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Marriage migration of Dominican women to
Germany via (web-based) matchmaking agencies

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and object of the study

In the past decades the number of international migrants has increased from an estimated 75 million in 1960 to around 175 million in 2000. Throughout the whole period about 50% of the migrants have been female (Mora, 2006). The closely matched balance of men and women in international migration flows has developed due to immigration legislation, changing gender relations in the countries of origin and destination, and the gender-selective demands of the work force. Indeed, over the past decades, the Caribbean, for example, experienced a veritable explosion of different kinds of international migration with major changes in destinations and a shift from male-led emigration to female-led emigration.¹ As such, in the 1970s and 1980s a large number of young women went to the US and Canada in order to find jobs in the service sector to sponsor their families at home. “*This pattern may reflect both matrifocal family patterns in the Caribbean and work opportunity structures for women in North America.*” (Kritz & Zlotnik, 1992, p. 99). But, since the 1980s, even if the USA continued to be the main destination of Caribbean emigrants, there had been a shift in the choice of destination for many migrants.² Caribbean and Latin American migration to Europe expanded in the last 50 years and was mainly politically motivated in the 1960-1980s (due to dictatorships in several Latin American countries). But the reasons for migration to Europe became more diversified in the 1980s which led as well to an increase of female migrants.³ Reciting Zlotnik, according to Mora (2006, p.7) “*Latin America was the first region of the developing world to record parity in the number of female and male migrants*”. Indeed, in 1990 half of the 6 million Latin American migrants were women. If considered part of the Caribbean the Dominican Republic is the country with the highest percentage of women among all migrants, namely 70% in 2004 (Mora, 2006). Among the reasons for the feminization of Dominican migration is the economic crisis of the 1980s that triggered a decrease in the income of family households. The weakening of the male role as the primary income provider, and the gender segmentation of the Dominican work sector that allowed women access to informal activities and low-paid jobs only. Additionally, the matrifocal family structures in the Dominican Republic (with women as head of households) encourage

¹ For a detailed overview of the development on Latin American and Caribbean migration as well as the participation of women in migration see Martínez Pizarro (2003).

² It is estimated that in 2002 about 2,8 million Latin American and Caribbean migrants lived in new destinations such as Spain, Great Britain, Canada and Japan (Martínez Pizarro, 2003).

³ In this thesis both terms “migration” and “emigration” are interchangeably used. Emigration refers to people who leave their country for another, whereas migration is an overall term for the movement of people. Thus, it generally includes other forms of migration, like rural-urban. However, in this work the term is used to describe international migration, unless indicated otherwise.

females to be independent emigrants resulting in an increase in such practices at the beginning of the 1990s (mainly as labour migration for domestic and care work to the USA or Spain). Labour is the main reason for the migration of Dominican women and consequently the numbers migrating for purposes of labour migration are high. However, some women migrate because of marriage to a foreign man and international marriages are one of the most common reasons for a change in residence.

Marriage migration – by men and women - can be defined as a special case of migration that implies a marriage, or as “*migration, tied to marriage*” (Ruenkaew, 2003, p. 35). Some of these relationships are founded during tourism; others, however, are founded through international matchmaking agencies that focus on the establishment of bi-national marriages. Migration via marriage is a specific form of female migration that lies “*at the intersection of many component parts – family and kinship, labour, economy, socio-culture, race and gender*” (Del Rosario, 1994, p. 7). All these factors influence the decision for and type of migration as well as the migrant’s experiences. Using a matchmaking agency to find a foreign partner constitutes a possible migration pathway that is almost exclusively used by women and gender relations are an important structural element. Consequently, the research question arises, how migration through international matchmaking is influenced by gender roles? Are the matchmaking agencies involved a constitutive element of a gender division that not only forms the international labour market but also the international marriage market?

Germany is one destination country of women who found their husband via market-based matchmaking. The aim of this research paper is thus to explore the phenomenon of marriage migration to Germany through international matchmaking agencies. The Dominican Republic was chosen as the women’s country of origin as it is, together with Brazil and Colombia, among the most popular Latin American countries for marriages between local women and European or North-American men. Besides, the especially high numbers of female migrants show that the willingness of women to leave their country is widespread.

The underlying idea of this research is to investigate not only the role of gender relations in international matchmaking but additionally, whether the established relationships are “*instrumental relationships, either from the husband’s or the bride’s perspective, rather than one based on ‘love’*” (D’Aoust, 2009, p. 2). Thus, one research question that arises is whether such a marriage constitutes an entry door for a life abroad or whether other reasons for using this service prevail for Dominican women? Specifically, do Dominican women intend to marry or to form a relationship to be able to migrate; or do they migrate in order to enable their bi-national marriage or relationship to exist? Furthermore, what role do the matchmaking agencies play in establishing transnational relationships between Dominican

women and German men and how do they perceive their business: as migration strategy or migration for love and romance?

Until recently, female marriage migration has been seen as social institution “*determined merely by kinship and custom and to this extent outside the realm of political economy*” and modern market forces. Married women were therefore “*routinely excluded from consideration in otherwise reputable migration studies*” (Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008, p. 24f.). The topic is of current interest and relevance as “social scientific attention to the intersection of issues of marriage and migration needs to go beyond ‘victimisation’ to a more balanced and context-sensitive consideration of changing dynamics in the nexus of marriage and migration” (Ibid.). International marriage migration is interesting to investigate as these cross-border marriages “*do not represent a global free-for-all in which all combinations – regardless of class, nationality, ethnicity, or gender, for example – are possible. Rather, they form marriage-scapes that are shaped and limited by existing and emerging cultural, social, historical, and political-economic factors*” (Constable, 2005, p. 3f.).

The frame of this thesis is limited and the topic certainly requires more time and effort to be investigated; not only because literature is scarce and data is unsatisfying. Nevertheless, the attempt is made to give a more complex image of this process, neither based on public or journalist opinions nor by repeating or referring to one-sighted reports. Instead, people who actively participate in matchmaking were given a voice through qualitative interviews: Agency owners for their general views; and men and women involved in the process for their personal experience and knowledge. In this study it was a priority to ensure that women would not be portrayed as victims, nor men as offenders; rather, both are looked at as social actors with responsibilities and free decision-making abilities.

1.2 Literature review: International matchmaking

In the 1984, Mirjana Morokvasic published one of the first articles about women as independent migrants (and not as following their migrating partners). Nowadays plenty of literature exists about the “*feminization of migration*”, about the high numbers of women moving independently to other countries, and especially on the influence of gender on migration (being reflected for instance in literature on women migrating as domestic workers, care givers, sex workers as well as in the literature on the trafficking of women).

However, the literature on female migration through international matchmaking is scarce and in the existing literature the process is mostly directly related to the trafficking of women, thereby gaining high visibility in academic, public and political discourse (see for instance Englander, 2008 and Llyod, 2000).⁴ Prejudices about Latin-American female migrants as

⁴ A good overview on the literature addressing the abuse and exploitation of women involved in international matchmaking (including NGO reports, academic research and other publications) has been compiled by IMBRA (2009, p.8, footnote 7).

“married to” or “trafficked” by the husband in a male-dominated society or a Latin-American man, are those interpretations often made in the existing literature. These assumptions often represent unacknowledged stereotypes of gender and ethnicity (Hernández, 2005, 2007). As trafficking implies a transfer of the woman against her will, to mention the topic of migration through international matchmaking in the same context leads to an incorrect assumption and connotation of the process as something negative and unplanned, and representing women as victims instead of actors with free-will. Furthermore, not all agencies involved have fraudulent, criminal or dubious intentions and one should refrain from generalisations. As widely read scholarly research on international matchmaking is limited or absent, “*the media has been the chief source of public understanding*” (Simons, 2001, p.13). Even political or scientific papers are often not based on studies carried out by themselves but on media sources and thus the bibliography of any papers on the topic should be well studied. Only a few authors have published about migration through international matchmaking with the intention of discussing the complexity of this process and the many varied motivations of the actors involved.⁵

A review of the literature available on international matchmaking has been provided by Lisa Simons in her dissertation on this topic (Simons, 2001, pp. 5-22). She considers every major work written between 1980 and 2000 and offers insight into three different approaches to this topic; specifically the approach of the media (which portray the business as immigration fraud and exploitation of women), scholarly research (which while aiming at a deeper understanding in the composition of actors involved, still adheres to common assumptions of abuse and violence in such relationships. It also deals with the relationship between matchmaking and politics⁶), and the advocacy perspective (matchmaking as a business for trafficking women).⁷

However, even if there is some scholarly research on international matchmaking only very few studies exist involving Germany (e.g. Vartti, 2003) and more extensive studies are mainly concentrated on South-East-Asia as the women’s country of origin (Ruenkaew, 2003 for Germany-Thailand or Beer, 1996, and Lauser, 2004 for Germany-Phillipines). To the best of my knowledge, none of the existing studies deals with the process of international matchmaking via agencies including Latin American or Caribbean women and German men.⁸ Particularly, the marginal numbers of Latin American migrants in Germany are a reason that

⁵ See for instance Constable (2005) on international matchmaking and gender or the studies guided by Simons (2001) on international matchmaking and feminism (USA and Philippines and Ukraine respectively), Del Rosario (1994) for Bride Migration from the Philippines and Palriwala & Uberoi (2008) about the significance of marriage on migratory movements in Asia.

⁶ Topics include international matchmaking agencies as a means to legally enter a country via marriage to a citizen, and political arrangements to prevent fraud and protect the women involved.

⁷ See Appendix I, Table 2 “Perspectives on the international matchmaking industry in the literature”, p.102.

⁸ The only studies dealing with marriage migration of Latin-American women concentrate on relationships that were founded by personal acquaintance and focus on North America as destination.

literature on their migration is in generally very scarce and has not been studied in all its diversity.⁹

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of a theoretical part, a short description of the applied methodology and the main part including the analysis of the empirical data.

The following chapter (chapter 2) will be concerned with an introduction to feminist migration research in order to present the development of the inclusion of female migrants into scientific investigation. Gender will be displayed as main structure element of migration, keeping in mind that gender roles and relations play an essential role in the establishment of the international matchmaking business. As this study concentrates on the migration of Dominican women, a short insight into the economic and political development of the Dominican Republic will be given and factors will be presented that constitute the high number of Dominican women in migration. More precisely, the highly gendered labour market, matrifocal family structures and migration networks will be discussed as factors.

In chapter 3 the methodical approach that was applied to carry out this research will be presented. The guiding research questions that were used to develop the guide lines for the interviews will be introduced together with a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews. In addition, the acquisition and sampling of the interview partners will be discussed as well as limitations to the quality of the data.

The main part of this thesis (chapter 4) gives an introduction to international matchmaking, leading over to a definition of and introduction to international web-based matchmaking agencies. More precisely, the design of such agencies will be presented and their way of advertisement. Furthermore, the process of German-Dominican matchmaking will be described in detail to allow the reader an insight into the process and involvement of the different parties. Both sides – German men and Dominican women – will be introduced according to their general profile and their motivations that lead them to participate in international matchmaking.

Finally, a conclusion will be drawn (chapter 5) to answer the four main research questions, to recapitulate the influence of gender relations on marriage migration through matchmaking, and to give an outlook on further possible research on this subject.

⁹ Latin American and Caribbean migrants form a minor migrant group in Germany. In 2009, there lived about 104000 Latin American and Caribbean people in Germany (almost as much as from France or Portugal but referring to a whole continent). Among these migrants women form the majority with 67216 (Destatis, 2010).

2. International female migration from the Dominican Republic

Research and literature on migration used to be gender-blind and focused on male migrants for a long time. Despite the growing numbers of female migrants, women were “*essentially left out of theoretical thinking*” (Kofman, Raghuram & Sales, 2000, p. 22). The major trend was to conflate female migration “*with reasons usually cited for men. Effectively it adopted an ‘add women and stir’ approach*” (Ibid.). Women’s experiences were fitted into approaches originally dedicated to understand and explain male migration, thereby assuming that both men and women share the same reasons and conditions to migrate. Feminist research came up with the objective of not only include women compensatorily but to make gender a central criterion of investigation. It was mainly in the 1990s that these claims actually led to a change in perspective, and were for the most part initiated by feminist movements from English speaking countries. Since the 1990s a change of perspective also took place in German speaking countries and in Europe in general, and studies on female migration and about gender and migration started to be published (Hahn, 2004).¹⁰

The aim of this chapter is twofold: firstly, section 2.1 will be concerned with the inclusion of women in migration research. The influence of gender on migration will then be discussed because it is considered to be one of the most important factors influencing migration patterns and in particular, female migration via international matchmaking.

Secondly, the Dominican Republic will be presented in more detail, for it is a country which records significant numbers of migrants and emigrants and a particularly high ratio of female emigrants.¹¹ It will therefore serve as the empirical context for this thesis. In section 2.2, the reasons for the expansion of the female Dominican migration and its development will thus be illustrated in particular. A short insight into the Dominican socio-economic and political situation in recent decades will be given, along with three key factors that have driven previous as well as current female migration from the country: a gendered labour sector; Dominican family structures and migration networks.

2.1 Female migration research

The absence of women in migration research has increasingly been criticized since the 1980s, until the feminist critique eventually achieved the goal of ensuring that women were also considered as active participants of migration processes. The main migration theories of the last decades have been criticized for their short- and one-sided approaches, because they are not adequate to describe current migratory movements and almost completely

¹⁰ See for instance Graeme (1991, 1993); Buijs (1993), Hillmann (1996), Prodolliet (1999), Hahn (2000); Aufhauser (2000), Gemende (2003) or Erel, Morokvasic, & Shinozaki (2003).

¹¹ In 2000, 9.3% of the Dominican citizens (782.000 out of 8,396 million) were emigrants (Martinez Pizarro, 2008) and in 2004 this percentage had increased to 12% (Robert, 2008).

ignore women in migration.¹² Hence, these mostly male dominated research approaches were modified and new inputs were given concerning research questions and the foci of analysis. Today, a perspective has been achieved “*which acknowledges how the multiplicities of masculinities and femininities are interconnected... enmeshed in relations of class, race and nation*” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005, p. 3).

Following Prodolliet (1999), three main generations of feminist migration research have been outlined by Aufhauser (2000). They can be identified as a primary phase which consisted of the improvement of women’s visibility and the illustration of their different and diverse life experiences. The aim was to identify the male centred research tradition and its typical sexist traps: passivation of women; ignorance of gender and its social structural importance; “*Familialismus*” (putting aside individual needs and interests in the family’s favour) and the overemphasis of gender-based differences. Most investigations were about labour migration and women were treated as independent and working, rather than as dependent migrants (as they had been treated before).

First studies that incorporated women in the migratory process were published in the 1970s when feminist migration research started its development with the aim of taking into account women (and gender) in studies and investigations.¹³ It however called for criticism that women were just added as an additional variable, measured with and compared to men’s migration patterns. It was useful for quantitative studies but failed to acknowledge “*that gender is fundamentally about power*” in social relations, in the immigrants’ place of origin as well as in their place of destination (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005, p. 5).

“The first generation of works was committed to a compensatory approach. They made women visible in migration research and demonstrated that these – like men – migrate, and that they thereby achieve (unique) accomplishments. In short, they showed that

¹² Until the 1970s, traditional migration theories were mainly based on an economic-neoclassical point of view (e.g. equilibrium theory). Migration was then described as a result of push- and pull-factors in the context of supply and demand of labour force. In the 1970s there was a drift to Marxist political economy, dependency theory and world systems theory. Correspondingly, the focus was on a historical-structural approach based on a world-wide unequal distribution of economic and political power and a global division of labour. Migration was seen as mechanism to mobilize cheap labour. Migrant workers were stigmatized as passive agents and particularly by treating female migrants as reactive rather than proactive this perception proved very pervasive. As a result, a new conceptual framework was needed to explain the diversity and complexity of migration streams, including macro- and micro-structural elements. Alternative approaches such as chain and social network migration or the shift to households as unit of analysis were developed. The latter assumes the families take collective decisions (as part of household strategies) in order to decide whether and which family members migrate. Following this perspective migration is seen as a means for economic improvement of the whole family (e.g. via remittances). Hence, the importance of socio-cultural variables was recognized. The new perspective of migration systems not only involved migratory chains and networks, but also allowed advancing in the analysis of gender conditions in migration (empowerment of women, status within the family system, access to economic resources, role in decision making, etc.).

¹³ See the approaches of Boserup (1970) about women and development and those of Thadani and Todaro (1978) about female migration from a neoclassical point of view. Furthermore, in 1974, the first international meeting about female migration (“The woman in the migratory process”) organized by the American Association of Anthropology took place in Mexico (Ariza, 2000).

women are a non-negligible part of migratory movements.” (Prodolliet, 1999, p. 28f.).(1)¹⁴

In a second phase – from the 1980s until the beginnings of the 1990s - it was acknowledged that the “world of the suppressed” should not only be pictured from the suppressors’ point of view (in a mostly male science these would be men). Instead, scientific awareness should take the position and perspective of women, away from an objectification of women as subjects of research and too simple classifications. More particular, an autonomous and independent female perspective at the centre of interest and research was asked for, together with an orientation mainly alongside a hermeneutic-interpretive scientific paradigm and work was primarily conducted using qualitative methods. Moreover, not only the differentiated insertion of women in the labour market was of interest, but the influence of gender on this social sphere and on migration patterns in general was of major interest as well. In particular, migration strategies and the relation between migration and households were of increasing interest. Studies that focused on households were however often criticized as they handled them as unitary unit rather than divided by “*gender and generational hierarchies of power, authority and resources*” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005, p. 7).

“The second generation of feminist migration studies pursues a contributory approach. Aside from the specific role of women with the realm of migration, these studies focus on the specific situations that women face within migration research.” (Prodolliet, 1999, p. 29). (2)

Finally, the third generation of research came up as a result of the criticism – made both by men and women - that the female identity was primarily constructed by experiences and living standards of (white) women from the „first world” or from the majority within a society. Therefore, in this third phase the universal category “woman” has been itemised and the analytical perspective has been opened and enriched (Ariza, 2000). Sex and gender differences were seen as a complex matrix of societal structured suppression, differences, and patterns of power amongst women themselves as well. Different dimensions of femininity and masculinity were in the focus as well as differentiations among women. Questions like “Which images of femininity and masculinity guide the migration processes? Who plays a role in the construction of those images and who has an interest in their establishment?” were considered in the investigations.¹⁵ Impulses came mainly from British feminist research of the 1980s (concerning female labour migration) and first studies were published about migrating women from developing countries.¹⁶

¹⁴ For all literature and interview quotes in their original version see Appendix II, pp.104ff.

