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The geographies of recruiting a partner from abroad

An exploration of Swedish data

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Arbetsrapport/Institutet för Framtidsstudier; 2009:21

Working Paper/Institute for Futures Studies; 2009:21

Stockholm 2009

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Summary

International marriages are both a result and a driver of higher levels of global mobility and interconnectivity. Increasing ease of air travel for work and leisure, rising numbers of individuals studying, working and travelling abroad, and the emergence of international partnering websites have expanded traditionally local marriage fields – the geographical areas where people meet the partner – to global proportions. This expansion has increased the chance of meeting a potential partner from abroad resulting in an increase in international marriage migration. Recruiting a partner from abroad is surrounded by prejudice and stigma. ‘Knowledge’ about the characteristics of the individual ‘importing’ a partner from abroad is often based on anecdotic evidence and myths. In this paper we explore the factors that determine the probability that a native Swede recruits a partner from abroad. Along with various demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the Swede we will pay specific attention to the geographies of marriage migration: the opportunity structure. This study uses longitudinal population data for the whole of Sweden, containing information on all individuals who lived in Sweden between 1994 and 2004. The results from multinomial logistic regression models shed a unique light on gendered and geographic patterns of partner recruitment.

Sammanfattning

Giftermål över nationsgränser är såväl ett resultat av, som en drivkraft bakom, ökad global rörlighet. Flera olika faktorer har bidragit till att giftermålsfälten – det geografiska område där människor träffar sin partner – utvidgats till global räckvidd. Denna expansion har ökat chansen att träffa en potential partner från något annat land, vilket i sin tur ökat antalet internationella giftermål. Det finns dock en hel del fördomar och myter kring dessa giftermål vilket speglar den begränsade kunskap som finns om giftermål över nationsgränser. I denna rapport undersöks vilka faktorer som påverkar sannolikheten att en svensk gifter sig med en partner från utlandet. Tillsammans med demografiska och socioekonomiska variabler, läggs särskild vikt vid geografiska aspekter, däribland möjlighetsstrukturen. Rapporten använder longitudinella data för hela den svenska befolkningen mellan år 1994-2004. Resultaten ger en unik bild av framförallt de könsmissiga och geografiska aspekterna av internationella giftermål.

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Introduction

International marriage migration is a rapidly increasing feature of modern societies in a globalising world (Cottrell, 1990; Johnson and Warren, 1994; Lu, 2005; Jones and Shen, 2008; Niedomysl et al., forthcoming). Current trends of marriage migration differ from more incidental rises in marriage migration in the past, such as marriage migration resulting from war (see e.g. Strauss, 1954 on war brides). Contemporary marriage migration is a more consistent and permanent phenomenon linked to processes of globalisation and increasing global interconnectivity. International marriages are both a result and a driver of higher levels of mobility and global interconnectivity and do not only affect individual lives, but also the receiving and sending societies of marriage migrants. The increase in marriage migration has significant implications for the internal and foreign policies of nation states and raises important questions about citizenship, nationality and integration.

The rise in marriage migration is the result of ever expanding marriage fields – the geographical areas where people meet to partner. Increasing ease of air travel for work and leisure, rising numbers of individuals studying, working and travelling abroad, and the emergence of international partnering websites have expanded traditionally local marriage fields to global proportions (Niedomysl et al., forthcoming). However, as Jones and Shen (2008) recently noted, it is easy to cite factors that may have increased the incidence of international marriages, but it is very difficult to sort out the relative importance of these factors. Jones and Shen

(2008) distinguish two different types of factors. The first relates to the deliberate and targeted search for a spouse outside one's own country (typically using mediating agencies) and the second relates more generally to increased mobility and interconnectivity. A third factor linked to the two mentioned is that modernisation processes may have brought about more positive attitudes towards marrying someone from outside his or her own group (Hendrickx, 1994; Uunk, 1996).

Relatively little is known about the characteristics of those who 'import' a partner from abroad. As with most emerging and rapidly growing societal phenomena, a lack of factual knowledge is a breeding ground for stereotypes and prejudice. International marriage migration is by no means an exception (Nordin, 2007). Prejudice is likely to have a negative effect on marriage migrants and their spouses, and has a potential deterring effect upon those who may be contemplating getting married to a foreigner. Prejudice might even influence government immigration policies. There are plenty of stereotypical images of those who marry a foreign partner, and most of them apply to men. For instance, men 'importing' wives are being portrayed as patriarchal sex-maniacs, living in remote rural areas, and being unable to find a local partner with modern values and preferences. These stereotypes may, or may not, contain some element of truth, but a lack of data in most countries has made it impossible to study even the most rudimentary characteristics of those recruiting a partner from abroad. Researchers have only quite recently begun chartering the most basic socio-economic characteristics of marriage migrants and their partners. For example, Nedomysl et al. (forthcoming) have found that a substantial proportion of Swedes who marry a foreign partner are female, while most existing literature on marriage migration focuses almost exclusively on males recruiting a partner from abroad.

