MARRIAGE AND MIGRATION: REPRESENTATIONS AND ATTITUDES OF GREEK CYPRIOTS TOWARDS INTER-SOCIETAL MARRIAGE

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Abstract

This article tackles a questionnaire survey-based study of Greek Cypriots' attitudes towards inter-societal marriage between non-nationals and Greek Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus. The study draws working hypotheses from a preliminary analysis of data from official population statistics on inter-societal marriage and immigration in Cyprus and further explores theoretical assumptions about three central factors to the propensity for inter-societal marriage: attitudes, opportunities and exchange. Four key findings resulted: different social distances for diverse groups of non-nationals; a hierarchy in Greek Cypriots' perceptions of different nationalities living in Cyprus that accounts for economic, racial and religious separation lines; gendered patterns of marital preferences for non-national spouses and more acceptance for nationalities that are perceived as having similarities with the Greek Cypriots.

Keywords: inter-societal marriage, attitudes, Cypriot society, non-national spouses, international migration

'Mixed Marriage' between Reality and Perception

The term 'mixed marriage' is commonly employed in the European tradition of research and literature on migration and ethnic relations. The goal herein is to provide an argument as to why this concept is a contested one (like other terminologies of hybridity that assume some 'purity', which is highly problematic in social theory), especially in its meaning as social construct.

In modern/post-modern societies which 'value' the equality of their members, it is difficult to explain why certain marriages are perceived as 'mixed'. In this manner, the sociologist is confronted with a dilemma: how to study 'mixed marriage'? Should he/she consider them as a reality or should she/he consider the fact that these marriages are perceived as 'mixed'? (Philippe, 1991). In this context, the term

'mixed' assumes a difference of identity and implies inequalities that are incompatible with ideals of equality.

In relation to migration and integration processes, the main dilemma in analysing this issue is how to avoid the polarisation in the opposition 'national/non-national or <foreigner>'[1] that translates the obsession of a society in crisis analysing everything in terms of in-group – out-group. In fact, every membership in a certain community is ambiguous and provisional. The individuals do not 'belong' to any form of social association or to a particular culture as is the case of an artefact or an institution; instead, individuals create cultures, and continuously change them.

In Europe today, the 'mixed' characteristic is perceived whenever marriage partners have different nationalities. In the case of the Republic of Cyprus, a marriage is perceived as mixed when Greek Cypriots enter into marriages with non-Greek Cypriots. It should be mentioned here that there is a wider question of inter-ethnic marriages in Cyprus, i.e. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as well as Turkish Cypriots with overseas partners, but this article is confined to Greek Cypriots and overseas partners.

In the specialised literature, the term 'mixed' is used less in connection with social class; one interpretation could imply that class identity, through the effect of democratisation is becoming weaker than the conscience of belonging to a historical, ethnic or religious community (Philippe et al., 1998).

In everyday life, the term 'mixed marriage' is used when the norm of social/cultural proximity is sensed, one way or another to be crossed. Merton (1941) put forward a sociological definition of 'intermarriage' as "a marriage between persons belonging to different groups". In fact, the first generation of sociologists who studied mixed marriage, defined the notion in terms of deviance from the norm of homogamy.

In a context of mixing populations, the dichotomy 'mixed – non-mixed' or 'normal' vs. 'mixed' becomes more difficult to sustain. In some instances, the term 'mixed couple' is used as a designation, opportunistically sometimes, mostly as a category in socio-political discourses, and not as a specific sociological category. However, the 'mixed' indicators are not taken into account as long as couples are doing well; however, when the reverse applies, they are invoked as causes for divorce. Thus, an analyst could interpret the conflicts of a 'mixed couple' in terms of their membership to different national, religious, ethnic or cultural communities, and not in terms of personal incompatibility. In order to avoid these kinds of culturalistic and nationalistic perspectives of conceiving a marital union between two people, the term 'mixed marriage' is deliberately avoided in this article. Instead, the term inter-societal marriage is employed to denote the marital union between two

individuals coming from two geographically separated societies: a Greek Cypriot and an overseas partner. The choice of term is motivated by the purpose of this study, which is to uncover some representations of Greek Cypriots about marriages of their co-nationals with partners migrating from overseas societies. The voluminous literature on marriages that take place across societies shows how marriages which involve the migration of one spouse are often the target of suspicion regarding their 'validity', while attitudes to such marriages reveal prejudices about the motivations of the partners. For example, in some cases negative attitudes towards 'miscegenation' in the host society are based on a set of stereotypes and prejudices towards immigrants who come from poor countries (seen as delinquents, opportunists) or on historically rooted and recreated prejudices and stereotypes based on skin colour (Garcia, 2006). Women entering countries/societies as the spouse of a citizen are often viewed as conforming to several negative stereotypes. They may be seen as the victims of patriarchal societies that use marriage migration to maintain control and gender roles or as economically dependent women who enter affluent countries as spouses but are really motivated by financial gains for themselves and their family back home. These attitudes reveal firmly held views of women as either powerless victims of male oppression or as calculating, rational and manipulative agents (Robinson, 1996). The reality of these marriages is, of course, far more complex, but herein the purpose is to identify their representations at public discourse level.

At this point it is worthwhile mentioning that there are two usages that characterise the term 'mixed marriage': an official usage (legal and administrative) and a social and mediated usage (based on the representations of 'Otherness'). The latter is the most susceptible to different interpretations and variations, subject to prejudice, but also the most prominent in everyday life (Philippe et al., 1998). The second usage will be the 'object' of this investigation, through identifying the perceptions, representations and attitudes of Greek Cypriots in relation to inter-societal marriages in the Republic of Cyprus.

Changing Marriage Patterns in Cyprus

Following the general movement toward globalisation and individualisation, family and marriage processes in contemporary Greek-Cypriot society are undergoing change. The Cypriot family is more recently seen as a mix of 'well-established' cultural codes and alternative lifestyles. Family and marriage in Cyprus are experiencing significant adjustments owing to mass tourism, mass media, international labour force migration and internationally changing social patterns (Hughes, 1999).

In these conditions of changing social context, the analysis of marriage-related patterns poses additional challenges. One determinant factor in marriage pattern

formation is the constraints of the marriage market in which individuals are searching for a spouse. Kalmijn (1991) claims that contact opportunities in a marriage market are shaped, among other reasons, by the demographic composition of the population as a whole. In Cyprus, the local marriage market is greatly influenced by tourism and by the increasing number of migrant women and men in search of employment, usually from the former USSR and countries from the European east, plus a large number of Asian maids and workers who come to Cyprus independently or through various employment agencies (Agathangelou, 2004: Hughes, 1999).

Population data – as analysed in the following section – show an increasing propensity for Cypriots to marry non-nationals as a result of the rise in immigration to Cyprus beginning with the early nineties. The immigration flow to Cyprus includes three main sources of foreign spouses for Cypriots: tourism, employment immigration flow and foreign countries where Cypriots study/studied. On average, concerning the third source, three-quarters of these Cypriots study every year in Greece, the United Kingdom and the United States; and one-quarter study in Bulgaria, Hungary, the Russian Federation, Germany, France and other countries.[2]

Nevertheless, simply because people migrate to another area or country does not necessarily mean that they are able or want to form close relationships with other groups. There are many studies which show how migrant groups often have restricted access to relationships with receiving-society groups, either through their own excluding practices or, more often, through those of the dominant group (Breger and Hill, 1998). By questioning Greek Cypriots about 'mixed marriages' the aim here is to identify why some ethnic groups are chosen as potential spouses, whereas others are not; moreover, what factors create or lessen the social distance between groups?

