

## **Workshop 45**

### **Marriage and Migration: Heterogamy and Homogamy in a Changing World**

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In a world in which the migration, movement, and mixing of peoples seems to be increasing dramatically - thus increasing the opportunities for people to interact with others of different cultural backgrounds - while at the same time the ideology of multiculturalism has given rise to the reassertion of putative primordial differences between peoples, interesting questions are raised about the relationships between political rhetoric and social action, groupness and individuality, and the public and the private. The rate of intermarriage is considered by sociologists to be the single most important statistical test of the strength or weakness of structural divisions within societies. What do we as social anthropologists and ethnologists have to say about heterogamy and homogamy in situations of movement and flux in the contemporary world, and what does this tell us about the ways that we conceptualise the structures and processes of boundary-definition?

### **Marrying a Foe, Living With a Friend: Greek-Turkish Couples in Greece**

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Addressing the issue of ethnic mixture and transnational families, this paper investigates specifically the experiences of Greek-Turkish couples living in Athens (Greece). The act of marrying a national "foe" is by no means unique: we ask however if it acquires new meanings in the context of expanding immigrant flows to a nation-state which has so far impetuously underlined its racial purity and cultural integrity. Our primary intention is to explore how official/ nationalist discourse and collective representations about national history, interact with the perceptions, choices and interrelations of couples involved in a socially degraded form of intermarriage. Looking at the memories, traditions, educational and social capital each of the two partners brings into the family domain, we exemplify that classifications based on ethnicity and culture fail to grasp the complex ways in which individuals understand and rephrase images concerning their respective

countries and peoples. Crossing political borders that have for long been imbued with animosity seems to endow actors with awareness and sensitivity which simultaneously facilitate them to deal with negative concepts of heterogeneity and generate new boundaries in the realm of family life.

### **Interethnic Marriages, Changing Rules and Shifting Boundaries Among the Wampar (Papua New Guinea)**

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Today migrants from other New Guinea provinces are coming in great numbers into Wampar territory. These immigrants intend to stay, in marked contrast to Wampar migrants who work for a period of time in cities and then return to their villages. Census data show a dramatic population growth over the last thirty years. Wampar villages are located in a semi-urban area near the town of Lae with opportunities for frequent interethnic contact. Wealthy Wampar are preferred marriage partners for migrants from other provinces. Wampar kin-groups are patrilineal. Every Wampar still belongs to a clan and a lineage, though clan affiliation has lost importance. A patrilineal ideology still exists, but kinship is tending toward a more bilateral system. One reason is the growing number of interethnic marriages with men from other tribes. The main landowning group is the patrilineage. Land is important for gardens and areca palms. Normally male children inherit the rights to their father's lands. Daughters inherit land rights if they do not have brothers, if they stay unmarried, or if their lineage is rich in land and they are married to a landless Wampar or non-Wampar. In my paper I am going to address changes in marriage rules and practices and their consequences for the kinship system and land ownership.

### **Living In-Between or Becoming “the Other”? Negotiating Identity by Means of Inter-Ethnic Marriage in Timoc River Valley, North-Eastern Serbia**

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Our paper is a case study of an intercultural wedding between a Vlach woman and a Serbian man that took place in the village of Slatina-Bor in north-east Serbia one year ago. This marriage triggered a crisis in the life of the community. At the social microlevel the family mirrors the ethnic conflict in society and the political atmosphere can generate enmity, prejudice, stereotypes and even intolerance and hatred. Looking through the lens of a microscope we can argue that interethnic reveal complex and profound processes of cultural exchange. It is argued that ethnicity only sets up the symbolic boundary one group draws and claims in relation to the other: that is, the ethnic reference only has a relational significance and is continually rediscussed and redefined within a game of cultural differentiation, played

out at both public and private levels; a principle that is well illustrated by the creation and negotiation of the new affinal (inlaw) relationships between people belonging to different ethnic groups that are the consequence of intercultural marriages.

