

## **Intercultural marriages and consideration of divorce in Finland: Do value differences matter?**

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### **Abstract**

Divorce is well known to be more common among intercultural couples compared to couples in which both spouses come from the same cultural background. In this working paper, we examine considerations of divorce among Finnish spouses in intercultural marriages in Finland, particularly from the perspective of value dissimilarity.

We employ descriptive and multivariate analyses of a representative postal survey among women and men in an intercultural marriage in Finland in 2012. Respondents were Finnish, Swedish and Sami speaking men and women who are married to a foreign language speaking spouse, and foreign language speaking men and women who are married to a spouse who is Finnish, Swedish or Sami speaker. Results are compared to similar data of monoculturally married women and men in Finland in 2008.

About 20 percent of interculturally married Finnish men and women have considered divorce during the previous year. Interculturally married men more frequently considered divorce than did men with a Finnish wife. Interculturally married Finnish women in turn have similar proportions of divorce considerations as monoculturally married women.

However, the country of origin of a foreign-born husband is related to the tendency of a Finnish wives to consider divorce. Finnish women married to a husband from a less developed country tend to have thoughts of divorce more than others: 40 percent of them reported considering divorce during the previous year.

Disagreements elevate the risk of considering divorce. Value conflicts most clearly raised the risk of considering divorce for Finnish men living in intercultural marriages. For Finnish women, the most evident conflicts relating to thoughts of divorce are conflicts over husband's work.

We conclude that value differences should not be exaggerated as source of conflict and divorce in intercultural marriages. However, when value conflicts do arise, they appear to raise the risk of divorce consideration among men.

## Tiivistelmä

### **Kaksikulttuuriset avioliitot ja avioeroajatukset Suomessa: Onko erilaisilla arvoilla väliä?**

Kaksikulttuuriset avioliitot näyttävät tilastojen perusteella päätyvän eroon muita avioliittoja herkemmin. Tässä työpaperissa olemme tarkastelleet avioliitossa olevien kaksikulttuuristen parien avioeroajatuksia ja niihin liittyviä tekijöitä, erityisesti erilaisia arvoja.

Tutkimus perustuu edustavaan postikyselytutkimusaineistoon vuodelta 2012. Vastajat olivat suomen-, ruotsin tai saamenkielisiä, jotka olivat naimisissa vieraskielisen kanssa, sekä vieraskielisiä, jotka olivat naimisissa suomen-, ruotsin tai saamenkielisen kanssa.

Kaiken kaikkiaan noin 20 prosenttia vastaajista oli ajatellut avioeroa viimeisen vuoden aikana. Vertasimme tuloksia vuonna 2008 kerättyyn aineistoon suomalais-suomalaisissa avioliitoissa elävistä. Kaksikulttuurisessa liitossa elävät suomalaismiehet olivat ajatelleet eroa useammin kuin tavanomaisessa liitossa elävät miehet. Naisten osalta ei tilastollisesti merkitsevää eroa ollut.

Suomalaisnaisen avioeroajatukset vaihtelevat sen mukaan, mistä maasta puoliso on peräisin. Jos mies on kehitysmaasta, avioeroajatukset ovat yleisempiä kuin muilla naisilla. Alimman kehitystason maasta olevien miesten suomalaisvaimoista 40 prosenttia oli ajatellut eroa vuoden mittaan.

Riitely lisää avioeroajatusten todennäköisyyttä. Kaikki ristiriidat, esimerkiksi riitely kotitöistä tai rahasta, eivät kuitenkaan ilmene avioeroajatuksina. Arvoihin liittyvät ristiriidat ovat suhteellisen harvinaisia. Erilaisista arvoista kertoi riitelevänsä vain noin 10 prosenttia vastaajista. Jos suomalainen mies kertoo riitelevänsä puolisonsa kanssa erilaisista arvoista, hänellä on muita todennäköisemmin myös avioeroajatuksia. Suomalaisnaisilla selkeimmin avioeroajatuksiin liittyi kiistely miehen työstä.

Arvoerojen merkitystä ei pidä liioitella kaksikulttuuristen parien ongelmien lähteenä. Mikäli arvokiistoja ilmenee, johtavat ne suomalaismiehen herkästi ajattelemaan avioeroa.

## Background

Intercultural or international marriages are a growing phenomenon in Europe, America and East Asia. Marriages between people of different nationality, country of birth, native language, or cultural background have become common also in Finland in recent decades. Of the marriages contracted during 2009–2010 in Finland, nearly ten percent were marriages of a speaker of a national language (Finnish, Swedish or Sami) and a foreign language speaker (Statistics Finland 2012). In the metropolitan area of Helsinki, such marriages are more common, currently at the rate of 12 percent, and marriages between a Finnish national and a foreign national comprised 15 percent of all marriages in Helsinki in 2011 (City of Helsinki Urban Facts 2012).

By intercultural marriage we here mean a marriage between people who have grown up in different socio-cultural environments. The growing importance of intercultural marriages is a relatively recent phenomenon in Finland; of the total marital population, only 3 percent is currently in an intercultural marriage (defined by registered language). In cohabiting partnerships in Finland, the proportion of intercultural couples is somewhat less than in the marital population. Intercultural marriages are mostly marriages of a first generation immigrant and a native.