A further question to be discussed relates to inter-societal marriage as a shifting marriage pattern. Does inter-societal marriage constitute a 'threat' to local 'endogamous' marriage patterns? And, to what extent does inter-societal marriage provide a changing model of marriage partner selection? In order to address these questions, the extent of such social phenomena, i.e. inter-societal marriage and immigration (as a major source of spouses entering into marriages with Cypriots) are discussed with reference to Cyprus.

Patterns and Tendencies Revealed by a Statistical Data Analysis: Opportunity – Immigration; Preference – Inter-societal Marriage[3]

Inter-societal marriage and immigration are both new and interrelated phenomena in contemporary Cyprus. One of the consequences of international migration and the permanent settlement of migrants in southern EU countries is the number of

mixed marriages and the formation of transnational families (Garcia, 2006). In order to identify the underlying themes and main tendencies, an analysis of statistical data has been conducted from annual Demographic Reports (No. 27-42, Statistical Service, Republic of Cyprus, 1989-2004), as no previous studies are available on this topic.

Data analysis, covered by this study, reveals that the number of inter-societal marriages in Cyprus has increased considerably over a sixteen-year period (1989-2004). A median increase of 29% in inter-societal marriages was recorded, from a low of 14% in 1991 to a high of 43% in 2004 (concerning all marriages entered into by Cypriots). The overall average rate of entering an inter-societal marriage was 27% (10% for Cypriot women and 21% for Cypriot men) for all marriages involving Cypriots during the sixteen-year period under study. As data shows, there was a greater tendency for Cypriot men to marry other nationalities during this period (their numbers are more than double those of Cypriot women).

The marital choices made by Cypriot men and women revealed some patterns in inter-societal marriage mate selection. The most frequent combinations were: Cypriot grooms and 'Eastern-European' brides; Cypriot brides and 'Euro-American' grooms.

The statistical data available shows intra and inter-societal marriages by type (ecclesiastical and civil marriages) and nationality. For the purpose of the analysis herein, the nationalities with tabulated/existing data in the official statistics are clustered[4] into three groups: the Euro-American group (including the nationalities: Greek, British, US, German and Irish), the Eastern-European group (including the nationalities: Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Yugoslavian and Moldavian) and the Asian-African group (including the nationalities: Iranian, Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, Sri-Lankan, Chinese, Pakistani, Indian and Filipino).[5]

When data was, therefore, analysed by the groups of nationalities, more clear patterns resulted for the period 1994-2004 (with data available). The most frequent out-marriage group for Cypriot women was Euro-American – 23% of the civil marriages and 70% of the religious marriages involving Cypriot women.

In relation to Cypriot men, the most frequently represented out-marriage groups were Eastern European for civil marriages – 55% of the civil inter-societal marriages involving Cypriot men, and the 'Other nationalities' category (the nationalities included are not made known in official statistics). For religious unions the latter combination (Cypriot grooms – 'other nationalities' brides) made up 77% of all the religious inter-societal marriages involving Cypriot men.

The marriages between Cypriot women and men from the Asian-African group[6] accounted for 19% of all civil inter-societal marriages entered into by Cypriot women. Furthermore, the Asian-African group of nationalities was ranked in third position (7%) among the preferences of Cypriot men, and the combination of Cypriot men – Euro-American spouses made up 9% (for the period 1989-2004 compared to 17% for 1994-1999) from the number of civil inter-societal marriages entered into by Cypriot men (for details see Appendix 1 – Summary Tables with Cypriots' Marital Choices for Different Nationalities, Resulting from the Statistical Analysis of Existing Data). Overall, the statistical data from 1999 onwards shows an increasing tendency for Cypriot women to marry other nationalities.[7]

It is evident from the statistical data that a great rise in the immigration rate to Cyprus took place after 1990. On average, the lowest immigration sex ratio for the period 1997-2004 is registered for the non EU Eastern-European countries (67 men for each 100 long-term immigrant women – the excess of the latter predicting more opportunity for inter-societal marriage). Nevertheless, the highest immigration sex ratio is registered for the African countries whereby for each 100 female immigrants to Cyprus there were 141 men – here the excess of immigrant men predicts more opportunity for foreign male marriage partners.

In order to test the hypothesis about a positive relationship between immigration and inter-societal marriage a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient analysis was developed. The values obtained show that the two variables are strongly associated. The volume of migrants is, therefore, a somewhat better predictor of non-national marriage partners for Cypriot men ($\rho=0,75$) than for Cypriot women ($\rho=0,53$). In other words, the variation in the number of international migrants to Cyprus determines the variation in the number of grooms and brides for Cypriot spouses.

By this token, the statistical data analysis (for 1997-2004) revealed that the largest number of migrants not only came to Cyprus from Eastern European countries, but that this group also supplied the highest number of marriage mates for Cypriot men during the same period.

In general, the relationship between the immigrant sex ratio and the marriage sex ratio, as measured by the Pearson's r correlation coefficient ($r = 0,32$), indicates a positive association between the two ratios. The patterns contoured by the values of the two ratios considered are very well defined: there are two main groups of countries providing inter-societal marriage spouses for Cypriots. The first one is the group of Euro-American countries with both immigrant and inter-societal marriage sex ratios being in favour of immigrant men, and the second one is the Eastern-European group with both ratios in favour of migrant women.

This section identified patterns emerging from statistical data analysis in relation to trends of inter-societal marriages in Cyprus. Overall, gender-specific differences were identified between the marital choices of Cypriot men and women respectively. In comparison with Cypriot women, the rates of Cypriot men marrying migrants are higher and gender-differentiated patterns exist in regional preferences when selecting migrant spouses. Cypriot men chose wives from Eastern European countries and Cypriot women chose husbands from the Euro-American group of countries. The aim of the statistical analysis was to contextualise the questionnaire survey presented in the following sections and to provide it with a working hypothesis.

Quantitative Research Design

Theoreticians emphasise three factors as central to the propensity for exogamy (i.e. inter-societal marriage): attitudes, opportunity and exchange (Lieberson and Waters, 1988). These factors herein form the focus of the questionnaire survey presented. From these factors, attitudes are the most theoretically intriguing. Different studies show that marriage between individuals of diverse ethnic, racial, or religious identity is usually met with reluctance or rejection (Barbara, 1989; Botev, 1994). Because no prior investigation on attitudes towards marriages between non-nationals and Cypriots has been undertaken, a questionnaire survey was designed to appraise Cypriot opinions, perceptions and attitudes toward mixed marital unions in Cyprus.

The working hypotheses have, as a source, the findings from the statistical analysis of the existing population data discussed earlier. The three hypotheses are presented below:

1. **Exposure and tolerance towards non-nationals:** With increasing interaction/contact and exposure towards people from other countries and cultures (see the increase in the immigration stream to Cyprus during the period 1989-2004), Cypriot attitudes towards marriage with non-nationals become more favourable.