### **Being a Daughter-in-Law in a Changing World: Kosovo-Albanian Mothers in a Swiss Town**

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Last year I led an integration project with Kosovo-Albanian women and their babies in a middle-sized Swiss town. One aim of the project was to find out about the situation of Kosovo-Albanian people when they become parents in an exile situation. The most striking point concerning our regular meetings was the fact that the conversation of the women very often dealt with one and the same subject: they lamented about their mothers-in-law with great passion. The aim of my contribution is to discuss the rather conflictive relation between these women and their inlaws. A lot of Kosovo-Albanian men with a residence permit in Switzerland marry women from their region of origin. At first, the young woman is happy about the promising prospect of living in a country with better economic and social opportunities. Contrary to her expectations of living “a modern way of life” she is experiencing now a situation of withdrawal, and as a newcomer she has no social network of her own. I suggest that the wishes and objectives of Kosovo-Albanian women, who migrate to Switzerland because of marriage, are in conflict with the aims of the in-laws to create and maintain familiar cultural solidarities.

### **Of Fragmentation and a New Solidarity: Horizontal Family Extensions Through Repartnering**

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Research on divorce has shown its social, economic, demographic, psychological, and legal effects on society, the partners and of course the children involved. These studies are, however, all based on the direct aftermath of a divorce, that is, within two years. Consequently, the negative effects of divorce have been emphasised over and over again. One explanation social scientists give of the ever-growing rate of divorce is the increasing individualisation of the western world. However, when looking at the consequences of divorce on the long run, certain cases show exactly the opposite: not family fragmentation and ongoing conflicts, but family extension and a larger family solidarity, including the new partners of the divorcees, and their children out of former marriages/ long-term relationships. Can we relate these new kinds of relationships to religious, ethnic, and/ or social notions held among members of these kinds of extended families? This paper offers some first, cautious answers to these questions based on anthropological research among twelve

families in the Netherlands.

### **Negotiating Masculinity and Femininity: Exploring Meanings of Gender in Marriages Between Western/ Christian Women and Egyptian/ Muslim Men**

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Increasing migration has resulted in a growing number of crossborder marriages. In my paper, I will discuss some aspects concerning cross marriages between Muslim Egyptian men and Western Christian women. The empirical part of this paper is based on in-depth interviews with mixed marriage families living in Egypt. A major objective of this study is to examine what challenges migrated women face in adjusting to and making sense of the shifting social, cultural and religious landscapes. I have particularly focused on in what ways women experience and organise their ordinary lives including duties, expectations and responsibilities. Women who have migrated are caught up in relations of culture, religion and gender particular to their new social, cultural and political environments yet do not leave behind their histories. According to the interviewees, different conceptions of gender roles, intimacy and sexuality has been a contributing factor in creating conflicts in their daily lives. Therefore, I have been particularly attentive to how perceptions of masculinity and femininity are illustrated in their narratives and in what ways these perceptions are interconnected to different value systems.

### **Intermarriages in Northern Ireland: The Case of Muslim Community**

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Sectarianism between the Catholic and Protestant communities characterises the socio-political life of Northern Ireland. Intermarriages between the two communities are complex and have been studied recently. Yet, in these studies, the ethnic minorities living in the region are not often taken into consideration and very few data are available. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Muslim community, which, according to the last census, numbers 2,000 people. During my research and fieldwork focusing on the identity construction of the local Muslim community, I became aware of a certain number of intermarriages in particular between Catholic women and Muslim men. In this paper, I shall discuss this phenomenon taking in consideration the socio-political environment of the region and the effects that these intermarriages have on the new-formed families. In particular the paper will focus on practical decisions about livelihood, residential choice, kinship relations, children's upbringing as well as emotional and cultural complexities deriving from the marriages.

## **Polish-Icelandic Mixed Marriages**

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With the political transformation after 1989, new patterns of migration have emerged in Poland. Permanent outflow has decreased and temporary labour movements became the dominant form of mobility. Although Germany continues to hold leading position among destination countries, new directions in cross-border movement from Poland have appeared. Iceland is an instructive example. Since 1989 this country has become a significant destination for labour migrants from certain areas in Poland, and gradually Polish citizens have become the most numerous foreign nationality. In the first years, it was predominantly a movement of women who worked in the fishing industry, usually in the fishing plants located in the small villages around Iceland (regions of high out-flows to the capital area). These migrations – planned as only temporary – often resulted in Polish-Icelandic marriages, in most cases followed with decisions about permanent settlement. The purpose of my paper is to analyse the various obstacles, difficulties, and misunderstandings encountered in the everyday lives of these mixed families.