Intercultural, interethnic, international or interracial marriages in many societies tend to manifest a greater prevalence of divorce than do monocultural or monoethnic marriages. In Finland in the year 2009, the divorce rate (divorces in a particular year per 100 existing marriages in the end of the previous year) in marriages between two persons born in Finland divorce rate was 1.3. The divorce rate in marriages between a man born in Finland and a woman born abroad was 3.5, in marriages between a Finnish-born woman and a foreign born man it was as high as 4.7. The marriages exhibiting the highest divorce rates in the 2000's, were men's marriages with Estonian and Russian born women, and women's marriages with men from Morocco and Turkey (Statistics Finland 2011b).

The higher frequency of divorce is in lay talk often attributed to "value differences" or "cultural differences". However, also structural factors may be influential. Thus the higher prevalence of divorce may be due to characteristics of these marriages and marriage partners that are generally known to heighten the risk of divorce, such as marrying at an early age, having a large age gap, being less educated or unemployed, or having low income. In the Netherlands, ethnic intermarriage leads to a higher risk of divorce (Kalmijn et al. 2006) and also in Sweden, marriages between a native Sweden and an immigrant are more at risk of divorce than homogamous marriages (Dribe & Lundh 2012), although controlling a number of background variables reduces these differences. However, the situation is not identical in all countries and in all types of intermarriage (see, e.g. Zhang and van Hook 2009 on United States, Maas & Tubergen 2012 on the Netherlands, Feng et al. 2012 on Britain). In Finland, marriages and divorces to some particular nationality or country of birth are still so few in number that we have to be very cautious in drawing any conclusions on the issue. It is important to clarify the factors that are related to marital discord and heightened risk of divorce in order to improve support services to couples in need of counseling or other types of support.

This working paper examines divorce considerations among Finns in intercultural marriages. We compare them to Finns living in monocultural marriages and also investigate, to what extent these thoughts are related to conflicts over values. We explore the association between values and thoughts of divorce among interculturally married couples in Finland. We examine the question of values and value conflicts both on aggregate level and on the level of individual respondents.

## Homogamy vs. heterogamy

The potential risk of divorce in intercultural marriages relates to the general theory of homogamy vs. heterogamy. In an intercultural marriage, the partners are more probably than in monocultural marriages, having different attitudes, tastes and communicative styles, which make it more difficult to understand each other (Kalmijn et al. 2005). It is an established notion in social research that people tend to be drawn more in homogamous couple relationships and that such relationships are more stable than heterogamous unions, be they heterogamous in terms of religion, race, ethnic group, nationality, language, social class, or educational group (Amato et al. 2007). Heterogamy is thought to increase the probability of divorce. Reviewing the relevant studies on the topic, Kalmijn et al. (2005) end up stating that there is a moderately positive evidence supporting the heterogamy hypothesis when examining different religions, ethnic groups, races or migrant background.

Heterogamy theory employs two factors to explain the higher risk of divorce: factors related to the dyadic relationship that emerge as a result of the value or cultural difference, and factors that relate to the social network, lack of acceptance or support that is a result of disapproval and social sanctions due to the transgression of the boundaries of endogamy. Describing the logic of value difference in heterogamy theory, Dribe & Lundh (2012, 154) conclude that 'lower stability among exogamous unions is a result of dissimilarities in values, attitudes, communication styles, and traditions, which lead to difficulties and disagreements in the partnership, or lower levels of support from, and interaction with, social networks and kin'.

If spouses have been raised in differing socio-cultural environments, we may expect them to have differing cultural practices but also differing value orientations. Socialization leads to adoption of some taken-for-granted cultural ideas of intergenerational and gendered relationships that are central for family roles and interaction (Kagiticbasi 1997; Keller ym. 2004).

It is a commonly-held conviction that value dissimilarity in intercultural couple relationships leads to dissatisfaction and conflicts. This view is akin to the finding that spouses who resemble each other in terms of values tend to have higher relationships satisfaction than those who differ from each other (Kontula 2009). Many social and psychological scientists who commonly derive their data from clinical practice (e.g. Berg-Cross 2001) also support such views. According to some qualitative studies the same belief is shared by the couples themselves (e.g. Remmenick 2009). Also in the Family Barometer 2012 (Lainiala & Säävälä 2012), many survey respondents commented on the different values being an issue that has to be discussed by the spouses, to avoid conflicts.

Whether intercultural couples have more differing values and attitudes than monocultural values is not self-evident. We may also witness a selection effect, so that those who differ from the mainstream value orientation tend to marry heterogamously. The values of spouses may also converge during their marriage. In Hohmann-Marriott and Amato's (2008) study, one survey provided evidence of fewer shared values compared to monocultural couples, while in another survey data such a relationship could not be detected (ibid.). In their two surveys, the spouses were to a large extent raised in the same country (United States) but from different ethnic groups.

Dribe & Lundh (2012) found that exogamous marriages between natives and immigrants in Sweden were having a higher risk of divorce, even if a number of background characteristics were controlled. For Swedish women, the divorce risk is lineally growing along the growing difference to the value orientation of the country of origin, while for men the relationship is not linear. The authors relate this to the gender roles which differ starkly between Sweden and some other countries.

In a study most relevant for our Finnish study (Hohmann-Marriott & Amato 2008), two surveys were analyzed to compare relationship quality between interethnic and same-ethnic marriages in the United States. The gap in relationship quality between interethnic and same-ethnic couples was modest but pervasive, after controlling for a number of characteristics. Poorer relationship quality in interethnic marriages was most evidently related to more complex relationship histories (i.e. having remarried) and lack of social support.