This paper focuses on Sweden as a destination country for international marriage migrants. Our main interest is in exploring the factors that determine the probability that a Swede recruits a partner from abroad. Along with various demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the Swede we will pay specific attention to the geographies of marriage migration. To provide a context for international marriages between native Swedes and their foreign partners we will compare these marriages with all other couples who get married in Sweden. The remainder of the text is structured as follows. The next section presents a review of international literature on marriage migration and results from previous research on international marriage migration to Sweden. The literature review provides the foundations for our aim and hypotheses. Next, we discuss the unique

Swedish longitudinal population data we used and associated methods of analysis. In the results section we present both descriptive statistics and modelling outcomes. The paper ends with a conclusion and discussion.

Background

Theoretical perspectives

The literature distinguishes two (related) theoretical approaches to understand patterns of intermarriage (following Kalmijn, 1998; Lievens, 1998; Klein, 2001). The first approach emphasises the role of individual preferences. In general, people choose a partner from their own group (endogamy) and close in social status (homogamy) (Kalmijn, 1998). The result is that partners are often very similar in terms of age, level of education, ethnic background, religion, and social status. Marriage patterns are also connected with the mutual satisfaction of needs – whether concerned with diverse issues such as age, physical attractiveness, economic security, charm or the attainment of a residence permit (Klein, 2001; Górný and Kepinska, 2004). In terms of understanding who recruits a partner from abroad, some people might deliberately search for a foreign partner because they look for characteristics they can not find locally.

A second approach emphasises the role of the opportunity structure of the marriage market. This opportunity structure determines the probability that someone is able to realise his or her preferences. The choice of a partner is constrained by the demographic composition of the search area and the type and number of meeting places people frequently visit (England and Farkas, 1986; Mare, 1991; Blossfeld and Meyer, 1988; Dagsvik, 2000; Kalmijn and Flap, 2001). The opportunity structure of the marriage market plays an important role in our understanding of who chooses a partner from abroad. Someone might simply not be able to find a local partner because of an unbalanced gender structure of the local market or because the preferences of an individual do not match the supply of available partners. Those who operate on a global marriage market, such as frequent travellers, are also more likely to find a foreign partner.

The above two approaches come together in what is called the marriage market (Blau, 1977; Kalmijn, 1998). The marriage market consists of a demand side where individual preferences play a role (with regard to love, physical attraction, income and social status, age, ethnicity, religion, etcetera) and a supply side, the opportunity structure of the market. The opportunity structure determines the probability that someone is able to realise his or her preferences. A literature review by Houston et al. (2005) shows that the marriage market metaphor is not only used to study the

relative availability of suitable partners at the local level, but also on an international scale.

International marriage migration to Sweden

Sweden has been a country of significant net-immigration since the 1940s, but studies of marriages between immigrants and Swedes are rare. Cretser (1999) was one of the first to study marriages between Swedes and foreigners. In his study, covering the years 1971 to 1993, he found that, while the number of marriages between Swedes had declined slightly, the number of cross national marriages had increased significantly over the study period by almost 50 per cent. The most dominant group of marriage migrants came from the other Nordic countries, but marriages with non-Nordic spouses were found to be on the rise. The increase in marriages to non-Nordic spouses was found to follow the same pattern as overall immigration figures. Since the 1950s, Sweden has experienced a shift in immigration from predominately labour migrants to refugees. While the earlier groups of migrants often came from the Nordic countries, more recent immigrants tend to come from war-ridden countries. Çelikaksoy et al. (2006) note that since many Western countries nowadays are imposing restrictions on immigration, marriage migration has become the most attractive way by far to gain admittance to any West European country.