2. **Social distance** – that refers to similarity or closeness based upon social variables or network connections – plays a certain role in terms of mate selection. Foreign nationalities are perceived as arranged in a hierarchy reflecting their desirability as mates (Kalmijn, 1998). Which foreign nationalities constitute a more socially accepted pool of mates for Cypriots? There is less social distance for the Euro-American and Eastern European groups of nationalities, compared to the Asian-African group. The smallest social distance is between Greek Cypriots and Greek nationals as spouses. This hypothesis is based on the previous analysis of statistical data that identified the Euro-American group and the Eastern European one as the

two main sources of spouses for Greek Cypriots. Questionnaire data is expected to shed more light on reasons for such preferences, however, different factors might be at play such as post-colonial attitudes, religion and racial stereotypes. In the specialised literature, processes of racialisation of international migrants in Cyprus are discussed in relation to the labour market. People from different geographical areas are concentrated in different occupations, with 'whites' (northern/central Europeans/Americans) concentrated in more office type work, with a large number as managers. On the other hand, 'black' people (northern Africa/Arabs and South East Asians) are more likely to be concentrated in manual labour jobs. Eastern Europeans, depending on their class position, generally occupy jobs at the lower end of the market (Trimikliniotis, 1999).

In the same vein, Agathangelou (2004) shows that not only are racial biases and stereotypes a constant element of the public and private discussion about immigrant women, but a division of reproductive labour along racial lines has taken shape in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus whereby women of colour, for example from Sri Lanka or the Philippines, are deemed fit only to do domestic work, whereas the 'not quite white' women from Eastern Europe are preferred as sexual mates.

3. **The third hypothesis** expresses the pattern identified in statistical data about gendered regional preferences in selecting migrant spouses. Cypriot men prefer Eastern European brides and Cypriot women prefer Euro-American grooms. Some reasons for these gendered preferences are to be identified in the questionnaire data. The preference of Cypriot men for eastern European women might, therefore, relate partly to their sexualisation (as mentioned above, Agathangelou, 2004) and as statistical data shows, there is more opportunity for encounters in the marriage market as there are large numbers of women from the European east migrating to Cyprus for jobs. On the other hand, the Cypriot women's preference for Euro-American men clusters on two nationalities: Greek from Greece and British (of Greek-Cypriot origin).[8] A possible interpretation for these choices is provided by ethnographic texts which extensively record that endogamy principles are not uniformly dictated to males and females: men taking brides not belonging to their national group are more tolerated than women who marry outsiders, precisely because wives and mothers supposedly disqualify the authenticity of cultural legacy through 'impure' kinship ties (Athanassiou, 2001).[9]

There is also an element of exchange imbedded in this hypothesis with regard to inter-societal marriages. The interpretation of status hypergamy considers the assumption that people in migratory context (mostly labour migrants), due to their disadvantaged social position in relation to 'natives', have an incentive to improve their socio-economic status (i.e. monetary, prestige in the community, comfortable

life style and access to social and cultural capital) through marriage. For example, although the practice is weakening, feminist research shows that some women still tend to court and marry men with higher social standing and resources than themselves, using their physical attractiveness as an exchange (Coltrane, 1998). Another example of hypergamous unions ('marrying up') concerns Africa-born men marrying indigenous women in Spain (Garcia, 2006).

On the other hand, an increase in the volume of inter-societal marriages could be explained partly by a restrictive legal framework for settlement migration (Garcia, 2006). This is also the case for Cyprus where the immigration and settlement legislation is restrictive with regard to citizens from non EU-member countries (for more details see Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006). Fake marriages constitute one of the consequences of restrictive immigration policy which social actors try to counteract by developing strategies and practices aiming at the legalisation of their migration status (i.e. obtaining a renewable residence and work permit by entering into a marriage with a citizen).

As a sample selection method for the survey, probability sampling or random sampling was used. The national sample selected (N=400, 95% confidence level) is representative of the age, gender and residence structure of the population of interest (i.e. the population of Greek Cypriots in the government-controlled area of Cyprus). In other words, the sample reflects the age distribution and the gender distribution of the population by place of residence.[10] The most frequent demographical characteristics for sample respondents were: male (50.2%), young age (between 15-34–37%), of tertiary education (44%), private sector employee (25.2%), married/engaged/cohabiting (70.2%), residence in urban areas of Cyprus (68%) and medium approximate annual income (between Cy£6,000-Cy£20,000/or approximately €10,000-€35,000, 53.8%).

The research instrument was a self-administered questionnaire: mostly closed questions, with predetermined answers. Given the exploratory character of the research, open-ended questions have been included, in order to gain more insight on topics difficult to quantify.

Since the variables employed could not be assumed to be more than nominal and ordinal scale, the form of analysis used was parametric tests. Chi-square was used as the statistical test of significance, with the null hypothesis rejected at the 0.5 level of probability. The answers given to open-ended questions were analysed using the procedure of qualitative content analysis.

Inter-societal Marriage Questionnaire Survey Findings

Cypriots' Opinions and Representations about the Number of Non-Nationals in Cyprus

Most Cypriot respondents believed that the number of non-nationals in Cyprus is high or extremely high and expressed concern about this perceived trend when considering the small size of the Greek-Cypriot community (86% of respondents agreed, and generalising to the population of interest, the Cypriots living in rural areas are more likely to give a similar response). Even if the numbers of both 'foreigners' and migrant workers were estimated as high, the respondents' attitudes were more favourable in the case of migrant workers in Cyprus.[11] A clear difference was identified in the perception of outside of the nation/'foreign' influence. Where the numbers of migrant workers were viewed as high or extremely high, they were regarded by 'natives' as people coming to Cyprus to maximise, as necessary, their financial resources before returning to their countries of origin. Moreover, the 'foreigners' who come to Cyprus to settle down are perceived as possible threats because many of them marry Cypriots and it is, therefore, believed that a shortage of marriageable 'native' partners is created while at the same time employment vacancies are filled, perpetuating the common social viewpoint that the 'foreigners' contribute to the increasing unemployment rates of the 'native' population. According to survey questionnaire findings, 58% of the respondents expressed this opinion, and more Cypriot women than men tend to share it.

Cypriots' Exposure to Outside of the Nation Influence

The findings regarding Cypriots' exposure to 'foreign' influence accounted separately for those respondents who lived abroad (translated to maximum exposure to foreign influence) and for those with relatives who have married non-nationals (understood as high exposure to foreign influence). The Cypriots who were exposed to maximum foreign influence are likely to be those who lived abroad as students, in one country, between one and five years, and aged 35-54 years (this group represents 50% of the respondents who lived abroad).

Confirming the statistical findings presented earlier, the survey outcome once more proved that inter-societal marriage is a new phenomenon in Cypriot society, since relatively large percentages of respondents have a cousin (45%), an aunt/uncle (23%) or a sister/brother (23%) who have married non-nationals. In addition, only a few Cypriot respondents declared that they have parents (2%) married to non-nationals and none of them had grandparents married outside the national group.

In most cases, more than half of the respondents have relatives married to other nationalities, and nearly half of these have a cousin married outside the national group. The Cypriots aged 15-34 years old are more likely to have an

aunt/uncle (41%) or a cousin (52%) married to a non-national. Over half of the respondents who have relatives married to overseas spouses characterised these marriages as being successful or very successful.