¹⁵ The importance of such questions will also arise when discussing the marriage migration via matchmaking agencies (chapter 4).

¹⁶ See for instance Phizacklea (1983), Morokvasic (1984), Brettel & Simon (1986), Pedraza (1991) or Tienda & Booth (1991). The publication *Gender and migration in developing countries* by Chant and Radcliffe (1992) was an important milestone not only in research on migrating women from developing countries but also on gender

“The third generation of feminist migration studies – commencing in the mid-1980s – broaches the issue of gender and power relations, that emerge from the specificities of migration. In this context, it deals with the construction of femininity and masculinity, with the significance of private and public, and with the influence of migration experiences on the relation between the sexes.” (Prodolliet, 1999, p. 29). (3)

Thus nowadays, women have found their way into migration research. The phenomenon of the “feminization of migration” has been highlighted by several academic studies¹⁷ and the special situation of women on the move – as well as the demarcation from male migration – has been emphasized. The thematic transformation of migration research over the last decades has been achieved by overcoming the economic point of view on female migration. New research approaches focus less on traditional push-pull models and instead comprise new perspectives, not only on the regions of arrival but also on those of departure, the ethnic group of the migrating women as well as on more qualitative and individual-biographic research methods, more detailed information about (most likely gender segregated) migration motivation and differentiated migration forms such as family-, single- or chain-migration (Hahn, 2000).

In the regional area of the Dominican Republic there have been three decisive moments for female migration and its corresponding research (Ariza, 2000). Firstly, from the beginning of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s labour migration dominated. The development and transformation of work sectors (in the Dominican Republic as well as in typical destination regions such as Europe) constituted the main interpretative framework for the diverse research that has been done on this topic. From the beginning of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, the effort was to combine these dominating streams of knowledge. However, consideration of the specificities of female migration was missing from research programs. Finally, from the 1990s onwards, one can observe an enrichment of the analytic perspective related to migration and gender, including factors such as the sex composition, reasons for and consequences of migration, the variation and duration of movements, family structures and dynamics, the relationship between migration and changing gender relations, the relative equilibrium between private and public spheres, supporting networks and the formation processes of social identities. These recent developments have led Pessar to the conclusion that *“scholars have made great advances in moving beyond an earlier male bias in theory and research... [and that] ...we are now moving toward a more fully engendered understanding of the migration process.”* (Pessar, 1999, cited in Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006, p. 64).

in migration. It was one of the first works to include gender instead of merely counting sex differences in migration.

¹⁷ See for instance Erel, Morokvasic, & Shinozaki (2003), Zlotnik (2003), Donato et al. (2006) or Sinke (2006). Studies by international organizations include San Miniato (1990), UNRISD (2005), UNFPA (2006), reports by UN-instraw and ECLAC/CEPAL for the Caribbean region (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean).

Consequently, research has shown that women migrate under different conditions to men. From a global point of view men show higher mobility than women, but the latter show more diverse migration strategies due to the different roles they play in the families and the family's income in different regional contexts, but also due to structural inequalities in labour market opportunities. These are indeed shaped by gender patterns and expectations, such that gender is a crucial factor for our understanding of causes and consequences and in addition important to almost all the aspects of international migration.¹⁸

The term "gender" was introduced into the social sciences to point out the difference between the socially and the biologically determined sexes. The concept of gender is much more complex than biological sex as it "*involves the ways in which cultures imbue this biological difference with meaning such as demarcating between male and female domains in activities, tasks, spaces, time*" (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p. 813). It is no binary and stable structure but a social performance, and gendered identities are (re)created all along the migratory process (UN-instraw, 2007). Gender plays a predominant role when dealing with curriculum vitae: It not only affects the migratory pathways but also their moment, duration and continuity. As a result, men and women differ not only in their paths of migration and their motivation but also in other migration characteristics such as length of stay and trips to their home country.¹⁹ Hence, gendered norms, expectations and opportunities of agency form the way women and men are engaged in migratory movements (Piper, 2008). Thus, belonging to a gender category can both facilitate and restrain migration and settlement. Gender-specific asymmetries therefore create conditions as well as possibilities for female migration at the economic, socio-cultural and political levels. Current migration approaches should hence require "*gendered differences in migration trajectories and incorporate a gender dimension into theorizations of contemporary migrations*" (Kofman, Raghuram & Sales, 2000, p. 3).

These days the argumentation persists that the "gendering" of migration streams is influenced by gender relations in the countries of origin *and* destination;²⁰ but images and clichés about gender relations are not sufficient to enable us to understand the gender specific structure of migration streams. The female as well as the male components of those images have to be analysed: Who is responsible for the construction of those images and in

¹⁸ For an insight into women's participation in international migration in the last four centuries and the influence of sex and gender on their migratory movements see Aufhauser (2000, pp.102f.). For the inclusion of gender in current international migration research see for instance Kofman et al. (2000), De Jong (2002), Ehrenreich & Hochschild (2003), Pessar & Mahler (2003) or Hondagneu-Sotelo (2006). Good overviews on the literature on women in migration and the influence of gender on their migratory movements are reviewed by Donato et al. (2006), Sinke (2006) and Carling (2005).

¹⁹ As an example, the United Nations Secretary's report from 1995 finds that women form the bigger part of the migrants staying in the country of destination forever, and also return to their home country less often than men (Aufhauser, 2000).

²⁰ Exemplified in employing Latin American or East-European women as nannies or domestic workers in Germany, and revealed as well in internationally arranged marriages as will be described later.

which contexts? Aufhauser (2000, p. 113) describes five main locations where images of femininity and masculinity are constructed in a context of international migration. Namely, 1) the gender-culture in the country of origin, usually ascertainable through normative and institutionalized expectations (labour fields, responsibilities, the relation between public and private); 2) agencies and networks (which images of femininity are best in marketing, differing when treating women for labour force, women to marry, etc.? Which is the best positioning?); 3) the immigration policies of the potential destination countries (special (visa) possibilities for dancers, housemaids, etc.)²¹; what is hidden behind these restrictions or possibilities? Which images of femininity and masculinity dominate, if for instance the husband has to prove that he has sufficient income to care for his wife before she is allowed to immigrate? 4) the gender culture and ethnic culture of the country of destination (e.g. if the male breadwinner model prevails, women are mostly seen as housewives and not as generating an income); 5) in migration research (e.g. by accentuating the vulnerability of migrating women without noticing or mentioning their active decision making abilities).

Through the process of migration the concepts of femininity and masculinity (brought from home) are consistently challenged - resulting in weakening, rearrangement or intensification. Studies on female migration have led to partly ambiguous conclusions concerning the effect of migration on women. Indeed, it has often been observed that migration is able to change gender asymmetries in a favourable way for women, namely that it opens up new spaces for women within their family and society and that it makes the gender division of labour more flexible by transforming the gender roles and models. Furthermore, female labour migrants are considered to be especially emancipated, for they actually decide to migrate independently. On the other hand, authors like Morokvasic (1984; 2009) or Erel et al. (2003), who focus on labour migration, argue that "*access to employment does not necessarily emancipate women*" (Kofman, Raghuram & Sales, 2000, p. 15). Neither does it signify an increased freedom of movement or an increased independence. Referring to Ariza (2000), the assumption of emancipation is based on an ethnocentric point of view as part of modernization theories. A methodological problem is that there exist no analytical ways to isolate the effect of migration on women from other concomitants. To answer the question of whether migration is able to modify (or to act as a modifying factor for) gender relations, it could be said that at least it hosts the possibility for transforming the structure of existent opportunities at a given moment. Also, it would be interesting to investigate how migration interacts simultaneously with diverse aspects which conform to gender inequality, rather than seeing migration as the only reason for these processes. In Latin America research on

²¹ UN-instraw (2007) for instance mentions the example of Dominican women migrating to Spain and Switzerland. By freely providing visas for work as cabaret dancers and entertainers, the Swiss government recruited a large number of Dominican women to work in the sex trade. Afterwards the women faced "*numerous restrictions to move into other occupations or to obtain legal papers*" (except through marriage to a Swiss national).

gendered migration is still in its infancy which is partly related to unsatisfactory statistical data.²² In particular, the high number of Latin American women engaged in informal or unregulated types of jobs implies that a high number of women (or female migrants) are statistically invisible (Piper, 2008).

In the following chapters, the influence of gender on the choice and availability of migration channels will be discussed with a specific empirical focus on female Dominican migration. The following section contains a short overview of the political and economic development of the Dominican Republic in the last decades. This overview will elucidate the initial position of international Dominican migration. Thereafter, three factors playing a key role in explaining female migration movements from the Dominican Republic will be presented in order to explicate both former and recent migration of Dominican women: the gendered labour sector; Dominican family structures and the importance of migration networks.

2.2 Factors that influence international female migration from the Dominican Republic

Grassmuck and Pessar (1991) give a detailed description of the political and economic development of the Dominican Republic in the last century, relating these developments to former and recent migration patterns. Following their argument, a brief overview will be given about the basic development of the country and its migration flows, leading over to factors that drive Dominican female migration.

From the 1880/1890s onwards, the Dominican Republic was integrated into the world economy by means of its sugar market, and at the beginning of the 20th century the sugar industry - the pillar of the country's economy - was consolidated under foreign interests (mainly North American between 1916 and 1924, after the first US military occupation). This forced appropriation of land for the benefit of foreign interests caused an explosive growth of sugar production, almost exclusively intended for export. Moreover, the confiscation of land involved the destruction of local subsistence agriculture and economy. In 1920, the Sugar Crisis (characterised by a dramatic drop in world sugar prices) and the subsequent depression marked the beginning of a change, during which the Dominican Republic evolved from a predominantly agricultural society to one of a low-level industrialization. During Rafael L. Trujillo's presidency in the middle of the 20th century the economy was controlled mainly by Trujillo himself. This "One-person state" was characterized by political control, a state monopoly, an extremely small internal market, unabashed personal win and restrictions on leaving the country. After his death, a de facto nationalization of the major economic sectors

²² First works on gender and migration for Latin America and the Caribbean have been published by Oliveira (1984) and Recchini (1988) (both referred to in Ariza, 2000), Grassmuck & Pessar (1991), Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) or Ho (1999). Institutions that generally deal with this topic are CEPAL/ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), CELADE (Centro Latino Americano y Caribeño de Demografía) or UN-instraw.

took place, which until today, is characterized by a “*relatively high degree of economic centralization and the extensive role played by the state in contemporary Dominican economic development*” (Grassmuck & Pessar, 1991, p.30).

The first emigration wave from the Dominican Republic started following Trujillo's assassination in 1961. The ensuing civil war, commencing with the ousting of the democratically elected President Bosch, only ended with the US military occupation (1966-1996). In 1966, elections took place and the Reformist Party reigned for 12 years under the leadership of Joaquín Balaguer (1966-78). In the following eight years the country was ruled by the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), until Balaguer took over the power again. After the overthrow of Trujillo's leadership and the 1963-revolution, migration was politically induced by an extremely unrestrictive immigration policy favoured by the US and encouraged by high the unemployment and political repression. The easier access to US-visas offered to Dominican citizens was perceived as a safety valve against further radical political mobilization and as a way to improve bilateral relations.²³ Once they had been stimulated, “*the outflows were sustained economically by two subsequent phases of development which... failed to modernize agriculture, excluded [the labour sector] from the benefits of increasing industrialization, and produced an expanding and increasingly frustrated middle class*” (Grassmuck & Pessar, 1991, p. 31ff.). Throughout the phases of ruling of Balaguer, education, especially in higher levels, grew at an unprecedented rate (similar to other Latin American countries at that time). The attractiveness of emigration increased through the integration of the Dominican Republic into the world economy and the upcoming presence of international companies and trademarks. The “*more highly educated stratum with high expectations for social mobility and the life-styles of modern consumption*” (Ibid., p.49). favoured migration movements, as within the country there was not that much demand for a well-educated labour force. Those who emigrated to the United States were not marginalized workers, but relatively skilled and educated. They were also workers who, precisely because of their relatively advantageous positions, were able to finance the expensive move to the United States. Moreover, they were motivated “*by a desire to improve their wages and general comfort*” and aspired to a different kind of consumption pattern (Grassmuck & Pessar, 1991, p. 95). Migratory movements to the US were not reserved for men, and women's migration strategies intensified at the beginning of the 1990s (initially mainly for family reunification and as labour migration for domestic and care work). Female migration streams were not limited to the US but also involved new destinations as Canada, Europe

²³ Dominican immigrant visas to the US doubled between 1961 and 1962 and almost tripled between 1962 and 1963 (1,789 visas were approved in 1961; 9,857 in 1963) (Grassmuck & Pessar, 1991, p. 33).

(mainly Spain) or Japan where women are similarly engaged in specific female working areas.²⁴

Three key factors explain international female migration from the Dominican Republic, namely the gendered division of work, power and gender relations within families, and social networks (Robert, 2008). In the following, and to end this chapter about female migration these three factors will be presented and discussed in more detail.

In the period of 1950-1980 the size of the female labour force in Latin America and the Caribbean tripled essentially due to higher education, lower fertility, rural-urban migration and an increasing demand for women in the growing service and export-processing sectors. Estimations made by CELADE (Latin American Demographic Center) between 1970 and 1990 state that the augmentation of female labour force in this region was assumed to be 122% and an increase of 37% was recorded from 1990 to 2000 (Ariza, 2000). The Dominican Republic shared the speed of increase of female labour participation that characterised all of Latin America in the second half of the 20th century. In 2006, female labour force participation in the Dominican Republic represented 42% (Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006) and current numbers of The World Bank name a labour participation rate of 50% of the female population, aged 15 years and older. Consequently, working women in the Dominican Republic are becoming increasingly important contributors to the household economy.

The Dominican Republic has undergone rapid transformation from an agrarian to an urban industrial economy “*with profound consequences for the gender restructuring of the labor force*” (Safa, 1995, p. 108). Dominican Republic female employment has increased considerably since the 1960s, in the export sector and the free trade zones. A survey among 529 Dominican women working in the free trade zones revealed that the typical characteristics of female workers in the Dominican Republic: “*low wages, poor working conditions, forced overtime, lack of child care, limited job alternatives, partners who offer no or limited assistance, and an increasingly high cost of living.*” (Safa, 1995, p. 108). Until the 1980s, the country remained dependent on sugar exports. As the consequences of US cuts in sugar quotas in 1980 the real wage declined by 70% until 1987, and during the same period the cost of a family food basket more than doubled (essentially due to devaluation, reduction in state price controls on staples such as rice and sugar and an increasing reliance on food imports). After the cutback in sugar production the lack of social support mechanisms in the Dominican Republic encouraged a growing number of men to enter the informal work sector. The men’s role as the family’s first economic provider weakened and

²⁴ Being a former Spanish colony the relation between the Dominican Republic Spain is still strong. As consequence, Dominican migrants form the fourth largest emigrant group in Spain and show the highest rate of female migrants. Dominican or Latin American women who live in Spain are mainly employed in domestic services and the hotel industry (Martínez Pizarro, 2009).

women (who were predominantly responsible for all matters concerning household and children) were highly affected when family income dropped. Male unemployment led to an increasing percentage of female-headed households, as women were more often the ones earning the financial means to support their families. Consequently, the economic crisis of the 1980s - mainly in the agricultural sector - combined with male unemployment encouraged Dominican women to enter the waged labour market.

In addition to the work performed in the export industry, female participation in the labour force is also tightly connected to the tertiarisation of the labour market. Nearly half of the Dominican women living in the cities are employed in the service sector (Ariza, 2000) and The World Bank states that 85% of all working Dominican women are employed in the service sector. Until the 1990s, the increase in female employment has been "*accompanied by declining or stagnating rates of male employment*" (Safa, 1995, p. 5) and a possible explanation for this phenomenon is that new jobs have been primarily designed for women (as in the tertiary sector).²⁵ As such, women's labour force participation has increased without reducing male unemployment. As a result men have been absorbed into the informal working sector whereas women show a high percentage of salaried workers. In the process, the concept of the male breadwinner – the man as the household's only financial provider – became out-dated in the Dominican Republic as women started to consider themselves more and more as the major financial providers of their families (Safa, 1995).

Nevertheless, the labour market in the Dominican Republic is sex segregated and highly gendered. This means that "*men and women are not distributed evenly across all sectors and occupations in proportion to their participation in the total labor force*" (US Aid, 2005). Women have to deal with limited possibilities (occupation mainly in the tertiary sector or less qualified manual sectors) and prevailing gender norms and stereotypes. "*Typical jobs for Dominican women include seamstress, babysit, cook, teacher, textile worker and domestic employee.... Although men are also present in 'feminized' work niches (e.g. restaurants or cleaning), they quickly move to more 'masculine', better paying labour niches (e.g. transportation, construction, management or administration).*" (Vargas & López, 2010, p. 11f.).²⁶ Because of the difficulty of accessing job opportunities and because of bad working

²⁵ Following statistics of The World Bank (2011), the numbers of economically active men have been constantly decreasing for the last 25 years (from 86% to 80%) whereas those of women have been steadily augmenting (from 42% to 51%).

²⁶ In 1992, an interesting study was published by Georges (1992) about an anthropological fieldwork and quantitative census in a Dominican village known for its high migration rates to the USA at the beginning of the 1980s. The results showed gendered patterns of job division and in "conformity with local conceptions of the gendered nature of work, all of the desirable new jobs have gone to men" (Georges, 1992, p. 97). Thus, even if emigrating men left gaps in the labour market, the most prestigious jobs available were again occupied by men. Jobs designed for women were concentrated in domestic services and childcare and women were paid 1/5 of what a man could earn by driving a jitney (taxi) or working for the lottery. The interview with a man from the village illustrates the highly gendered reputation of jobs: It was considered as acceptable by the male interviewee that one of the women's jobs consisted of driving *children* to school regularly. But as a usual taxi

conditions and poor payments making it difficult to support their family, international labour emigration was a way for women to improve their families' living conditions and an additional source of income to the internal migration (rural-urban) and local employment.²⁷ Indeed, women still have to manage the domestic sphere but often without the incomes of their husbands or partners and many therefore decide to emigrate in order to generate (extra) income (Gregorio Gil, 1995). Furthermore, the sexual division of the labour market in the Dominican Republic hampers opportunities for social and professional progress for women. Migration can thus be seen as a way to broaden women's opportunities.