Here we are interested more in the risk of divorce than relationship quality; thus we have used the consideration of divorce as a proxy for divorce. However, one should keep in mind that considerations differ from behaviour. Divorce considerations also vary by sex, so that women tend to express more openly dissatisfaction in their marriage and are also more frequently the initiators of divorce (Diedrick 1991; Crane & al. 2005; Amato 2010). We interpret considering divorce as a sign of serious partnership dissatisfaction and/or lack of commitment to the union. In both cases the examination of such thoughts helps us to understand what factors trigger divorce in intercultural marriages.

## Data and methods

The study derives from a postal survey designed for interculturally married residents in Finland in 2012. The random sample was drawn from residents in such relationships, 3,500 foreign language speaking persons and 2,500 national language speaking persons. The response rate was 40.0.

For the purposes of this study we operationalized intercultural marriages by making use of a person's registered native tongue in the Population Register of Finland. Intercultural marriage was defined here as a marriage between a national language speaker (Finnish, Swedish or Sami) and a foreign language (any other language) speaker.

Using registered data on native tongue as a proxy of cultural reference of a person naturally has its limitations. First, in Finland it is possible to register only one language as one's native tongue. This means that bilingual or trilingual persons appear as if they were monolingual. Second, the accuracy of the information provided by the people in the register remains slightly unclear. People may have their own reasons for registering a particular language as their native tongue. It can also be changed at will in the register.<sup>1</sup> Third, people who speak a foreign language may still be Finnish: born and raised in Finland and consequently having a hybrid or multiethnic identity.<sup>2</sup>

Taking these limitations into account, we considered using registered language as the basis for our study sample as the most useful and economical way of drawing a representative picture of intercultural marriages in Finland. Using country of birth would have brought into the sample a considerable number of Finns who were born abroad but moved to Finland at some point, and using nationality would have left out those who have received Finnish nationality, mostly having been married for a longer time. Using multiple criteria (e.g. language and country of birth) in sample selection would have required more financial and time resources and a time consuming process of clearing some constraints related to data privacy protection regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Anneli Miettinen (Väestöliitto), in Palapeli register data, between 1985 and 2000, 3 percent of foreign language speakers who were present in both years had changed their registered language, and between 1990 and 2000 only one percent. This would imply that changing one's registered language is not very common. None of the Finnish or Swedish speakers in the sample had changed their registered language into a foreign language in these periods.

<sup>2</sup> One of the unfortunate side-effects of using registered language as proxy of intercultural marriage is that we fail to identify marriages between Finns and Swedes from Sweden. For this reason marriages between Swedish-speaking Finnish and Finnish-speaking Finnish nationals are here not considered intercultural marriages.

The survey was carried out as a postal survey with an option for filling the form in the Internet by using personalized pin codes. The form was sent to registered Finnish speakers in Finnish, to Swedish speakers in Swedish, to Russian speakers (the largest immigrant group in Finland) in Russian and Finnish, and to all other foreign language speakers in English and Finnish. The postal survey contained one round with forms and another round consisted of a reminder letter. The overall response rate was 40.0; for men born in Finland or abroad 35 percent, for women born in Finland 52 percent and for women born abroad 39 percent. These figures are quite good for a postal survey in Finland, and even more so, considering that half of the respondents were immigrants.

For this analysis, we have separated the 'natives' and those of foreign background by using country of birth as the criteria. Native tongue as a criteria turned out to be more difficult than we foresaw because quite many respondents were found to be multilingual (17.5 percent of those who were registered as foreign language speakers, also spoke Finnish or Swedish as one of their native tongues; and 3.5 percent of those who were Finnish or Swedish speakers in the register, reported neither of these languages as their mother tongue).

The distribution of the respondents corresponded well to the geographical spread of the sample. However, the province Uusimaa where Helsinki is situated is somewhat overrepresented among the respondent (by 2 per cent) and Western Finland underrepresented (by 3 percent). The age composition of the respondents shows some over-emphasis on the younger groups, although the mean age of the respondents is 45,35 years (in the sample it is 45,05). In the subsample for purposes of this article, the mean age of the respondents is 47,5. This is because Finnish men in intercultural marriages tend to marry in older age than other groups.

When comparing intercultural marriages to monocultural marriages in Finland, we use another, earlier sample survey. The survey 2008 was carried out for the Family barometer 2008 (Miettinen & Rotkirch 2008; see also Lainiala 2012). The survey respondents were men and women aged 25–44 who had zero or 1 parity. The response rate was 44.2 and N=3,058. We removed unmarried respondents and those who informed that they were foreign language speakers or whose spouse was a foreign language speaker, ending up with a comparable sub-sample of 924 respondents.

For comparisons with the 2012 intercultural marriage survey we use a sub-set of our intercultural marriage survey restricted to respondents aged between 25 and 44 and with no or only one child. This restriction is separately mentioned. In all other analysis we use the whole 2013 data set.

Some tables also make use of the Finnish country data on the European Values Study<sup>3</sup> 2008 on married respondents (N=625).