In a recent study (Niedomysl et al., forthcoming) a more narrow definition of marriage migrants was employed. Marriage migrants were defined as immigrants who moved to Sweden and got married to a native Swede within the year of arriving in Sweden. The study by Niedomysl and colleagues was the first to study marriage migration using population registration data for a whole country over a 14 year period. Their results showed that although the increase of international migration to Sweden has been relatively modest during the years 1990-2004, an increase of 17 per cent, the numbers of international marriage migrants have increased substantially by 37 per cent. The work by Niedomysl and colleagues yielded two major new insights in patterns of international marriage migration not previously recorded in the literature. The first was that they found a substantial proportion of all marriage migrants in Sweden to be males (42 per cent in 2004). This was surprising as the marriage migration literature is strongly biased towards female marriage migration and the experiences of mail-order brides in particular (see also del Rosario 1994; Glodava and Onizuka 1994; Robinson 1996; Lu 2005). Their results showed that there is a large gap in our knowledge of marriage migration as we know very little about the characteristics of women recruiting a partner from abroad. The

second major insight arising from their empirical work is that the pattern of geographical origins of marriage migrants is highly gendered. They found male and female marriage migrants in Sweden to originate from very different regions of the world. Female marriage migrants were found to originate mainly from Southeast and other Asia, Eastern Europe and Russia, and South America, a finding which fits in literature on mail-order brides (Paez Minervini and McAndrew, 2006). Male marriage migrants were found to originate mainly from Western Europe, Africa and Middle East, Northern America and Australia. Gender differences in regions of origin were found to be large, for example, 29 per cent of the female marriage migrants in Sweden originated from Southeast and other Asia, while only 4 per cent of the male marriage migrants originated from this world-region. The fastest growing groups of marriage migrants were women from Northern Africa and the Middle East, although absolute numbers were small, followed by women from Southeast and other Asia and South America. Male marriage migration showed more moderate growth rates.

The study by Nedomysl et al. (forthcoming) also investigated age and educational differences between marriage migrants and native Swedes. Considerable age differences between spouses were found in cases when the female marriage migrant originated from a low income country: these women were on average 11 years younger than their male Swedish partner. No large age differences were found between spouses when the marriage migrant originated from a high income country. Swedish women who recruited a partner from abroad tended to be of roughly the same age regardless of whether the spouse came from a high or low income country (Nedomysl et al., forthcoming). The study by Nedomysl and colleagues raised important questions on the mechanisms behind marriage migration. Which Swedes recruit a partner from abroad and how do their characteristics relate to the characteristics of those partnering with a native Swede?

Aim and hypotheses

The aim of this paper is to explore the factors that determine the probability that a native Swede recruits a partner from abroad. We will investigate to what extent stereotypes like that of an older man with a low level of education and living in a rural area who 'imports' a female from a poor country holds any truth in Sweden. We will pay special attention to gender differences in marriage patterns. The literature on marriage migration has mainly focussed on men recruiting a partner from abroad and very little is

known about the characteristics of women recruiting a partner from abroad. In our models, we will investigate the effect of a range of basic demographic and socioeconomic factors of native Swedish males and females on the probability that they partner with another native Swede, a marriage migrant from a rich country or a marriage migrant from a poor country.

We will pay special attention to the effect of spatial context variables – which reflect the local opportunity structure of the marriage market – on marriage patterns. Based on our literature review we will test the following three hypotheses:

1. We expect that the probability of recruiting a partner from abroad is related to the population density of the region where the native Swede lives. We have two contrasting hypotheses. First, people in sparsely populated areas are less likely to find a partner who matches their preferences and are therefore more likely to recruit a partner from abroad. Second, people in cities are more likely to recruit a partner from abroad because urban dwellers can be expected to be more open to marrying someone from another group and can be expected to be more likely to operate on an international marriage market.

2. Second, we expect that the gender balance of the local marriage market will have an effect on the probability that someone recruits a partner from abroad. For example, in regions with a relative shortage of women, men will be more likely to recruit from more distant marriage markets.

3. Third, we expect that especially men living in regions with a generally traditional view on gender roles are more likely to recruit a partner from abroad because they find it difficult to find a partner locally. We have no specific hypothesis regarding women looking for a partner.

Research design and data

Population data

For this project we used a longitudinal micro database of the entire Swedish population drawn from a number of different administrative registers (Statistics Sweden, 2005). From an international perspective, the database is unique as it consists of linked annual demographic, geographic and socioeconomic data for each individual living in Sweden, for the whole 1994 to 2004 period. For our study we used information on all individuals between 17 and 75 years old. A person is included in the data once the age of 17 is reached and excluded at younger ages. Because we study the probability that someone gets married during the study period, we excluded all individuals who were married continuously during the 1994–2004 study

period. Those who get married during this period are only included up to the year they get married and are subsequently removed from the data, as they are no longer 'at risk' of getting married. In the event an individual experiences a divorce or widowhood, he or she (re)enters the data as a single person in the next year. Since we study the probability that someone gets married between year t and year $t-1$ we only use the 1994 data to establish whether someone got married between 1994 and 1995.

