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# **An Investigation of the Post-Migration Survival of Traditional Marriage Patterns: Consanguineous Marriage among Turkish and Moroccan Immigrants in Belgium<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Introduction**

An early scientific account on consanguineous marriages is from the hand of George Darwin. In the second half of the nineteenth century, he tried to estimate the incidence of kin marriages in England, by comparing the expected common-surname marriages with the actually observed proportion in the population he studied (Bittles, 1994: 562 and Grant, 1996: 6). His interest in consanguinity was not so coincidental since his father, Charles, had married his first cousin Emma Wedgewood. The main objective of the eighteenth and nineteenth century scientists was not only to obtain an idea of the prevalence of kin marriages, but more importantly, to identify or weaken the arguments considering consanguinity a cause of degeneracy among the offspring. This field of study has traditionally been dominated by biologists and social biologists. Demographers joined in the debate because the marriage of close biological kin was apparently associated with higher fertility rates, prenatal losses and postnatal mortality. The possible causal relationships between consanguinity and these demographic indexes has not been proved in a satisfactory way because of their high association with other socio-demographic background characteristics and the difficulty of distinguishing between genetic and non-genetic causes in most mortality data for the developing countries (Bittles, 1994 and Shami (et al.), 1994). Furthermore, there is still discussion ongoing as to whether inbreeding over many generations could lead to "the effective removal of deleterious genes from the gene pool, via the selective prereproductive loss of individuals with recessive genetic disorders" (Bittles, 1992: 339).

Another area from which the interest in consanguinity has grown is that of anthropology. Here it has been studied as a part of the broader kinship and inheritance systems. In the scientific field that lies at one of the intersections of the above mentioned disciplines, namely migration research, relatively little attention has been paid to the occurrence of consanguineous marriages. Fast growing urbanisation and rural-urban migration in developing countries, however, has invited researchers to look at the survival of traditionally rural matrimonial systems in the new urban context (see Leonetti and Newell-Morris, 1982 and Feldman, 1994). In addition, migration researchers increasingly recognise the importance of networks in explaining the persistence of international migration systems (Boyd, 1989; Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik (eds.), 1992; Böcker, 1994). Within these networks family ties play of course an important role. Yet, although a few authors have made brief comments on the evolution of consanguineous marriages in immigrant communities in the past (see Gokalp, 1989, Esveldt (et al.), 1995: 180-183, and Tribalat, 1995: 58-60), it has never been the subject of a separate analysis. To our knowledge more attention has been paid to the 'arranged or compulsory marriage' as a characteristic of matrimonial practices in immigrant communities, and its possible negative effect on the integration of the new household in the host society.

It is the objective of this paper to analyse the evolution of a marriage custom in the new context after migration. To that goal two analytical steps will be undertaken. First, a comparison will be made between the prevalence of consanguineous marriages in the Turkish and Moroccan communities in Belgium with their respective countries of origin. To do that we shall combine data from different sources. These comparisons are of course limited to information common in the two data sets. A second analysis will, therefore, be presented in

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Hilary Page for the comments and suggestions she made for the realisation of this paper.

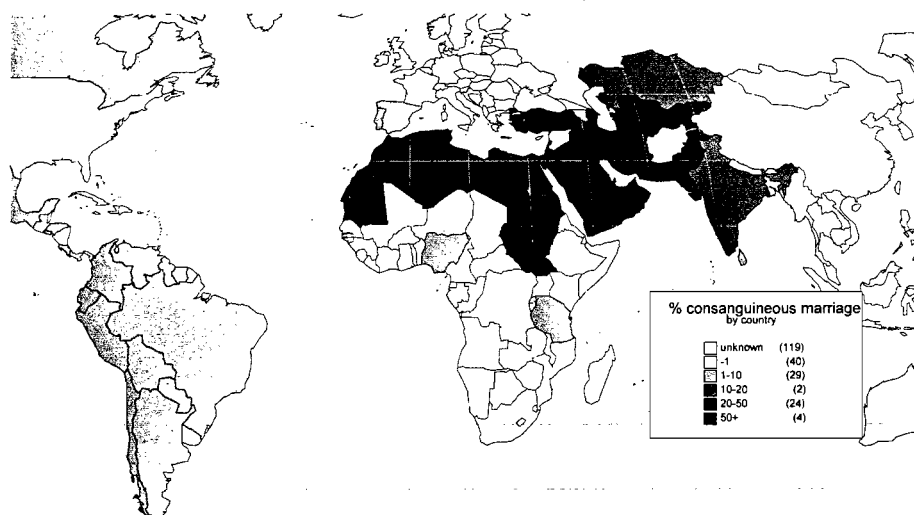
limited to information common in the two data sets. A second analysis will, therefore, be presented in which the evolution of consanguineous marriage over the different migrant cohorts and migrant generations will be analysed in greater depth. Before going deeper into the analysis, I present a sketch of the prevalence of consanguineous marriages world wide and discuss some of the classical explanations given for marriages within the kin group.

### Consanguineous marriages world wide

Consanguineous marriage is often seen as a religious artefact. But, although its prevalence is generally highest where Islam is the dominant religion, the practice of marrying close kin is certainly not exclusive to Muslims. As can be seen from figure 1, consanguineous marriages are also common in regions where Buddhism or Hinduism is the dominant religion. In North Africa and the Middle East, marriages between relatives are also observed among Christians and Jews (Bittles, 1992 and Khlal, 1997: 76). These are not to be considered as a kind of deviant behaviour of some isolated groups: even in the Old Testament, numerous examples of consanguineous marriages can be found. I believe, therefore, that we must follow Khlal (1997) in her argument that endogamy or consanguinity in marriage must be seen as a cultural rather than an Islamic or religious trait. This argument is further supported if we consider marriage practices in the areas where detailed information on consanguineous marriages is not available. It is estimated that kin marriages are practised in 35-50% of the populations in sub-Saharan Africa and these do not concern only Islamicised populations (Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989 and Bittles, 1994: 565). Furthermore, cross-cousin marriage is an established custom among the Han, the most important ethnic group in China (Bittles, 1994: 565).

In Europe and North America the practice of consanguineous marriages has almost completely disappeared. According to Goody (1994) it was not until the fourth century (AD) that important prohibitions on marriage to kin were introduced by the Church. This is not to say that they ceased to exist from that moment. From George Darwin's calculations we know that among the English gentry and aristocracy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century about four per cent of all marriages involved related spouses (Grant, 1996: 6). In some geographical and social isolates, it was not only until this century that the practice declined drastically.

Figure 1: Consanguinity world wide (marriages between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins only)



Sources: Bittles (1990, 1994), Khlal (1997) & DHS-surveys

An important cluster of countries with high levels of consanguinity is situated around the southern and eastern border of the Mediterranean, from the Maghreb-countries in North-western Africa to the Turkish republics in the former Soviet Union (see figure 1). These are

patrilateral parallel cousin marriage<sup>2</sup>. This statement, however, needs to be qualified in two ways. First of all, it is somewhat problematic to speak of a "preferred marriage" if the overall consanguinity rate in marriages (on the national level) hardly exceeds 50% and patrilateral parallel cousin marriages mostly account for no more than half of all consanguineous unions<sup>3</sup>. Of course, the number of 'preferred' marriages is limited by the number of eligible candidates within the family. The upper boundary of potential consanguineous marriages that can be concluded within a certain community is thus nowhere 100%. Secondly, the preferred FBD marriage in Arab and other Muslim countries or communities is not a religious prescription. Islam neither forbids nor prescribes this particular type of marriage (Abd Al-Ati, 1995: 136). This does not mean that strenuous prescriptions for the FBD marriage have never existed. In some Muslim societies, a man can prevent his parallel cousin marrying someone else without his consent. In Iraq, customary law even recognised the right of the male to kill his parallel cousin if she married another man, and among the Chibaysh (Iraq) the paternal uncle considered it a humiliation if his nephew preferred to marry a stranger over one of his daughters (Chelhod, 1965: 124).

Both Turkey and Morocco are situated in the belt of countries with a high prevalence of consanguineous marriages. They are, however, not amongst the countries with the most extreme levels of consanguinity. According to recent DHS-data, consanguineous marriages account for 22,6% of all marriages in Turkey. The comparable figure for Morocco is 29,3%. Because of the shortage of reliable data and definitions of consanguinity that do not always correspond, it is difficult to estimate whether or not the occurrence of consanguineous marriage is decreasing in these two countries. Some data on the topic are, however, available. For the 1960's, Timur estimated that the total number of couples with related partners accounted for 29% of all married couples in Turkey (Gokalp, 1989: 54). According to the results from the Population and Health Survey held in Turkey in 1988, the consanguinity level was estimated at 21,1% (Tunçbilek and Ulusoy, 1989: 40 and Güvenç, 1993: 353) and according to Tunçbilek and Ulusoy (1989) no significant change occurred in these percentages between 1983 and 1988. We may cautiously conclude that the prevalence of consanguineous marriages declined during the seventies, but has remained stable since then. For Morocco, we can only rely on the DHS-surveys of 1987 and 1992 to situate an evolution over time. In 1987, 33% of all couples involved relatives. Three fourths of these were first cousins (Benhamadi, 1996: 232). In the time span between the 1987 and 1992 DHS surveys, the prevalence of consanguineous marriages declined by 4 percentage points.