Independent Dominican female migration began to occur at the beginning of the 1990s and mainly encompassed women from poor rural areas (Gregorio Gil, 1995). It intensified in the following years. With 70% in 2004, the Dominican Republic showed the highest percentage of female migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean (Mora, 2006).²⁸

Women play a significant part in welfare, both as providers and as recipients and the "*gendered nature of welfare provision, which prioritizes women's role as carers in society, is heightened during migration.*" (Carling, 2005, p. 2). Through a labour shift from the industrial to the service sector, jobs occur in gendered niches "*where labour recruitment is influenced by the sexual division of labour*". "*The existence of gender-specific economic niches for immigrants and the tendency of migration to sustain itself in particular forms has produced overwhelmingly male or female migratory linkages between certain pairs of countries.*" (Ibid.). Hence, on the European labour market there is an increase of female migrants in particular sectors. Female migrants occupy jobs in the domestic and care sector because state provision of welfare "*is not keeping pace with the requirements of ageing populations across Europe*" (Kofman, Raghuram & Sales, 2000, pp. 2-7). The international division of reproductive labour on the one hand and the market demands in the feminised sectors on the other hand play an important role in the composition of female Dominican migrants. "*A transnational female labour market is being created... attesting to the fact that the labour market makes use of labour identities anchored in gender relations in order to meet the demand for flexible and cheap labour.*" (Martínez Pizarro, 2009, p. 144). Thus, many Dominican women, migrating in search of better living conditions, work mostly traditional female work areas.

driver, this same woman would not have been suitable because of her "nervousness" (a manifestation of her putative weakness). Interestingly, this does not seem to affect her ability to drive children.

²⁷ The difficulty to access the labour market as reason for migration can be backed up by the fact that a significant percentage of women only enters the labour market after migration. In a study by Luis Eduardo Gurnizo in 2005 cited by Robert (2008), 42.7% of all Dominican emigrants were unemployed before migrating, whereas after the migration only 10.2% remained unemployed. As 71% of the interviewed sample consisted of women, it can be stated that this increase in labour force also regards women.

²⁸ Many Latin American and Caribbean countries show high numbers of female migrants. In many cases, they do not only outnumber men in international migration to the USA and Europe but also in interregional migration (Martínez Pizarro, 2003).

However, migration does not always have the positive effect that women hope to achieve by leaving their country to work abroad. When migrating for labour, for many women, the move is accompanied by a deskilling and a racial and sexual discrimination on the labour market.²⁹ Gender acts as basic “*organizing principle of labour markets in destination countries, reproducing pre-existing gender patterns that oppress women... [Jobs are performed by women] of a particular race, class, ethnicity and/or nationality*” meaning that gender crosscuts with other forms of oppression (UN-instraw, 2007). For instance, cleaning, cooking or child care are typical jobs that are often offered to Latin American women, but which strengthen their representation and reinforce the association of Latin American women with specific gender and cultural characterizations and stereotypes such as loving their home and children, being clean, good cooks or service-oriented towards men (Hernández, 2005). Remittances that are sent by Dominican women to their families at home are often used for activities such as the construction of houses or the substitution of the work that used to be done by themselves and hence used to be free of charge (Gregorio Gil, 1995).³⁰ Additionally, remittances are in many cases not used prudently by their husbands or partners left behind, and do not attain their initial goal of improving their and their families’ situation. Hence, for many women emigration is not always the desired escape of their and their families’ deficient economic situation.

Even if economic motives generally underlie the migratory movements of both men and women, power and gender relations (with the partner, within the household or community) can influence the decision to migrate as well. Nowadays, the fact that Dominican women emigrate independently in such big numbers to work in the domestic and care sector in Europe (mainly in Spain) can partly be explained by means of the Dominican family system, based on matrifocality, as in “*matrifocal societies... women are more likely to migrate autonomously as active participants in international labour markets... both in comparison to women in patriarchal societies and in comparison to men in their own setting.*” (Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006, p. 84).

The Caribbean family system is often said to be matrifocal. Matrifocality is described by Barrow (1996, p.22) through a relatively ethnocentric perspective as “*truncated and inadequate family structures in which males avoid[...] their responsibilities as fathers and conjugal partners and in which women, as a result, were overburdened and could not single-handedly manage adequately to socialise children and ensure economic support for*

²⁹ E.g. 38.8% of the Colombian migrants in Spain have university degrees but are nevertheless mainly occupied in domestic services (Robert, 2008).

³⁰ In 2007, the Dominican Republic received 3.032 million Dollars as remittances. The majority (75.7%) was sent from the USA, followed by Spain (6.1%), Italy and Switzerland. Approximately 38% of the adult population receives remittances regularly with an average of 165 US\$ 10 times a year according to data of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic reproduced by Robert (2008).

household and family members.” He further subsumes two main characteristics that emerge from the literature to define matrifocality. Firstly, the mother or woman acts as the central focus of relationships and secondly, her authority and dominance within the family surpasses that of her husband or partner. Due to high breakup rates mother and children often comprise the basic family unit in matrifocal households with the adult males coming and going. According to the population census of the Caribbean, 25-46% of the Caribbean households are female-headed (Thomas-Hope, 2002).³¹ This pattern can also be confirmed for the Dominican Republic, where around 30% of the households are headed by women, and where most women do not live in traditional husband-wife households.³² In contrast to the ideal of the “traditional family” (as nuclear family with men as breadwinners and women as homemakers) (Bielby, 2006, p. 391), in the Dominican Republic “informal unions are prevalent, unwed childbearing is common and union disruption is frequent, yielding a wide variety of household types” (Safa, 1995). These can for instance be differentiated by the “presence or absence of an adult male, the nature of a woman’s relationship to that male (formal or informal), and the order of their union (first, second, third, etc.)” (Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006).³³ Concerning the nature of relationships between men and women, consensual units are popular in the Dominican Republic. Their number has increased in the last 30 years and in contrast to most other Latin American countries they even outnumber legal marriages.³⁴ Consensual units are less stable and are initiated earlier than marriages. Because of their informal bond they contribute to marital instability and a high percentage of female-headed households. Moreover, in contrast to married women, women in consensual units have fewer rights concerning the partner’s social security or property. Legally, their new partner is not financially in charge of the family, and women are left with the primary

³¹ There is controversy about the reasons of high rates of female headed or matrifocal households. As possible reasons for strong matrifocal structures Safa (1995) names the perpetuation of African family structures (as result of slavery), male migration or male marginalization due to the inability to support the family financially. “Matrifocality is generally associated with the black and mulatto urban poor in the Caribbean, where male marginalization is most severe and where the man’s authority is totally dependent on his earning capacity.” (Safa, 1995, p. 56). Other possible explanations are the high dissolution rates of relationships, high frequency of adolescent pregnancy (Ariza, 2000), poverty, community organisation and contemporary socio-economic circumstances (Barrow, 1996). In contrast to these opinions González (1970) states in her study on Black Caribs that matrifocality does not necessarily correlate with the abovementioned factors but is more associated to the development of modern society and to bilateral kinship.

³² Even if this family form is very popular, it is not common in all Dominican regions. There are areas in the Dominican Republic where patriarchal family forms and traditions persist (Robert, 2008). Given numbers on female-headed households do only include those households where a man is absent. They do not include those households where women live in partnership but nevertheless contribute the major part to the household’s income. For a study on the profile and distribution of female-headed households in the Dominican Republic see ONE (2007).

³³ Thus, in Dominican middle class as well as in poor families the most common pattern of mating and family organization is the single mate pattern, whereas serial relationships and children with more than one man occur most frequently among poor women.

³⁴ The rates of marriage in the Dominican Republic differ according to residential area, education and class. Generally spoken, legal marriages spread in areas of higher education and medium and high urban class whereas consensual relationships dominate in populate urban and rural areas.

responsibility of raising not only their common children, but also those from previous unions of the woman. Marriage, instead, confers greater responsibility on the man to support the family, also in case of a breakup. In the Dominican Republic, for every married household there is almost an equal number of either cohabiting, divorced or separated households (see numbers for 1981 and 1993 of married, separated and consensual living women by Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006, p.70). This explains why there are many single mothers and patchwork families composed of children that do not live with their biological fathers.

Embedded in the context of the socio-economic situation, as suggested by several authors (see footnote 31 on p. 21), it is difficult to state whether female activity in the labour market is provoked by matrifocality or if – conversely – matrifocality can be explained by means of the female involvement in the labour market. The latter argument is posited by Greenfield (1973, p.31ff.). According to him full matrifocality results when women “*take total responsibility for providing economic support, assume dominance and head the household in the absence of adult males as fathers and conjugal partners.*” The main explanation lies therefore in external economic circumstances, and specifically in employment opportunities “*which require domestic groups to adapt, restructure and reallocate economic roles thereby modifying nuclear family form and organisation (Ibid)*”. In societies where men earn more than the minimum salary, male-headed households are the rule. When they however cannot find employment and when women start getting jobs, these women then automatically become the household’s breadwinner, “*thereby gaining authority and relative importance that goes with the task*” (Ibid.). If the man leaves home, the woman becomes the “*hub of a matrifocal household*” (Ibid., p. 44). As Safa points out, matrifocality is limited to the domestic domain (where it weakens male dominance) and it does not assure women of equality in the public sphere. Furthermore, it “*actually encourages women’s attachment to the family and their domestic role, because it enhances the importance of women in the household, while the strong bond between women, children, and their female kin makes domestic work less alienating than in isolated nuclear households*” (Safa, 1995, p. 56f.).

As described earlier, the restructuring of the Dominican labour market encouraged the inclusion of women in waged labour because of the demand for the work force in a highly gendered labour market. Furthermore, the concomitant unemployment of Dominican men encouraged even further female labour participation. The results of Safa’s survey show that the economic marginality of men not only informs the level of importance of the woman’s contribution to the household, but can result in marital instability. Namely, it can drive men away from their home or make them reluctant to marry, and increase women’s resistance to marriage, too. This further increases the number of consensual unions among Dominican couples that are not institutionalized by marriages. “*It is clear that Dominican women are conscious of subordination and even exploitation by men... [and most] would prefer to*

maintain a stable conjugal relationship, while they struggle to make it more egalitarian, because they realize the difficulty in maintaining a family on their own." (Safa, 1995, pp. 121). But they depend on their partner as it is not the "*erosion of the man's role as economic provider*" that leads to more egalitarian conjugal relationships, but "*his ability and willingness to share this role with his wife*" (Ibid., p. 178). The interviews mentioned by Robert (2008) demonstrate similar statements and show migration for women as being a solution for discomfort within the relationship or household (lack of liberty, being overburdened with work), for domestic violence, for the wish to get to know another society with other cultural codes, or for leaving the social control of their society of origin.

Hence, female and male migrants do not migrate for the same reasons and are led by differing impulses. Therefore, Latin American and Caribbean studies concentrate more and more on the family context as important factor for female migration (e.g. the breakup or lack of relationships with men). Changes in relations towards family and partner, women's social acceptance, personal economic reasons, as well as general differences in the structure of the development of the countries are factors that encourage female migration (Martínez Pizarro, 2003). Thus, not only "*the lack of employment, but also the imagined trappings of more equitable gender relations... [encourage young women] to pursue the goal of emigration from the Dominican Republic and elsewhere*" (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p. 829). Additionally, the matrifocal characterization of the country definitely yields differences in the patterns between female and male migration. Indeed, matrifocality or being head of household has a positive influence on the migration decision of women, based on the fact that unattached women in matrifocal societies are more willing to migrate than in patriarchal societies (Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006).³⁵ "*In a patriarchal society, the typical woman is married and this union subjects her to male control, which reduces her likelihood of international out-migration, whereas in a matrifocal setting the typical woman is unmarried, but whether she is or is not in union has a very minor influence on her odds of leaving*" (Ibid. p. 81). In this case female migration is "*more strongly related to the women's own migratory experience*" and derives from her own decision and less from her partner's or husband's migrant status (Ibid.). The fact that women appear more as independent actors rather than "tied movers" demonstrates once again that the concept of women as dependent migrants is not a satisfactory explanation for female migration.³⁶

Even if women migrate autonomously it does not imply that they migrate independently (they still belong to a household, community, family, etc.). Women's networks differ and influence

³⁵ According to the survey of 2004 reported by Robert (2008), 65% of the migrating Dominican women were heads of household.

³⁶ A number of Spanish researches cited by Martínez Pizarro (2003) even acknowledged that the family reunification process happens to be vice versa and men are the dependent migrants. More precisely, women move as pioneers to Spain to work and are followed by their partners.

their decision-making, their way of travelling, their insertion in the country of destination and their relationship with the community of origin. They can range from the informality of relatives and friends to more official networks including agencies or transnational corporations. The existence and support by transnational migrant networks is increasingly used to explain female migration. The activation of diverse contacts within the network is typical among female migrants and might even be an essential part of their migration process. Martínez Pizarro (2003) identifies two hypotheses for this phenomenon: firstly, the gender dimension is of particular importance for the constitution and maintenance of the networks and secondly, autonomously migrating women do not necessarily migrate independently or out of an autonomous decision. Networks can for instance be used to facilitate labour migration and the fact that Dominican migration to Spain has been arranged by women, contributed to the establishment of female migration networks (as work in the domestic sphere is often based on trust and references play an important role in this case). But networks can not only be used for labour migration. As will be shown in the following chapter, international networks also play an important role in marriage migration via agencies.

In this chapter, the influence of gender on migration has been demonstrated. As such, the strong impact that gender norms and stereotypes have on the every day life of Dominican women strongly influences the conditions and possibilities of their migration pathways. Dominican women choose migration channels that are open for them, such as labour migration to classic female working sectors (care and domestic work). Another migration channel used by many Dominican women is marriage to a foreign man, and the assumption that it is especially based on gender stereotypes will be explored in the empirical part of this study. In particular, it will be shown that international matchmaking agencies have a special interest in promoting gender stereotypes in order to promote their business and it is interesting to investigate what role they actually play in this industry. Furthermore, the question which kinds of motivations are in the foreground when Dominican women opt for a marriage to a foreigner will be answered, and if the marriage to a foreign man is consciously used as migration channel as is presumed in common opinion. In addition, the previous discussion about emancipation of independently migrating women, when put into the context of marriage migration, leads to an interesting question: is it a sign of independence and emancipation when a woman takes the decision to register at a matchmaking agency and to migrate? Or does she rather, as common prejudices suggest, migrate dependently as wife – to a traditionally gendered marriage and household, remaining in her traditional roles and expectations?

The next chapter will start with an introduction to the methodology for this project which aims to answer the main issue in this thesis: Do Dominican women use international matchmaking agencies and marriage as means for strategic migration purposes?

3. Methodical approach and data collection

3.1 Research questions

In this study I will address several broad questions in order to explore the thesis about marriage via matchmaking agencies as being a specifically female migration strategy, and to understand if the prejudices that exist in society about men abusing this agency (i.e. initiative) of women are fair. Grounding this enquiry in the theoretical background of gender as central factor in female migration, the following research questions arise: 1) How do German men and Dominican women, who participate in international matchmaking, explain their own motives? 2) How do the participants and matchmaking agencies perceive this business? 3) What gender and cultural stereotypes do international matchmaking agencies use in order to attract clients? and 4) Should a bi-national marriage through an agency used by Dominican women be seen a strategic step for migration purposes only?

To obtain the information needed to answer the aforementioned general questions, two distinct interview guidelines have been developed and were used during the questionnaires. Namely, one to interview matchmaking agency owners, and another to interrogate German-Dominican couples founded through these agencies. I chose to focus my empirical research on interviews with bi-national couples and matchmaking agencies because they are the main participants in this process of relationship building. The couples are the protagonists as they take the initiative to register at an agency because of individual reasons and motivations. The agencies are the means for the partners to find each other. They are more the means than the initiative part as bi-national couples can as well be established without their work, e.g. by tourism – particularly in highly tourism focused countries such as the Dominican Republic.³⁷

Agency owners were initially asked to describe the matchmaking process to find an entry to the topic and to facilitate understanding of this procedure. Furthermore, the nature of the agencies was explored using questions concerning their advertising, recruitment methods and services offered as well as by asking about typical problems that arise during the matchmaking process. In the second stage of the interview, those owners owning agencies that focus on international matchmaking were asked to describe the common profile of their female (Dominican) clients and their knowledge or assumptions about these women's motives in marrying a foreign man. In the third stage, the same questions were asked of their male (German) costumers. Finally, general information about the agency, its development and statistics were gathered. One agency that works primarily in the forming of German-German couples will serve as a medium for the comparison of national and international matchmaking. The statements of both types of agency owners are used to understand the

³⁷ People from Dominican or German state offices (e.g. immigration office) are also involved in the process, but in the restricted frame of this study the protagonists' perspectives are in the foreground.

process of matchmaking and to draw a general profile of the clients of international matchmaking agencies. In contrast, the two couples involved in the study will provide an insight into the individual point of view of the participants.

The German-Dominican couples who found each other through a marriage agency were interviewed separately. In particular, both husband and wife were asked to describe how they got to know each other as a way of warming them up prior to asking more personal questions in order to obtain an impression of their main reason in seeking a foreign partner. The interviews with the couples focused mainly on: firstly, the initiation of the relationship (namely the incentives to find a foreign partner and to consult an agency, as well as the process of getting into contact and maintain contact with each other); and secondly, the bi-national relationship itself (including the maintenance of the relationship over distance, the reaction of family and friends and the negotiation of every day life). The questions slightly differed depending on the interview partner (German man or Dominican woman) and on the living status of the couple (living together or still separated). At the end of the interviews, some socio-demographic data was collected in order to provide richer profiles of the participants with some additional details. These aforementioned segments illustrate the main focus of the interviews and provide the framework for the semi-structured interviews that will be developed in more detail in the next section.

3.2 Qualitative research and analysis: Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured expert interviews are especially useful to discuss complex issues, to collect data about personal perspectives and the orientations of the interview partners, and about their personal experiences. Prior to the interviews relevant topics are identified as the basis for more specific questions that are raised in each interview individually. An important feature of semi-structured interviews is that with only a few pre-set questions at hand, the interviewer cannot “pre-judge” which of the information is and is not important but leaves this decision to the respondent instead. The interviewees decide by themselves in how much detail they wish to answer a question. Therefore, it is critical that the respondents can talk freely (without or with just a few inputs) and that they are given the opportunity to relate their experiences in detail and depth in their own words. Using their own perceptions and inputs the respondents then permit the interviewer to explore areas and detect information that either did not occur to the interviewer or of which the interviewer had no prior knowledge (Livesey, 2002, p. 1). Whilst the format and ordering of the questions remains the same in each interview, the semi-structured nature of the interview allows for the exploration of new phenomena. In addition, after each interview newly gained ideas are incorporated into the next interview’s questionnaire as new information about the topic was obtained. The aim of this procedure is to eventually achieve an impression as broad as possible.