It was found that the increased exposure of Greek Cypriots to other nationalities as relatives diminished the social distance, so that the non-national relative is perceived and accepted per se as a family member. Moreover, the non-national as a family member is not part of an 'anonymous' mass of other nationalities that are unfavourably judged by Cypriot public opinion. In other words, a 'well-known foreigner' is not a stranger for Cypriots anymore; he/she is tolerated and accepted as a family member because of an increased exposure to assimilation factors such as knowledge of the Greek language, participation in community activities, different common celebrations and leisure activities.

Social Distance between Greek Cypriots and Non-nationals
The Cypriot respondents' most favourable attitude is towards the non-national as a visitor in Cyprus, and the most unfavourable attitude is towards the non-national as a spouse. The social distance increases from left to right, as follows:

> Non-national as visitor / Non-national as neighbour / Non-national as work colleague / Non-national as relative / Non-national as citizen / Non-national as spouse.

Non-nationals as visitors in Cyprus are most likely to be accepted by respondents so long as the Cypriot economy is based on tourism, whereas, non-nationals as Cypriot citizens are less likely to be accepted. This finding is verified by the previously mentioned fact that Cypriot respondents classified unfavourably the 'extremely high' and 'high' numbers of migrants in Cyprus.

It could be said that the Cypriot respondents are likely to accept 'foreigners' as long as they do not interfere with two highly valued entities by Greek Cypriots: their family and homeland. On one hand the respondents are less likely to accept other nationalities as relatives, citizens in Cyprus and spouses – statuses that signify a certain degree of permanence, but on the other hand, visitors, neighbours and work colleagues belong to statuses that are perceived as short-term and transient and therefore are more likely to be accepted by indigenous people.

A further difference has been identified in the perception of various categories of non-nationals: although Cypriot respondents favourably estimate their relatives' inter-societal marriages, they declare that they are not likely to readily accept non-nationals as members in their families.

The Cypriots who are most favourable to their own hypothetical inter-societal marriage belong to at least one of the following demographical categories: male,

educated (of tertiary education), intellectual or artist and with medium to high income. These demographical categories coincide with those categories of Cypriots who are most likely to have lived abroad and have been exposed to maximum foreign influence. The introduction of control variables that measure the exposure to foreign influence (e.g. 'Respondents' life abroad' and 'Respondents' relatives married to non-nationals') revealed more aspects concerning Cypriot attitudes toward their hypothetical marriage to a non-national. In this sense, the Cypriots (either men, or women) who have never lived abroad (i.e. 62% female and 40% male), and Cypriot women who have relatives in inter-societal marriages are more likely to disagree with their hypothetical inter-societal marriage (49% shared these opinions). Moreover, the Cypriot men who have relatives married to non-nationals are more likely to agree with their hypothetical inter-societal marriage (41% agreed with these opinions).

Furthermore, those respondents who are less likely to accept their hypothetical marriage to non-nationals have at least one of the following demographical characteristics: female, primary education, worker, constructor or farmer, with low annual incomes. Once more, these categories coincide with those of the Cypriots who have never lived abroad.

Overall, the Cypriots are more likely to disagree, than to agree with entering a hypothetical inter-societal marriage, despite their increasing exposure to 'foreign' influence (see e.g. the increase in immigration stream to Cyprus), a tendency that is confirmed by their degrees of acceptance of hypothetical marital choices for different nationalities living in Cyprus (as analysed below).

Cypriot Representations and Attitudes toward Inter-societal Marriage at Societal and Personal Levels

More than half of the Cypriot respondents estimated the number of inter-societal marriages in Cyprus as being 'extremely high' and 'high' and almost half of the respondents classified the 'perceived as high' and 'extremely high' number of inter-societal marriages in Cyprus as neither good, nor bad. Both Cypriot women and men tend to share this opinion (i.e. 43% males and 44% females).

The fact that Cypriots are more likely to adopt a neutral attitude towards the perceived as high number of inter-societal marriages supports the favourable opinion expressed regarding relatives' inter-societal marital unions, marriages they already have some knowledge about. Nevertheless, most of the Cypriot respondents said that they are not willing to enter into marriages with non-Cypriots. Therefore, although they perceive inter-societal marriages already concluded by their relatives to be "successful", they would not be willing to marry outside their national group.

On the one hand, most of the people questioned would be unwilling to accept a marriage by their parents to other nationals and more than 60% of respondents would be unwilling to accept inter-societal marriages by their siblings, children, aunts or uncles. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents are likely to accept inter-societal marriages within their circle of friends and cousins. As previously reported by respondents, the most frequent relative married outside the national group is the cousin. One out of four respondents has a cousin married out and one out of two respondents is willing to accept his/her cousin's decision to marry a non-Cypriot. Young Cypriots and those living in urban areas tend to share this opinion.

It is worthwhile mentioning that Cypriots regard the cousin as a distant relative, part of their extended family. Cousins and friends are not regarded as part of the respondents' immediate close family/relatives. The Greek-Cypriot conception of 'cousin' therefore embraces a broad category that covers large numbers of blood, marriage, and fictive kinship. This may explain the increased acceptance of a cousin's inter-societal marriage in comparison to that of a close kin. More than three-quarters of respondents accept their relatives' or friends' decision to marry a non-national. Cypriot men, those aged 35-54 years and educated Cypriots are more likely to share this opinion.

Once again, the questionnaire outcome illustrates that Cypriot men are more favourable to inter-societal marriage than their female counterparts (as the statistical data on inter-societal marriage has proved). The introduction of control variables that measure respondents' exposure to foreign influence (as in 'If respondent has ever lived abroad' and 'If respondent has any relative married to a non-national') reveal additional aspects in relation to the contrasting attitudes towards inter-societal marriage as adopted by Cypriot men and women. More precisely, the Cypriot men who have never lived abroad are more likely to agree with the idea of inter-societal marriage (42% supported this) and their Cypriot women counterparts are more likely to disagree (39% agreed). Also, the Cypriot men who have relatives married to non-nationals are more likely to agree with the idea of inter-societal marriage (61% confirmed this response) and their Cypriot women counterparts are more likely to disagree or to adopt a neutral position (32% and 32% respectively).

More reasons were expressed by Cypriot women respondents against inter-societal marriage. These reasons gravitate around the following interpretations of 'difference': non-nationals have different cultures, languages, and religions. These differences all determine a 'mentality gap' that leads to conflict. Their belief is that, in the case of inter-societal marriage, a conflict is more likely to arise than in the case of in-marriage between two Cypriots, whereby the former may be more likely to fail. Moreover, because of the above differences, inter-societal marriages

(according to their representation) are not only destined to dissolution, but can also have disastrous societal consequences.