The foreign-born spouses in our 2012 survey originated in nearly 140 different countries. Russia was the most common single group of origin. In terms of the continent of origin, the majority of foreign-born husbands and wives come from Europe including Russia (62,3%/57,1%, respectively). Other significant groups come from Asia (11,4%/32,7), Africa (13,2%/2,4%) and America (12,2%/7,6).

As methods of analysis, we use crosstabulations (results in tables 1-4) and Wald tests (Results in figure 1). Variables and summary variables were coded as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> see <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>

## DEPENDENT VARIABLE

*Divorce consideration:* The answers to the question ‘Have you considered divorcing your partner during the last year?’ was coded into two categories: 0 = not considered divorce, 1 = considered divorce. Original coding was 1 = not once (0), 2 = yes, a few times (1), 3 = yes, many times (1) and 4 = yes, daily (1)

## INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

“Every couple relationship has conflicts sometimes. How often during the last year have you and your partner had a conflict about the following things?” A list of 16 potential sources of conflict was offered. The same question was presented also in the 2008 family barometer, apart from two potential sources of conflict (different religion and different values). The respondent could choose from 5 options in each source of conflict, ranging from ‘very often’ to ‘never’. ‘Don’t know / does not apply to me’ was one option.

The following variables (16) are used in Wald tests: Scale 1-5 whereas 1 = no conflicts at all and 5 = conflicts very often: Value dissimilarity, Work (own, spouse’s), Closeness, Unfaithfulness, Money, Parents (Own, Spouse’s), Sex, Free time, Friends, Economic support to parents and relatives, Alcohol & Drugs, Religion, Parenting and Housework.

## CONTROL VARIABLES

Respondent’s age and marriage duration. These are used on Wald tests.

## VALUES

Our survey included some questions that help to detect the value orientation of the respondents. However, as we do not have the responses of both partners, we cannot say anything definite about the value dissimilarities between the spouses. We examine whether the respondents differ from the average value orientation of the Finnish marital population by comparing their answers in one particular question which our survey adopted from the European Values Study.

A question adopted from the European Values Study (part of World Values Survey) that is used by Inglehart & Welzel (2005) in their world value categorizations, was included in the questionnaire. The question asked, “Here is a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five.” The list included 11 qualities plus ‘none of these’ and ‘I cannot say’ options.

We also examine the value context of the country of origin of the foreign spouses by making use of Inglehart & Wetzel’s (2005) categorizations and follow the model provided by Dribe & Lundh (2012; see appendix 1).

## Results

### CONSIDERATION OF DIVORCE

Answers to the question whether the respondent had considered divorce during the last year (table 1) showed a difference between men and women across the line of the country of birth. Women had considered divorce more often (about one in four women) than had men (about one in seven). It is notable that we do not find any difference in the thoughts of divorce between people of the same sex who are born in Finland and those who are of foreign background.

**Table 1. Responses to the question ‘Have you considered divorcing your partner during the last year?’, %**

	Finnish (*)		Non-Finnish	
	man	woman	man	woman
<b>Not once</b>	84.7	75.2	83.7	76.6
<b>A few times</b>	12.3	19.1	14.6	19.3
<b>Many times</b>	2.0	4.7	1.3	3.1
<b>Daily</b>	1.0	0.9	0.4	1.0
	100 (496)	100 (529)	100 (466)	100 (582)

(\* ‘Finnish’ denotes people whose native tongue is Finnish, Swedish or Sami and who were born in Finland.

The differences between men and women within both groups are statistically significant at a 95% level, but not significant between Finnish and non-Finnish men and women.

Next, we compared a sub-set of our data to data on the similar question in Family Barometer 2008 among monocultural couples. When comparing similar subsets of respondents (married, 25–44 years of age, having no or 1 child), some differences were visible. Results are statistically insignificant for women but are significant for men (at the 90 % level; Table 2).

**Table 2. Proportion of respondents having considered divorce during the last year, 25–44-year-old Finns (\* with 0 or 1 child in 2008 (monocultural marriages) and 2012 (intercultural marriages), %**

		Considered divorce (%)	Not considered divorce (%)	Total (%)
<b>Finnish man in *</b>	<b>intercultural marriage</b>	18.5	81.5	100 (n=157)
	<b>monocultural marriage</b>	12.3	87.7	100 (n=389)
<b>Finnish woman in #</b>	<b>intercultural marriage</b>	27.9	72,1	100 (n=280)
	<b>monocultural marriage</b>	24.1	75.9	100 (n=526)

(\* For the sake of brevity, we use here ‘Finnish’ as a shorthand for those people who speak Finnish, Swedish or Sami and who are born in Finland.

\*Man in intercultural marriage vs. Man in monocultural marriage: The difference is statistically significant at a 90% level.

#Woman in intercultural marriage vs. Woman in monocultural marriage: The difference is NOT statistically significant at an 80% level.

## VALUE CONTEXT

According to the heterogamy hypothesis, thoughts of divorce could be expected to be the more common the wider the value difference between the spouses’ countries of origin. Inglehart & Welzel’s (2005) two-dimensional global value distribution can be used as a proxy of the value difference between spouses (see Dribe & Lundh 2012). For our analysis, the countries’ value orientations were re-coded into four major categories (see Appendix 1).

The distribution of considerations of divorce according to the spouse’s country of birth’s *value context* is presented in Table 3 below. Among Finnish women, thoughts of divorce seem to be most common among those women who are married to a man originating in a country in the value category that is farthest away from Finland. In this group most countries are in Africa and Asia, such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Bangladesh.