„Generally speaking, qualitative research aims to uncover interrelations. It prefers comparative techniques in order to identify similarities.... In essence, qualitative research is a method of discovery, revealing connections and relationships in unknown social realities.... These processes of discovery are systematized via qualitative methods. They require openness and a flexible approach by the researcher, allowing for a continuous adaptation to the structure of the unit of analysis. Springing from a hermeneutic tradition, they necessitate the researcher's willingness and ability to understand. Presuppositions and methodical restrictions potentially inhibiting or even eliminating this understanding are therefore avoided.” (Kübler, 1984, p. 63/64). (4)

There are several ways for interpreting and working out an interview, varying concerning the theoretical approach and research focus. For a descriptive-hermeneutic interpretation, closeness to the text (or interview) is of highest priority (Heinze, 1987, p. 65ff.). Following the analysis of interviews by Meuser & Nagel (2005) and the approach by Heinze (1987), the first step towards an interpretation is to define the content of the respondents' statements in their own words (*paraphrasing*). Thereby, it is essential to engage with the perspective of the interviewees by means of deconstructing their everyday theories and definitions of situations in order to explain what the respondents mean with their statements. Furthermore, by observing the narrative structures of the given answers and statements the researcher tries to detect a hierarchy of significance of experiences, so as to elucidate, what is the most important experience for the interviewee. Typical indicators for such a hierarchy are the quantitative proportion and expression of linguistic concern during the interview but also systematically emphasised and often repeated points. Hence, important questions to point out during analysis are among others: What topics are brought up during the interview? Which of these are important for the interviewee? And how are these issues placed in relation to each other? Afterwards, all interviews are checked for passages of similar content, and thematic categories are built. Subsequently, these categories are related to knowledge of previous studies on this subject and theories are associated to back up the interpretation and result of the analysis.

In order to start the analysis, all interviews first need to be fully *transcribed* (Schmidt, 2007, p. 447ff.; Hopf & Schmidt, 1993).³⁸ In particular, names of places, participants or other people mentioned during the interviews were made anonymous. Therefore all names appearing in this study were made up by the researcher. In order to facilitate the distinction in the

³⁸ The whole interviews were transcribed, including slips of the tongue, repetitions and interjections (as “er”), breaks, mental leaps, unfinished sentences, laughing and other relevant expressions. Only topics that were uninteresting for the topic itself (e.g. the weather) were not transcribed. If the tone of voice or an emphasis were important to understand an expression, a comment as been added (e.g. “mmh [approving]”). No attention was paid to fully transcribe the dialect of the interviewees. However, colloquial language has mostly been adopted to reproduce the flow of words. Punctuation marks were not set according to German grammar rules but according to sense and emphasis (e.g. to signalize breaks in accentuation and rising of the voice) and quotation marks were set when dealing with a citation made by one of the participants (e.g. “she said ‘you are a typical German’.”) Finally, passages that were incomprehensible have been marked as such and the assumed wording was inserted behind, accentuated with a question mark.

following chapters, agency owners are always titled by their family names and couples are quoted by their first names. Note that transcriptions are artificially made documentations and thus always include interpretations. This cannot be avoided but should be controlled and kept in mind all throughout the analysis (Hitzler & Honer, 1997, p. 11f.).

In a second step towards interpretation, the statements were *systematized* according to the categories of the field manual. In that process, categories were used to sample thematically similar approaches and considered topics. In addition, new categories such as the resources of men and women (i.e. positive characteristics) in a matchmaking process were created and first interpretations of statements and paragraphs were noted. Working systematically through the interviews is parallel to the process of interpretation, and

“[t]he analysis is comprised of an interpretation and exegesis of the available texts, where the researcher’s expertise and impressions from the respective interviews guide the interpretation.” (Lamnek, 1993, p. 124). (5)

Thirdly, the interviews were *paraphrased* for scientific interpretation and organized around the central topics and research questions, such as the matchmaking process and the profiles and motivations of participating men and women. The paraphrasing of an interview protocol provides an important source of information that could lead to insights into a reality that is as yet unknown, and those facts and paragraphs that can be treated as objectifiable are considered significant. By paraphrasing all seven interviews and by involving the perspectives of agencies as well as participants, a coherent picture of the international matchmaking business and the motivations behind it was produced. Furthermore, core statements of the interviewees, concerning these main topics, were collected and noted. Critical paraphrasing is designed to insure against the influence of bias from the researcher and the risk of forming hasty conclusions. Hence, before its meaning and patterns can be interpreted, the researcher needs to try to understand his or her subject in a descriptive way first (Heinze, 1987, p. 64). Finally, a fourth step in the interpretation process consisted of comparing the interviews’ results to the initial assumptions of this study in order to answer the research questions and to prove or disprove the original hypothesis of international matchmaking as means for Dominican female migration.

To conclude this section, it should be noted that in order to support the seven interviews and the testimonies of the agency owners, data has been selected from their websites. Among others, the advertising and the terms and conditions as given on their websites were checked. Thereby, the conformity of their interview statements with their way of presenting their business in public was tested. One agency owner agreed to provide me with the sympathy check, which men and women have to fill out when registering at his agency, and with references that were written by men who used his service.

3.3 Acquisition and sampling of interview partners

German-Dominican couples, whose relationship was established via a matchmaking agency, are the subject of this thesis. By means of bilingual (Spanish-German) bulletin-board appeals in eleven Latin American restaurants, bars, Salsa-clubs and cultural institutions in Berlin, Germany in February 2011, I hoped to find bi-national couples that would agree to give me an interview. The underlying idea was to get into contact with resident Latinos in Germany and make use of snowball sampling within the Latin-American community. The feedback to the placards consisted of 16 answers, but unfortunately, none of the couples had been formed thanks to an agency and no one knew about such a case. At the same time, I acceded to several German-Latin-American internet forums where I contacted people who made statements on bi-national couples, bi-national marriage or marriage migration. The feedback to the forum entries was poor, only 3 answers and nobody willing to contribute with an interview or information. At the same time, I also checked matchmaking agencies on the internet that work with German and Dominican clients. This approach turned out to be the most successful. One agency website specified a German agency office nearby, which I called to fix a meeting. This (fortunately) ended up in a face- to- face interview four weeks later. Furthermore, via this contact I managed to convince the actual owner of the agency (based in the Dominican Republic) to agree on an interview with me as well. As journalists and the media mostly provide negative information about this kind of businesses my purpose was firstly regarded with a natural and automatic suspicion and scepticism. Thus, first hesitations had to be overcome by stressing on my scientific background. Through this agency I got into contact with one of the couples that the agency had been acted as broker for. Another agency working with German and Dominican clients, founded and contacted through their website, agreed immediately to be interviewed. However, they first demanded several hundreds of Euros for supplying me with information on this subject (maybe supposing an underlying journalistic interest). Hence, again, I had to convince the agency owners of my university background. After persuading them of my entirely scientific setting and my interest of dealing with the complexity of the topic rather than with repeating purely negative stereotypes, they eventually agreed to support my work. In addition to the interview, they even sent me material such as references from former clients and the sympathy check. Through this agency I got into contact with the second German-Dominican couple.

Relying on the abovementioned information and data, three different categories of people involved in international matchmaking were interviewed. The first category consisted of the agency owners and was composed of two German owners of international matchmaking agencies with domicile in the Dominican Republic and one owner of an agency based in Germany, who is operating mainly with German clients but working in cooperation with agencies in other countries. In order to compare the different matchmaking procedures and

aims of participants (national vs. international), it was convenient to have at hand one agency which mainly works in establishing German-German relationships.

The second category contains the German men and more specifically the two German men who used one of the above mentioned agency's services to find a Dominican wife with whom they got married. Finally, the third category is formed by their respective (Dominican) wives. These two interviews were conducted in Spanish to enable the women to express themselves comfortably in their own language. One couple lives together in Germany and one couple still lives separately but has planned to live together in the Dominican Republic from this autumn on.

Apart from one face-to-face interview with a German-based agency, all the interviews were conducted via telephone, as three interviewees are currently in the Dominican Republic and three other interviewees live in different parts of Germany. Therefore, telephone interviews were not only the most convenient but also the least expensive choice in the framework of this Master thesis. A couple of days before the interview, a paper outlining the main subjects was sent via email to the interviewees for their information. All interviews lasted between one and two hours, were audio-taped and transcribed. Although the information acquired in previous calls and one meeting were not taped, notes were taken during and afterwards about what could be recalled.

3.4 Limitations and quality of data

In spite of the many positive features of semi-structured interviews there are still a couple of limitations to this method. Firstly, as the interview is designed to allow flexibility and new findings its effectiveness will also inevitably depend on the interviewer's skills and ability to make up questions during the interview. Besides that, unconscious signals sent by the interviewer as well as leading questions could lead the respondent to direct his or her answers in a specific direction pre-supposed by the researcher's expectations.

Thus, the reliability of the results is limited as it is impossible to repeat a semi-structured interview. Whilst the questionnaire does follow a standardised pattern of questions, interviewees are encouraged to talk freely and additional unscripted questions are asked. This more personal nature of the interview and the fact that samples tend to be (very) small, make findings difficult to generalise and impossible to confirm statistically. Additionally, respondents may answer questions "*in a different way depending on a number of factors... that are impossible for the researcher to control*" (Livesey, 2002, p. 3).³⁹ However, reliability during a specific interview can be attained by verifying the consistency of the respondent's answers as "*[r]eliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions*"

³⁹ For instance, the respondents' feelings in the specific moment of the interview or the interviewer-respondent relationship influence the behaviour and cooperation of the interviewee.

(Hammersley, 1992, p. 67). This means that statements that are mentioned repeatedly by a respondent can be compared in order to confirm the consistency of the given answers. Next to that, it is important to keep in mind that the degree of impression management might influence the given responses as well (Silverman, 2010, p. 270ff.). This might for instance be the case concerning the treatment of women or more generally the matchmaking business. As such, the interview with agency owner Richter reveals discrepancies between what he proclaims as being his opinion and the way he actually acts in his business.

Aside from the aforementioned limitations of semi-structured interviews; a commonly posed question in qualitative social research is whether the results are valid. This has been described by Hammersley (1992, p. 57) in these terms: *“By validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.”* Semi-structured interviews offer *“a depth of information through the use of open-ended questions”* and do not constrain respondents’ answers through predetermined questions (Livesey, 2002, p. 3). Validity is hard to prove using this research technique.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the researcher-participant relationship may additionally affect the outcomes of the studies. For instance the fact of me being a German woman may have had an impact on the openness and willingness of the men to answer gender-sensitive questions. Indeed, during the interviews there were noticeable hesitations at questions about German women and their characteristics which strongly suggested that such questions were not thoroughly answered because of my gender and nationality.⁴¹ Hence, in order to improve the validity of a study, researchers need *“to seek to refute their initial assumptions about their data in order to achieve objectivity”* (Silverman, 2010, p. 278f.). When some evidence seems to point in an interesting direction, the temptation to draw hasty and easy conclusions must be avoided and this evidence should instead be subjected to every possible test. By applying the comparative method – through an interview with an agency focused on German-German relationships – the provisional hypothesis about the process and motivations of those engaged in international matchmaking was systematically tested.

Another noteworthy aspect (generally encountered) in this context is that qualitative reports typically include excerpts of raw data, such as quotations from interviews, that allow the reader to make a *“validity check”* between the data and the researchers account. However, the danger of *“anecdotalism”* (i.e. when only some well-chosen *“examples”* are presented to the audience as evidence for the inferences) should always be kept in mind as it may lead to

⁴⁰ The interviewer cannot know if the respondent is telling the truth or is giving a perfect recall of his or her experiences. After some reflection-time people try to make sense of their behaviour by rationalising their actions. Thus, the respondents’ *“explanation for their behaviour, with hindsight, may be very different from what they actually felt at that time”* (Livesey, 2002, p. 2).

⁴¹ Such as the reference made by Wieland *“I always had problems with German women and... well that’s not meant as affront now...”*.

undesirable and uncontrolled distortion of the results (Silverman, 2010, p. 222f.).⁴²

A factor that certainly limits the validity of this study and its results is the fact that the interviewed couples were contacted through the agency owners. More precisely, the latter ones have not only an interest in that their business is presented in a positive light with positive examples (of successfully matched couples), but also in contrast to common stereotypes of abuse of their service for migration purposes (which very likely influenced the selection of contacts forwarded to me).

Last but not least, it is important to note that the *generalisation* of the gathered information through qualitative research is particularly difficult.⁴³ In general, the “*depth of (personal) information created using this method may make it relatively more difficult to generalise findings from a small group of people to a much larger group*” (Livesey, 2002, p. 4). More specifically, the sample on which this study relies focuses on the specific Dominican-German matchmaking on one hand and on one single kind of agency on the other hand. Hence, the acquired information through this study can neither be generalized to matchmaking agencies world-wide nor to any individual opting for this process to find a partner. First of all, agencies in this particular business all work differently, with dissimilar policies and conceptions. Although the two selected agencies participating in this study share a similar concept and procedure they nevertheless still differ from each other concerning their method of advertisement (such as including more or less stereotyping of Dominican women on their web pages). Next to that, the motivation of the participating men and women strongly depends on their respective social, cultural, economic and family backgrounds. Due to the substantial complexity of this topic as well as the high number of related parameters, it is generally virtually impossible to factor in all possible parameters into a study.

This research should thus be considered an exploratory study, with the examples in this survey, serving mainly to build new perspectives on the motivations that are involved in international matchmaking businesses. The aim is to place a check on the prejudices that international matchmaking serves as a means for migration (on the women’s part) and for facilitates old-fashioned gender ideas (from the men’s side).

⁴² “*There is a tendency towards an anecdotal approach to the use of data in relation to conclusions and explanations in qualitative research. Brief conversations, snippets from unstructured interviews... are used to provide evidence of a particular contention. There are grounds for disquiet in that the representativeness or generality of these fragments is rarely addressed.*” (Bryman, 1988, p. 77).

⁴³ Generalisation in qualitative research means that the result is an “*integrated, precise model that comprehensively describes a specific phenomena [sic], instead of a simple correlational statement about antecedent and consequent conditions*” (Mehan, 1979, p. 21).

4. German-Dominican Matchmaking

In this main chapter, an introduction to the development of international matchmaking will first be given. Then, the agencies involved in this work will be presented in order to allow the reader to differentiate them from the vast amount of internationally working agencies, and those researched in other studies. Thereby, a deeper insight into this scientifically barely studied topic will be provided, including not only the advertisements used in this business itself, but also the outline of a typical professional German-Dominican matchmaking process.

In a second subchapter the German clients will be depicted and the characteristics that either serve or prevent participating in international matchmaking will be highlighted. Eventually their motivation to subscribe to the agency will be described.

In the last part of this chapter, the female clients from the Dominican Republic will be introduced in a similar way, namely they will be presented according to their profile and general characteristics or resources, and according to their motivations to register at an agency for finding a German husband.

4.1 International Matchmaking

Every cultural and social milieu offers places, institutions and practices that allow individuals to meet and select partners. Since the early times mediators, who could be either family, friends or distant relatives, used to be commonly asked in many societies to facilitate and eventually effect marriages. In the last decades, professional international matchmaking has come up as a method to bring together two partners coming from different countries or even continents. A special characteristic of matchmaking in general is the assistance and support offered to the client during the first steps of his or her partner search. Through international matchmaking limitations in spatial closeness, specific social competence or the availability of time are overcome. In particular, people who have difficulty in approaching somebody of the opposite sex can simply skip this step. Furthermore, going through a matchmaking agency can provide two strangers with important information about the other, namely their common interest in building a relationship (Lenz, 2003).

Through the first years of the development of marriage bureaux and agencies, “*matchmaking was invariably targeted at members of the same nationality*” or the same ethnic or religious group (e.g. in case of immigrant colonies and minorities) (Del Rosario, 2008, p. 123). Initially, international marriage brokers worked with catalogues containing pictures and biographies of the foreign women. The 1960s marked the beginning of a world scale matchmaking industry, as the “*interacting effects of intensified industrialization, rapid urbanization and improved international mobility, together with their concomitant ideological, social and demographic changes, have largely contributed to a growing demand for matchmaking services. ...Its growth was facilitated by technological improvements of the period. ...Computerization*

revolutionized matchmaking as well as contributed to making it an industry of global scope” and financial success”. (Ibid.). Different types of matchmaking then became available such as computer-based, non-computer-based, traditional with questionnaires, interviews or mixed forms. Since the 1970s, different types of agencies came up (e.g. regarding their service) and they specialized in women from Asia, Latin America and economically less developed European countries.

Decades ago, pen-pal corners in newspapers and magazines were the forums to find a foreign partner and they still present probably the cheapest type of paid mediation. In contrast, the internet now offers mating possibilities that go beyond regional and even national frontiers. It provides a high volume of profiles to a large internet community and due to the success of this business, the number of such agencies increased. While traditional matchmaking used to be family-centred, modern commercial types of international matchmaking are extremely male-centred and profit-oriented. More precisely, they are characterized by an *“asymmetrical network of accountability in which the male clients are favoured”* (Del Rosario, 2008, p. 124). They moreover have commercialised their activity and the products on sale are *“particular identities of men and women which are in demand in certain social, economic and historical settings”* (Ibid.). While in former times the service concentrated on particular ethnic, racial or religious groups, it is now focussed on the establishment of multi-cultural matches with specialization in national target groups as a consequence of the growing competition on the market.

In Germany the peak time of matchmaking agencies occurred in the years following World War II. The exact date of the establishment of the first marriage bureaux in Germany – working similarly to those treated in this study - is not available, however, according to media reports Germany might have introduced the fashion *“at least in Western Germany, of specializing in certain nationalities of women”*, starting mainly with women from South-East Asia (Del Rosario, 1994, p. 129). Concerning the number of women that come to Germany by international matchmaking, to the best of my knowledge no statistics are available. Since not much investigation has been done on this subject so far, there is nearly no confidential and objective information at hand.