A second category of hostile reasons towards inter-societal marriage (as invoked by respondents) emphasises the material motivations of some overseas spouses, such as: "Some foreigners marry Cypriots for material reasons and destroy Cypriot families", "No to blank marriages, for material reasons". This category supports, to some extent, the exchange theory assumptions that inter-societal marriage spouses exchange material and non-material resources and accounts for exchange factors that influence exogamy.[12]

A third category of reasons opposing inter-societal marriage accentuates xenophobic motivations, for example, "In general I don't like foreigners, especially Eastern Europeans because they are the cause for high unemployment and extra-conjugal relationships",[13] "Papoutsi apo ton topo sou che an einai balomeno" ["Better the shoes from one's homeland even if they are patched"], "Foreigners gain rights and Cypriot land", "Foreigners bring to Cyprus the worst from their countries", "A large number of foreigners in Cyprus make us feel foreigners in our country", "Foreign mentalities will change Cypriots' pure and honest mentality", "Cypriots trust more only Cypriots", "It's better for spouses to have the same nationality". 'Foreigners' are therefore identified with all the social 'evils' and problems adjudged by Cypriots as negative influences, such as alienation, unemployment, and extra-conjugal relationships.

Half of the Cypriot male respondents gave positive reasons that approved of inter-societal marriage. The most frequently emphasised reasons were: free choice in choosing a marriage partner, love and mutual understanding as motivation for considering inter-societal marriage, the equality of human beings (irrespective of ethnicity or religion), and the well matching of partners. This constitutes a more liberal and open-minded perspective on inter-societal marriage, based on the universal principles of liberty and equality applied to the mate selection process. It 'equates' inter-societal marriage with endogamous marriage and stresses individual factors influencing the former. Differences of any type are deleted, love and mutual understanding are placed above any material reasons and non-nationals are recognised as equal human beings. This is the picture depicted as most favourable by responses to open-ended questions.

There are other considerations that reveal interesting aspects – part of a favourable perception of inter-societal marriage in Cypriot society. In this sense, there is a category of reasons that presents inter-societal marriage as a beneficial change that contributes to cultural revitalisation in Cypriot society, for example: "Mixed marriage gives the chance to escape from the Cypriot mentality and habits", "I consider that mixed marriage is a good thing because in Cyprus the marriage is

an acquaintances affair". Moreover, through inter-societal marriage, Cypriots have the opportunity to learn about other ethnicities and improve their social acceptance: "This type of marriage allow us to know other customs, traditions or behaviours", "Mixed marriage makes easier the acceptance of other foreigners", "Mixed marriage helps to improve relations between different ethnic groups".

Another group of reasons favourable to inter-societal marriage is formed from those emphasising biological/genetic factors. In other words, the marriage is conceived as a way of renewing the genetic code of the native population. Such reasons were expressed by participants as follows: "I agree with mixed marriage because it generates new races", "Mixed marriage improves culture, human relations and human health because of new genes", "Mixed marriage makes our people good-looking". The underlying racism is evident as long as 'mixed marriage partners' are racialised based on phenotypical differences which are considered desirable and contribute to 'whitening up' the indigenous population.[14]

An anti-xenophobic perspective on inter-societal marriage is revealed by the following favourable reasons invoked by other respondents: "I agree with mixed marriage because I like foreigners and I am not racist", "If we were foreigners in a foreign country, we wouldn't like not to be accepted", and "Foreigners shouldn't be deprived of their human rights".

A final category of favourable reasons regards inter-societal marriage as a frequent and widely encountered phenomenon: "In the current context of globalisation mixed marriage should be a normal phenomenon".

Ideologies of Love Marriage and Inter-societal Marriage
There were also a handful of reasons that support inter-societal marriage choices encountering opposition from third parties like nuclear or extended families. Partners' mutual feelings and choices are ranked above any other opposition or social pressure and the control from third parties is denied: "Two people in love must marry, even if others are against" and "If partners think they will have no problems and don't care what people say, then it's all right". There is an ideology around love marriages here, as opposed to marriage out of interest (personal or familial). In this context, Greek Cypriots seem to have adopted Western patterns of marriage partner selection where emotional aspects, 'affective individualism' and the formation of marriage ties on the basis of personal attraction, guided by norms of romantic attachment prevail (Berger, 1966; Murstein, 1976; Coltrane, 1998).

Moreover, the same love ideology is at play when a quarter of the people questioned believed that nationality does not influence Cypriots' marriage decisions. These reasons coincide with those invoked as reasons in favour of inter-societal marriage. Love, psychological traits and free choice of marriage partner are

three categories providing the most frequent reasons which emphasise the primacy of personal marital decisions or free choice of a marriage partner, without any other interference. Of course, this is an ideal case that denies societal structural influences. Love is perceived as a primordial principle that overcomes any influence of nationality: "If there is love, there are no nationalities" (women and young people are more likely to give this reason). Moreover, "If Cypriots marry foreigners, this is out of love". But "love can be dangerous" as sometimes "When Cypriots fall in love, they don't see things clearly".

The questionnaire data informs more about predominant love marriage ideology when considerable numbers of respondents (almost one-quarter) seem unaware of any nationality influence in the Cypriot marriage decision-making process. The most frequent reason given is the following: "If it is out of love, nationality plays no role; if it is a marriage of convenience, then it does". Also, "It depends on how much they love each other". The above exposes a two-sided reality of inter-societal marriage and of inter-societal marriage decisions, as perceived at Cypriot public opinion level. There is a socially accepted inter-societal marriage 'out of love'/'marriage of love' and an inter-societal marriage that is regarded as an extreme 'blank' marriage out of interest, i.e. a 'marriage of convenience' which is socially rejected in Cypriot society, although some decades ago the common mate selection pattern used to be based on the familial economic interests; furthermore, research shows that the custom of providing Cypriot women with dowries is still alive (see more details in Fulias-Souroulla, 2006).

Cypriot Contacts with and Preferences for Different Nationalities Living in Cyprus
An important finding is that the majority of people questioned (i.e. 70%) were of the opinion that nationality is either 'important' or 'very important' in inter-societal marriage. The respondents who shared this general opinion are likely to have at least one of the following demographical characteristics: female, inhabitant of rural areas, older than 55 years and less educated. These categories are identical with those who expressed an unfavourable opinion about migrants and marriages of Greek-Cypriots with non-nationals up to now. Instead, the respondents who are more likely to believe that nationality is not important in inter-societal marriage belong to at least one of the following demographical categories: male, educated, inhabitant of urban areas and young. Again, these categories are identical with those that were identified as more favourable to migrants and inter-societal marriage in Cyprus, so far.

According to the findings concerning respondents' preferences for eleven nationalities living in Cyprus (and listed in the questionnaire) there are four groups of nationalities:

(a) The most preferred nationalities living in Cyprus: Greek, British and Russian;
(b) Preferred nationalities: German and Romanian;
(c) Less preferred nationalities: Bulgarian and American;
(d) Least preferred nationalities: Israeli, Iranian, Filipino and Lebanese.[15]

The majority of the respondents have met and know 'very well' and 'well' Greek nationals living in Cyprus. The percentages of those respondents who prefer (87%) and those who know (87%) Greek nationals are identical. Thus, it seems that respondents' preferences are based on the experience of direct contacts with Greek male and female nationals living in Cyprus.

The outcome illustrates differences in Cypriot preferences by respondents' gender or, in other words, a gendered difference in Cypriot preferences for different nationals. Cypriot men prefer mostly Russian, Romanian and Bulgarian nationals, and Cypriot women more often prefer British, German and American nationals living in Cyprus. The responses given by the people questioned, therefore, confirm the identified patterns given by the statistical data analysis that reveals similar differences in the marital choices made by Cypriot men and women (for details, see Appendix 1).