Before going deeper into the classical explanations for consanguineous marriages, it is useful to note the observed negative association of consanguinity with other socio-demographic characteristics such as education, socio-economic class<sup>4</sup> and the degree of urbanisation of the place of settlement (cfr. Tunçbilek and Ulusoy, 1989; Bittles, 1992; Benhamadi; 1996 and Khlal, 1997). The extent to which these relationships observed at the individual level may lead us to assume a straightforward relationship between the general development of a society and a declining prevalence of consanguineous marriages is, however, questionable (Vergin, 1985 and Khlal, 1997).

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<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of the bridegroom, these are marriages with the daughter of the paternal uncle (father's brother's daughter marriage, FBD)

<sup>3</sup> Most of the data on consanguinity do not, however, allow us to make a further breakdown of cousin marriages into first cousin marriages by genealogy. For Turkey, this information is available and the share of FBD marriages in consanguineous unions is 22% in Turkey (DHSIII-Turkey, 1993). In Morocco, paternal 1<sup>st</sup> cousin marriages (parallel AND cross cousins), account for 42% of all consanguineous unions (DHSII-Morocco, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> According to Khlal (1997: 66) cousin marriages are nowadays much more prevalent among the lower social classes in the Arab world, whereas they haven often been presented in the anthropological literature as the prerogative of the upper strata in society. Tillion (1983: 28) also suggested a relationship between nobility and cousin marriage in the paternal line.

## **A discussion of the classical explanations for consanguineous marriages**

A classical demographic explanation for consanguineous marriages points to the restriction of the marriage market in social or physical isolates. The Hutterites are an example of such a population where kin marriages occurred because of the group's social isolation. This explanation of consanguinity is however not very useful to us since neither Turks nor Moroccans constitute a physically or socially isolated group. To the extent that immigrant communities can be considered as restricted marriage markets, this is often a consequence of the prevailing rules of endogamy. These are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

In the anthropological literature the explanations for consanguineous marriages coincide with the reasons given for the rules of endogamy and exogamy. The rules of exogamy are closely related to the incest taboos which prevent individuals mating with, or marrying close kin. In most societies the taboo includes marriage between parents and children, and between siblings. In the Koran, the incest taboo for a man was extended to include aunts, nieces, stepmothers, stepdaughters, stepsisters, daughters-in-law, and the sisters of one's wife (Abd Al-Ati, 1995: 128). Many different theories have been proposed to explain the almost universal existence of incest taboos. These have been summarised by Durham (1991: 316): through the obligation for out-marriage, the incest taboo indirectly promotes beneficial co-operation, alliances, or exchanges between families; they are sometimes seen as preventing competition and disruptive tensions within family units; according to other authors, people who are reared together develop a sexual aversion and this aversion is the basis for the moral disapproval of these relationships; and from a more biological perspective, incest taboos are seen to have a higher cultural fitness because they reduce possible genetically deleterious effects through the reduction of inbreeding.

Societies not only specify rules restricting marriages between close kin, they often also have some outer barriers within which marriage partners have to be sought. Perhaps the most widespread rule of endogamy in Muslim societies is that of religious endogamy: for Muslim men it is forbidden to marry a woman who does not know 'the book' (who is neither Muslim, Christian, or Jewish) and Muslim women are allowed to marry only other Muslims. Rules of endogamy are, however, not exclusively religious and they are not always as absolute as in this example. Other widespread endogamy rules include caste or social class endogamy, village endogamy and lineage endogamy. Since we are mainly interested in explaining the rationale for consanguineous marriages, we shall focus here on lineage endogamy. In patrilineal societies, lineage endogamy is practised through the patrilineal parallel cousin marriage. This type of endogamy is often observed in pastoral communities and, as mentioned before, in most of the North African and Middle Eastern societies. Essential for the understanding of this type of endogamy are its consequences in terms of property distribution. In a patrilineal societal organisation the fragmentation of productive resources can be avoided only through marriages within the patrilineage, that is, through the marriage of the children of two brothers. This is of course only so where family property is transferred to female as well as to male heirs, i.e. the system of diverging devolution in Goody's (1983: 21) terminology. This system was validated in the Koran by the establishment of an inheritance system prescribing that a woman could acquire half of the share of a man<sup>5</sup>. Whether Islam introduced a drastic change in the relationship between woman and property and in marriage practises is, however, questionable: "In settled areas throughout the Near East marriage transactions already appear to have included a settlement by the husband or parent upon the wife, who was also entitled, at least after the Prophet, to share in the inheritance of her parental property" (Goody, 1990: 371). The outcome of FBD marriages in terms of property distribution clearly indicates the economic relevance of such a system in pastoral and land-owning communities, but it also has its political dimension: whereas cross-cousin marriage supports a strategy of alliances between lineages, parallel cousin marriages results in the

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<sup>5</sup> According to some authors (Tillion, 1983: 29-30, Eickelman, 1981: 130 and Delaney, 1991: 102) this principle is often violated in the Maghreb and Turkey. Seddon, (1981: 70) nuances this argument by saying that a woman may receive parts of the property of her father during his lifetime as her own share of the inheritance.

enclosure of the lineage on itself and reinforces the solidarity within the bloodline. Some authors have, therefore, argued that those Arab tribes that were more self-sufficient preferred lineage endogamy in contrast to trading tribes that sought to improve their relationships with other tribes through intermarriage (Zuhair Hatab, quoted in Bakarar, 1985: 39-40).

From the foregoing we must retain that patrilineal parallel cousin marriages have an economic function (they limit the distribution of property from one lineage to another), and from a structural point of view, the political rationale is embodied in the strategy of enclosure and the reinforcement of the lineage solidarity. A point that has been marginally addressed until now is that of the transfer of property or money (through the dower and dowry) between the families of the spouses in marriage settlements. According to several authors these transactions increase proportionately with the social distance between the two spouses, or, are at least lower or less compelling where relatives are involved (Stirling, 1966: 187; Gokalp, 1989: 55; Jamous, 1981: 250; Bakarar, 1985: 39; Govinda Reddy, 1988; Goody, 1990: 380; Delaney, 1991: 119). Customs with respect to marriage-related transfers of property can vary considerably from one locality to another. In many Muslim societies the most important transfer is that from the groom or his family to the bride or her family. Although there's considerable variation in the terminology used, Arabs often use the term *Mahr* to refer to the part that goes to the family of the bride. The *Sadaq* or *Jahaz* is the sum or property that goes to the bride directly (Goody, 1990: 365). The latter can be paid immediately, or at the moment of an unwanted divorce. Together the *Mahr* and the *Sadaq* or *Jahaz* constitute the dower (sometimes also referred to as the indirect dowry). In Turkey the terms *Baslik* or *Kalin* are used to denote the amount of property that is given to the bride's family (Vergin, 1982: 573 and Dogan, 1993: 215). According to Vergin (1982: 573) the *Mehir* or *Mehr* (derived from the Arab *Mahr*) is paid to the bride at the time of marriage in accordance with Islamic precepts and belongs to her personally. The dowry, on the other hand, is transferred by the family of the bride to the newly formed couple, but often the bride may exercise partial or total control over its disposal. The dowry can consist of the trousseau that the bride has made or collected during her youth, things she bought with the money given her by the bridegroom's family, and also the part of her inheritance that she received at the moment of her marriage rather than at the death of her father. If the inheritance consists of land, a woman will sometimes allow their brothers to cultivate their land. "On the other hand they expect support and security in the event of life crises, especially when threatened with repudiation by their husbands. Only later in life, when a woman is truly secure in her marital household, with grown sons to support her in old age, will she have her sons press her claim" (Mundy, cited in Goody: 1990: 375).