In her study on German matchmaking websites, Vartti (2003, referring to del Rosario, 1994 and Mansson, 1995) states that during the 1990s in Germany reportedly at least 60 matrimonial agencies specialized in arranging contacts with women from Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Moreover, among the 300 websites that were catalogued by Vartti almost 50% were based either in Germany or working in cooperation with a German agency. The results of identifying the regions supplying women for German online marriage agencies showed that 70% of the women came from Eastern Europe (noticing that it was not always clear which countries were meant by Eastern Europe but Russia and Ukraine appeared to be

the most represented countries). Eastern Europe was then followed by Asia (15%, consisting mainly of Thailand and the Philippines), South America (10%, with Brazil as most important sending country), the Caribbean (3%, with the Dominican Republic and Cuba as most popular countries) and Africa (2%).⁴⁴ It is noteworthy that, even though the Dominican Republic and Cuba appeared to be the most represented countries amongst the Caribbean, taking into account Vartti's sample contained only seven websites effectively mentioning the Caribbean (out of 269 pages giving geographical reference), this number is in absolute terms relatively small. The number of Dominican women coming to Germany by means of matchmaking is impossible to verify as there are no official statistics available, as this information is neither collected by German immigration offices nor by the agencies themselves.⁴⁵ Yet, while there are no statistics obtainable, the presence of a number of international matchmaking agencies that focus on establishing couples comprised of a Dominican woman and a European or North-American man, leads one to suspect that emigration via this channel is not insignificant.

4.1.1 Definition and introduction to the agencies

Referring to Godwin (1973), Del Rosario (1994, p. 126) defines commercial introduction services using three characteristics which I agree, can be taken to describe the business. Namely, 1) The commercial introduction business, regardless of the target clients, is an industry with supply, demand and profit as prime considerations. Arranging relationships is a service for a fee, not a social service and thus the *"prime intention of agencies of all types is to make profit from the desire of men and women to find relationships."*; 2) Mediating agencies tend to engage *"in advertising techniques which inevitably give rise to, or encourage further, unrealistic expectations."* Because the aim of advertising is to convince prospective clients, the entire matchmaking industry is characterized by exaggeration and stereotyping; 3) The industry is characterized by fluidity. More precisely, the number of agencies is hard to establish as agencies open and close in rapid succession. Besides, the classification of agencies is difficult if not impossible as self-stated labels or functions are unreliable.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Appendix I, Figure 2, p.102.

⁴⁵ In 2009, 4,213 Dominican women were living in Germany. More than two times as many as Dominican men (see Appendix I, Figure 3, p. 104). Considering the data on naturalization of Dominicans in Germany of the same year it is noticeable that 54% of the Dominican women were married at the moment of naturalization but only 24% of the Dominican men (see Appendix I, Figure 4, p. 104). Even if this data also includes those Dominican women with a husband other than German, it shows that contrary to men the prevailing family status of Dominican women is married and that thus the naturalization is most probably connected to marriage or family.

⁴⁶ A definition of *"international matchmaking organizations"* was made by the INS (United States Immigration and Naturalization Service) in 1999, highlighting the demarcation from traditional matchmaking organizations or those of a religious nature (Simons, 2001). In 2005, the US Congress defined international matchmaking agencies as *"a corporation, partnership, business, individual, or other legal entity... that charges fees for*

Matchmaking agencies differ not only according to their clientele (for instance by their national target group) or their respectability. Agencies that provide potential clients with phone numbers and addresses of the company tend to be more consistent and serious in the business as they are easier to trace. Agencies differ according to their services offered and their way of working: *“Some agencies have both Internet and hard copy magazines. ...Many agencies have memberships which, for fees of up to several hundred dollars, include services such as monthly magazine subscriptions, travel and visa information, online chat groups, individual advice and counselling sessions. Some agencies offer complete packages of services for higher fees, such as personalized computer assessments of appropriate partner profiles, customized searches through large databases, help with letter writing and translation, legal assistance filling out visa forms, and even the planning of wedding parties. ...The vast bulk of business however, is from men purchasing women’s addresses.”* (Simons, 2001, p. 48).

Moreover, Vartti (2003) divides the agencies involved in her survey into egalitarian and non-egalitarian working agencies (see Table 1, p. 37) in order to offer a demarcation of marriage agencies and those focused on sexual services, concerning their treatment of male and female clients.

Table 1 Degree of Egalitarian-ness and Functions of Site

	Sex Shop	Marriage/ Dating agency
Egalitarian	Mediating sexual contacts: sections for men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, couples and so on	Mediating relationships: romantic, humorous, serious or religious atmosphere
Non-egalitarian	Sex tours: selling contacts to foreign women / prostitutes, and arranging tours to areas offering sex services	Mail-order marriages: female contacts from poor countries sold to richer countries

Source: Vartti (2003, p. 187).

Vartti’s division into egalitarian and non-egalitarian matchmaking agencies is an attempt at categorization as the lines are blurred. Indeed, the internationally working agencies included in my study have clearly a serious and romantic focus but male and female clients are not treated equally. Thus, they can be located somewhere between egalitarian and non-egalitarian.

In the following, a short description of the agencies treated in this study will be given in order to provide the reader with an impression about the business and to distinguish them from

providing dating, matrimonial, matchmaking services, or social referrals between United States citizens or nationals... and foreign national clients by providing personal contact information or otherwise facilitating communication between individuals.” (cited in D’Aoust, 2009, p.5).

agencies that have been researched in other investigations. Furthermore, the methods of advertising of such agencies will be discussed.

a) *Introduction to the agencies*

Both agency owners who agreed to provide me with information on their business are German citizens running their own international matchmaking agencies in the Dominican Republic. Simon Richter moved there 10 years ago and according to him, the quantity of physically attractive women in their twenties and early thirties looking for a partner gave him the idea to found his matchmaking full-time agency in 2001: to bring together Dominican women tired of unstable relationships and faineant partners, and German men with difficulty finding spouses and the wish to “*try something new*”. On the other hand, Reinhard Hertz and his Dominican wife, whom he got to know via an agency himself, opened up their business focused on German-Dominican couples in 2005.⁴⁷ First, they worked from Germany but in 2008, they moved and started their own independent business in the Dominican Republic, using the experience they have gathered. Both agencies are located in a town of about 100,000 inhabitants in the heart of the country. They focus on Dominican women and German speaking men and each provides a service for around 500 women. Once these are listed on their internet gallery, it takes usually between 6-8 months until they are either introduced to a German prospective partner or quit the agency for other reasons. Nonetheless, some women have been clients for already two years. However, they usually lose interest when listed without success for such a period. Most women never find a partner through the agency. Only about 10% eventually meet a German man. Indeed, every year several hundred of men contact the agencies for information, but far less conclude a contract and around ten matches a year are finally achieved by each of the agencies. Richter regrets that there is not more demand from part of the men. He would love to give more women the chance of a relationship with a German, Swiss or Austrian.⁴⁸

Contrary to national dating agencies, women and men in international matchmaking are not charged the same fees for the service. Women usually pay nothing at all but when signing in at Richter’s agency, they pay between 5-10 Euros. However, the amount is negotiable and depending on the woman’s employment. A high inscription fee cannot be taken as income in the Dominican Republic is low and women form the essential part of this business. The fee is

⁴⁷ It is common that matchmakers have formerly been involved in the business as clients before opening up their own agency (see as well Simons, 1999).

⁴⁸ Hertz once offered the service for men and registered about 10 Dominican men at his agency. However, there was no demand by European women and he thus closed this service. He assumes too little advertisement as reason for the failure and that it is „*more a men’s thing*“ to use an international agency to meet a partner. Richter declares the idea of registering Dominican men at his agency as ridiculous even if he could „*earn a fortune*“ by their inscription fees. Dominican men would not fulfil the demands of German women as having for instance a profession and job or as caring for their wife and family. Thus, there would not be demand from German women for Dominican men.

only thought to prevent frivolous and thoughtless inscriptions, thus to assure sincere female members. In contrast, to meet his future wife will cost a man around 2000 Euro. The final amount depends on several factors, such as the booked service and trips on site, the number of months of email writing and translation to contact women, the number of months of access to partner suggestions or the choice of accommodation in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁹

The male clients are mostly attracted by the internet presence of the agencies or word to mouth advertising of friends who have used the service. Furthermore, the agencies work with private counsellors and cooperation partners in Germany to offer better service and recruit new clientele. Thus, some German clients initially intend to use a national dating service but when they are offered the alternative of dating a foreign woman they become interested in international matchmaking.⁵⁰

The majority of the women at the agency are attracted by word-of-mouth advertising as women who participated successfully usually take friends and family members to the agency. However, some women are drawn in by systematic recruitment from advertising in local papers, direct approaches or leaflet distribution on the street. Most women react positively and curiously but some women refuse the service.

Hertz: „There are some, who... take no stock in this, who are downright afraid of it... This is due to,... that they think, well, that they will then be pushed somewhere in nightclubs or... well, other upsetting things that they've heard of in their life... You've to accomplish much clarification.“ (6)

The networks that develop due to the connection between owners, clients and potential customers (that sometimes then become owners or cooperation partners due to their own experience) are important for further matching by the agencies. Even if the extent is far less than in other countries (e.g. the Philippines), a migration networks develops, leading to follow up migration of family members or friends of women who have already finished the process.

⁴⁹ The amount is comparable to the fee of a German-German matchmaking agency. German matchmaking agency owner Claudia Mentrup charges the same for a „mission until success“ (but from both, men *and* women). Usually, her clients opt for less expensive services as paying for partner suggestions (each costing 375 Euro).

⁵⁰ Cooperating agencies with their office in Germany usually focus on establishing German-German relationships. When working together with the agencies in the Dominican Republic or other foreign countries they can offer their male clients additionally the possibility to contact foreign women. For the agency in the Dominican Republic this entails one of the few possibilities to check the male client before his arrival in the Dominican Republic (compare p.59). It is common that matchmaking agencies are connected among each other in order to extend the number of potential mates for their costumers. Especially internationally working agencies work hand in hand and during my research I came across several web pages on international matchmaking where the section on Dominican or Caribbean women could be attributed to one and the same agency.

b) Advertisement in international matchmaking

The images of femininity - best in marketing - differ when treating women for labour force or women to marry.⁵¹ Aufhauser (2000) makes the point that when presenting women on the internet as potential spouses, characteristics as assertiveness, foresighted thinking, management competence or readiness to assume risks – characteristics that all women have who migrate independently - are not those highlighted in the marketing strategy. Instead, images of diligence, willingness, submissiveness, being fond of children, kindness, eroticism and adaptability are considered more fitting to present foreign women as potential partners.

Most international matchmaking agencies sell their services solely to Western males. Thus, it should not surprise that the businesses' web sites and their advertisement are designed to promote female features that they believe their potential costumers will value the most. When advertising Dominican women for marriage, matchmaking agencies follow particular patterns in order to increase their attractiveness for German men. In this way, they do not differ from national agencies such as the one owned by Mentrup. She places adverts for clients in local newspapers consisting of short descriptions, always aimed at the target group.

Mentrup: "For an older lady I've to add... that she is, well, a good cook and I have to design the ad so it is a bit homely, right? Thus, always fitting the ad to the client so that you attract those that you want to appeal to... then just the older men call, whom I actually want to reach... And that's why you always have to pay attention to how you frame the ad, so that it works out." (7)

Conceptions of gender play an important role in the context of international matchmaking. More precisely, when choosing a partner through a matchmaking agency, the perception of gender roles is essential as it influences the decision on the nationality of the potential partner and thus, it is in general capitalized on when advertising and promoting international marriages. As noted by Vartti (2003) the advertisement of Latin American and Caribbean women gives a stereotyped image of being women in general and of being Latin American and Caribbean additionally. More precisely, in publicity materials Latin-American women are depicted with the common Western stereotypes as being sensual and of exotic beauty. They are characterized as being "*proud of their femininity, meaning that they love to dress up, cook, and take care of the household and children*" (Vartti, 2003, p. 200). The Latin American woman is described as ideal housewife, as "*lively, energetic, and hot-tempered, which can be seen in her love for music and dance... The Latin beauty is based on the favo[u]rable mixture of races*" (Ibid.). Current examples of advertisements describe Dominican women as

⁵¹ Concerning the advertisement of women for labour migration, in source countries a "*gender-specific labour supply is produced by gender norms and stereotypes*" and these gender stereotypes are reinforced by recruitment organizations which can be state-based or private (Mora, 2006, p. 11). Agencies focusing on female labour force further ascribe to national and ethnic stereotypes to promote "their" Latin American or Caribbean women, who immigrate to Europe mostly as dancers, housemaids, au-pairs, seasonal workers or care takers as other qualifications are less efficient to get the immigration permit.

“*natural, feminine, and tender*” and as “*unspoiled by the concurrence and consumerism of European like-minded people*”.⁵²

„Not in the mood of fastidious, boring European women, anymore? Try your luck with an exotic Dominican woman!“ (Advertisement on the web site of a matchmaking agency, July 2011)

Richter: “Well... we try to direct men’s attention to our agency by representing, well, women as... being exotic! This means... as it just is in Germany... that foreign men or women have simply... like this exotic effect, right?” (8)

It has to be kept in mind that agencies differ according to their method of advertisement and therefore, to the male clientele they attract. Not all agencies publish statements like the one mentioned above which does not only limit the characteristics of Dominican women to their “exotic” origin but in addition, differentiates them from German or European women. By presenting the women in opposite to German women or Western women in general, publicity material overemphasizes the feminine and “traditional” characteristics of the former. Thereby it contributes towards a high and even unrealistic expectation of the potential wife (Del Rosario, 1994). Designers of non-egalitarian web sites claim that Western women have since a long time ago lost “*features desired by men like willingness to commit to long-lasting relationships and readiness to support and nurture the husband*” (Vartti, 2003, p. 194). Moreover, in some recent ads of agencies the German *Emanze* (women who are involved in the women’s liberation movement) is named as a reason why men should find a wife from abroad. Referring to Hertz and Richter, many of their male clients share the reasons mentioned by Vartti, namely, the impression that German women show little commitment in relationships and prioritise their own needs instead of those of their husband or family. Nevertheless, it is not a general bad image of German women that guides men to register but bad experiences with their former (German) partners.

Agencies have to decide if they advertise offensively or cautiously with gender and cultural stereotypes, as offensive advertising can attract more clientele but can have a negative effect, too. The situation of Mentrup is a good example of how owners have to react to their clients’ needs. To expand her offer she entered cooperations with international matchmaking agencies in Hungary and the Dominican Republic. At the beginning, she had mentioned the possibility of contacting a foreign woman on her web-page but finally decided to erase the

⁵² In contrast to online advertising of women, statements about German customers on web sides are very uncommon as women mainly know about agencies by word-to-mouth and got through the internet. However, one matchmaking agency, directed from Costa Rica, offers the following description to their female clients: “*Needless to say, men have a special attraction to everything exotic. Especially men from central Europe yearn for tenderness, but at the same time for Latin temperament. They are fascinated by the unbelievable beauty of a Latin American woman. The German mentality is characterized by qualities as politeness, loyalty, affectionateness, sincerity, tidiness and solicitousness. For having a very well developed infrastructure, education, hard work and a professional career are given facts. German men love their partner and try to fulfil nearly all her wishes with the aim to make her happy. If a German man falls in love, it is forever.*”

reference on her web site due to negative feedback from her German partner agencies and of male clients. These clients were looking for a respectable and egalitarian agency and regarded her advertisement of foreign women as dubious. Consequently, she now only mentions the opportunity to meet Dominican or Hungarian women during personal conversation with her clients.

Mentrup: „Because in some people’s opinion it does not catch on... many German clients have a problem with it as in their opinion it is, well, not trafficking, but er, well, seen in a bad light, such an in-between, they do not appreciate it... because,... well, I indeed got the feedback that they told me that it would not be respectable or something like that. That’s the way it comes across!... And that’s why I said to myself that I don’t want to get this reputation and then my business suffers... Because the clients say ‚Oh, no, she works with Caribbeans, no, that one I skip‘... Many just see it this way, that, um, the economic misery is exploited... I judged it differently, but it comes across this way and I’ve had to accept it. As I say... there are men who say ‚well, that’s my type, such hot-blooded women‘.“ (9)

Most important eye-catchers on the web sites of international agencies are the picture galleries of their female clients as they are the main reason that men want to contact the agency.⁵³ By providing men with pictures of the women from the first moment on, these form an essential part of the decision to contact a woman. Unlike in national online dating, in international matchmaking pictures of the women are usually published online but not those of men, which is not surprising as these are the ones who choose and women can merely react when being contacted. The online presence of only women shows the unequal treatment of both clients. Women are turned into virtual commodities by the modern commercial forms (Del Rosario, 1994, p. 199f.) and the agencies’ web sites lead to the negative connotation of offering or selling women. This perception can be understood and is additionally enhanced when looking at some pictures of Latin-American and Caribbean women that are published on dating websites. The pictures seem not to be placed online only for the purpose to give an idea about the women’s outer appearance but they show women often in sensual posing and revealing clothes. Hence, these pictures do not strongly suggest that the business is based on anything else than sexualized women; and that women do not contribute anything else than good looks. Thus, Vartti (2003, p. 200) claims that on German web sites Latin American and Caribbean women “*look like exotic things rather than persons. In connection with seductive picture galleries and texts this image*” is likely to increase women’s vulnerability. However, the fact “*that their images are commodified does not make them commodities*” (Constable, 2005, p. 173). The way women are presented has to be considered by agency owners as it can attract clientele but can have a negative

⁵³ Picture galleries are a point of difference between international and national agencies. Posting pictures and short descriptions in newspapers or on the Internet converts the private self into a public performance as it is made visible and publicly displayed to an anonymous audience (Illouz, 2010). The negative image of matchmaking and dating agencies in society as well as required discretion does not allow that the ads placed by Mentrup contain photos of her clients. According to her, this would be highly untrustworthy as people could be recognized.

effect, too. If women are presented too offensively male clients could doubt the respectability of the agency. Thus, not all agencies show women in short skirts or in erotic poses. However, agencies that are more serious still use feminine gestures on pictures – such as a woman smelling a flower – for their women’s advertising. Femininity or feminine appearance is used by the agencies to advertise the women and thereby their own business.

4.1.2 The Matchmaking process

Hertz and Richter offer a service that is neither limited to the purchasing of contact data (selling addresses) nor to the establishing of pen-pal relationships. They offer a support service over several months with the aim to bring together two people in a functioning relationship.

From the agency’s online gallery a male client usually short-lists two or three, but up to five women whom he would like to contact, deciding on the basis of her pictures and few information concerning her age, family status or hobbies. Moreover, he sends an email with pictures and a personality profile of himself to the agency.⁵⁴ This profile is an important means to verify agreement among men and women concerning ideas of life and relationship. Furthermore, for Richter it is an analytical and selection criterion to choose or refuse *female* clients at his agency. Such a reason could be that she fills out the data superficially (and thereby shows little effort) or that she cannot write properly. In contrast, one does not get a real impression of the men before meeting them personally, as many of them describe themselves in euphemistic ways that deviate from reality.