The total number of individuals included in the study is 4,745,492. However, since the majority of individuals are at risk of getting married for several years, the total number of person years used in our analyses is 33,168,196. Due to immigration, the total number of singles present in a given year increased from approximately 3.2 million in 1994 to 3.6 million in 2004. It is interesting to note that of the four categories of civic status analysed in this study, the two marriage migrant categories are the ones increasing most during the study period. The number of marriages with migrants from poor countries increases with a factor 1.66 between 1995 and 2004.

Table 1. Descriptive results. Civic status of the native Swedes included in the study each year between 1995 and 2004.

		Not married	Married^a	Married to rich country marriage migrant	Married to poor country marriage migrant
Gender	Male	17,148,771	376,759 (96,33%)	3,773 (0,96%)	10,601 (2,71%)
	Female	16,305,269	368,543 (97,06%)	5,189 (1,37%)	5,977 (1,57%)
Age	< 35 years	15,967,445	453,524 (97,34%)	4,711 (1,01%)	7,668 (1,65%)
	35-54 years	10,761,655	256,298 (95,97%)	3,457 (1,29%)	7,314 (2,74%)
	>=55 years	6,725,010	35,481 (93,69%)	794 (2,10%)	1,596 (4,21%)
Educational level	Low level	8,316,066	103,261 (95,99%)	900 (0,84%)	3,413 (3,17%)
	Intermediate level	16,285,084	349,907 (96,70%)	3,672 (1,01%)	8,267 (2,28%)
	High level	7,977,141	271,074 (97,00%)	3,788 (1,36%)	4,609 (1,65%)
Employment status	Employed	20,614,431	571,773 (97,31%)	5,050 (0,86%)	10,757 (1,83%)
	Unemployed	4,878,323	71,948 (95,11%)	1,432 (1,89%)	2,267 (3,00%)
	Non-employed	7,961,356	101,582 (94,39%)	2,480 (2,30%)	3,554 (3,30%)
Income	Low	15,697,087	243,660 (95,21%)	4,824 (1,88%)	7,437 (2,91%)
	Middle	15,240,554	394,616 (97,44%)	3,135 (0,77%)	7,214 (1,78%)
	High	2,372,295	99,647 (97,34%)	929 (0,91%)	1,792 (1,75%)
Work sector gender balance	Male dominated	7,061,296	169,221 (97,07%)	1,170 (0,67%)	3,932 (2,26%)
	Gender balanced	20,558,649	422,229 (96,27%)	6,209 (1,42%)	10,156 (2,32%)
	Female dominated	5,834,165	153,853 (97,42%)	1,583 (1,00%)	2,490 (1,58%)
Population density	Largest cities	12,514,429	325,692 (96,14%)	4,552 (1,34%)	8,511 (2,51%)
	Other cities	11,776,260	252,276 (97,12%)	2,691 (1,04%)	4,786 (1,84%)
	Medium density	5,265,980	105,012 (97,28%)	1,031 (0,96%)	1,905 (1,76%)
	Low density	1,877,547	32,151 (97,20%)	306 (0,93%)	620 (1,87%)
	Remote rural areas	2,017,697	30,152 (96,36%)	382 (1,22%)	756 (2,42%)
Gender region	Other regions	28,188,259	649,696 (96,61%)	8,056 (1,20%)	14,747 (2,19%)
	Gender traditional	5,263,654	95,587 (97,22%)	906 (0,92%)	1,831 (1,86%)
Gender balance municipality	Male dominated	5,651,426	104,991 (96,98%)	1,150 (1,06%)	2,115 (1,95%)
	Gender balanced	21,367,723	480,084 (96,79%)	5,467 (1,10%)	10,443 (2,11%)
	Female dominated	6,434,961	160,228 (96,18%)	2,345 (1,41%)	4,020 (2,41%)

^aNote that percentages add up to the total of the three marriage groups (not including the not married group). For details see text.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable in our model indicates whether an individual gets married in a given year or remains single. The variable has four different categories: (1) remaining single (including divorcees and widows); (2) getting married, excluding getting married to a marriage migrant; (3) getting married to a marriage migrant from a rich country; and (4) getting married to a marriage migrant from a poor country. To define rich and poor countries, we used a country classification from the World Bank (2007) in which countries are classified based on their gross national income, which is thought to be indicative of their economic level of development.