The difference according to the value scale is less prominent among Finnish-born men. However, the differences in consideration of divorce between women married to a foreign spouse is significant only for those who come from the most distant value context.

**Table 3. Prevalence of divorce consideration among interculturally married Finns(\*, according to the value context of spousal country of birth, %**

		Finnish spouse considered divorce (%)	Finnish spouse <i>not</i> considered divorce (%)	Total (%)
<i>Foreign wife's country of birth value context</i>	Values closest to Finland	15.7	84.3	100 (n=51)
	Values close to Finland	13.0	87.0	100 (n=108)
	Values less close to Finland	16.4	83.6	100 (n=219)
	Values farthest from Finland	16.1	83.9	100 (n=62)
<i>Foreign husband's country of birth value context</i>	Values closest to Finland	22.1	77.9	100 (n=208)
	Values close to Finland	16.7	83.3	100 (n=66)
	Values less close to Finland	20.0	80.0	100 (n=40)
	Values farthest from Finland	<b>36.0**</b>	64.0	100 (n=122)

(\* For the sake of brevity, we use here 'Finnish' as a shorthand for those people who speak Finnish, Swedish or Sami and who are born in Finland  
 \*\* significant at 95% level

The level of *human development* of the spouse's country of origin may also be a useful factor for understanding differences in thoughts of divorce. In Table 4 we see a clearly growing pattern in consideration of divorce along the level of human development in country of origin of the foreign-born husband: the less developed his country of birth is, the more common are the wife's thoughts of divorce. However, the same pattern is not found among Finnish men.

**Table 4. Consideration of divorce among respondents born in Finland, according to the Human Development Index (HDI) of the spousal country of birth, %**

		Finnish spouse considered divorce (%)	Finnish spouse <i>not</i> considered divorce (%)	Total (%)
<i>Foreign wife's country of birth</i>	HDI very high	18.0	82.0	100 (n=139)
	HDI high	14.6	85.4	100 (n=178)
	HDI medium	13.8	86.2	100 (n=130)
	HDI low	16.7	83.3	100 (n=6)
<i>Foreign husband's country of birth</i>	HDI very high	20.4	79.6	100 (n=285)
	HDI high	28.0	72.0	100 (n=100)
	HDI medium	<b>37.3**</b>	62.7	100 (n=67)
	HDI low	<b>40.0**</b>	60.0	100 (n=35)

\*\* significant at 95% level

Descriptive statistics would suggest that the country of origin has an effect on considerations of divorce especially for Finnish women. The two lowest groups of human development seem to be related to a Finnish

wife's tendency of entertain thoughts of divorce. However, multivariate analyses are necessary to see if such a covariance is explained away by other factors such as the husband's socio-economic position or the attitude towards the marriage among the close social networks. As Table 4 shows, the tendency to consider divorce is not only related to the value context of the country of birth, but may as well relate to the difference in the level of human development in the spouses' respective countries of origin.

The situation is, however, different for Finnish men. There is no linearity or statistical difference in the relationship between their thoughts of divorce and their level of development or value context of their wife's country of birth.

VALUES EXPRESSED

Our survey gave us data on the value orientation of the respondents in terms of ideals of child upbringing. The same question was posed to all respondents, not only to those who had children. Table 5 shows the frequencies of respondents who chose particular qualities as ideals of child upbringing and compares those frequencies to data from the European Values Survey on Finnish, married respondents in 2008.

**Table 5. Particular qualities children should be encouraged to learn at home, respondents in our 2012 survey and the 2008 European Values Study , %**

	2012 Intercultural marriage, Finnish (n=1039)	2012 Intercultural marriage, Foreign born (n=1271)	2008 EVS Finnish married respondents (n=625)
Tolerance and respect for other people	85	80	86
Good manners	84	78	89
<b>Feeling of responsibility</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>90</b>
Independence	43	47	47
Determination, perseverance	45	42	47
Unselfishness	30	28	25
<b>Imagination</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	27
<b>Hard work</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>
Thrift, saving money and things	19	24	25
Obedience	19	20	22
<b>Religious faith</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>