The least known and preferred by Cypriots are the Israeli and Iranian nationals living in Cyprus. Together with Filipino and Lebanese nationals, they constitute the Asian group of nationalities. As questionnaire data shows, the greatest social distance is between Cypriots and the Asian group of nationalities:[16] there is less contact and preference for non-European nationals in Cyprus.

Cypriot Preferences for Spouses' Nationality in Inter-societal Marriage
Half of the Cypriot respondents would not marry non-nationals. Male respondents were keener to marry outside the national group, than their female counterparts. This tendency is verified by the statistical data analysis that shows a large difference between the number of inter-societal marriages entered into by Cypriot men and women (as previously discussed).

The male respondents would prefer Russian brides (40% – this also represents the most frequent out-marriage combination for Cypriot men), followed by British (31%), German (30%) and Romanian (29%) brides. As statistical data shows, when Cypriot men entered into marriages with Eastern-European brides, they chose mostly Russian and Romanian brides, and Bulgarian brides less often. From the Euro-American brides, Cypriot men chose British, American and German brides (see also, Appendix 1).

Simultaneously, the Cypriot female respondents' preferences for spouses match the existing statistical data on inter-societal marriage entered into by Cypriot women; they would prefer British, American and German grooms and they also married these nationalities most frequently (same hierarchies for both Cypriot women's hypothetical mate choices and the registered number of inter-societal marriages entered into by Cypriot women).

The people questioned once more replied in concordance with the existing statistical data on inter-societal marriage in Cyprus (for details see Appendix 1). The great majority of the respondents recorded 'No' to Israeli and Iranian grooms and brides, while in the Asian group of nationalities the smallest percentage registering 'No' answers were recorded, by both male and female respondents, for Lebanese.

A significant finding, therefore, is that Cypriot men are more likely to marry women from countries in Eastern Europe whereas the Cypriot women are more likely to choose men from the Euro-American group of countries. Also, Cypriot men prefer mostly Russian brides (less German, Bulgarian and Romanian brides) and Cypriot women prefer British and American grooms. Neither Cypriot men nor women prefer people from Israel, Iran, or the Philippines as marriage partners.

As mentioned earlier, almost three-quarters of the respondents believed that nationality is 'important' or 'very important' when entering an inter-societal marriage. When questioned, more than half of the people reported that nationality influences marriage decisions made by Cypriots.

The reasons most invoked in support of the statement that "<foreign nationality> influences the marriage decisions made by Cypriots" are the following: difference as disadvantage, commonality as advantage, and prejudices about other nationalities. These reasons coincide with those raised to accent the disagreement with inter-societal marriage in Cyprus. Different cultures, economic backgrounds and religious faiths might negatively affect the offspring of an inter-societal marriage, and also influence marital behaviour and favour tendencies towards divorce. On this pretext respondents argue that it is better for Cypriots to choose nationalities with which they share some perceived commonalities: "We search to see which ethnicity is closer to ours".

Some respondents thus state clearly that "Common ethnical features constitute an advantage for the mixed married couple and the opposite". Religion is a case in point, as respondents defined: "If foreigners are Christians, there is no reason to disagree with inter-societal marriage"; among Christians, the Orthodox Christians are favoured: "Only Orthodox foreigners are accepted". Moreover, a religious gap might be a serious obstacle: "The religion plays a very important role in a family, so Muslims and Christians cannot live together".

In words formulated by the respondents, a conclusion might be that, the nationality of a non-Cypriot 'should influence' a Cypriot's marriage decision: "In order to avoid large contrast and oppositions leading to later problems"; this viewpoint is expressed by most Cypriot interviewees.

Moreover, other factors that concern ranked perceptions of different nationalities in the spouse selection process support the opinion that nationality influences the marriage decisions of Cypriots: "It is about subjective preference for different nationalities", "Each nationality differs from the other, so that Cypriots will choose", "It is not hard for Cypriots to decide when the partner is British or American", "I don't like some nationalities at all".

Preferences for material resources in a marital partner were invoked as the rationale behind nationality influencing marriage decisions: "Lots of these girls have as purpose money, Cypriot citizenship and residence in Cyprus". While "Cypriot women take into account nationality and Cypriot men don't", this motive can prove 'disastrous'. The above explanation supports assumptions of the exchange theory about resource exchanges between spouses. By contrast, "Cypriot men take into account mostly only foreign spouses' physical appearance". This indicates a construction of 'beauty' on a racial basis, with non-national women of colour being framed by racial biases and stereotypes as 'appropriate' to undertake domestic work, whereas 'not quite white' women from Eastern Europe are preferred as sexual partners (Agathangelou, 2004). Vassiliadou also discussed this topic in relation to stereotypes about Greek-Cypriot women in Cyprus in so far as "compared to Western women, Cypriot women are considered as 'naturally' less attractive, less sophisticated and less sexual" (2004, p. 62).

There is another sizeable category of reasons that are frequently mentioned by the respondents when they argue why nationality influences the marriage decisions of Cypriots. These reasons relate to prejudice, xenophobia, and third party influences in spouse selection. Hence, foreign nationality influences marriage decisions made by Cypriots because "The Cypriots judge mixed marriage based on their prejudices about each nationality", "Because deep inside we are racist" and "Because there is enough prejudice and xenophobia in Cyprus".

Third party influences (i.e. close family and relatives) on mate selection are also reported to have an effect on Cypriot marriage decisions concerning overseas spouses: "Because a Cypriot will be influenced by his/her relatives" and "Because mixed marriage is considered to be a taboo in Cyprus".

On the same question of how or why nationality influences the marriage decisions of Cypriots, the interviewees also emphasised the opportunity (or lack of)

to make contacts in the marriage market: "Those who marry foreigners perhaps cannot find Cypriot partners".

Some respondents no longer perceive nationality as an impediment in the current changing context, since "Cypriots now enter into marriages with lots of nationalities" and "There are differences, but in our times, these are not obstacles anymore". Some respondents are aware of the high frequency of inter-societal marriage in contemporary Cyprus (as their estimates regarding the number of inter-societal marriages in Cyprus have shown) and given this notable rise, the phenomenon of inter-societal marriage is not considered a form of deviation from the endogamous rule.

The reasons given to support the idea that nationality is not a determinant factor in the marriage decisions of Cypriots are very similar overall to the reasons voiced by those respondents who were receptive to the idea of inter-societal marriage of Cypriots.

Conclusions and Discussion

This article forms part of a larger study[17] that inaugurates a path of sociological research in the domain of marital unions between Greek Cypriots and partners originating from overseas societies. As a starting point in the investigation of this relatively new phenomenon in Cypriot society, the present analysis quantified the tendency of Greek Cypriots to marry outside their national group.

Because no previous research is available on the topic of inter-societal marriage and immigration in Cyprus, it has been necessary to take into account the picture given by the statistical data available. Although data was sometimes incomplete, the information it provided constituted a suitable cornerstone from which the topic under study could be explored. These findings show that Cypriot women prefer men from the Euro-American group of nationalities as spouses, while Cypriot grooms favour Eastern European brides as their first choice. The existing statistical data regarding the marriages between Greek Cypriots and non-nationals, and also the volume and composition of the immigration stream to Cyprus, offers an image of the inter-societal marriage market and its dynamics in Cyprus.