The meaning or rationale behind the various property transactions in marriage settlements has been interpreted in various ways. Some authors stress that the system guarantees the economic independence of the wife in the event of repudiation or divorce<sup>6</sup> or in the unfortunate event of the death of her husband (Abd Al-Ati, 1995: 67). This is certainly relevant where the woman has direct control over a part or the whole of the dower. The part of the dower that goes directly to the father of the bride is often seen as a compensation for the investment in her education or as a remuneration for the loss of labour power in the fields or in the house. Other scholars tend to emphasise the symbolic aspect of marriage transactions. Delaney interprets the dower as a symbolic payment to the bride's father for his labour in bringing her up. "It is in recognition that the fruits of her body, which her father has cultivated, are now to be reaped by the boy's family" (1991: 119). Jamous (1981: 245-263) elaborates this argument. In his view the matrimonial market is a primary battlefield for status competition or competition for honour. Since marrying a woman is acquiring the rights over her descendance, the honour of family of the wife is at stake. The level of the dower is the symbolic representation of this honour. Jamous remarks that marriages can be interpreted very distinctively, depending on the level of the dower: if the father of the girl accepts a low dower, he confirms his inferiority towards the man who takes his daughter. His only gain is

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<sup>6</sup> This point is of considerable importance since divorce or repudiation is a fundamental feature of traditional Arab society with rates as high as those nowadays prevalent in Europe (Goody, 1990: 376).

that his name is now associated with that of a more powerful and prestigious household. When the father of the girl succeeds in receiving a high dowry, his superiority is recognised and his honour and prestige elevated. Lineage endogamous marriages can be interpreted as the refusal of engaging in the competition for honour. This can happen when a family does not have the means to pay for a considerable dowry. Or, at the other extreme, the patriarch may feel so superior, he considers no one able to compete with him over the honour of his kin or lineage.

Whatever meaning we ascribe to the transactions involved in marriage settlements, they all suggest that they become less important as the social distance between the two spouses decreases. When the two potential marriage partners are children of two brothers (or, more generally, when they are relatives) honour is not at stake since they belong to the same kin group. Similarly, the economic independence of a woman in case of repudiation or divorce does not have to be insured through the dowry, since the marriage is embedded in more stable kin relationships. This economic advantage of consanguineous marriages is not to be underestimated since the dowry and the additional cost of the marriage feast can easily exceed a family's entire annual income (Eickelman, 1981: 126 and Delaney, 1991: 111). It is not all that unlikely, therefore, that the relationship between kin marriages and marriage transactions is turned upside down so that the cost of marriage becomes a primary reason to conclude marriages between relatives. This is also assumed by Bittles (1994: 576) in his remark that consanguineous marriages in South Asia are seen as an economically more feasible alternative to marriages with non-kin.

Up to this point we have mainly discussed the political and economic functions of consanguineous and lineage endogamous marriages. In addition to, or in opposition to these kind of explanations, other authors have emphasised the social functions or cultural explanations for kin marriages. We have already referred to the central place given to the concept of honour in Middle Eastern societies and in North Africa. Delaney (1991: 101-102) summarises some other points of view on honour as a crucial factor in marriage strategies: since the notion of honour is 'function of the purity of the women' in his family, a father loses control over the honour of his family when his daughter marries out. Marrying within the family is, therefore, often seen to offer better guarantees for the preservation of the family honour because the father and his immediate relatives are allies in the control of the behaviour of his daughter.

Other often stated social functions of kin marriages are that it is expected to reduce the risks of an unsuitable match, that it facilitates marriage negotiations and that it will smooth the mutual adjustment of the parties involved. The logic is that both parties know each other very well, they cannot hide financial or medical problems for each other, and that they probably have a comparable status. The same reasoning can of course be applied to marriage within a specific locality, i.e. the neighbourhood or the village. In search of an explanation of the patrilateral parallel cousin marriage, Khuri (1970) draws on a similar argumentation by saying that in contrast to other types of consanguineous marriages, FBD marriage does not establish new affinal relationships at all. "The same specifically recognised family relationships between a person and his consanguine relatives before marriage continue after he marries the paternal cousin. It is in this sense that FBD marriage contributes to harmonious family relationships: the same family relationships to which a person learns to accommodate himself at an early age continue after he marries and reaches adulthood" (Khuri, 1970: 616). Not everyone shares the opinion of Khuri, though. "Parents of daughters often say they prefer to give a daughter to the son of a female relative on either side because it is this woman with whom their daughter will work and spend most of her time, and with whom she must get along" (Delaney, 1991: 110).

The last statement is one that counters the classically held idea that all Muslims prefer cousins in the paternal line as marriage partners. It is perhaps less important as an argument that is under serious consideration each time a marriage is concluded, but it is important in that it indicates the relativity of the so called 'preferred marriage'. In studying Arab or Muslim

populations scholars too often focused on 'the typical' and exotic patrilineal parallel cousin marriage, thereby neglecting the explanation for its coexistence with other forms of consanguineous or endogamous marriages. Delaney (1991: 108) clearly tries to take into account the existence of a variety in partner types in her reflection that marriage partners are searched for in concentric circles, "emanating from ego and proceeding from inside to outside". The first circle is among close kin, but the possibilities are already known. The next circle of perusal is other kin, neighbours and fellow villagers, both in the village and living in town". Perhaps the paths that are followed in looking for and choosing a marriage partner are not as geometrical as Delany suggests, but important in her argument is that it illustrates the permissiveness of the so called preferential rules. Therefore, I believe we must follow Eickelman (1981: 133) in his argument that most marriage decisions show a subtle combination of various strategies which cannot be derived solely from rules or prescriptions. As argued above, marriage decisions may be embedded in a variety of expected social, economic and interpersonal or political advantages. And why should we not also include love or attraction as a possible motive ?

The idea that marriage is the final sediment of many possibilities, considerations and negotiations, and not simply the outcome of one or the other preferential rule is supported by figures on the matrimonial practices of the two populations studied here (see table 1). These figures do not suggest an exclusive preference for lineage endogamous marriages at all<sup>7</sup>; both lineage endogamic and exogamic strategies are common practice in the two countries considered.

**Table 1: Blood relationship with the first husband**

	Morocco	Turkey
No relationship	70.7	77.4
Paternal 1 <sup>st</sup> cousin	12.2	08.5
Maternal 1 <sup>st</sup> cousin	09.6	06.4
Other relationship	07.5	07.6
	N=5631	N=6519

(Sources: DHSII-Morocco, 1992 and DHSIII-Turkey, 1993)

Furthermore, table 1 clearly indicates that consanguineous marriages are not the norm in either of the two settings. They account for only 29,3% of all marriages in Morocco and 23,6% of all marriages in Turkey. Marriages between first cousins account for 3/4 of all consanguineous marriages in Morocco and for 2/3 of the total number of marriages between relatives recorded in Turkey. This higher figure for Morocco is to be explained by the more frequently practised FBD-unions in Morocco, or what is generally seen as the Arab marriage (see also footnote 2). The latter statement cannot be deducted directly from the above figures, but several authors have indicated that in Turkey, other marriage traditions or preference rules prevailed before the advent of Islam and the introduction of marriage patterns characteristic for the Arabs. These authors state furthermore that the influence of the Arab marriage traditions on Turkish society has been only marginal (Gokalp, 1989: 54-55 and Vergin, 1985: 572-573).

The flexibility with which matrimonial traditions are applied, has also been underlined in ethnographic research in both countries. David Seddon (1981: 77) described close endogamy and exogamy as two intimately related strategies of peasants in northern Morocco. The same holds for Turkey: in a report on her fieldwork in a rural community in the province of Zonguldak, Ilcan (1994) suggests that matrimonial strategies are very much dependent on the household structure and the social and economic position of the family or lineage. From this argumentation, we must retain that partner preferences and prescriptions for lineage endogamy, neighbourhood endogamy or village endogamy do have a certain sociocultural, economic or political function or rationale, but they are applied only in a very flexible or opportunistic way. The relative ease with which 'prescriptions' or 'preferences' are sometimes

<sup>7</sup> In table 1 marriages with maternal first cousins are lineage exogamous. The 'other relationship'-marriages and the marriages between paternal first cousins include both lineage exogamous and lineage endogamous marriages. The nature of the questions does not allow us to distinguish between parallel and cross-cousins.



overruled, can be illustrated by invoking an example of another matrimonial practice, i.e. that of the place of residence after marriage. Because it is disgraceful for a man to go and live under the authority of his father-in-law, the principle of virilocality is seen as inviolable. However, Ilcan (1994: 283-285) for example describes the case where the groom moves into the house of his bride because her father did not have sons himself. After the death of his father-in-law the groom replaces his subordinate position of living in son-in-law for that of the head of the household. Another example is given by Seddon (1981: 67-68). He describes that men were "prepared to forego their own inheritance for the sake of attachment to a more powerful man than their father and to endure the slight social opprobrium that attached to the man living with his wife's father as opposed to his own father and agnatic line".

