. The results reported in this chapter indicate that the long-term effects of disequilibrium marriage markets may be more far-reaching than one might initially expect, which, in turn, calls for further research into this subject, both empirically and theoretically.

Notes

1. This paper has had a rather long gestation period. Some of the main lines of enquiry date from my Master's Thesis in 1995. The ideas presented there were developed further in a seminar paper written in 1996. As I changed subject for my doctoral thesis, the seminar paper was never presented, but put in the bookshelf to collect dust. During the last few years however, I have been involved in a number of studies on the migration of women and most recently, on the outmigration of women from rural areas in Europe and the way in which this creates a sex ratio imbalance. This 'outmigration' paper indicated results that seemed to confirm my predictions from the mid-1990s. As such, this happy juxtaposition of old and new provided me with the impetus to revisit the topic in a more structured fashion to see whether my initial impressions were indeed sound.
2. Culturally speaking, countries such as China and India can even be seen to strive for disequilibrium. Since boys are considered to be more 'valuable', parents often get rid of unwanted girls through abortion or infanticide. In a European context many young women seek to leave rural and peripheral

areas where opportunities for them are lacking; as the young men disproportionately stay disequilibrium marriage markets are created (ESPON 2012).

3. The notion, “lower-quality” men and women implies that they are less productive than the others. Becker is however not precise when discussing “inferior”-marriages: one interpretation is that high-quality men have too many low-quality women; a second interpretation is that men have to marry women from another class, religion, race, age etc.; and a third is that the former two are not mutually exclusive.
4. Mixed marriages refers here to marriages where the spouses are from different countries, ethnicity etc. and not only of mixed race.
5. This could perhaps also be described as an escape from the local/regional marriage market since the utility of a marriage with a lower quality man will be too low for her.
6. In 1987 a small town in northern Sweden tried to import women from Stockholm to their local marriage market. This Swedish town was however not the first to try this: two Spanish mountain villages tried to import women from Barcelona and Madrid in the same way. In the Swedish case, the import of Russian women from northern Russia has been institutionalised with successful results, and has indeed been ongoing since the late 1980s.

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Elli Heikkilä and Daniel Rauhut (eds.)

Marriage Migration and Multicultural Relationships

With human mobility on the rise, multicultural marriages have become noticeably more common in the past decades. The marriage market has thus expanded over time, going from being exclusively local and national to becoming increasingly global. Marriage, in turn, has become a significant factor that influences migration. This edited book looks at marriage migration and multicultural marriages from a wide range of viewpoints and takes into account the spectrum of dynamism.

This edited book aims to deliver more information and a greater understanding of how dynamic multicultural marriages are in different societies around the world. The book includes chapters that look at the phenomenon globally but also provide views at the national and local levels.



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