The survey questionnaire findings identified different social distances for diverse groups of foreign nationals living in Cyprus. Hence, if the Cypriot attitude towards 'foreigners' in Cyprus is unfavourable, their attitude towards migrant workers in Cyprus is less unfavourable and the attitude towards their relatives' marriages to non-nationals is favourable. As a result the Cypriot attitude towards non-nationals is becoming more favourable as the social distance decreases between Cypriots and different nationalities living in Cyprus. It could be explained

that this shortening of social distance is due to a gradual personalisation of the 'foreigner'. In this sense, respondents' high exposure to 'foreign' influence (measured through indices such as whether the respondents lived abroad or whether they have non-national relatives) has been found to heighten favourable attitudes toward the inter-societal marital union (especially in relation to Cypriot men) and vice versa.

In general, the survey's findings identify a first hierarchy in the respondents' perceptions of different ethnicities living in Cyprus. The basic axis in this hierarchy is given by the racial categorisation white-non-white and the religious separation Christian-Muslim. These constitute the main 'difference' that has been invoked as the prime reason against inter-societal marriage. Several survey findings clearly illustrate that 'race' constitutes a core and defining cultural category that structures and shapes everyday motivations and common sense, social practices and perceptions of Greek Cypriots.

The geographical distance, most often in people's minds, refers to social, cultural, political or religious distance. Geographically, Cyprus is closer to the Middle East than to Europe, however, Cypriots aspire to a 'European identity'. According to their representations, this is a 'superior' identity or one that is perceived as such because of material and non-material assets: the 'Western identity' represented by the Euro-American group of countries (as considered by the present analysis). In the same vein, Argyrou (1996) argues that in Cyprus, people are predisposed to view the countries of Western Europe and North America as the site of the highest culture. He further explains, however, that the West as a superior cultural identity has been constituted in the context of colonialism and neo-colonialism and serves to legitimate the domination of one block of nations over the rest of the world.

In relation to the first hierarchy of perceptions as identified herein, Agathangelou (2004) shows that racial biases and stereotypes constitute a constant element of public and private discussion about immigrant women in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey. The research here corroborates these findings statistically, for the case of Cyprus, and goes further to argue that there are differences in perceptions between men and women. A significant survey finding is that, Cypriot men are more favourable towards inter-societal unions than their female counterparts. This is supported by the fact that Cypriot men married non-nationals more often than Cypriot women. Overall, the study findings (from statistical data analysis and questionnaire survey) picture two opposite and gendered stands of Greek Cypriots on inter-societal marriage: of Cypriot women and of Cypriot men.

What this study thus reveals, is the significance of various boundary-ranking measures; that is, indicators of perceived 'social distance' in influencing the marital decisions about which group could provide potential spouses, and which groups

were simply not considered by Cypriot men and women because of religious or racial criteria. For example, a Cypriot woman might consider marrying a British, Greek or American man, but under no circumstances would she consider marrying a Filipino man, because of the various hierarchies of acceptability of 'foreign-ness' in relation to migrant groups in Cyprus.[18]

Questionnaire findings depict Cypriot women as being more likely to choose spouses from the Euro-American group of countries while Cypriot men show a preference for spouses from the Eastern European group of countries (these preferences coincide with the marital choices made by Cypriot men and women, as statistical data illustrates).[19] These choices constituted a second hierarchy that accounts for economic/material differences and inequalities. In terms of socio-economic status, the Euro-American group is perceived by Cypriots as a 'higher' status migrant group, also representing the most culturally desirable origin for the spouse of a Cypriot bride. The second group of Eastern-European countries is regarded as a 'lower' status immigrant group, viewed as inferior because of its average socio-economic standing, in addition it also represents a major provider of brides for Cypriot men. Due to the fact that there are marriages between Eastern-European women who worked in a Cypriot cabaret-type venue and Cypriot men (as the qualitative part of this study has shown, see Fulias-Souroulla, 2006), many Cypriots display 'doubts' about the 'moral integrity' of these women and tend to bestow a 'prostitution halo', on all their co-nationals, socially stigmatising and marginalising them as economic and opportunistic immigrants.

The analysis of the reasons (or representations) against inter-societal marriage reveal that the Cypriot respondents are 'aware' of artificial inter-societal marriages entered into by migrant women. However, what seems to be unclear for most Greek Cypriots is that these women are coerced into marriages with Greek-Cypriot citizens because there might be no other way for them to prolong their stay on the island. In this case, a marriage to a citizen is the solution to the problem created by the lack of policies concerning migrant settlement on Cyprus. Migrants arriving from countries outside of the EU are constrained by the regime of short-term/temporary residence permits that allow them the possibility of obtaining only a fixed-term work visa. Furthermore, the Cypriots' negative representations depict how inter-societal marriages entered into for 'material reasons' by migrant women, and labour migrants with poor economic standing, contribute to high unemployment rates among nationals. These images are partly created by the mass-media and some political groupings, based on self interest.

Nevertheless, Cypriot men and women agree with marital choices for Greek nationals. As the findings show, to the great majority of respondents (87%), Greek nationals from the mainland are well-known and preferred as marriage partners. Hence, this is the only combination almost unanimously accepted by Cypriots

because of the common ethnic identification of the two partners. In this sense, Argyrou (1996) formulates the argument about a Greek-Cypriot identity constructed in a context of a historical continuity with classical, glorious Greek civilisation. However, the identification is not true in today's context of Greek identity since "the practice implies that there are two ways of being Greek and that the Cypriot way is superior" (ibid., pp. 54-56).

According to existing social prejudices and stereotypes (positive and negative) about each nationality (as mentioned by the respondents), Cypriots are, therefore, expected to judge inter-societal marriage as well as viewing the spouses favourably or less favourably/unfavourably. The general criteria/markers are: religion, economic standing and racial characteristics, such as skin colour. A nationality that possesses many 'similarities' to Greek Cypriots, on these markers, is most likely to be identified as closer in terms of social distance and implicit acceptance, as the questionnaire outcome portrays. For this reason, Cypriots easily accept nationals from European countries as marriage partners, but not Asian or African.[20] The large number of inter-societal marriages and the diverse nationalities of people that enter into marriages with Cypriots contribute to a greater but gradual social acceptance of this phenomenon in Cyprus.

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Notes

1. Greek Cypriots use the word 'foreigner'/ksenos to denote non-nationals, both in public discourses and everyday language.

2. According to data from Statistics of Education (Report No. 36/2004) for the year 2003/2004, the first group of countries registered 90% (15,882) of total Cypriot students abroad and the second group of countries made up only 10% (1,749) of total Cypriot students abroad.

3. This section is part of a more detailed statistical data analysis on marriage, inter-societal marriage and immigration in Cyprus (in Fulias-Souroulla, 2006).