### **Consanguinity in the immigrant community: some plausible paths**

It is not all that easy to predict how the frequency of consanguineous marriages will evolve within immigrant communities. On the one hand immigration will surely accelerate the impact of social factors most commonly associated with modernisation or development. In the Turkish and Moroccan migration to Belgium, the decision to emigrate is also a decision to exchange rural life for that in one of Europe's industrial centres<sup>8</sup>. This, of course, drastically alters the economic structure of the household: the dependence on family property as a means for subsistence is replaced by the economic rationale of wage labour. In addition, the educational level of the children of the pioneering immigrants is expected to increase significantly. These are only two of the most obvious social implications of migration, and both of them suggest a declining support for traditional matrimonial practices: they not only break down the economic support for consanguineous marriage, but also tend to increase individualism and particularism. The hypothesis that traditional matrimonial practices will gradually lose importance is supported by results of previous research on the demographic behaviour of the second generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in Belgium. Although they did not always evolve in parallel, important demographic transitions seem to have accompanied the migration and the generational succession within the immigrant community. Among these changes or transitions we may account a significant increase in the age at marriage, a declining fertility rate and a fading preference of mothers for sons (see Lodewijckx, Page & Schoenmaekers, 1997 and Page & Segaert, 1997).

As has been mentioned before, some authors have observed a negative association between kin marriages and educational level, socio-economic class and the degree of urbanisation of the place of settlement, but a straightforward relationship between urbanisation or migration and the breakdown of traditional matrimonial practices does not seem to exist (Vergin, 1994 and Khat, 1997). In her conclusion of a study on the mating patterns of internal immigrants in various regions in the developing world, Feldman subscribes to a similar point of view. According to her, "mate selection practices among ethnic and other groups migrating to urban centres in the developing world are evidencing a response to the socio-economic conditions which they fashion or find there" (1994: 341). In some of the cases she describes, traditional matrimonial practices were being reinforced, under other conditions they collapsed to follow a more westernised model of mate selection. Although the motives for, and the structure and outcomes of international migrations may only partially overlap with that of internal rural-urban migration, we cannot a priori exclude the hypothesis that kin marriages will persist in and through international migration. We have already argued that rigid rules for preferential marriage partners do not exist. On the contrary, the matrimonial traditions and practices in the two countries studied here have a considerable degree of flexibility. It is, therefore, not far-fetched to suppose a certain degree of adaptability of these marriage patterns to the new conditions created by migration and migration policies. The latter is essential since the Belgian government restricted new migrations from Turkey and Morocco to the marriage partners of persons already legally residing in Belgium. For someone residing in Turkey or

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<sup>8</sup> See Surkyn and Reniers (1997) and Reniers (1997) for a description of the characteristics of the Turkish and Moroccan migration to Belgium.

Morocco, marriage with the daughter or son of an emigrant has the added value associated with the acquisition of a residence permit. This new economic rationale in partner selection is reflected in the sometimes staggering values of the dower and dowry where the marriage induces a new migration (Gokalp, 1989: 62). In their turn, the higher levels of the economic transactions when the marriage is accompanied with a visa may result in a new impetus for consanguineous marriages. The high level of the dower is surely not the only factor that has to be considered in trying to find explanations for consanguineous marriages within a migratory context. Arranging and concluding marriages in Turkey and Morocco is a subtle process where possibilities are meticulously scanned and only small incremental concretising steps are undertaken. Often the marriage negotiations involve the mediation of a third party (see Maher, 1974: 63-64, Delaney, 1991:118-124 and Ilcan, 1994: 277-282). The degree of prudence required is, of course, dependent on the social distance between the spouses and - elaborating on the terminology of Jamous - the honour that is at stake. These procedures are pretty complicated when the physical distance is large as is the case when one of the potential spouses is a migrant. One way of coping with this problem is marrying within the kin group. Additionally, family members in the country of origin are in a better position than strangers to exert pressure to have one of their children marry with a potential partner in Europe.

In the above reasoning it is suggested that kin marriages are an important characteristic of cross-border marriages (marriages that induce the migration of one of the spouses). These cross-border marriages are not a marginal phenomenon in the recent migration history of the two populations: 55 to 75% of the second generation migrants and migrants that were unmarried at the moment of their departure marry a partner from the country of origin (Lievens, 1997: 79). From the perspective of the countries of origin, these relatively high figures have to be explained by a continuing emigration pressure. The desire to emigrate can be nourished by economic motives, but this is not exclusively so. We can recall in this context the example given by Boulahbel-Villac (1994: 46-49) of a Maghrebien woman for whom choosing to marry someone in Europe stemmed from her preference for a nuclear family instead of a life within an extended household. From the perspective of the immigrant community the picture is more complex and it is probable that the logic at hand for marrying someone from the country of origin is different for men and women. Some of the underlying motives for marrying a partner from the country of origin have been revealed in qualitative research (see Esveldt (et al.), 1995: 185). For Turkish and Moroccan men living in Belgium, partners from the country of origin might appear more attractive because they are less spoiled and libertine than woman from within the immigrant community. It is believed that they comply more easily with the authority of their husband. This kind of marriage has a more traditional outlook since it confirms the classical division of roles and power between men and women. For as far as woman prefer men from the country of origin, this is because it is assumed that men from within the immigrant community suffer from many social problems that stem from their marginal position in European society. Marrying a man from the country of origin can also be seen as an act of emancipation, because in that case the virilocal residential tradition is overruled in the advantage of the woman. She retains all her relationships and has a better understanding of European society than her future husband. These woman are, because of their eligibility (due to the continuing emigration pressure and a restrictive immigration policy) also in a good position to claim a husband with a better status and higher education. As such, this marriage strategy may serve the empowerment of the woman in the new household and is therefore less conventional. These apparently opposing motives for men and woman from the immigrant community to marry someone from the country of origin share the fact that they increase the authority of he or she who 'imports' a bride or bridegroom from the country of origin.

Our first hypothesis presupposes a continuing westernisation of matrimonial practices after migration. The alternative suggests a certain degree of adaptability of the 'traditional' marriage practices to the new context created by migration and migration policy. It also suggests a redefinition of their meaning and consequences. To test the hypotheses on the evolution of consanguineous marriages in a migratory situation, two analytical steps will be undertaken. First we compare the prevalence of consanguineous marriages in the country of

origin and in the immigrant community. In the second step, the determinants of consanguineous marriages and the evolution over the different migrant cohorts and generations are at stake.

### **First analytical step: comparing consanguineous marriages in the immigrant community with the countries of origin**

To compare marriage patterns in the immigrant community with their respective countries of origin, two logit analyses were performed (one for Turks and one for Moroccans) with partner type as the variable to be explained. The set up of these analyses is somewhat atypical because data from different sources were combined. The household records of the DHS-surveys were used to generate the information on the countries of origin<sup>9</sup>. For the immigrant communities the Migration History and Social Mobility (MHSM)-surveys<sup>10</sup> were used. These are two representative national surveys conducted among a representative sample of men with Turkish and Moroccan nationality residing in Belgium. Although the DHS-surveys are samples of woman (age 15-49) and the MHSM-surveys are based on samples of men (age 18+), all data sets were matched to contain only information on once-married couples with wives aged 15 to 49 years old<sup>11</sup>. The important advantage of this procedure is that the prevalence of consanguineous marriages in a migratory context can be compared to that in the country of origin, thereby controlling for the effects of other possible intervening variables. Its main disadvantage is that the analysis is limited to information on variables common to the different data sets.

The data enable us to distinguish three different partner types as categories of the dependent variable: first cousins, other more remote relatives<sup>12</sup> and non-kin marriages. The main independent variable distinguishes Turkey and Morocco from the two immigrant communities in Belgium. The control variables considered in these two analyses are the region of origin or residence, the educational level of the husband and the marriage period. The region variable is considered as an independent variable because of important regional variations in the general development of both countries and also because the immigration from both countries tended to be very selective in regional terms (Surkyn and Reniers, 1997 and Reniers, 1997). For the non-migrants (DHS-data), we considered the region of the current residence. For the immigrants in Belgium (MHSM surveys), the last region of residence in Turkey and Morocco was used. Region is defined as a group of provinces. In their classification only those provinces with three or more representatives in the MHSM surveys were retained. For Turkey four regions were distinguished<sup>13</sup>, for Morocco only three<sup>14</sup>. The educational level of the husband (no education or primary education, lower secondary education and complete secondary or higher education) was used as a control variable since previous research had indicated it as an important covariate of traditional matrimonial practices. The marriage period is included in the analysis to control for a possible evolution over time.

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<sup>9</sup> DHSII (1992) for Morocco and DHSIII (1993) for Turkey.

<sup>10</sup> Two representative surveys carried out (from 1994 to 1996) by the universities of Brussels (VUB), Ghent (UG), Liège (ULG) and Louvain-La-Neuve (UCL) with financial support from the Flemish Scientific Research Council, the Federal Department for Scientific and Technical and Cultural Affairs (IUAP-grant 37) and the Research Councils of the Universities of Ghent and Brussels.