Table 1 gives a summary of the dependent variable by gender (top two rows with data). As can be seen, more Swedish men recruit a partner from abroad than Swedish women. Swedish men recruited 3,773 women from rich countries and 10,601 from poor countries. Swedish women recruited 5,189 men from rich countries and 5,977 men from poor countries. It is interesting to see that relatively speaking, Swedish women are more likely to recruit a partner from a rich country than Swedish men. For more detail on the characteristics of the marriage migrants, see Nedomysl et al. (forthcoming).

Method

We used a multinomial logistic regression model to determine the relationship between the probability to get married and a range of socio-economic characteristics. The approach is similar to an ordinary logistic regression model with the important exception that the dependent variable can have more than two values, in our case representing four different civic status categories with remaining single as the reference category. In Table 2 for men and Table 3 for women, we report odds ratios for the predictors instead of coefficients. Odds ratios are the exponentiation of the coefficients and indicate how the risk of the outcome falling in the comparison group (Married; Married to rich country marriage migrant; Married to poor country marriage migrant) compared to the risk of the outcome falling in the reference group (being single) changes with the variable in question. An odds ratio of larger than 1 indicates that the risk of the outcome falling in the comparison group relative to the risk of the outcome falling in the referent group increases as the variable increases. An odds ratio of lower than 1 indicates that the risk of the outcome falling in the comparison group relative to the risk of the outcome falling in the referent group decreases as the variable increases.

Independent variables

To test our hypotheses we included several basic demographic, socio-economic and spatial context variables in our model. The age variable has three categories: (1) younger than 35 years; (2) 35–54 years; and (3) older than 54 years. Four socio-economic variables are included: income, level of education, employment status and work sector gender balance. Individual annual income adjusted for inflation is measured in three categories: (1) low; (2) middle; and (3) high income. Level of education is measured in three categories: (1) low level (secondary school); (2) middle level (upper secondary); and (3) high level (university). The employment status variable records whether an individual is: (1) employed; (2) unemployed; or (3) non-employed. Non-employment is defined as not being available for work and not receiving unemployment benefits. This category includes students, house-wives/husbands and retired people. The work sector gender balance variable categorizes individuals' place of work sector as being either: (1) male dominated; (2) gender balanced; or (3) female dominated. All economic sectors where the percentage of women fell in the range of one standard deviation over or under the national average were categorised as gender-balanced. Otherwise the sector was categorised as either male or female dominated. Those without a job are included in the category gender balanced.

Three spatial context variables were included in our model: municipality level population density; municipality level gender balance; and a categorization of regions by gender roles. The 290 Swedish municipalities are comparable to local authority areas in the UK. Population density was measured in five categories: (1) the three largest Swedish city regions; (2) other large cities; (3) municipalities with a medium population density; (4) municipalities with a low population density; and (5) the most rural and remote municipalities. Three categories of municipality level gender balance were used: (1) male dominated municipality; (2) gender balanced municipality; and (3) female dominated municipality. If the percentage of women in a municipality fell in the range of one standard deviation over or under the national average, the municipality was categorised as gender-balanced. Otherwise the municipality was categorised as either male or female dominated.

The variable 'gender region' reflects regional differences in gender roles in Sweden. Based on a discussion of gender roles and geography in Sweden (Hirdman and Åström 1992; Forsberg 1997) a regional categorisation by gender roles is suggested. Forsberg (1997) makes use of several data sources, such as gendered employment figures, political representation, and

female entrepreneurship to depict the geographies of traditional, non-traditional and modern realms of gender roles in Swedish regions. It is important to mention that the categorization of regions by gender roles is rather crude and is naturally not representative of all inhabitants in the regions. However, in order to test whether regional differences in gender roles contribute to patterns of marriage migration a crude categorisation is necessary. In our models, we used a simple dichotomous variable indicating whether (1) or not (0) a municipality can be categorised as traditional in terms of gender roles. As a general rule of thumb, these traditional municipalities are located in less populous regions in the inland parts of Sweden. Table 1 gives a summary of the independent variables.

Results

We used two multinomial logistic regression models to gain insight in the effect of a range of independent variables on the probability of getting married to a Swede, getting married to a marriage migrant from a rich country and getting married to a marriage migrant from a poor country compared to remaining single. Table 2 presents the results for Swedish men and Table 3 presents the results for Swedish women. Reported parameter estimates are transformed into odds and reported with standard errors in parenthesis and stars to indicate the level of significance. We emphasize here that our dataset includes the total population of Swedish male and female singles in the 1994 to 2004 period, and not a sample. Therefore, the standard errors and levels of significance should not be interpreted as guides for errors involving inferences from a sample to the larger population. Rather, they provide a means of assessing the reliability of estimated coefficients given potential functional misspecifications and measurement errors in variables (see also Galster et al., 2008). We first discuss the results for men and women separately and then point out the most significant gender differences in a short summary in the last section of this paper.

Table 2. Multinomial logistic regression of the probability to marry for Swedish men with single as reference category (odds ratios).

		Married	Married to rich country marriage migrant	Married to poor country marriage migrant
		Exp(B) (S.E) Sig.	Exp(B) (S.E) Sig.	Exp(B) (S.E) Sig.
Age	< 35 years	2.361 (0.007)***	1.283 (0.063)***	0.736 (0.034)***
	35-54 years	2.166 (0.008)***	1.938 (0.062)***	1.763 (0.032)***
	>= 54 years (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Educational level	Low level	0.558 (0.006)***	0.181 (0.061)***	0.556 (0.031)***
	Intermediate level	0.683 (0.004)***	0.353 (0.039)***	0.746 (0.024)***
	High level (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Employment status	Employed	1.314 (0.008)***	0.907 (0.070)	1.097 (0.040)**
	Unemployed	0.777 (0.008)***	0.699 (0.068)***	0.914 (0.040)**
	Non-employed (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Income	Low	0.483 (0.007)***	0.920 (0.068)	1.036 (0.041)
	Middle	0.679 (0.005)***	0.802 (0.048)***	0.925 (0.030)***
	High (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Work sector gender balance	Male dominated	0.963 (0.007)***	0.909 (0.073)	1.196 (0.045)***
	Gender balanced	0.979 (0.007)***	1.185 (0.069)**	1.144 (0.044)***
	Female dominated (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Population density	Largest cities	1.420 (0.011)***	1.294 (0.105)**	1.385 (0.057)***
	Other cities	1.264 (0.010)***	0.911 (0.100)	0.988 (0.054)
	Medium density	1.241 (0.010)***	0.915 (0.099)	0.960 (0.053)
	Low density	1.050 (0.013)***	0.855 (0.127)	0.810 (0.070)***
	Remote rural areas(reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Gender region	Gender traditional	0.947 (0.006)***	0.781 (0.067)***	0.817 (0.036)***
Gender balance municipality	Male dominated	0.980 (0.007)***	1.131 (0.072)	1.105 (0.041)**
	Gender balanced	1.006 (0.005)	0.912 (0.042)**	1.022 (0.026)
	Female dominated (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000

*** = P < 0.01, ** = P < 0.05

Table 3. Multinomial logistic regression of the probability to marry for Swedish women with single as reference category (odds ratios).

		Married	Married to rich country marriage migrant	Married to poor country marriage migrant
		Exp(B) (S.E) Sig.	Exp(B) (S.E) Sig.	Exp(B) (S.E) Sig.
Age	< 35 years	9.256 (0.010)***	7.233 (0.069)***	16.709 (0.084)***
	35-54 years	5.598 (0.010)***	6.299 (0.071)***	10.413 (0.086)***
	>= 54 years (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Educational level	Low level	0.537 (0.006)***	0.308 (0.051)***	1.490 (0.040)***
	Intermediate level	0.682 (0.004)***	0.673 (0.032)***	1.391 (0.033)***
	High level (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Employment status	Employed	1.005 (0.007)	0.502 (0.050)***	0.613 (0.046)***
	Unemployed	0.600 (0.007)***	0.559 (0.045)***	0.654 (0.043)***
	Non-employed (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Income	Low	0.725 (0.009)***	1.763 (0.089)***	1.751 (0.098)***
	Middle	0.750 (0.008)***	1.029 (0.083)	1.421 (0.093)***
	High (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Work sector gender balance	Male dominated	0.998 (0.007)	0.823 (0.074)***	0.497 (0.073)***
	Gender balanced	0.942 (0.004)***	1.089 (0.037)**	0.828 (0.032)***
	Female dominated (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Population density	Largest cities	1.372 (0.011)***	1.443 (0.095)***	1.978 (0.092)***
	Other cities	1.232 (0.010)***	1.027 (0.091)	0.967 (0.089)
	Medium density	1.273 (0.010)***	1.018 (0.091)	0.841 (0.089)
	Low density	1.061 (0.013)***	0.660 (0.121)***	0.777 (0.113)**
	Remote rural areas(reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Gender region	Gender traditional	0.967 (0.006)***	0.762 (0.058)***	1.026 (0.054)
Gender balance municipality	Male dominated	1.176 (0.007)***	1.004 (0.062)	0.634 (0.062)***
	Gender balanced	1.087 (0.005)***	0.911 (0.036)***	0.839 (0.031)***
	Female dominated (reference cat)	1.000	1.000	1.000

*** = P < 0.01, ** = P < 0.05

The results in Table 2 show that for single men, the odds to marry to a Swedish woman are 2.4 times higher for men under 35 than for men over 54 years old. This is as one would expect: younger singles are more likely to find a partner than older singles. The effect of age on the probability to marry to a marriage migrant from a rich or a poor country is completely in line with the literature. Men between 35 and 54 constitute the group most likely to recruit a partner from abroad. A separate analysis (not shown) revealed that when those marrying a marriage migrant from a poor country are compared to those who marry to a native Swede, it is actually these over 54 who have the highest odds to recruit a partner from a poor country.

The effect of education is roughly the same for all three outcome categories. Those with the highest levels of education have the highest odds to get married. This pattern is especially accentuated among men marrying women from rich countries. The employment variable also shows roughly the same effect for all three outcome variables with the employed and the non-employed having the highest odds to marry. It is important to note that the non-employment category is rather heterogeneous. Those men categorised as unemployed are clearly the least favourite marriage partners. The income effect differs between the three outcome variables. With increasing income the odds to get married to a Swedish woman increase. Such a clear income effect is absent for the other two outcome categories. This indicates that those with a low income are relatively likely to recruit a partner from abroad. This is particularly notable for men who marry a woman from a poor country.

The work sector gender balance variable is a proxy for the work related opportunity structure of potential partners. Many people meet their partner at work or at work related events. The work sector gender balance indicates whether the Swedish men work in a male dominated, female dominated or gender balanced economic sector. Of those men who marry to a native Swedish woman, those who work in a female dominated sector have the highest odds: they have lots of opportunity to meet a local female partner. Men who work in a gender balanced sector have the highest odds to marry a marriage migrant from a rich country. The odds that a man who works in a male dominated sector marries someone from a poor country are 1.2 times higher than the odds for a man in a female dominated sector. This finding is in line with the thought that if you are less likely to meet a suitable partner on your local marriage market, you are more likely to recruit a partner from abroad.

Next, a set of geographical variables are added to the model. It is important to note that the contribution of the geographical variables to the

model fit is much lower than for the other variables. With increasing population density, the odds to marry a native Swedish women increase. In cities, men are more likely to find a suitable partner because of the very large opportunity structure. The effect of population density on the probability to recruit a partner from a rich or a poor country is U-shaped. Men in the most rural and the most urban areas have the highest odds to recruit a partner from abroad. This confirms both our hypotheses. Men in rural areas are the least likely to find a local partner and therefore more likely to recruit a partner from abroad. Men in large cities are more likely to be exposed to the global marriage market and are therefore more likely to recruit a partner from abroad.

The variable categorizing local marriage markets as traditional in terms of gender roles shows that in traditional regions the odds of recruiting a partner from abroad are lower than in other regions. This is the opposite of what we expected. The effect is probably caused by 'cultural' factors. In regions with more traditional views on gender roles people are possibly less open for foreign partners. The last variable included in Table 2 indicates the gender balance on the local marriage market. The effects found are entirely in line with the literature on opportunity structures. The odds to marry a native Swedish woman are highest in the female dominated regions. The odds to recruit a partner from abroad are highest for those living in male dominated regions where there is a shortage of female partners.

Table 3 shows the regression outcomes for the model estimating the probability that a Swedish woman marries a native Swedish man, a male marriage migrant from a rich country or a marriage migrant from a poor country. We have no clear hypotheses with regard to the probability that a woman recruits a partner from abroad as the literature almost exclusively focuses on men. The age effect shows that for single women, the odds to get married increase rapidly with decreasing age. The age effect is most extreme for those marrying a man from a poor country. The odds to marry a man from a poor country are almost 17 times higher for women under 35 than for women over 54.