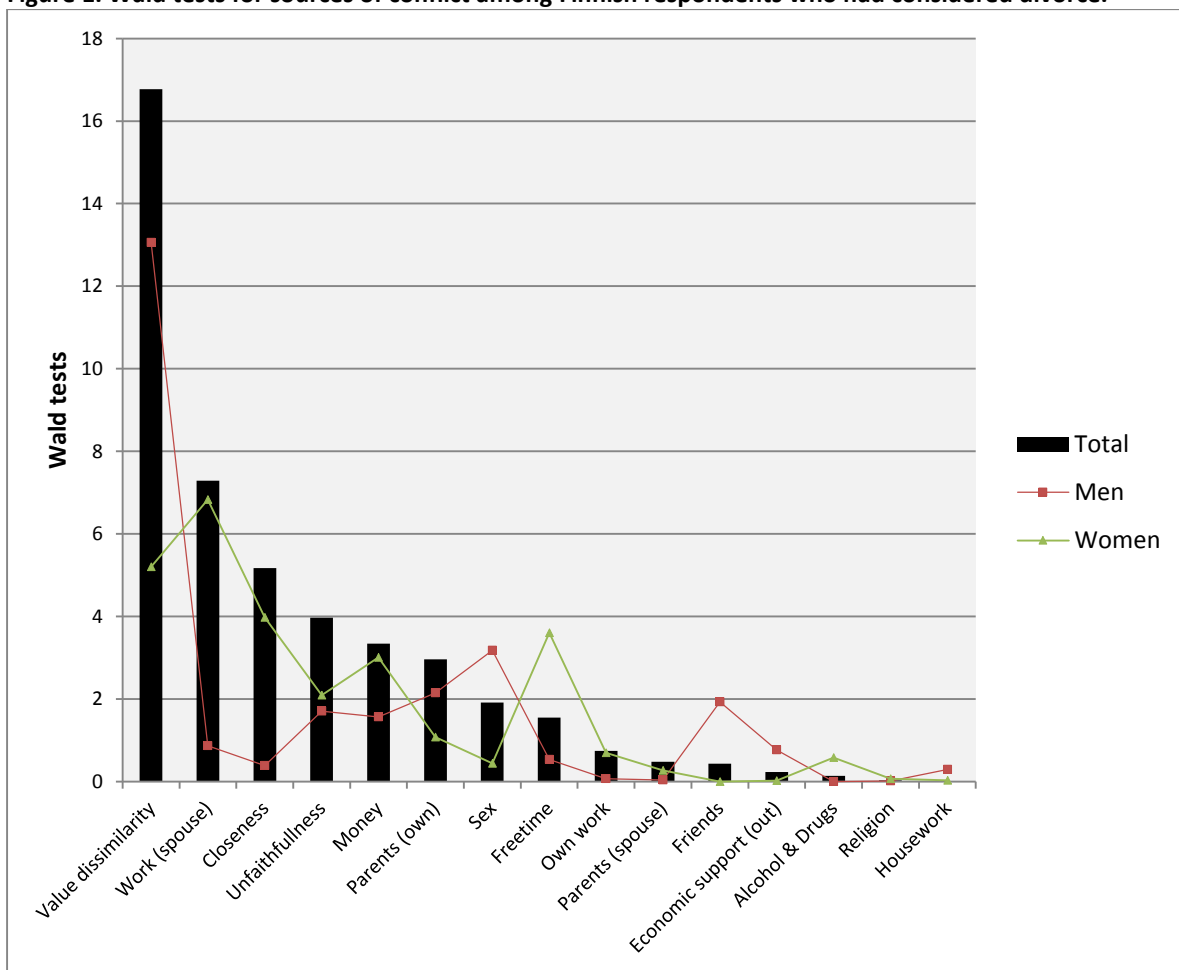
As far as this single question can give us some hint on the value orientation of the respondents, it seems that the values of Finnish people in intercultural marriages do not differ drastically from the values of other married population in Finland. Difference can only be detected in the valuation of hard work and feeling of responsibility: those who are married to a spouse of foreign origin, tend to stress hard work more commonly than others, and they stress being responsible and being thrifty less commonly.

VALUES AS A SOURCE OF CONFLICTS: MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

When including variables in a logistic regression analysis to examine factors related to consideration of divorce (not shown), the variable that co-varied most evidently with thoughts of divorce was the prevalence of conflicts in the marriage. Other variables included in the model were: respondent’s SES; spouse’s SES; interest towards spouse’s culture and language; acceptance of the marriage in close social network; and the HDI of the spouse’s country of origin. Respondent’s age and duration of marriage were controlled. Conflicts heightened the odds for thinking about divorce 3 to 4 times (odds ratios 3.6 and 3.8; not shown). However, not all sources of conflict have the same importance in creating thoughts of divorce. We analyzed in more detail the conflicts among those who had considered divorce (Figure 1)

Couples who report value conflicts have a significantly heightened risk of divorce. This is evident especially for men whereas for women types of conflicts associated with a heightened risk of divorce are more complicated. The most common topics of conflicts among all intercultural couples like division of household work did not raise the probability for consideration of divorce. As couples with children were analyzed separately, conflict in childrearing were not found to be significant (results not shown).

Figure 1. Wald tests for sources of conflict among Finnish respondents who had considered divorce.



## Discussion

This working paper has explored one side of the heterogamy hypothesis: the role of value difference or value conflict as a potential source of thoughts of divorce in intercultural marriages. In order to examine this issue, we have had the opportunity to make use of a rare source of data, a recent representative sample survey of intercultural marriages in Finland.

Men and women in intercultural marriages have different inclination to think about divorce. Women, both Finnish and foreign born, have more commonly thoughts of divorce than men. In our data we could not detect a statistically significant difference in thoughts of divorce between women in monocultural and intercultural marriages. Somewhat higher propensity to thoughts of divorce did exist among interculturally married Finnish *men* compared to monoculturally married Finnish men. However it is known from register data and numerous studies in different countries that, compared to monocultural couples, divorce is more common among intercultural couples and in marriages between an immigrant and a native.

It is possible that our survey data was too narrow to bring about some of the interrelationships that are found in larger register-based analyses on divorce and intercultural or interracial marriages. Another explanation to the lack of differences in thoughts of divorce between interculturally and monoculturally married women is that divorce can possibly take place in intercultural marriages without long prior consideration. The interrelationship between relationship satisfaction and divorce is complex. People may divorce even if they are only moderately dissatisfied with their marriage, in case of weak commitment to the union (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott 2007; Hohmann-Marriott & Amato 2008). Some of the marriages to spouses of foreign origin are contracted after relatively short time of courtship. This is particularly the case when the husband comes from outside of EU and would have great difficulties in securing a residence permit without the marriage (Lainiala & Säävälä 2013). The bureaucratic constraints may lead some couples to marry earlier than they would have without such pressure.