<sup>11</sup> The only bias remaining in the match of the two samples is that women who were married twice or more are excluded in the DHS-data, whereas men who were married twice or more are excluded from the MHSM-data.

<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the data do not allow us to distinguish parallel from cross-cousin marriages.

<sup>13</sup> These are the Metropolitan areas and the Mediterranean Coast (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Kocaeli (Izmit), Adana, Aydin, Balikesir, Bolu, Edirne, Antalya, Kirklareli), Central Anatolia (Kayseri, Konya, Zonguldak, Karaman, Denizli, Yozgat, Aksaray, Corum, Kirsehir, Nevsehir, Samsun, Isparta, Usak, Kutahya, Sinop, Hatay), Afyon and Eskishehir, and Eastern Anatolia (Trabzon, Giresun, Ardahan, Sivas, Kars, Kahramanmaraş, Erzincan, Tunceli, Gumushane, Malatya, Iğdir, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa).

<sup>14</sup> These are the Golden Triangle and the Periphery (Casablanca, Meknes, Agadir, Rabat, Fez, Kenitra, Tarouannt, Guelmim, Tiznit, Marrakech, Beni Mellal, Khemisset, Ouarzazate), the Northern Arab provinces (Tanger, Oujda, Tetouan (including Larache), Chefchaouen, Taza), and the Northern Berber provinces (Nador, Al Hoceima).

In both logit models fitted, only three significant effects needed to be retained. These are the direct effects of region, educational level and the effect of the variable that distinguishes the two immigrant communities from their respective countries of origin. More details on the model selection and the effects retained can be found in the appendix (analysis 1a and 1b). To facilitate presentation, the odds and odds-ratios have been transformed into percentages. These net-percentages are to be read as the percentages obtained after controlling for the effect of the other variables in the model. In the following graphs only the percentages for marriages with first cousins and other consanguineous marriages are shown. The percentage of kin exogamous marriages are their complement and are omitted from the graphs.

Let us first consider the effects of region and educational level (figure 2). For both Moroccans and Turks the prevalence of consanguineous marriages of both types declines with an increasing educational level. This is consistent with our expectations. The proportion consanguineous marriages also varies with the region of origin and residence. This is more explicitly the case for the Turks, for whom consanguineous marriages are most common among those who live in or grew up in the less developed Eastern Anatolian provinces. Consanguineous marriages are less common among persons from one of the Metropolitan areas and the provinces along the Mediterranean coast. For both nationalities we also have a category with a 'non-applicable' value. These are migrants of the second or middle generation, who left Turkey and Morocco before the age of 15 or were born in Belgium. It is not possible to draw any far-reaching conclusions from figure 2 because the variables combine information on migrants and non-migrants. Important, however, is that the interaction of these effects with the country of residence was found to be non-significant. This means that the differentials found by region of origin and education in Turkey and Morocco persist in the same way within the immigrant groups.

Figure 2a: Net percentage of consanguineous marriages by region of origin (or residence) and by educational level (immigrants and non-migrants), Turks

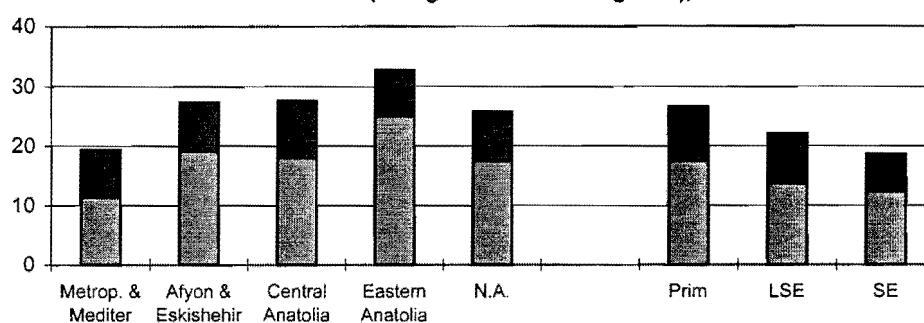
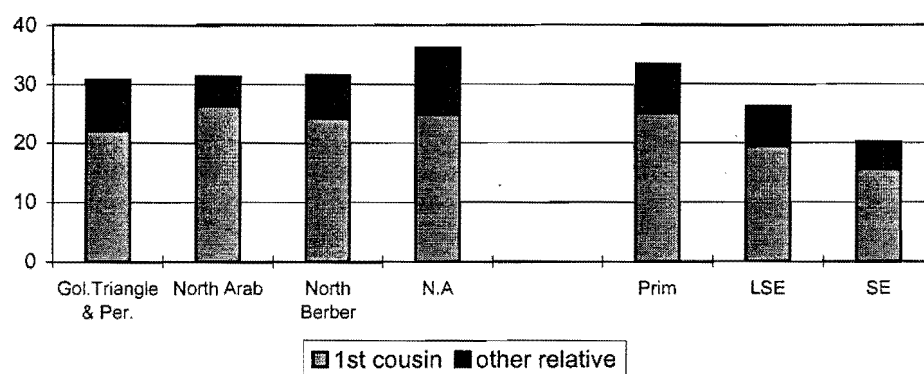
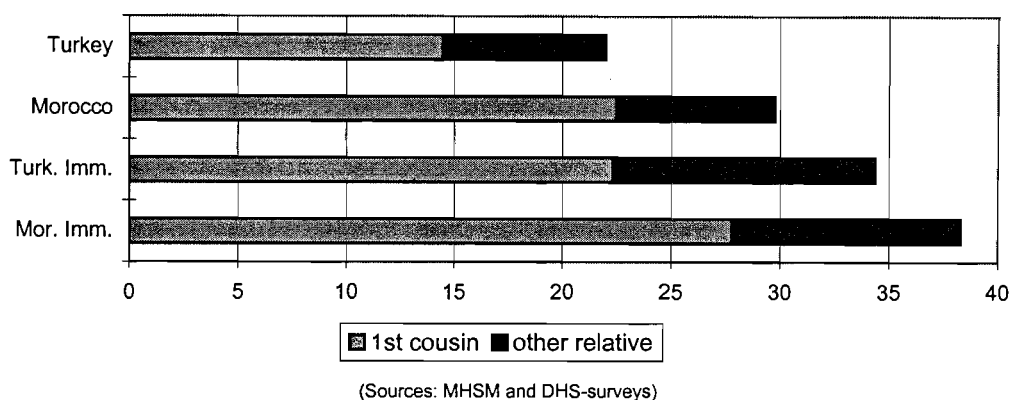


Figure 2b: Net percentage of consanguineous marriages by region of origin (or residence) and by educational level (immigrants and non-migrants), Moroccans



(Sources: MHSM and DHS-surveys)

**Figure 3: Net percentage of consanguineous marriages in Turkey, Morocco and in the respective immigrant communities in Belgium.**



From figure 3 we can make four main observations:

- In all four situations, marriages between first cousins are more common than marriages between other relatives. This is consistent with the figures for consanguineous marriages in other parts of the world, and also with the figures presented in table 1.
- Consanguineous marriages are more common among Moroccans than among Turks. This information could also be inferred from table 1.
- Consanguineous marriages are more common within the immigrant communities in Belgium than they are in the countries of origin: among Turkish migrants for example, kin marriages account for 34% of all marriages while this is the case only for 22% of the marriages of Turks still living in Turkey. This is an important and first indication for rejecting our first hypothesis that the practice of kin-marriages will disappear with emigration.
- The difference between the country of origin and immigrant community is larger for the Turks than for the Moroccans. This is a somewhat curious phenomenon, but it is perfectly consistent with earlier observations that the conformation of the Moroccan immigrant population to more western demographic behaviour is proceeding faster than that of Turks (see for example Page and Seghaert, 1997). Here, of course, we cannot speak of a conformation, but of a less pronounced deviation of the western norm. It may also be another indication of the greater heterogeneity of the Moroccan immigrant group as observed by Surkyn and Reniers (1997) and Reniers (1997). Relatively higher educated Arabs in particular, distinguish themselves from the lower educated Moroccans and the Turkish immigrants by migration motives that were fostered not only by economic considerations. The migration histories of some Moroccans give the impression of an individual pursuit of liberty and a European way of living. Their migration is not as often embedded within a household strategy as was the case for most of the Turkish and less educated Moroccan immigrants. It is probably among these Moroccan migrants and their offspring that we find the lowest proportion of consanguineous marriages.