Hertz and Richter then verify if the chosen women are interested in the man which takes several days as they usually meet them personally to check attraction as well as availability. It could happen that some time passed since a woman’s registration and they have to ensure that she is not already married or pregnant, and still interested in the service. If the woman is not “available” anymore she is erased from the data base and the man can choose somebody else. However, if she is still interested in the services of the agency and in the man who is presented to her using his pictures and his profile, new pictures of her are taken that are sent exclusively to the man. Up to this moment, everything is free of charge. According to Richter, 5% of all men who contact his agency for information finally sign a contract. Hertz states that 30% of those men who show interest in his agency, opt for a paid service. The rest uses at most the gratis service including weeks of work for Hertz and Richter (verifying the women’s availability and interest, making new pictures and translating

⁵⁴ Such a profile is a questionnaire named „sympathy check“ that can consist of around 100 questions and includes topics such as personal characteristics, hobbies and interests, ideas about the future wife, relationship and every day life. Both, men and women, fill out this profile and the questions vary slightly for men and women but are mostly around the same issues. However, it is noticeable that women are asked detailed questions concerning their and their families’ financial status (about having debts or loans, their own income and financial role within the family as well as the financial role of the future partner).

first letters between the potential partners). At Richter's agency men pay a "reservation fee" of several hundreds of Euro when one of the chosen women agrees to get into contact. Thereby, the man pays for the translation service and ensures that the woman does not get into contact with another man: she is then reserved for him only. Finally, men and women get into contact via email and with the help of the agency's translation service which is included in the contract to eradicate the language barrier in the case that the man does not speak Spanish. At Hertz's agency, men are allowed to write to maximum three women two emails every month. These letters are a first step to get to know each other, and the men write up close and personal emails mainly about their life, their expectations of the future relationship, and about what went wrong in the past. Hertz gives advice about the content and abbreviates the letters to the most important points which are then translated by him to Spanish or German respectively. This process of contacting the woman is the ideal course of action as in many cases women are visited spontaneously when the agency owners consider them as fitting the needs of a client in the country at the time or if the client searched the gallery for an alternative whilst in the Dominican Republic. Hence, women are sometimes informed as little as an hour before being visited by the broker and the potential German partner, being completely surprised and having no information about him as a person. This process differs clearly from the work of a German agency where both, men and women, are always fully informed about each other. This includes that both clients obtain the profile of the other at the same time to be fully prepared when being contacted.⁵⁵

Some men react spontaneously and visit the Dominican Republic and their potential spouse after as little as a week; others take more time and come in the following months. Around 80% of men who start an email exchange travel to the Dominican Republic after approximately three months of email writing. Consequently, this makes a total of six emails before meeting each other physically for the first time. When visiting the Dominican Republic men are advised to stay at least a week so that the agency owners have the chance to get a real impression, and most men stay for about two or three weeks. However, there are many clients who do not adhere to this advice. Even if Richter shows ambiguity about such short trips and does not support them he does not refuse these clients, either, leading to the suggestion that financial benefit takes priority.

Richter: „Unfortunately, there are many... – in quotation marks – ‚loonies‘ in the partner search community – once, I had a client who had come for three days, wanted to meet five women during these three days and of course! My goodness, I had to earn my money... but I said, okay, I would attend to him, I would coach him but these three days were just complete chaos... That just turns into a giant disappointment! When a man just comes for three days and wants to be introduced to five women, true to the motto, er, well ‚Now please open the meat counter and now we'll close it again‘, right? That

⁵⁵ The profile is set up by Mentrup including similar information than in international matchmaking with the difference that she meets all clients personally. The profile is then handed out to the woman revealing the name, the town of residence and the telephone number of the man and vice versa.

almost has a perverse character, as, well, we are not a meat inspection business, in contrast, it's about taking some time to get to know each other...! Of course you can meet two, three, four or five women, then we play with open cards towards the women, we tell them , 'Wait and see! Don't fall in love! I still have to show him other women, but you're now in a, in a very good position and er... still be careful'. ...First you have a walk around so to speak. The women usually all know about it, they know, upsa-daisy, don't show too much euphoria initially... Well, that's the dumb connotation, that's, I've to admit, really something... unpleasant." (10)

This demonstrates a clear difference between international and national matchmaking or dating services where not only men but also women have the choice of several potential partners to pick from. I suggest that the fact that in international matchmaking women have less power in partner selection – being only in the position of accepting or rejecting the men's initiative - makes them seem peculiarly passive and powerless. In addition, women can be "reserved" by one of the agencies and thus, they do not get the chance to be contacted by other potential partners. Instead, men have the possibility to contact and meet up to five women at the same time. This implies a highly non-egalitarian process. The unequal treatment in international matchmaking makes women not only look incapable of action but also exchangeable. One of the consequences of internet dating is that "*the meeting is organized under the aegis of the liberal ideology of 'choice'*" (Illouz, 2010, p. 79). *The self as a "chooser"* with the idea "*that the romantic encounter should be the result of the best possible choice*" (Ibid.). This should apply to international matchmaking agencies, but instead, the position of a woman is that she is seen as being one of several hundreds and thus exchangeable, and this leads many authors to draw the conclusion that women are victims or "*commodities*" (Lloyd, 2000; Vartti, 2003).⁵⁶

When a man arrives in the Dominican Republic, he is picked up by the agency owner (sometimes accompanied by his wife) and the chosen woman at the airport. Even if the choice of the woman is made by the client, Richter tries to influence the decision of who goes along with them: The woman that fits best to the man (concerning education, age, etc.) should be presented first. Then, the following days are filled with excursions to the country side by the owner couple and the potential spouses.⁵⁷ Sometimes, men prefer to spend time alone with the woman and those couples without language barrier often do so (20-30%). During the trips and gatherings, harmony between the clients is checked and first details are discussed, concerning ideas about the relationship and common life. The brokers' aim is to bring two persons into contact who match well and could form a successful relationship.

⁵⁶ The self-perception of women as being exchangeable is expressed by Hertz in the fact that most matched couples seem not to be interested in maintaining contact with him. He made the experience that women were afraid that he could present another woman to their partners and therefore preferred to cancel the connection. It could be interpreted as fear of being replaced due to the huge "offer" of potential partners that Hertz represents as broker.

⁵⁷ Both, Hertz and Richter, emphasize the involvement of their Dominican wives in the business. Their presence does not only simplify the recruitment of and contact to the female clientele but eases the situation during trips and meetings as the Dominican woman is not alone with two German men and feels comfortable.

Therefore, Hertz, Richter and their wives act as translators, travel guides, mediators and advisors.

Richter: "Because now it is already the first evening, are you completely slack and I actually just got annoyed that I took the, the wrong woman along (laughs), because nothing happened, nothing came across? Or then... the, the complete opposite... You really have to get on the same wavelength as the men, and the girls... check precisely,... where do they harmonise, what do they feel for each other or do they really have a strong interest, or is it following the device 'Well, why not going on the river tour this afternoon, because, er, like it is expected by the agency', right? We, um... as I've said, we only bring those together, where we really believe that it makes sense." (11)

Richter: „I really need to create something long-term and cannot take it easy, right?... It's about communication, that has to fit, and,... the right, just finding the right woman.“ (12)

Not all men make use of the possibility to choose and contact up to five women as has been confirmed also by Mentrup. Klaus chose only one woman, when having a look on 100 out of 400 women presented on the webpage.⁵⁸ After meeting Mary-Sol personally and noticing that she was interested as well, he considered it needless to meet other women.

Klaus: "We excellently completed one another, in the charisma and in the communication and there has been just good harmony right from the beginning and I just did not want to meet another woman. That would have weakened the situation, I assume... And I'm a decision maker and not 'alas, now try the other one to see if she's even better'... I'm not such a type! It was okay for me and I recognised that... I pleased her and let's say, she received my sympathy... And thus I thought, if this happens to work, then I would be happy." (13)

Mentrup: „And he just picked this one out of the gallery, and said ‚Only her!‘... and he does not want more.... and I say ‚choose some more, to cover any eventualities. You'll fly there, it's a long way...‘ and he replies ‚No, I know that and I dream of her and I don't want anybody else‘... Well. What I should I do?" (14)

In contrast to Simons (2001, p. 29) who states that agencies do not “*choose partners, evaluate choices, or chaperone courtships*” but “*provide a public forum for people to meet*”, which differentiates them from arranged marriages, Hertz as well as Richer actually do so. Their work includes consulting and if a man has idealistic ideas about his future spouse, they give advice and present him women who, in their eyes, are more convenient. That means

⁵⁸ Klaus is a 59 years old on-site insurance salesman who lives in Western Germany. He was married to a German and has an adult son with his former wife. They were divorced 16 years ago. Since then, he had relationships with German as well as with several Eastern European women. In spring 2010, he met his Dominican wife Mary-Sol through an international matchmaking agency on the Internet and shortly afterwards he started working as avocational consultant for the agency in Germany. Mary-Sol is a 30 years old primary school teacher. She has two sons (3 and 10) from her first marriage that lasted 10 years. Klaus and Mary-Sol got married in March 2011 and they are planning to live together in the Dominican Republic from the autumn of 2011 on.

⁵⁹ His description of the process does not coincide with that of Mary-Sol. She indicates that Klaus had met another woman the first days of his stay in the Dominican Republic but that he had never mentioned a word about what happened. It can only be assumed why he did not mention this first meeting, possibly as he wanted to give the appearance of having selected the “right” woman from the beginning on. It would give Mary-Sol less the image of being “second choice”.

that they not only advise the man of whom to choose, but even select those women that in their opinion fit best to the present man. This can go as far as them not presenting those women that had initially been chosen by the man. Furthermore, they chaperone as long as the couple wishes to have their assistance. Richter perceives his mentoring as necessary to make the meeting between men and women a success; but also to prevent fraud from one of the parties. The necessity of coaching is approved by Klaus.

Richter: "Because, I always notice anything, I can filter on my own, nothing slips through, er, my fingers, no women can really lie to me, I would know all that and men, when I welcome them here, um, I would not let it happen that they [man and woman] might meet each other on their own. Not only because of the language! Also in general, so to speak, to know, gosh, just free them of their reserve.... lots of men, who come here, are also... a bit more shy. Or just a bit reticent or blocked, that's why, I always want to be the one who, who is pulling the strings. Or the one who is the puppet master, I'm sorry (laughs), the one who lets the puppets dance. ... Just like that, being the one, who participates in pulling the strings. The one who knows how to accommodate the situation well.... I'm really always the one who can attend the two of them, also want to attend them. Therefore, I earn good money." (15)

Klaus: "There is great mentoring and they translate and accompany you and if there are any problems, they are solved, mutually. Furthermore, they observe, if there is good chemistry, otherwise they might intervene, saying 'well, I think this does not fit' or 'that does not work out, better we leave it at that'. You are really mentored to a high level of responsibility." (16)

In the end, even if the brokers have significant influence on whom a man will choose for a meeting, the final decision is taken by the man and the woman; and this is important to recognize. As Drewes (2011) points out, matchmaking agencies or web sites just suggest potential partners; they do not take the decision for the participating people.

If a couple does not harmonize Hertz and Richter present alternatives. It can happen that after four or five days a man wants to be presented to somebody else. According to estimations of Hertz, about 40% stay with the first woman, another 40% with the second and 20% are more difficult to place. These even come back (e.g. after a year) for a second trip if they do not find anybody matching during their first stay. It could be an indicator that the partner constellations are well-considered and that men do not act indifferently when choosing their future spouse. They invest not only money but time and energy in their partner search. Even if mostly men are the ones who decide to stop the meetings and to see another woman, women have also the right and possibility to refuse a man if they do not like him. It is important to recognize that women in international matchmaking are not speech- and powerless beings.

Richter: "We interview her again whether it makes sense, what she thinks of the man, if we should continue or mmh (thoughtful)... how she's feeling about it now?... She is simply free in her decision. They don't have to do anything,... I'm happy to call her a taxi if she thinks that she just feels unwell, uneasy." (17)

But of course, women are in a different situation than men. They cannot select out of 500 men but are one of the few who get the chance to meet one German man. This leads to the

tricky situation that choice is very limited (if there is one at all), and to the unequal positioning of men and women in this business (see also Vartti, 2003). On the one hand, women have the possibility to deny a candidate. However, possibilities to meet one are rare as there is an unbalance between “supply” and “demand”, if equating the marriage market with economic processes. Thus, the decision might be highly influenced and taken under pressure and in favour of the man.

The statements of Richter, Gabriela and a reference letter of a male client confirm the perception that men are mostly the decision makers and women are valued by how they approach their potential spouse.⁶⁰ Due to the men’s short stay in the Dominican Republic and the women’s large concurrence, a “misconduct” of women is often immediately sanctioned; more precisely, a second chance is almost never given.

Richter: “Men who come here, however, have the advantage that they are the ones who decide, who from his selection will progress to the ‘final round’. Everything is supposed to be based on mutual consent.... Where the chemistry is best, who approaches the candidate best, where both realize, there may flourish a love.” (18)

Gabriela: “Well, then... in June... I met Wieland... a Saturday... but we weren’t... together that day because... another person went to meet him that day. But a week later he made up his mind for me, so then we started to get to know each other... we went out one day... mhh (thoughtful) then he told the agency owner that he wanted to be with me, he went back to Germany and we kept in touch.” (19)

Gabriela: “When I saw Wieland... I liked him. At first sight. But I said ‘No. I think that... that there’s nothing here (laughing), nothing here to look for’, then Simon [Richter]... after he finished introducing Wieland to us – eh, Simon said... that he would call us. And that Wieland was making up his mind for one of us: ‘Ah, I will call you, I will call you next week, God willing’. Then the days passed by and finally he called us. So then, um, a Thursday... after the Saturday,... my mom’s phone rang... I picked up and said ‘hello?’... ‘This is Simon here, he chose you, he’ll be there in... about an hour’. And I was in a condition! (she laughs) and the rest was moving quickly: makeup and... everything.” (20)

“Günther Schubert made a deposit of 500 Euro for the placement and coaching of a new partner.... He chose Mireldis Gonzáles, 0 children, from XX as his new girl-friend. We have checked the interest and consent of both and from now on we are going to help them for several days to find each other. In case that Günther, out of any reasons,

⁶⁰ Gabriela was 22 years old when meeting her husband Wieland through the agency shortly after finishing secondary school. The first time they met, was at a restaurant and together with other women of the agency. She lived together with her mother before moving to Germany to start common life with her husband in summer 2009. When Gabriela received the telephone call of the agency owner he announced Wieland as a family focused man, needing a woman. Wieland is 33 years old and works at the office of his parents’ company. According to himself, he had registered at the agency as he was fed up with German women and due to the negative experience he had made with his former German girlfriend. He wanted to get to know the Dominican Republic, its culture and therefore, he decided to contact the agency. Before meeting Gabriela, Wieland spent several days with two other Dominican women but was not further interested. Gabriela likes Wieland as he is unostentatious and nice. She gives him credit for having always tried to communicate with her family (even without Spanish knowledge) and to integrate himself in her family life. Shortly after moving together Gabriela became pregnant and now they have a one year old daughter.

wants to get to know other candidates, he's got the option, until he knows exactly who suits him well and who also decides in favour of him.” (21)

An example given by Richter shows that men are the “puppet masters”. One male client got along well with the last of three women presented and she came to see him every day. For all participants it was clear that they were a couple or at least in the process of establishing a relationship. Then the man moved back to Germany and never got into touch with her again. The passive position that the women sometimes occupy is as well shown by another situation experienced by Richter: A Swiss man had met a Dominican woman through his agency and before leaving for his home country, he offered her an engagement ring. For all participants it was clear, that both wanted to continue their relationship and marry. After being back in Switzerland the man called Richter to tell him that he was sorry but that his two children – after consultation with them - decided against his new spouse because of her too dark skin colour. Consequently, Richter had to tell the woman that her engagement had been dissolved and that the man was not interested anymore. Richter himself reacts with incomprehension and disgust to such behaviour.

Richter: “I can't comment on that further, because if I did, I would freak out, when I think about this case! How people here are often, er, treated and judged? Such a... nonsense!... But... such things happen, too! You just want to, to deal with the situation sincerely, you realize,... they gel, they are funny, there could be the chance for, for something to arise,... they could indeed find out many similarities in life, all that one can do, live together, learn to love each other and so on, and then, after two weeks, or after three weeks of absence of the man suddenly an email arrives 'Mr. Richter, please communicate to, er, to the person that now he is through with her'.” (22)

The situation that a woman is dumped by a man is nothing exclusive for international relationships mediated by an agency and people can be dumped by a partner of the same nationality just as well. However, due to the circumstances of choosing each other (that is “choose” and “being chosen”) “being dumped” has a different connotation and manifests the power imbalance of the partners.

Men and women who want to find a partner via an agency need to have the willingness to endure several months of not seeing each other and to keep the relationship going in the meantime. In public opinion these marriages are often considered precipitated and less serious, because in the common assumption of love marriage, the time of courtship increases the credibility of a marriage. However, only in a few cases, do couples marry after a few days or weeks of knowing each other and commonly they take more time. If the man is flexible he travels up to three or four times to the Dominican Republic (e.g. in the first year) so as to get to know his partner better. Between these trips the couple stays in contact via the internet. When Klaus realized that Mary-Sol had real interest in seeing him again and as he wanted to sustain the connection as well, he spontaneously announced he was coming back to the Dominican Republic in two months time.

Klaus: "Then I wanted to keep this connection because I realized that there was affection from her part and I... we liked each other and love developed and... at the beginning I couldn't really believe it but then,... at once, the penny dropped, er, yes, 'when I would come back by plane' and then I replied 'two months'... I just pondered quickly and then I thought, you can do it and why shouldn't I?... Mary-Sol didn't want to make it so, er, obvious but nevertheless I realized that she was interested. That I, um, take the gloves off. That I'm not such a lightweight and then, er, enjoy the time with her and then 'Bye and gone for good'... And there I realized that she was interested in me coming back." (23)

Klaus visited the Dominican Republic four times within one year and when Mary-Sol came to visit him in Germany for three months. Half a year after having met, they decided to marry. About 30-40% of the couples who meet via Hertz's agency decide on marriage. They marry to demonstrate their love, or to legalize their relationship, which constitutes the only way that the law in Germany will allow the partners to live together (due to German visa restrictions). Furthermore, the women's education and catholic religion was named as reason for a marriage. Thus, for Wieland and Gabriela the principal reason to marry was her family's religiosity. If Wieland was a Dominican man he assumes a relationship without marriage would have been possible; but being a foreigner and living in a foreign country, such bond would not have been accepted by the family. A marriage proves that the men are serious about the relationship.