Finnish partners in intercultural marriages report much higher prevalence of conflicts than Finns married in monocultural marriages (Lainiala & Säävälä 2012). This is so particularly among women, and concerning such issues as sharing household work, the use of leisure time and money. However, it was interesting that at the same time, our survey showed that interculturally married Finnish men and women are as or even more satisfied with their couple relationship than Finns married in monocultural marriages (*ibid.*). This gave a rather intriguing image of the intercultural marriages in Finland as being relatively conflict ridden but at the same time, relatively happy.

The ideals of upbringing children differ between the foreign born and Finnish born spouses in intercultural marriages. Finnish respondents more often mention imagination, and they do not stress thrift, hard work and religious faith as commonly as those of foreign background. We can see that the foreign born respondents have a more traditional and more survival oriented value landscape than the Finnish respondents. The Finnish respondents in turn stress self-expression and rational-secular values more. These are the typical values in Nordic societies (Inglehart & Welzel 2005).

Looking in more detail to the factors that engender thoughts of divorce, we found that Finnish women married to men from countries of low Human Development Index (HDI) are more prone to develop thoughts of divorce, and that the propensity to such thoughts grows along the growing difference in developmental status of the countries. Forty percent of women married to a man originating in a poorly developed country had had thoughts of divorce during the preceding year. It remains to be further studied what actually lies behind this association. For example, the fact that these men are mostly visibly different and thus a target for discriminatory or racist attitudes or actions affects the men's opportunities to integrate. Most probably there

are many interlinked factors behind their Finnish wives' thoughts of divorce. What we can show in this study is that it cannot simply be explained away by referring to the "different values" of the spouses.

Men's propensity to think about divorce in turn does not differ according to their wife's country of birth. Also Dribe & Lundh (2012) point out that the country of origin makes a difference for Swedish women's tendency to divorce from intercultural marriages while the case is not present for Swedish men. They found this interrelationship when comparing countries of origin according to the value context of the countries. We in turn found that actually the relative developmental status of the country of origin is a clearer factor behind a Finnish woman's thoughts of divorce than the husband's country of birth's value context. This brings us to speculate on the role of lack of social support that such marriages may suffer, having transgressed the boundary of endogamy. It requires more detailed statistical analysis to evaluate the relative importance of social support in understanding the prevalence of thoughts of divorce among those who are married to a man from a maximally different country of origin, both in terms of values and human development.

Conflicts over different values are the most evident correlates with Finnish men's thoughts of divorce in intercultural marriages. Unfortunately we do not have comparative data on this from monoculturally married couples. The couple possibly does not start quarrelling about differing values until they face a more serious relationship crisis. A felt conflict over values is not necessarily the root cause of thoughts of divorce but may actually also be a result of such thoughts. Only about 10 percent of our Finnish respondents had had conflicts over different values with their foreign-born spouse (Lainiala & Säävälä 2012).

Conflicts over husband's work were more important correlates for women's thoughts of divorce than conflicts over values. Possibly men who work long hours either due to being entrepreneurs or experts, or due to low pay, would have less opportunities – or willingness – to participate in household duties and children's upbringing in the degree that a Finnish woman may expect. Alternatively men unemployed for extended periods may raise dissatisfaction in the wife. Qualitative studies could provide further understanding on the relationship between work and couple relationship satisfaction in intercultural marriages.

It has to be remembered that a vast majority of the survey respondents had had no thoughts of divorce during the last year and neither had they conflicts over different values with their spouse. Here we have examined in detail those who have problems. The dynamics of these challenges are important to understand, because thus we understand better the factors that subject intercultural marriages to a risk of divorce. Even though in a cross sectional data most couples do not have thoughts of divorce, given the divorce rates, it can be expected that the majority of couples will face a crisis at some point. The same applies to monocultural marriages.