### **Second analytical step: the determinants and evolution of consanguineous marriages within each immigrant community**

From the first analysis we may perhaps learn that consanguineous marriages are more common in the immigrant community than in the respective countries of origin, but that analysis has its limitations. First of all, it deals with the immigrants as one homogeneous group and it is not possible to identify for example any evolution over the different migrant cohorts or generations. Secondly, it is possible that migrants of the second generation have postponed their marriage (because of a more prolonged educational career), and have been excluded from the analysis (the universe consisted only of married couples). If consanguineous marriages are more common among those who marry early, this fact may artificially inflate the percentage consanguineous marriages among immigrants. These

limitations are overcome in a direct or indirect way in the second analysis. First by introducing a variable that distinguishes the different migrant types and generations, and secondly by using age at marriage as a control variable. For the interpretation of the results we shall also take into account the proportion married for each category of the independent variables (see appendix: analysis 2a and 2b).

The dependent variable in this analysis differs slightly from the one used before. Here a distinction is made between kin-marriages, marriages with family friends or acquaintances and unions with partners formerly unknown to the family. We introduced the distinction between family friends or acquaintances and other partners because we suspected that network-mediated migration is an important factor in explaining marriage patterns within the immigrant communities. We left out the distinction between first cousins and distant relatives because it is of minor interest here. Further, we have chosen not to model the unmarried migrants as a separate category of the dependent variable, since marital status is part of the definition of one of the independent variables (migrant type, *cfr. infra*), and because age at marriage was used as a control variable.

The most important predictor is the one that distinguishes the different migrant types and cohorts. First of all, we discerned labour migrants who were already married before they migrated from those who were not. The children of the early labour migrants are considered as the second generation if they arrived in Belgium before the age of six. The others are labelled as the middle generation. The 'migrant bridegrooms' are a distinct category. These are the men that migrated as an adult (mainly during the last fifteen years) and who derive their residential status in Belgium from a marriage with a woman already legally residing in Belgium. For both nationalities, we also introduced educational level (dichotomous: primary education or less versus lower secondary education or more) and age at marriage (trichotomous) as control variables. For Morocco we also included ethnicity (the distinction Berber/Arab) which is a better predictor than the region of origin. For Turks a similar distinction (for example that between Turks/Kurds) could not be made, since the Turkish migrant group is much more homogeneous in terms of its ethnic composition and there only a few representatives of these ethnic minorities in our sample. For the Turks, we thus used the same regional variable as in the first analysis.

The data used here come entirely from the MHSM-surveys. From these samples we considered the characteristics of the first marriages of ever married Turks and Moroccans in Belgium. Complete information on the model selection can be found in the appendix (analysis 2a and 2b). The effects of the control variables are summarised in figure 4 and figure 5.

The effect of age at marriage (figure 4) is straightforward. The younger a man marries, the higher the odds that the bride is a family member. The later he marries, the higher the chances are that he will marry someone formerly unknown to the family.

Figure 4a: Partner type by age at marriage, Turks (net %)

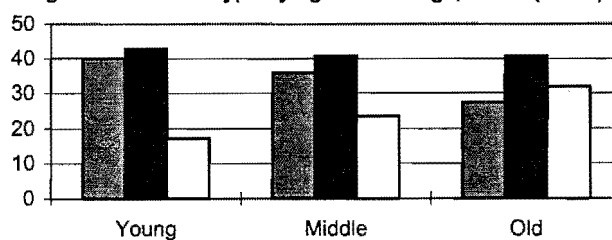
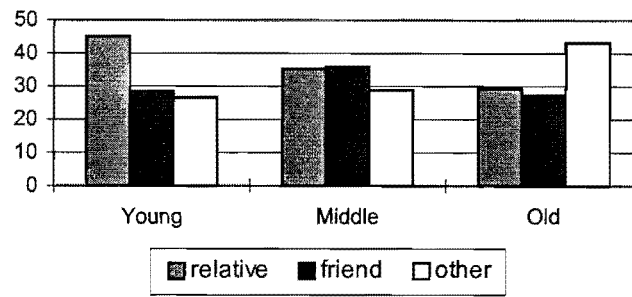


Figure 4a: Partner type by age at marriage, Moroccans (net %)



(Source: MHSM-surveys)

Figure 5 illustrates the effect of the region of origin for Turks and of ethnicity for Moroccans. From these graphs we see that the prevalence of consanguineous marriages among Turkish immigrants is highest for those coming from the lesser developed Eastern Anatolia. This reflects the differences observed in Turkey. For Moroccans, it can be seen that Berbers are more often married to a relative than Arabs. Among the latter, marriages with strangers to the family are more common.

Figure 5a: Partner type by region of origin, Turks (net %)

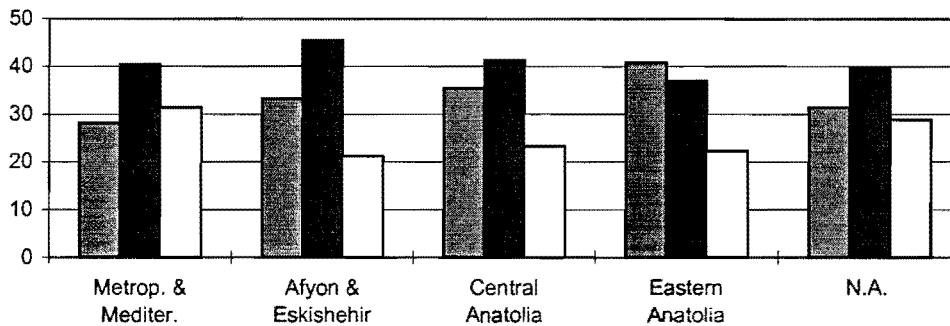
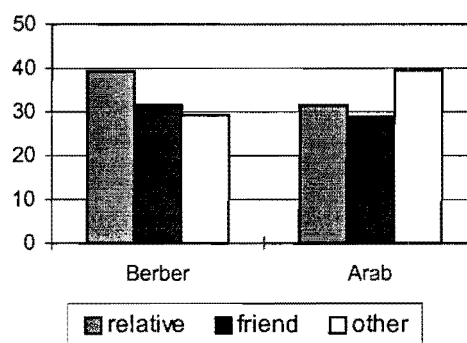


Figure 5b: Partner type by ethnicity, Moroccans (net %)



(Source: MHSM-surveys)

As an explanatory variable the effect of migrant type is, however, far more interesting than the variables discussed so far: it is this variable that distinguishes the different migrant groups and cohorts and thus gives us an insight in the evolution of marriage patterns within the immigrant communities. This effect is elaborated in figure 6. For Moroccans, the effect of migrant type varied with the educational level; the effect of migrant type is therefore presented for each educational category separately. Since no such interaction was significant for the Turks, the effect of migrant type is presented for the two educational categories combined.

The definition of the categories of the independent variable in these three graphs can be read in different ways. On the one hand, they distinguish the different migrant types or migrant modalities; on the other, they inform us about the time dimension underlying the Turkish and Moroccan migration history to northern Europe. The original labour migrants can be found in

the first two categories. The majority of them came to Belgium before the middle of the seventies. Some of them were married at the moment of their departure, others came as bachelors and married afterwards with a Belgian woman, someone from the existing immigrant community, or someone from the country of origin. For them, a restricted marriage market may have played a role in the choice of a particular partner type. Given the preference of Muslims for religious endogamous marriages, the limited number of unmarried migrant woman present in the sixties and early seventies may have been an important reason for them to marry someone from their country of origin. The migration period of the middle generation partially overlaps that of the labour migrants, but extends into the eighties. The middle generation is an exponent of the phase in migration history often recognised as the phase of family reunification. Because the Belgian authorities took measures to restrict new migrations, migrants with temporary labour contracts were keen to respond to this changed legal context by turning their temporary settlement into a permanent one. This was then confirmed by the migration of the family they had initially left behind. The eighties were also the period in which the second generation reached marriageable age and, partly as a consequence of that, family forming migration became important. Its name is derived from the fact that a new migration of this type is intimately linked to the formation of a new household in Belgium. The existence, and certainly the importance, of this migration phase is closely related to the migration policy of the European governments. Because migration is nowadays limited to moves induced by a marriage, marriage in its turn became a means for migration. Those who lived in Turkey and Morocco and migrated just after marrying a bride or groom living in Belgium are labelled migrant brides and migrant bridegrooms. Since we work here from the perspective of men (the MHSM-surveys are based on samples of men) the 'migrant bridegrooms' are considered as a separate category (the 'migrant brides' have married second and middle generation men or even labour migrants that were unmarried at the moment of their departure).

