



## Spouse Selection and Marriage Processes in a Transnational Setting: Results from a Longitudinal Qualitative Study

Studies investigating the marriage patterns of immigrants in Germany point out that with regard to immigrants from Turkey the vast majority of the concluded marriages are intra-ethnic (Haug 2010, pp 47–48). An important share of these marriages are apparently at the same time transnational, i.e. concluded with a partner who until the marriage has been living in Turkey (cf. Baykara-Krumme & Fuß 2009; Kalter & Schroedter 2010). Strong (family) ties to the country of origin and disadvantages on the marriage market in the country of destination for immigrants from Turkey seem to be two important reasons that contribute to the perpetuation of marriage migration processes (González-Ferrer 2006; Straßburger 2004, Timmerman, Lodewyckx & Wets 2009). Quantitative as well as qualitative studies that have been conducted on this subject focus on the perceptions and preferences of the spouses residing in Germany (Kalter & Schroedter 2008, 2010, Baykara-Krumme & Fuß 2009; Straßburger 2003).

In order to understand the characteristics of the partnership formation and the marriage migration processes better, the perceptions of both spouses have to be taken into consideration. This aim is at the core of our study entitled “Marriage Migration from Turkey to Germany – A Qualitative Longitudinal and Dyadic Perspective”. We conducted in-depth interviews with spouses who were at the time of the first interview living in Turkey and respectively resided in Germany. The interviews were done with both females and males and included biographical narratives as well as instant narrations about ongoing experiences at different time points. As a consequence, we have first-hand reports of individuals who were engaged in a transnational partnership and reported about issues such as how their relation started, which factors affected the decision to conclude a marriage with a person living in another country, etc. This study tries to map out how the spouse selection and marriage processes are evolving in the case of transnational marriages. Obviously gender specific issues are of central importance to our analyses. Our data allow us to look at different dimensions of these (initially) transnational partnerships:

On the EAPS conference we would like to focus on dimensions that we deem important in the *period before the partners started to live together* in Germany. This includes issues such as

- how initial contacts between the partners were established,
- how communication among the couple was facilitated,



- what kind of experiences the partners shared prior to marriage,
- what kind of events were typically taking place in the time period before marriage and how the temporal order and density of these events was,
- what potential role other family members other than the couple itself have played,
- what the expectations of the partners were from each other and the marriage as well as from a life in Germany or Turkey.

These dimensions will not only allow us delineate characteristics that are specific to relationships on distance, but also will contribute to a better understanding of spouse selection and partnership formation processes in a transnational context.

## References

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