Hertz: "From part of the women, the marriage is actually taken for granted, mainly because of their education here.... Over all when they take up with a man from a foreign country, then they actually want to marry, well, it's just... it's also... to know if he's serious. Well, they are Catholics." (24)

Nevertheless, some clients wait with the marriage or the women travel as students to Germany and it is not known if the couple stays together and finally marries. When couples decide to stay together they usually marry in the Dominican Republic (90% according to Richter) as it is less expensive, complicated, and time-consuming. Afterwards, nearly all couples start their common life in Germany, mainly because of professional reasons (more precisely, because of the job of the man as the breadwinner). Only in very few cases does a couple choose to live in the Dominican Republic (10% according to Hertz) and many who try after short time move back to Germany because of the financial and professional situation. However, the percentage is increasing and mainly men older than 50 opt for the country for their wives. This is connected to the exit of the man's professional life which can be confirmed by the fact that many couples ideally want to live in Germany first and to move to the Dominican Republic after the man's retirement. Even if the willingness for relocation is a condition for the women who register at the agencies and is expected by most men who participate in matchmaking, as two partners are involved in the marriage "*the decision leading to actual relocation will in all probability be a joint decision involving husband and wife*" (Riley & Gardner, 1993, p. 203). Although it seems that men take the decision where to live, women have a voice and often favour living in their home country, which contradicts the

common assumptions that women are speechless and that they marry a foreigner to leave their country.⁶¹ Klaus and Mary-Sol will presumably start their common life in the Dominican Republic. Even if Mary-Sol could imagine living in Germany she prefers living in her home country and close to her family. She is aware that the decision has to be taken by both and fortunately, Klaus likes the Dominican Republic and the idea of living there. Besides, he has the financial means and enough ideas about possible jobs for him. In case it turns out to be the wrong decision he has prepared everything for an uncomplicated return to a common life in Germany.

Klaus: "Well I noticed that she would prefer to live in the Dominican Republic... Well, she said that she doesn't really dare, because... well, the women know, that the men prefer to live here in Germany. They know that. And... however I can take the liberty, let's say, because I already took precautions as of private insurance and so on, so that I would be able to live there... together with her. And, um, when I asked her she replied 'Well, Germany is beautiful but also cold and... not really'.... I just don't want to have an unhappy wife either, live with an unhappy wife, who does not really cope with living here in Germany. Who would maybe prefer to live in her surrounding and, they have strong family ties. And um... they take always good care of it and um, to take someone out of it,... would not make her happy." (25)

Mary-Sol: "You know, I can adapt if Horst needs it.... I could because, you know, you can't just put pressure on one side. We are married now and... if he accepts it, then I also can accept it if he needs it.... No, you know, I can adapt... no problem for the three months [she spent with Klaus in Germany]. And I was kind of adapting.... However, first, I was kind of, kind of out of place." (26)

Women are not only expected to agree to move to Germany. In addition, they are also expected to learn the German language to ease the communication within the couple. Since most couples live in Germany, women who found a partner via the agency most commonly start to take German language lessons in little groups at the agencies themselves. The aim is to achieve the A1-certificate that is requested by the German government when applying for residence in Germany. Within several months the women are sufficiently prepared to pass the exam at the German embassy and thereby allowed to immigrate to Germany as spouses or fiancées. Nevertheless, for Hertz the agreement to learn German is not a condition to register at his agency but depends over all on the motivation of the women to learn a foreign language.

Hertz: "I tell them 'you have to be willing to learn a foreign language', but I... um, I don't tell them, er, you have to and... both sides need to be willing.... It has to grow from the inside, otherwise, I believe that the relationship is doomed to failure, anyway. That means that if there are obligations somewhere, it doesn't matter what kind of, then... it's not worthwhile. And I don't support this either. That's what I also frankly tell the men..." (27)

⁶¹ It actually happens that the opposite is the case. One of Mentrup's male clients chose to contact a Dominican woman through her agency as he wanted to change country himself and live in the Dominican Republic. Thus, this would imply a strategic relationship or marriage from part of the man.

Even if it seems most natural to ask the women to learn the German language (as well as moving to Germany), it is far less common for the men to learn the language of their partners. Hertz gives, notwithstanding, men the advice to take a Spanish course but only in few cases the suggestion is followed even if, according to him, it could have an encouraging effect on the relationship on a give-and-take basis. Indeed, the difficulty of the language barrier is evident and high willingness to communicate is essential (e.g. by help of dictionaries and translation computers). Only few men have Spanish knowledge before enrolling at the agency and most try to learn some Spanish within the relationship. Yet, only few achieve a level sufficient for everyday communication but count on their wives to learn German. Thus, Vartti (2003) states that this is a further factor that indicates a “non-egalitarian” relationship as the language used within a relationship can even work as a power indicator.⁶² Vartti further mentions that already in the advertisements of the agencies, the treatment of the language barrier can indicate a non-egalitarian agency, when male clients are pacified that “*communication with the bride will be easy, because the women will quickly learn the language of their husbands*” (Vartti, 2003, p. 196). If women are not talented or willing to learn German, men sometimes react quite harsh and even take it as a reason for separation.

Hertz: “Then you have to discover that, given that, men are often, that for them it is a reason to separate... well, if the man knows Spanish himself, er, if he is a bit more tolerant himself and, um... but many unfortunately are just not tolerant. They, they then say ‘well, if she doesn’t learn German and just doesn’t cut it, then um... she won’t be able to integrate here, then she’s not my wife’. Like that, to put it bluntly.” (28)

This quote gives another example of how, for women, love or better said the relationship is extremely bound up in conditions. If women do not agree to learn the German language or migrate to Germany, this can already be a reason for being refused by the male client and replaced for another more willing candidate.

Matchmaking as form of trafficking and exploitation?

“*Modern technology, the internet in particular, makes it easier than ever before for men to shop for wives from exotic foreign locations.*” (Lloyd, 2000, p. 345; accentuation added). Such statements are no rarity in the literature on international matchmaking. Marriage through an agency and following migration to the country of the husband is often studied in connection with the victimization and passivity of women, their trafficking and prostitution. Many argue that international matchmaking agencies are a form of trafficking per se. However, horrific numbers or statements of how many women are abused by their husbands who they met via matchmaking have to be looked at with caution. Oftentimes the incidents

⁶² However, the fact that in most of these relationships women are much younger than their husbands, and given the fact that the capability of learning a new language decreases with age, the use of the German language within the relationship does not necessarily indicate a power imbalance but a result of the aforementioned point.

are not put into relation, neither with violence against women in general nor with all women involved in matchmaking.

The economic inequality between men and women using international matchmaking is commonly seen as constituting a relationship prone to conjugal exploitation. In addition, the matchmaking business offers a great appeal for agencies operating in a grey area that attend to women whose only way to achieve their migration goals is via marriage to a foreigner. Thus, reactions to the international matchmaking businesses are mainly negative and the media and advocacy repeatedly reproach the agencies for exploiting women, operating illegally or half legally, and for using sexist or racist images. Negative stories are the rule and reports harm agencies through these generalizations. Hence, agency owners have to deal with prejudices concerning them and their work and are not safeguarded from stereotypes of them as “*sexist men*” and as “*capitalizing on the economic and social inequality*” of men and women (Simons, 2001, p.12). Positive stories are seldom heard and for international but also for national agencies it is a battle to gain new clientele.⁶³

Richter: “General opinions, ... and dramatizing opinions are, er, marriage bureaux are always portrayed as being untrustworthy! Unfortunately. You just hear ‘Oh, that doesn’t exist’ and ‘I don’t believe it’, ‘Oh, no! She has certainly worked as... prostitute and, er, don’t engage is such fishy stuff, all that does not work!’ And er, ‘Buying girls’ and... just chitchat... You never get positive feedback. Never anything optimistic, never!... It’s always hard to attract at least a little clientele.” (29)

Mentrup: “Well, matchmaking itself, that is actually the problem... we have to battle against the negative image... because the media is pushing negative propaganda... That’s what sells... and people watch that and say: All dating agencies are like this.” (30)

Mentrup: “You’ve to make up your mind: Do you trust? Because if you do not, we cannot work together anyway, right?... It’s not about buying shoes or a car, it’s about finding a partner... But most people say ‘no, matchmaking! That’s all dubious.’” (31)

Even if agency operators have a lot of influence on how to design their business and even if there are certainly agencies that are involved in trafficking and dubious business, this cannot be generalized. Firsthand, “*dating and marriage agencies are selling a service, they are not selling people*” (Simons, 2001, p. 58). Simons suggests that women in international matchmaking “*are not being sold, but rather have chosen to ‘market’ themselves as a way to simultaneously find a spouse and improve their life chances for achieving their personal goals*” (Ibid.). Agencies try to weaken the prejudices against their work by offering as much transparency as possible on their web pages or for instance by putting examples of successfully matched couples online, with pictures and short descriptions. In addition, some

⁶³ When a reportage about one of the agencies was published in German television the broker knew beforehand that his business would mainly be described negatively and close to the established stereotypes (trafficking, exploitation, etc.). Nevertheless, he accepted the shooting as he hoped to benefit from the publicity which he actually did. It is, however, questionable what kind of male clientele he gained through his appearance on TV.

former clients leave references to prove the reliability of the agency to other clients and also to the cooperating agencies in Germany.

Agency owners are not the only ones to be denounced for their business. Men who participate in international matchmaking are aware of the negative prejudices and fears and are confronted with sometimes offensive reactions towards them and their wives. Yet, they do not want to be seen as “consumer husbands” (Lloyd, 2000, p. 352).

Wieland: “Well certainly, there were rumours that I had bought my wife.”⁶⁴ (32)

Wieland: “What everybody of you says, that’s all... let’s say nonsense. Of course there are women like the ones that are described [who exploit men]. But one finds these women in everyday life, too, where it’s not about matchmaking.” (33)

Klaus: “Well, what kind of guy is that? He gets himself a wife from the Dominican Republic’, or so they say... Gets himself a wife from there, a woman who was probably bought by him or whatever. And... that’s sometimes a bit, well, subject to jokes.” (34)

Gabriela: “Well... yes, um... that’s what I’ve heard from people, that it wouldn’t work... that they only wanted people’s money and that it was also for prostitution. That it was like, that men went there, bought women and took them to another country to prostitute them. I heard that all the time!” (35)

Neither of the men involved in this study show any intentions similar to the prejudices they are confronted with. However, as a reaction to the negative image of international matchmaking some men react by quitting every contact with the broker and keeping their story secret from family and friends in order to avoid ridicule or criticism. As an example, Klaus told his son and friends that he had met Mary-Sol during holidays.

Klaus: „I’ve a son and he also believes it this way [that I met Mary-Sol through a common friend],... what he thinks about it, I don’t know. Er... I told is this way as I didn’t want that... you don’t have to tell anything. I don’t know how the reaction would be... I don’t know whether they believed me ...anyway, not everybody needs to know it.” (36)

Wieland is conscious about fears on the part of the women and their families. Therefore, he financed, with the help of his mother, flights for Gabriela’s mother and sister to Germany to allow them to participate at their wedding.

Wieland: „Not that Gabriela’s mother thinks, who knows what we are doing or where we live, but that she gets an impression that Gabriela lives well here and that she does not lack anything.“ (37)

⁶⁴ Wieland is married to Gabriela, see footnote 60 on page 48.

4.2 Participants in German-Dominican matchmaking: German men

4.2.1 Profile

“We accept only male clients who are employed. The age is not an issue. Age differences of up to 25 years are no rarity in this country. Important for Dominican women are respect, sincerity, loyalty, understanding and much love.”
(Extract of a web site for German-Dominican matchmaking, July 2011)

The common assumptions about what kind of man uses the services of an international matchmaking agency to meet his future wife are none too positive. More precisely, they are concluded by Simons (2001, p.6) as being “*veterans of the war of sexes*” who find women from their own nationality “*too bossy, too competitive, too demanding*”. “*Therefore a man will find a way out by purchasing a woman*” who cannot speak his language and “*will rely entirely on him for her every need.*” Furthermore, they are commonly stereotyped as elderly men “*who seek young women*” and prejudices prevail that these men are disreputable members, if not losers in their own society in addition to being highly unattractive (because of their physical appearance or profession). They are said to be either machos who expect a “*traditional*” wife, or “*social discards*” and therefore need the help of a mediator to be introduced to a woman. This stereotyped image insults not only the men belonging to this group, but also the women who opt for them. However, the experience of agency owners and current developments show that in spite of the well-established cliché, these prejudices do not always coincide with those men making use of international matchmaking.

As the studied agencies are focused on German-speaking men, male clients come either from Germany, Austria or Switzerland. The average age of the male clients at present is 40 years old and decreased continuously in the last five years (when it was then set at a level of 50 to 55 years old). Interestingly, only few clients are older than 60 or younger than 30 (the absence of younger men is partly due to the lack of financial resources). Furthermore, many men are divorced at the time when they contact the agency and often have children. They have different educational and professional backgrounds (employed, self-employed, workers or doctors) and all except very few have an income equal to or slightly above average. This can be explained by the fact that male clients need to have money available to pay the service fee of 2000 Euro as well as the several trips to the Dominican Republic in order to get to know their partners better when they still live apart. In this sense, these men thus benefit from their more favourable economic position that allows them to participate in international matchmaking (see also Ruenkaew (2003) for German-Thai marriages).

Hertz describes three different types of male clients. Firstly, spontaneous men who are not interested in exchanging emails but prefer travelling to the Dominican Republic at once in order to meet their partner candidate(s). Secondly, there are the men who prefer to write emails beforehand and thereby build up a first image of the women before actually meeting

them. Usually they decide in advance which woman they want to meet first. Finally, the third type of male clients consists of men who are actually not ready to fly to the Dominican Republic. Instead, these just try and see whether they can succeed, in which case they would like the selected woman to come directly to Germany. Although Hertz considers such type of clients, he does not support this kind of process. Indeed, the financial means of Dominican women are generally too limited to fly to an unknown country to meet someone they have never met before. Due to the precarious situation they would face by meeting a foreign man in a foreign country, knowing neither the language, nor having the mentoring of the agency, most women would not even agree. As stated by Hertz, men are expected to come to the Dominican Republic if they want a meeting.

Most of the clients have never been to the Dominican Republic before, and do not know anything about Dominican culture. Therefore, they are sometimes unable to correctly evaluate social situations. Some of them “put on their rose-coloured glasses” when meeting a woman, so that Hertz and Richter need to intervene to bring those back to reality. With their experience and knowledge they are able to interpret and evaluate situations much better than the freshly arrived men, who often do not realize when a woman is not particularly interested in them or has other motivations than only starting a relationship (such as an opportunity to move to Germany).

Hertz: “Many men evaluate situations through rose-coloured glasses... well, he thinks that it is only reservation and she is just not that talkative but her button-up behaviour tells me that she actually has a problem with it [the man and his behaviour].” (38)

Richter: “Once, I had a male client... who we blandished for 10 days, we told him ‘look, please, Sara... is always mute and silent and when you go for a walk with her, she walks 10m beside you!’ When we had all dinner together... they sat vis-à-vis, 3m apart from each other! That was really, er, to tear one’s hair! We... told him ‘please, forget this woman, look – of course she’s pretty, but there are others who are just as pretty as her – she doesn’t suit you, you can see that! She’s not interested in you, she, she may only come here because her parents told her to do so. [Maybe they told her] ‘Come on, marry a German’ and then she is maybe out of the woods? Don’t do it. Devote yourself to a woman from whom you get something back, someone who also talks to you!” (39)

In a study on bi-national marriages by Wiessmeier (1992) German men were described by foreign women as being calm, slight in their appearance, humane, inspiring confidence and sedate. Such characteristics could be confirmed for numerous male clients. In contrast, Dominican women are used to active and extroverted people and therefore have difficulties to evaluate a calmer behaviour. Therefore, very silent men may be hard to match, because it automatically alienates Dominican women and makes it more complicated “to convince a woman to fall in love”. That being said, not all Latin American women embody the stereotype of being agile and extroverted, so that calm and timid personalities such as Wieland definitely get their chance, too. As an illustration I mention Wieland’s demand to be presented to a woman being similar to him, whereupon he was presented to his wife Gabriela.

Wieland: *“Because I also told him [the agency owner]... that I just don’t want such a... daredevil, who goes out to party every weekend of whatever kind... because... that was me during my youth, but for some time I was just not interested in this anymore.”* (40)

The results in this case differ from the results of other studies (such as Ruenkaew, 2003) and from the common assumption that male clients are shy and unconfident. Being extroverted undeniably facilitates the matchmaking process, as can be seen in Klaus’ case. Indeed, during his interview Klaus continuously presents himself as self- confident and full of life which turns out to be an important resource for participating in international matchmaking. Furthermore, when travelling to the Dominican Republic for the first time, Klaus did not know much about the country and its culture, but he felt nevertheless confident to travel there and free of any fear.

Klaus: *“I went through a lot in my life and, er, nevertheless I’m a very joyful person... I’m always joking and... I don’t let things get to me that easily... I’m also a person who takes decisions and implements them, I’m not such a daydreamer, as I often see here when people [who are interested in matchmaking] call ‘Well, I don’t know, yet’ and ‘well, but not now and maybe in five months’ and well...”* (41)

Klaus: *“I’m... such a go-getter, I’m not afraid of anything... I’m a very fun-loving person and down-to-earth.”* (42)

In addition to self-confidence, agency is an important characteristic for women and for men. At Mentrup’s agency the men’s reaction to the proposition to become acquainted with a woman from the Dominican Republic is often hesitant. Even if general interest has been expressed the distance remains the main reason for refusing such an offer. In addition, some clients do not have the personal capability to dare a trip to an unknown country, even if the chances of being matched with German women are limited.