Figure 6a: Partner type by migrant type, Turks - all educational categories, (net %)

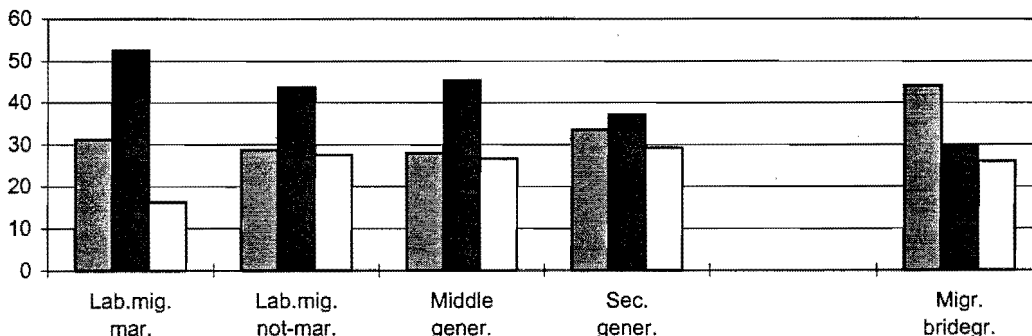
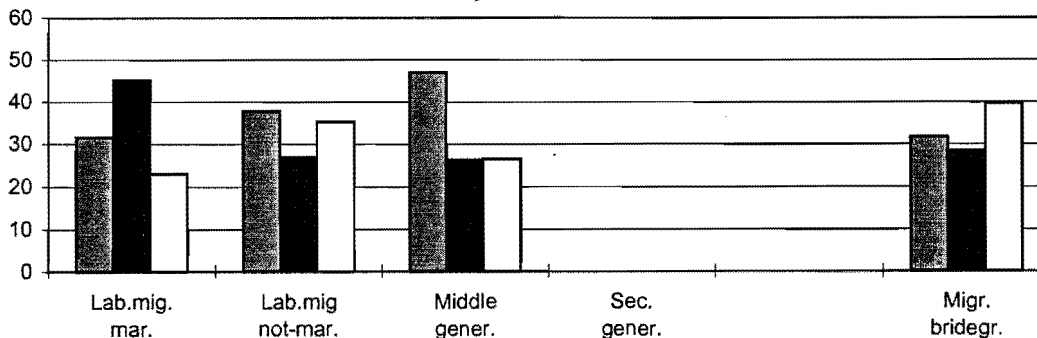


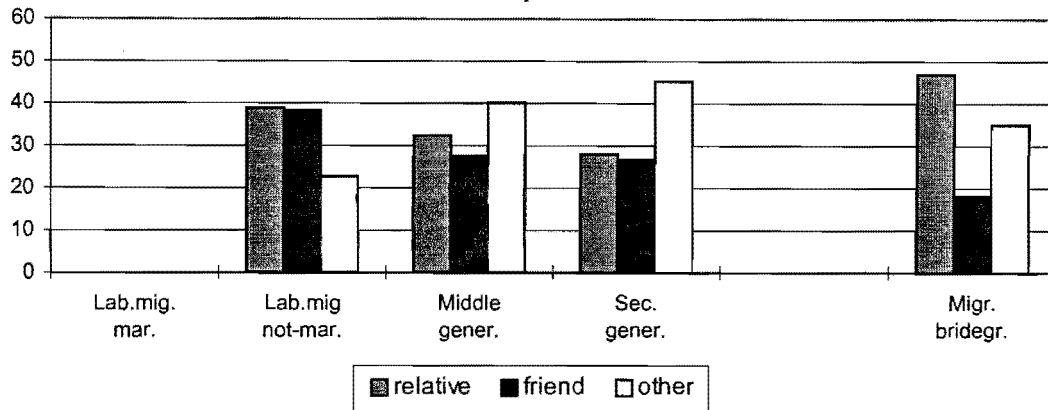
Figure 6b: Partner type by migrant type, Moroccans , (net %)

1. Primary education or less





2. Lower secondary education or more



(Source: MHSM-surveys)

In reading these graphs, we need to take into account that the proportion of consanguineous marriages among the second generation is most probably overestimated in these results: only 64% of the second generation Moroccans and 66% of the second generation Turks in our sample were married at the moment of the surveys. Because consanguineous marriages are more common among those who marry at an early age (cfr. supra), the proportion of consanguineous marriages for the second generation is expected to decline in favour of marriages with partners formerly unknown to the family.

The relatively high level of consanguineous marriages among the migrant bridegrooms (certainly for the Turks and higher educated Moroccans<sup>15</sup>) is a first indication of the close relationship between kin-marriage and migration. 32 to 47% of all migrant bridegrooms are married to a relative. The high prevalence of consanguineous marriages among the migrant bridegrooms partly explains the higher share of consanguineous marriages observed in the immigrant community compared to the country of origin (see analysis 1). Studying the pattern from another angle, one would come to similar conclusions: in table 2 we have summarised the percentage married to a bride from the country of origin for all the men who grew up in Belgium or married after migration. In that table we can see that 80 to 96% of all consanguineous marriages induce a new migration. The proportion of migration-inducing marriages declines to 21% for the second generation Moroccans who marry someone formerly unknown to the family.

Table 2: Percent of marriages with someone from the country of origin for migrants who were unmarried at the moment of their departure and for the second generation (observed %)

	Turks			Moroccans		
	relative	friend	other	relative	friend	other
Labour migrant, not-married	85	81	69	92	83	67
Middle generation	96	85	84	87	72	58
Second generation	86	73	81	80	40	21

(Source:MHSM-surveys)

All these figures suggest an intimate relationship between consanguineous marriage and migration. Interpretations of kin marriages, therefore, have to consider its consequences in terms of migration possibilities as one of its main motives. Whether economic arguments figure high on the list of reasons for consanguineous marriages in a migratory context is difficult to find out from these data. It is my belief, however, that in the case of a migration-inducing marriage, the social functions or benefits and economic advantages of consanguineous marriages go hand in hand. As mentioned before, in the countries of origin migration is still considered as an economically attractive alternative to local life and work. Marriage has become the only possible means to realise this dream. Therefore family members will exercise pressure on their relatives to have one of their children married to a

<sup>15</sup> The interaction with educational level (Moroccans) appears bizarre and is not immediately explicable.

relative's son or daughter in Europe (see for example Böcker, 1994: 13-18). It is family members that are approached in the first instance because these are more easily accessible and this will facilitate possible marriage negotiations. A marriage with non-kin living in Europe is much more difficult to conclude because of the procedures in the marriage negotiations that have to be respected and because of the often high value of the dowry or dowry when the marriage may induce the migration of one of the spouses. From the perspective of the bride or bridegroom living in Europe, marriage with someone from the country of origin may be preferred because it reinforces her/his authority within the new household and because of the possibility it offers of marrying someone with a higher status. Furthermore, if the principle of virilocal residence after marriage is violated, this further increases the status of the family of the bride. If the marriage induces the migration of the bride, she often ends up in a subordinate and powerless position: she usually loses the supporting ties of her own family and she does not have any knowledge of the country, its customs or its language.

Common to the three diagrams of figure 6 is the declining prevalence of marriages with friends or acquaintances of the family. In the case of the higher educated Moroccans this tendency is accompanied by a declining prevalence of consanguineous marriages and a high probability of marrying someone formerly unknown to the parents. This is clearly the group who in their partner choice most resemble the European model. 45% of the second generation Moroccans have married a woman formerly unknown to the family. Given the relatively low proportion of the second generation Moroccans that is yet married (see appendix), this figure may even increase in the near future. Marriages with strangers to the family are most often marriages that are initiated by the partners themselves. The identification of a Moroccan subgroup with more European matrimonial practices is not all that curious. As said before, the Moroccan migration to Europe was more heterogeneous in its composition and cannot be understood solely in terms of economic arguments. Socio-cultural objectives and aspirations seem to have played a role as well. This is once again confirmed in their matrimonial practices.

A declining number of marriages with family friends or acquaintances is also observed for the Turkish migrants. In their case it is also accompanied by a slightly increasing prevalence of marriages with relatives in the second generation. The increase of consanguineous marriages together with a declining prevalence of marriages with friends is even more marked among the lesser educated Moroccans. For both groups we thus find a trade-off between marriages with family friends and marriages with relatives. This is a very interesting phenomenon, particularly if we also consider the fact that most of the marriages in the immigrant communities still involve new migrations, or put differently, that most of the marriages are cross-border marriages, joining families in the country of origin and destination. Several explanations for this trade-off in preferences for relatives and friends may be put forward, but most probably it is linked to the increasing social distance between the immigrant community and the country or region of origin. Of the early labour migrants that were married at the moment of their migration, 45 to 53% married with an acquaintance or a family friend. In the terminology used before, these are most probably all village or neighbourhood endogamous marriages. As time goes on, contacts between the emigrants and the region or place of origin may become increasingly restricted and family ties are probably more resistant to this degradation of contacts than non-family ties. In addition, cross-border marriage negotiations with non-relatives involving new migrations become too complicated to remain common practice. Among the second generation Turks, marriages with friends of the family account for only 37% of all marriages, for Moroccans this figure is below 30%. This trade-off in preferences between relatives and friends of the family, inspires us to advance the hypothesis that the definitive demise of consanguineous marriages within the immigrant communities is announced by an initial increase in its popularity: as the social distance between immigrant community and region of origin increases over time, cross-border marriages may become more and more problematic. In a first stage they will be increasingly restricted to marriages between relatives before they disappear completely. As such, an apparent step towards more

traditional matrimonial practices as observed here may just be one of the last convulsions of a system that is going to lose most of its importance in the near future.