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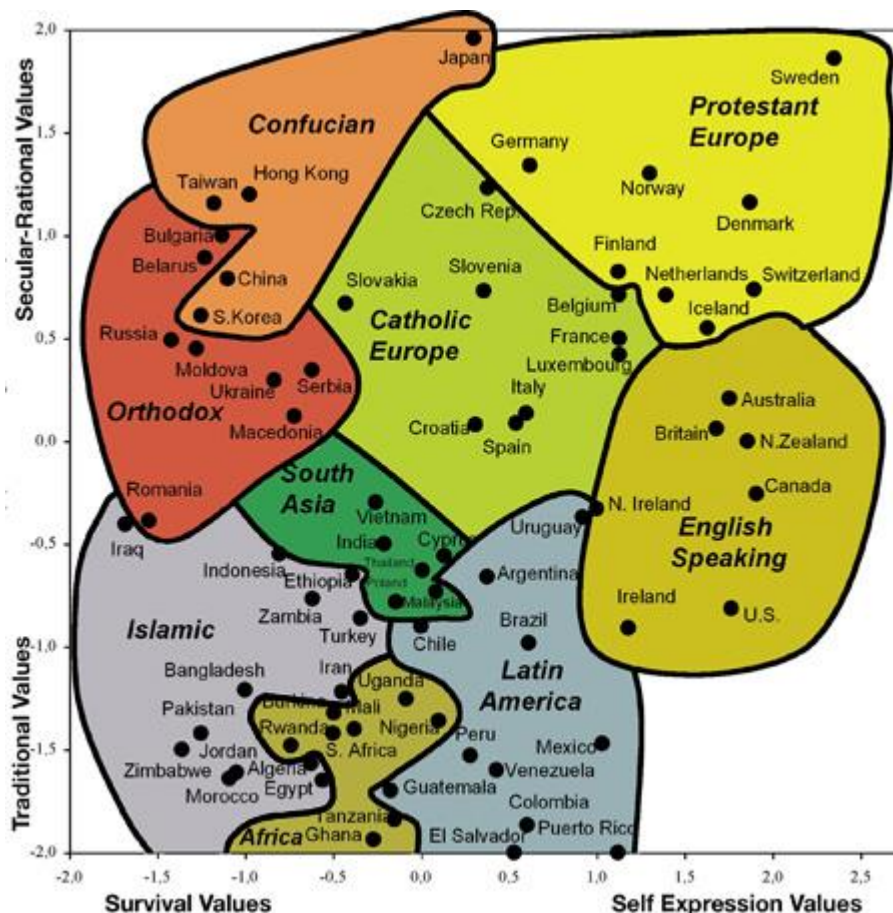
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## Appendix 1. Value context and Human Development Index

Ingelhart & Welzel's scale is based on World Values Survey that has been going on in about 100 countries along 30 years. They have produced a grid of value orientations typical to each country on two important dimensions of values: the Traditional/Secular-rational values dimension and the survival/self-expression values dimension (Figure 2). The traditional/secular-rational dimension reflects the contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it is not. A wide range of other orientations are closely linked with this dimension. Societies near the traditional pole emphasize deference to authority and family values, and reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. Societies with secular-rational values have the opposite preferences on all of these topics. The second major dimension of cross-cultural variation is linked with the transition from industrial society to post-industrial societies which brings a polarization between Survival and Self-expression values.

Figure 2. The World Value Survey Cultural Map 2005-2008.



Source: Inglehart & Welzel (2010, 554)

[http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder\\_published/article\\_base\\_54/images/wvs-culture-map.jpg](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54/images/wvs-culture-map.jpg)

In this division, the countries in the group 1 are closest to Finland and includes Northern and Western European countries plus Japan, group 2 includes Anglo-American countries (Australia, Great Britain, Canada, United States) and many Latin American countries, group 3 includes Eastern European countries such as Russia, Bulgaria and some East Asian countries (China, Korea), and group 4 includes most of the African countries, rest of Asia and the Middle East (table 6). In our descriptive analysis, we will make use of these value categories and will find out whether the value context in which the spouse of foreign background has grown has a relationship to the considerations of divorce of the spouse of Finnish background.

**Table 6. Inglehart and Welzel’s value scale categories (2005; see Dribe & Lundh 2012)**

	<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Category 3</b>	<b>Category 4</b>
<b>Traditional-secular values</b>	>0	≤0	>0	≤0
<b>Survival-self expression values</b>	>0	>0	≤0	≤0
<b>Common in areas</b>	Nordic countries Central and southern Europe Japan	Anglo-American countries Latin America	Central-Eastern Europe East Asia	Africa Asia The Middle East

The value categories used by Inglehart and Welzel are nevertheless quite broad. The level of human development of the spouses’ country of origin may be similarly important in determining marriage problems in intercultural marriages than the value context element. The Human Development Index (Anand & Sen 1994), abbreviated as HDI, is a summary composite index incorporating “statistical measures of life expectancy, literacy, educational attainment and GDP per capita, calculated by United Nations under the UN Development Programme”. It measures a country’s average achievement in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge and a decent standard of living (see criticisms of using HDI, Sagar & Najam 1998). HDI of spouse’s country of origin was re-coded into four categories by the classification of the UNDP (table 7).

Countries of very high development index (Group 1) are mostly European countries, United States and Canada plus the highly developed Asian countries. Countries grouped as those of high development index (Group 2) are mainly Latin American countries, plus Russia and some former communist countries such as Romania and former Yugoslavia, and Turkey. The medium development index (Group 3) is assigned to many Middle Eastern and Asian countries such as Iraq, China and India. The low development index countries (Group 4) comprise mostly of African countries and of the less developed Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. The cutting points are arbitrary in the way that countries of the world are simply arranged in a declining order of human development and then grouped into four categories of about equal size.

Compared to the Inglehart & Welzel’s (2005) value categories, HDI spreads the countries of Asia, Middle East and Africa better, into two-three categories instead of the one in the Inglehart-Welzel model. In their scale in turn, the so-called highly developed countries are distinguished in two categories. Comparing the usefulness of these two categorizations gives us some hint whether it is the human development of the country of origin or the value context that matters more for the couple relationship.



**Table 7. Human development index value categories (see UNDP 2013, [www.hdr.undp.org/en/](http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/) )**

	1 - Very high	2 - High	3 - Medium	4 - Low
Index range	0.79-0.94	0.70-0.78	0.52-0.69	0.28-0.51
Common in areas	Europe North America +Japan, Korea	Latin America +Russia, Belarus, Turkey, Malaysia	Middle East Most of Asia	Africa +Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan