

Call for Papers  
to Session 172  
on the XVI<sup>th</sup> World Economic History Congress, Stellenbosch, 9-13 July, 2012

## **TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGE MARKETS AND MIGRATION**

Marriage markets refer to the characteristics, composition, and geographic location of dating or formal matchmaking pools within which people search for intimate partners. Broadly speaking, marriage market research posits that individuals make decisions regarding the formation of intimate relationships according to the availability of desirable partners who reside in their marriage market. The market is a metaphor for describing how marital unions are organized through the efforts of men and women. Economists may systematize information on elements of the market such as key characteristics people take into consideration, communications and venues for dating or matchmaking, subgroup preferences, and the macro-economic opportunities for enhancing the market, particularly with an eye towards the economic costs and benefits both on the individual and state level.

In migration research marriage markets play a decisive role in the process of integration. According to sociological and historical studies, intermarriage is a crucial, probably the most crucial, mechanism of ethnic intermingling, and of integration. In Europe today as well as in the contemporary United States, intermarriage of migrants children of low social status, such as Muslims from Turkey, North Africa, or Southeast Asia and Hispanics from Mexico and other Middle and South American states, attracts attention from research scholars but also from politicians and the media. But what if migrants are dealing with transnational marriage markets? Just as the international labor market served to advance capitalism, so too the transnational marriage market serves to maintain existing ties between different regions of the world.

Participants in this panel will explore the contents of the term 'marriage market' in economic, social, and cultural aspects and how it refers to international migrants. This session aims at analyzing the role of match making as an indicator for migrants integration around the globe in nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a period when some groups moved according to cultural markers towards an emphasis on love in marital decision-making, while

others applied a more parental or communal arrangement pattern. Different labor markets for women and men influenced heteronormative marriage markets, such as when male laborers found jobs in different regions than female laborers. Perceptions of gender roles differed across time and borders. How does this interlinkage between labor and marriage market change over time and world region? How do expectations of marital roles and of the relationship of potential spouses prior to marriage relate to this decision-making?

Abstracts for this session should contain no more than 400 – 1000 words and should be sent to the corresponding session organizer, Annemarie Steidl ([annemarie.steidl@univie.ac.at](mailto:annemarie.steidl@univie.ac.at)) before the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. The paper presenters will be informed about their selection before the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. Papers should be submitted before the 15<sup>th</sup> of June in order to give session participants and commentators sufficient time to prepare.