4. It is important to mention that population data for marriages between Greek Cypriots and non-nationals is made available for a limited number of nationalities (i.e. considered by the Statistical Service as 'main nationalities'). A large number of nationalities are clustered under the category of 'other nationalities'. Regarding civil marriage, data is available for (A) five nationalities (i.e. Greek, British, American, Israeli and Lebanese) that had married in Cyprus between 1989 and 1994. From 1994, (B) six more nationalities (i.e. Romanian, Bulgarian, Russian, German, Iranian, and Filipino) are tabulated regarding marital unions with Greek Cypriots. (C) For the years 2002 and 2003 there are three more nationalities registered: Irish, Moldavian and Ukrainian (but no data is reported for the German and Iranian nationalities). (D) For the year 2004, eight new nationalities are added: Belarusian, Sri-Lankan, Chinese and Yugoslavian (for

'nationality of bride') and Syrian, Pakistani, Egyptian and Indian (for 'nationality of groom').

5. There is a racially-based assumption here that these groups share similar characteristics. It should be clearly understood that the viewpoints expressed do not represent those of the author. Agathangelou (2004) would argue that indeed these groups share similar positions on a racialised hierarchy of perception: Euro-Americans enjoying the most 'respect', followed by eastern Europeans, then Africans/Asians.

6. The statistical data available shows only the number of marriages entered into by Greek-Cypriot women with Egyptian men for the year 2004 (no other African nationality appears in the statistics to have entered into marriages with 'natives').

7. See Appendix 2 for a graph of marriages: Greek Cypriots – non-Greek-Cypriots by gender and year. The amendment of the citizenship law in 1999 allowed those descendants with a Cypriot mother and a non-Cypriot father, the right to citizenship.

8. For more details see Fulias-Souroulla (2006).

9. Cited in Petronoti, Marina and Papagaroufali, Eleni (2006).

10. For more details, see Fulias-Souroulla (2006), pp. 117-199, 318-320.

11. The language of the auto-administrated questionnaire was Greek and the terms employed to denote immigrants were 'foreign workers' (kseni ergates) and foreigners (ksenos/i). The opening paragraph of the questionnaire defined the term 'foreigner' as a person who entered Cyprus with the intention to settle down, and/ or to stay for one year or more.

12. Exchange theory is based on an economic metaphor that uses a profit motive as a basis of social interaction. As Smith (1995, p. 21) shows "economists have used exchange principles to identify the use of resource in marital interactions in Third World settings". Early presentations of the theory formulated by anthropologists also demonstrated its applicability in various cultural contexts. Levi-Stauss (1969) emphasised that exchange behaviour is regulated by social norms and values; thus, exchange interactions are not restricted to direct interaction among individuals but include "complex networks of indirect exchange among various social groups" (Sabatelli and Shehan, 1993, p. 404).

13. In Cyprus, Eastern - European women (especially those working in night clubs) are regarded as a direct threat to the marriage between indigenous people, both by the state authorities and public opinion (Vassiliadou, 2004). This is being confirmed by the present research and further research conducted in the FeMIPol project at [www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de].

14. It is a common practice for Greek-Cypriot relatives when learning about the birth of a child to ask whether she/he is a mouzouris/mouzourou (slightly darker hair and skin) or an asproulis/asproulou (with blond or lighter coloured hair and whiter skin).

15. I should mention that the survey questionnaire did not include nationalities from the African continent because of the limited tabulated statistical data available on nationalities married to Greek Cypriots. As mentioned earlier, there is no data registered for these nationalities except for the year 2004 when data is registered for Egyptians only, and restricted to 'nationality of groom'. At the time the survey questionnaire was distributed, the Demographic Report for the year 2004 had not been published. The

absence of such data means that the number of marriages between Greek Cypriots and African nationals would appear to be very small.

16. There is no statistical data tabulated for African nationals living in Cyprus (except for Egyptian men married to Cypriot women in 2004). The questionnaire employed does not list any African nationalities because of the lack of statistical data.

17. Fulias-Souroulla (2006).

18. See also the statistical data presented earlier as well as in Appendix 1.

19. See also Appendix 1.

20. According to statistical and survey findings.

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Appendix 1

Summary Tables with Greek-Cypriot Marital Choices for Different Nationalities, Resulting from Statistical Data Analysis (1989-2004)

Table 1: Most Frequent Marital Choices of Cypriots for Non-national Spouses

Group of nationalities	Most frequent marriage partner for Cypriot men		Most frequent marriage partner for Cypriot women	
	Civil	Religious	Civil	Religious
Euro-American group	British	British and Greek	British	Greek
East-European group	Russian	...	Romanian	...
Asian group	Filipina	Lebanese	Lebanese	Lebanese

**Table 2: Least Frequent Marital Choices of Cypriots for Non-national Spouses**

Group of nationalities	Least frequent marriage partner for Cypriot men		Least frequent marriage partner for Cypriot women	
	Civil	Religious	Civil	Religious
Euro-American group	German	German	German	German
East-European group	Bulgarian	...	Russian	...
Asian group	Iranian	...	Filipino	...

Note: The symbol '...' means that no tabulated data is available for all nationalities under study for mixed religious marriages between Cypriots and non-Cypriots.
Source: Author's elaboration of data from Population Statistics, Demographic Reports (1989-2004)

Appendix 2

Marriages: Cypriots-Non-Cypriots by Year and Gender
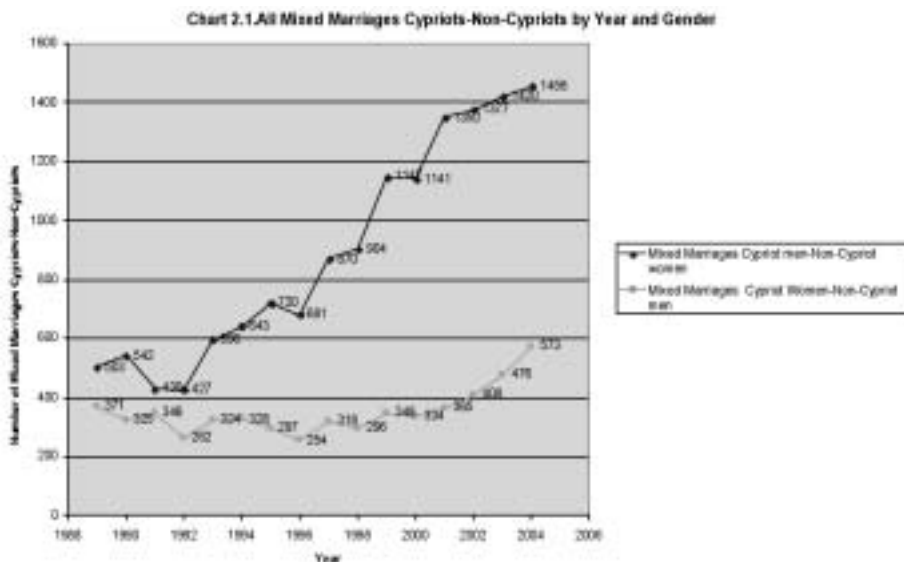
Chart 2.1.All Mixed Marriages Cypriots-Non-Cypriots by Year and Gender

Source: Author's elaboration of data from Population Statistics, Demographic Reports (1989-2004)

Migrant worker at construction site near the Green Line
© Photographer: Narges Abdi
Source: Limbo: The Migrant in Cyprus – A Portrait
Edited by David Officer and Nicos Philippou
Mediterranean Voices Project (Euromed Heritage Project)