## Conclusion

Matrimonial practices in a migratory situation do not clearly follow a western model after migration, but neither do matrimonial strategies or practices in a migratory situation give a clear indication of a withdrawal into the security of tradition. Social reality proves once again to be more complex than some simple linear theoretical assumptions. One of the reasons is that these hypotheses neglect the internal heterogeneity of the immigrant communities. Immigrant communities consist of different groups who, consciously or not, do not always follow similar paths or strategies for subsistence and integration. Although the technique used here is not specifically designed to identify different subgroups in a population, we have seen that the better educated Moroccans distinguish themselves from the Turks and less educated Moroccans by their tendency to support more western matrimonial practices. This is a confirmation of earlier observations that the Moroccan emigration to Belgium is much more heterogeneous in its composition than the Turkish. The individual migration histories of the Moroccans are not as frequently embedded in a household strategy and are not as often characterised by group solidarity. Group solidarity and ties with the country of origin are of course prerequisites for consanguineous and cross-border marriages.

Additionally, there are two reasons not to interpret the relatively high frequency of consanguineous and cross-border marriages as a culturally defensive reaction of a minority in migration. First of all, such marriages may (in some cases) serve the empowerment of the women in the household; as such they are in a sense progressive. Secondly, the increasing number of consanguineous marriages among the Turks and the less educated Moroccans in Belgium is accompanied by a declining number of marriages with friends of the families. We have identified the trade-off in marriages between friends of the family and relatives as the first indication of the weaknesses of cross-border matrimonial practices. Whether these will disappear definitively in the near future is uncertain though. Because of the constant renewal of contacts and links between the immigrant community and the country of origin (through new migrations), it is not unlikely that the phenomenon of consanguineous marriages and migrating brides and bridegrooms will remain a persistent, although marginal characteristic of immigrant communities.

The classical economic argument for consanguineous marriage (especially for patrilineal parallel cousin marriage) has lost its explanatory power because the families in immigration have become increasingly independent of family property such as land and cattle for their economic subsistence. A new economic rationale seems to have replaced it though. Because migration remains an economically attractive alternative to the often difficult life in the countries of origin, and because the governments of the receiving countries have restricted new migrations to family-forming migration, the level of the economic transactions in marriage settlements may increase significantly when the marriage induces the migration of one of the spouses. The only way to avoid the high expenses associated nowadays with marriages that include a migration is to marry a relative. One means to that goal is to appeal to family solidarity. Of course, the family that marries a bride or groom to someone from the country of origin also recognises advantages in this type of marriage. Among others, it increases the power, authority and status of that family. The latter argument leads us in the direction of the social, political and symbolic functions and rationale for consanguineous (and cross-border) marriages. In this context we should not forget to mention that consanguineous marriages may facilitate marriage negotiations considerably. For Turks and Moroccans this can be of some importance because marriage is often an affair of the (honour of the) whole family. Marriage settlements, therefore, require subtle negotiations and can become quite difficult to conclude. In a migratory situation, where the stakes are raised and physical distance between the families is increased, the facilitation of marriage negotiations may become an important asset of consanguineous marriages.

It is important to stress, once again, the adaptability of matrimonial practices to changing social conditions. Contrary to a general belief that marriage is an institution with a relatively stable content that is supposed to rely on long-standing traditions, this analysis clearly illustrates its potential for reinterpretation within new conditions of subsistence: the migration of many Turks and Moroccans to Belgium created such a new social reality and the evolution of kin marriages in the immigrant communities are excellent examples of the flexibility of matrimonial practices and their constant redefinition

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## Appendix: details on the analyses and additional tables

### Analysis 1a: comparison of consanguineous marriages in Turkey and Belgium

Variables in the analysis: country (c), region (r), educational level of the husband (e), marriage period (p), type of partner (t)

Selected logit model: {crep, ct, rt, et}, df=140, Pearson Chi<sup>2</sup>=144.6, p=0.38, delta=0.1

For the presentation of the results, the odds and odds ratio's have been transformed into percentages following the technique of Kaufman and Shervish (1987). The percentages used for the charts in the paper are the following:

	Type of relationship between the two spouses			N
	First Cousin	Other relative	No relative	
<b>The effect of country</b>				
Turkey	14	8	78	4640
Belgium	22	12	66	995
<b>The effect of region</b>				
Metropolitan Areas & Mediterranean Coast	11	8	81	2752
Afyon & Eskişehir	19	8	73	407
Central Anatolia	18	10	72	1373
Eastern Anatolia	25	8	67	849
N.A.: did not grow up in Turkey	17	8	74	254
<b>The effect of educational level</b>				
Primary education	17	9	73	3641
Lower secondary education	14	8	78	732
Secondary education	12	6	81	1262

### Analysis 1b: comparison of consanguineous marriages in Morocco and Belgium

Variables in the analysis: country (c), region (r), educational level of the husband (e), marriage period (p) and type of partner (t)

Selected logit model: {crep, ct, rt, et}, df=102, Pearson Chi<sup>2</sup>=107.5, p=0.34, delta=0.1

	Type of relationship between the two spouses			N
	First Cousin	Other relative	No relative	
<b>The effect of country</b>				
Morocco	22	7	70	3361
Belgium	28	10	62	591
<b>The effect of region of origin</b>				
Golden Triangle & Periphery	22	9	69	2568
Northern Arab provinces	26	5	69	858
Northern Berber provinces	24	7	69	433
N.A.: did not grow up in Morocco	25	11	64	93
<b>The effect of educational level</b>				
Primary education	25	8	67	3034
Lower secondary education	19	7	74	481
Secondary education	15	5	80	437

## Analysis 2a: Turkish immigrants in Belgium

Variables in the model: migrant type (m), region (r), age at marriage (a), educational level (s) and type of marriage (t)

Selected logit model: {mras, rt, at, mt}, df=202, Pearson Chi<sup>2</sup>=212.8, p=0.29, delta=0.1

Odds and odds ratio's have been transformed into percentages following the technique of Kaufman and Shervish (1987). The percentages used for the charts in the presentation are the following:

	Type of relationship between the spouses			N	% ever married	median age
	Relative	Friend	Other			
<b>The effect of region of origin</b>						
Metropolitan Areas & Mediterranean Coast	28	40	31	131	98	35
Afyon & Eskishehir	33	46	21	320	99	39
Central Anatolia	35	41	23	331	99	38
Eastern Anatolia	41	37	22	172	99	38
N.A.: Did not grow up in Turkey	31	40	29	265	70	24
<b>The effect of age at marriage</b>						
Young	40	43	17	379	100	34
Middle	36	41	24	378	100	31
Old	27	41	32	462	100	38
<b>The effect of migrant type</b>						
Labour mig., married	31	53	16	271	100	56
Labour mig., not-married	29	44	28	100	100	44
Middle generation	28	45	27	320	96	33
Second generation	34	37	29	205	66	24
Migrant bridegroom	44	30	26	323	100	31

## Analysis 2b: Moroccan immigrants in Belgium

Variables in the model: migrant type (m), ethnicity (e), age at marriage (a), education (s), and type of marriage (t)

Selected logit model {meas, mst, et,at}, df=94, Pearson Chi<sup>2</sup>=101.3, p=0.29, delta=0.1

	Type of relationship between the spouses			N	% ever married	median age
	Relative	Friend	Other			
<b>The effect of ethnicity</b>						
Berber	39	32	29	473	82	37
Arab	31	29	40	287	79	35
<b>The effect of age at marriage</b>						
Young	45	29	27	240	100	40
Middle	35	36	29	253	100	38
Old	29	27	43	267	100	42
<b>The effect of education and migrant type</b>						
<i>Primary education</i>						
Labour migr., married	32	45	23	138	100	54
Labour migr., not-married	38	27	35	148	100	45
Middle generation.	47	26	27	98	99	35
Second generation	46	12	41	11	80	26
Migrant bridegroom	32	29	40	94	100	33
<i>Lower second education</i>						
Labour migr., married	5	73	22	10	100	44
Labour migr., not-married	39	38	23	34	96	40
Middle generation.	32	28	40	100	93	31
Second generation	28	27	45	55	64	23
Migrant bridegroom	47	18	35	72	100	30