The effect of education is the same for the probability to marry to a native Swedish man and the probability to marry with a man from a rich country. The odds increase with increasing level of education. Surprisingly, the odds to marry a man from a poor country are highest for Swedish women with the lowest level of education. With regard to employment status, the most notable effect is that non-employed women have the highest odds to recruit a partner from abroad. Again, it has to be remembered that the category of non-employed is highly heterogeneous. The effect of income shows

significant differences between those who marry a native Swedish man and those who marry a foreigner. The odds to marry a native Swedish man increase with income while the reverse is true for the other two outcome variables. Apparently, mainly Swedish women with a relatively low income recruit a partner from abroad. Women who work in female dominated sector have the highest odds to recruit a partner from abroad. The effect is the strongest for those who recruit a partner from a poor country.

Again, three geographical context variables are included in the model, serving as proxies for the local opportunity structure of potential partners. With increasing population density, the odds to marry a native Swedish man increases. The effect of population density on the probability to recruit a partner from a rich or a poor country is U-shaped. Women in the most rural and the most urban areas have the highest odds to recruit a male partner from abroad. The effect is largest for those recruiting a partner from a poor country. In traditional regions the odds of recruiting a partner from a rich country are lower than in other regions. No other notable effects of this variable are found. The effect of the variable indicating the gender balance on the local marriage market differs for the three outcome variables. Native Swedish women are more likely to marry a native Swedish man if they live in a male dominated region. Swedish women are more likely to recruit a partner from a poor country when they live in a region where women are overrepresented. These findings are in line with the literature on the effect of the opportunity structure.

Conclusion

Sweden is becoming a more and more globalized society and as a result, marriage migration to Sweden is on the rise (Niedomysl et al., forthcoming). In this paper, we set out to investigate some of the prevailing stereotypes associated with people who recruit a partner from abroad. We believe that one of the main causes of prejudice towards this group of people is lack of knowledge with regard to the characteristics of those who recruit a partner from abroad. Although the present study was not capable of an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms behind marriage patterns we believe our quantitative approach using statistical analysis has given some unique insight into the characteristics of those who recruit a partner from abroad and how they differ from singles and those marrying to someone from Sweden.

Our methodological approach was unique in a field of study dominated by qualitative studies. We have utilised a data set including information on all single men and women in Sweden between 1994 and 2004. This has

resulted in some novel findings not previously discussed in the literature, in particular with regard to the gendered nature of marriage migration and the effects of the spatial opportunity structure on patterns of partner recruitment.

The first, and not entirely surprising finding was that demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are, generally speaking, far more important in explaining the probability of recruiting a partner from abroad compared to geographical factors. Most notable effects were found for those recruiting a partner from a poor country. Men who recruit a partner from a poor country can be described as being relatively old and having a high level of education, an average income and, if employed, working in a male dominated sector. Women who recruit a partner from a poor country can be described as being under 35 years old, having a low level of education, being non-employed, having a low income and, if employed, working in a female dominated sector. The results partly defy the general stereotypes of those who recruit a partner from abroad. Men who do so are relatively old, but are also higher educated, indicating that they are potentially interesting marriage partners. More surprising were the results found for women recruiting a partner from a poor country. In a way they better fit the stereotypical image, apart from the fact that they are very young. To get to a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanism, more detailed qualitative research is needed.

One of the key interests in this paper was to investigate the effect of the local opportunity structure on marriage patterns. The literature clearly states that a shortage of suitable partners on the local marriage market increases the probability that people recruit a partner from abroad. In this study, we used three proxies for the local opportunity structure. We found that both men and women living in the three largest Swedish cities and those living in the most rural and remote areas were the most likely to recruit a partner from abroad. The underlying mechanism is likely to be a complex combination of factors. Those in cities may be more open to a foreign partner and at the same time they may be more likely to be exposed to suitable foreign partners. Those in rural areas might find it hard to find a suitable local partner and therefore deliberately search a more global marriage market. We further found that men living in more traditional regions were less likely to recruit a partner from abroad. This is the opposite of what we expected and may be possibly explained by cultural factors: those living in more traditional regions are less open to a foreign partner. Finally, we tested the hypothesis that the regional gender balance would have an effect on patterns of marriage migration. The results were

exactly as expected. In regions where women were overrepresented, men were more likely to marry a native Swedish woman. In regions where men were overrepresented, men were more likely to recruit a partner from abroad. Women are more likely to marry a native Swede when they live in a region where men are overrepresented while they are more likely to recruit a partner from abroad when they live in a region where women are overrepresented.

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