Mentrup: *“Let’s say if they are simple men, where I can see, German women do not want such men. Where I say to myself for a Dominican this is still the... God! It’s a man from Germany, right? And in such cases I suggest them to use international matchmaking but they already freak out when they have to go to a train station, not to mention an airport! They would get lost! And that scares some, I mean the distance.”* (43)

Hence, the male clientele which actually makes the trip to the Dominican Republic thus often shows self-confidence, courage and initiative. Answering to lonely-hearts-ads in newspapers is one thing, but making the step and travel to the Dominican Republic (in spite of the negative publicity these agencies usually receive) demands agency and courage from the male clients. Wieland made use of an international matchmaking agency initially out of curiosity. Through a coincidence – as he claims – he started using the service of an agency he had found on the internet. First hesitating, he finally decided to try this kind of partner-search as he was alone and had nothing to lose. He then chose the women he liked and fixed the date for travel.

Wieland: *“Back then it was actually just curiosity, just to have a look, because... I’ve always had problems with German women,... anyway um, I just had a look... and well, I found the web site... and then, er, by mistake I signed a contract, well and then I thought... why not trying another way [of dating] and not the conventional way or manner... why not? You’re alone and whether you continue running around alone for years to come or if you try this way... because with German women I’ve always had my problems.”* (44)

Wieland: *“Of course, my parents then also [said]... ‘Oh my god, what are you doing? Why? Er.. do you think that is right? And oh, one has heard so much about it...’ That’s why I said, alright, one hears a lot but, um, to say if it is like that, you can only make your mind up once you’ve tried yourself. And what other people say, well, I cannot say anything about that... I cannot confirm that. And that’s why I said, I’ll try it... because I’ve always been a bullhead and I’ve always had my way and thus did what I wanted to do.”* (45)

Wieland: *“It takes quite some courage [to travel alone to the Dominican Republic], when you’ve... actually... always travelled in a group then it takes some courage, of course! But... it was like having a look as well, how you react to a foreign culture, foreign country, completely on your own, how you cope with it... you don’t know the language... what will happen then? Just to try.”* (46)

Richter: *“If somebody is a pessimist... you can’t talk him out of it!... But this isn’t the stratum I want to meet, either! The people I run into here are people who, who, they dissociate themselves from their circle of friends, they say ‘well, Simon, I have 20 pals but all 20 said, er... what bullshit’, right?... But the person who then comes here is the one I need! The characters that we want to have here, who bring along a bit of spirit regarding adventure, courage, readiness to risk something,... they’re all people... who want to create something new, who want, they’re really... they are entirely special, er, calibres.”* (47)

The fact that male clients need to be self-confident and show agency is also well depicted by an example given by Klaus. Once, he visited a work-related client together with his Dominican wife Mary-Sol. The man was 60 years old and single after having had several unlucky relationships with German, Russian and Polish women who he met via advertisements he placed in newspapers. Klaus’ customer was thrilled by Mary-Sol and thus, Klaus proposed him to help him finding a spouse as kind and endearing as her. He also offered him to accompany him to the Dominican Republic.

Klaus: *“I say ‘listen to me, I can provide you with such a woman... if you want’... I felt kind of pity for him, it had nothing to do with business, I would not have done it via my cooperation partner, I would have managed it through,... you can organize it through the circle of friends of Mary-Sol or so... It would not have been a problem, not at all!... He was so enthusiastic and I say ‘Yes, there are more of them’. Of these women, right? And I say, that’s something different than Russia or Poland or wherever else... where they are only after your money or what do I know, er, here you can bring together for an open-hearted encounter.”* (48)

To Klaus’ big regret his client eventually refused to come with him shortly before Klaus’ next trip to the Dominican Republic.

Klaus: *“And then he tells me... ‘I’m so sorry, that I’ve to cancel, but I don’t have the courage, I’m not the person you are’ (laughs)... That snappy and, and initiative and just doing it and being able to deal with it and he says ‘I’m a sissy [whiny person]... and I don’t think that I could handle it. I would, the woman, er... I would fail and then I would*

make her unhappy'. So he already had such fears! And I felt such a pity for him, but there you can't help. What can you do?" (49)

In the aforementioned example, Klaus calls his client a "good catch", because he is kind and owns property. This is a good illustration of Klaus' opinion concerning the resources a man should have to score points with women. Notwithstanding, his client is unsuccessful in finding a partner showing that eventually it also depends on whether the resources (i.e. the positive characteristics) a person possesses, are valuable and if they *are* actually resources. Notice that the value that is attributed to the several distinct characteristics can differ according to nationality, culture and personal estimation.⁶⁵

Furthermore, Klaus' example is also a good illustration of the migratory network which often develops in international matchmaking and plays a significant role in the recruitment of both male and female clients. Klaus himself had been inspired to try a matchmaking agency by a friend who found his Thai wife via an agency. After using the service himself, he got involved in the business and is now working as contact person in Germany. In said case Klaus would have taken care of his work-related client free of charge, as friend rather than as broker, to acquaint him with women from Mary-Sol's circle of family and friends. It is in fact common that couples are brought together on an informal base through friends, family kinship, etc. (see also Ruenkaew, 2003); most common on the part of the woman or her family but in some cases through the initiative of the man.

In contrast to the male clients of an agency who basically cannot be controlled before their arrival in the Dominican Republic, female clients are systematically checked for the veracity of their data as soon as they register.⁶⁶ Richter and Hertz try to keep control over their female clients by accepting women coming mainly from nearby their agencies so that they are able to visit them. For their male clients, at the other hand, agencies have to rely on the information they receive through, for instance, the men's sympathy checks. Thus, agencies majorly depend on the men's sincerity and it is only when the client arrives in the Dominican Republic that the agency owner can get a real impression of him.⁶⁷ It could therefore happen that a man does not tell the truth concerning his occupation by pretending he is an employee while he actually is jobless. Moreover, some clients declare incorrect ages which is tolerated by Richter as it is mainly done out of shame rather than out of malice.

⁶⁵ The statement of one of Simons' male US-American interviewees who participated in international matchmaking shows well how resources are valued relationally (Simons, 2001): her interviewee found it great that Ukrainian women were impressed by him having a job as UPS-driver for almost 20 years. In contrast to US-American women who neither value his job as a driver very much, nor are impressed by his 20 years of continuous working Ukrainian women recognized that he is reliable by the sole fact that he has been working for 20 years and thereby, distinguished him positively from local men.

⁶⁶ Also to assure the respectability of women at the agencies as women in international matchmaking business are often accused of having worked in prostitution.

⁶⁷ Unless the man chooses the way via a German cooperation agency or counsellor.

In some cases Hertz and his wife did not want to continue the contract any longer after having met the man personally. Reasons for these cancelations were for instance that the man appeared to have a violent character and even got rough; a behaviour that is unacceptable for the agency owners. Furthermore, in addition to their behaviour towards women, the men's purpose for using the service cannot be ascertained beforehand, either. Richter states that if he doubts about a client's intention, he does not hesitate to refuse to provide him with the agency's services. However, his statements are contradictory: On one hand, he specifies reasons for an immediate exclusion such as "*severe abnormal behaviour*" (by treating a woman as sexual object); but on the other hand, he does not totally exclude these men from his agency as he is ready to accord them several other chances.

Richter: "When a man becomes too pushy or appears too pushy, you have to... such a behaviour is unacceptable. In every country of the world... You always have to preserve some manners, always, er, when you want somebody to fall in love with you it means that you want to win his or her heart, that's what counts. You can really take your time." (50)

*Richter. "Well, severe, severe (stressed)... abnormal, er, abnormal behaviour,... for example when somebody treats women as if they could be purchased?... Or when somebody believes that he is allowed to... that he's allowed to have a go at the woman and that she is now his... his sexual object from the first minute on?... an excessive demand following the motto 'Okay, then let's just... go to bed together', right?... We reprimanded this client... mmh (approving) and when he then noticed that this woman did not want to have anything more to do with him, we of course gave him further chances, but... well... he was just not placeable."*⁶⁸ (51)

In order to get a certain guarantee on the men's background, various agencies make the attempt to verify the men's data and to assure a certain level of sincerity by asking for copies of their ID, passport, and police clearance certificate that are then archived and provided to the woman. Some agencies even offer men the same service and present them the named documents of the woman after they have met her. This way, both parties are confident and assured about the identity of the other.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, it can be stated that in general double standards are applied for male and female clients: while women are checked beforehand, men are mostly not inspected before arriving in the Dominican Republic. It is only the case when the agency works with a cooperative agency in Germany that the man is met

⁶⁸ Such clients, who did not understand the aim and concept of a matchmaking agency, are the exception. Instead, the vast majority of Hertz' and Richter's male clients look for a partner to respect and not for quick sexual relief. A contrary example to that of Richter is told by Klaus about a befriended German-Dominican couple who met through the same agency as he and Mary-Sol did. The couple lives in Germany where the woman had already studied before. After their marriage in Germany they had no sexual relations for over half a year. For Klaus it is incomprehensible that the man did not have the heart to approach his wife, neither did she approach him. Klaus assumes his friend's bad experiences in his former relationship as possible reason for his hesitation. Anyhow, he as well as the client mentioned by Richter were displayed as exceptional cases.

⁶⁹ In the USA the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005 (IMBRA) made the attempt to require agencies to „provide potential foreign brides with information on US clients' criminal history, and previous marital status“ (D'Aoust, 2009, p. 9). The law is not sufficiently implemented but constitutes a suggestion of regulation of the market to the benefit of the women involved.

personally, and a clearer impression of his person, his intentions and the verity of his indications is obtained. Thus, the risk of a man telling lies and deceiving his potential partner can in this way be prevented. Furthermore, the importance of women's security and the possible risk of meeting an unknown man is prioritized and controlled by the agency owners by for example, not supporting women who would travel to Germany to meet their potential partner for the first time.

4.2.2 Motivation

Why choose a wife from the Dominican Republic?

*„Because they are just incredibly pretty, natural and nice;
Because in the Dominican Republic there is a surplus of young and fascinating women, who are fond of life, hospitable, eager to learn, and very adaptive;
Because a Dominican woman is not guided by a selfish career or ambitions, but puts naturalness and diligence first;
Because a Dominican woman attaches great importance to family and togetherness;
Because a Dominican can be a woman, without having to pretend;
Because an age difference of 15-25 years is usually not important for Dominican women, if the partner is nice, loyal and treats her well;
Because the mentality of Dominicans is predominantly positive, joyful, perhaps a little naive and uncomplicated, life-affirming and enchantingly refreshing, and always feminine in her charisma;
Because only once a Dominican chooses the man whom she loves, adores and to whom she is loyal. The man with whom she sticks it out through thick and thin;
Because the distance to a Dominican due to the language barrier is usually mastered within a few weeks with the help of a language school;
Her adaptivity and interest for other cultures and languages is simply unimaginable.“*

(Extract of a web side for German-Dominican matchmaking, July 2011)

The reasons why German men get involved into international matchmaking differ according to the personal reasons and the respective countries of the women involved. This survey exposes some of the patterns of motivation that explain the preference of German men for a foreign spouse in general (and a Dominican wife more specifically) as well as the choice of an agency offering full services (in contrast to buying addresses or setting up profiles at dating agencies). Ruenkaew (2003) distinguishes two categories of reasons for the fact that men opt for a wife from another country. She namely differentiates reasons due to personal characteristics (such as timidity, hesitation or physical unattractiveness) from those due to structural elements that have a negative impact on the men's chances on the German marriage market (such as the lack of social contacts or the ignorance to the change of gender roles within the family). Such men have difficulties on the marriage market on the one hand; and feel under societal pressure to fulfil conformity on the other hand, and therefore feel the need for a relationship. These men are "transnational relationship seekers" who practice a "transnational partner search" (Ruenkaew, 2003, p. 249). A partner search that leads them, due to the difficulties they experience on the marriage market in their own country, to search for a partner from a foreign culture.

The image of the ideal partner differs among men who are engaged in international matchmaking and they give more or less exact descriptions of how they imagine their new partner. Some men attach importance to “good chemistry” between both partners whereas for other men, the physical attractiveness of women constitutes an important point. More specifically, the female profile that men (involved in German-Dominican matchmaking) are interested in is a joyful, open-minded, loyal and family friendly partner who sets value on affection, togetherness, and common activities. This means that these criteria, named by Richter, do not differ from those of men who use national dating and marriage services. Hence, the question arises why men nevertheless desire a woman from a foreign country and from the Caribbean more specifically. Furthermore, it is also interesting to investigate why they sign up with an international agency. They must have the impression that this is more efficient than finding a partner with the desired characteristics on their own.

Participants in matchmaking usually have very precise information about the costs that the partner search would involve in terms of time, money and “personal engagement”. This means that unlike in independent initiatives the search costs are a controllable factor in international matchmaking (or matchmaking in general) which is an important aspect for men when deciding upon this service. Thus, matchmaking agencies have a clear advantage over an independent partner search in the way that they not only give important and necessary information beforehand (does the woman have a willingness to marry and form a stable relationship?) but as already mentioned above, they also clarify the costs with respect to time and money in advance (see also Ruenkaew, 2003; Simons, 2001).

According to Hertz, most male clients know about the agencies either through personal recommendation or because they found the web pages by coincidence. They are mainly attracted by the online pictures of the women and, especially when under 35 years old, curious as to what is behind all this and how the women will react to their contact.

Richter: “Then I have got some interested men here who have always been latino-oriented... and now as they are newly divorced, they recognize, gosh, their little dream, of getting to know a Dominican or a Venezuelanian or a pretty Columbian, this little dream of theirs they will now live. They are free! They don't have any commitments!... And they try it!... Now, they say ‘well, why not something new?’ Something... extraordinary... now, they just try something exotic... based on a nice holiday that they had in the Caribbean, in Latin America or... may be in Thailand, when ... gosh! Why not get to know a completely different culture, learn a new language, and fall in love with a woman!” (52)

Hertz surmises that his client numbers have increased, and the average age of clients has decreased due to new media and greater anonymity in social gatherings. More precisely, communication is increasingly done via the internet and potential partners can therefore be searched for via internet platforms and dating sites. Common reasons why men in international partner-search choose to use a professional agency with services up until marriage are the anonymity of online sites as well as experiences of deception when placing

and answering advertisements on their own. This type of deception can be controlled for by calling upon agency brokers, as they know their female clients, can “guarantee” for their respectability, and know the women match the information and description they have given. Hence, men trust in the control as well as the local and cultural knowledge of the brokers which is part of the general service and significantly helps the male client to choose the appropriate partner.

Hertz: “Many told me, they’ve already contacted some women through other big dating sites... and the women there may have about 50 contacts, write with 30 men and well... usually that is not really serious. That’s why men would rather contact us.” (53)

Richter: “When you already live here for several years... by the way she is talking, you immediately recognize, that this is a clever one, a really clever one... but is she willing to fall in love? Don’t even think about it! And this, a man just cannot know!” (54)

Mentrup: “When he says ‘I want a tall one, a slim one, a sporty one’, then I won’t present him one who is 1,50m, more wide than tall and comes wearing a kitchen apron and does not have teeth. But this is what happens when using box-numbers.” (55)

Some clients, who have already experienced deceptions and frauds by agencies, nevertheless try such services again, though this time in the Dominican Republic. Many men are interested in finding a Dominican partner as they have already travelled to the Dominican Republic or other Latin American and Caribbean countries for holidays or have even lived there. Concurring with the results of the study of Ruenkaew (2003), it appears that men who opt for a marriage with a foreign woman are often driven by their admiration for and affection to the other culture (sometimes in combination with an unwillingness to live in Germany). Thus, when freshly divorced „they decide to accomplish their dream“ and mate with an „exotic“ woman as stated by Richter. Other clients choose the Dominican Republic because they find other nationalities that are common to international agencies less appealing, or because they had bad experiences with these women’s behaviour. Klaus, for instance, was not interested in finding a spouse from Asia. Through stories he had heard, he got the idea that financial reasons for marriage seeking were common. Besides, prejudices of Asian women being frigid and emotionally cold put him off.

Hertz: “Many are specifically looking for a foreign woman.... Some have already collected experiences in other countries, as in Poland... also Rumania or Russia but this went wrong... because... over there it’s not about love. I mean that was more... they were fooled... they just got their money squeezed out! There are some agencies in Poland who place women apparently looking for a partner, but... they are just fictitious agencies... I had several clients here who fell for them.” (56)

Richter: “Many say, Thai or Asian women would – they could not fall in love with such a woman... Concerning Polish women or Russian women, some people already... have prior ‘experiences’, they say that they are even worse than German women (laughs)... er, as they say, these women enter the house and... then they demand, the Polish women immediately ask ‘Well, and were is my cleaning lady then? (laughs) At what time does a cleaning lady arrive?’ and that’s why, they are entirely (accentuated)

materialistic!... that's why some men come to the Dominican Republic, who already know a bit of that, that these Eastern European countries became very materialistic." (57)

Materialism is mentioned as motivation for German men to rather opt for a foreign wife (and more specifically a Dominican wife). Also Vartti (2003) has observed in her investigation that women in international matchmaking agencies are sometimes described as being less materialistic than Western women. Concerning the above statements, it would be interesting to know what background these women have. According to Richter, if women do not want or do not accept to clean the house they are materialistic. However, it is questionable whether the mentioned Polish women are really materialistic or if other reasons may prevent them from wanting to clean the house (such as being used to have a cleaning lady at home, or having an idealised image about life in Germany).⁷⁰ In my opinion, refusing to clean does not mean that the woman is materialistic, but it is described as such because suitable adjectives and an adequate interpretation are missing. In other words, the adjective "materialistic" is used by the men to describe the women's behaviour but it is questionable whether this is not rather due to a lack of more appropriate and fitting terms to describe such manners and attitudes. Actually, this point about "materialism" has not only been mentioned by agency owners but also by male clients. Klaus had been in several relationships with German and foreign women before meeting Mary-Sol. Even if he does not want to judge all German women negatively, he nevertheless states that he had never had the chance to meet a woman like his wife in Germany.

Klaus: "I would not just romanticize 'ahh... everything is so great and all the rest is all rubbish. Here in Germany all women are silly...' This would neither be fair nor true. I can only say, that I also met German women in my loneliness and I shipwrecked, because they were just... er, touchy... and volatile and vixenish and... I've experienced this... and I don't want to pick on it now...." (58)

When he was then asked why he did not try to find a German partner anymore, he started stuttering and finally declared that women in the Dominican Republic are said to be less materialistic.

Klaus: "Well, yes... that was er... er... well, er... well, more, er... er... I think I've heard – I can't... tell exactly now – that the mentality of the women, er... er... - well, in the end you never know, everybody meets someone different – that they are after all more loveable. Not so, not so... er... so... er... materialistic oriented! That's it! That's what I reckon. And, er... that's what I wanted to try and sparks were flying, immediately." (59)

⁷⁰ Furthermore, it can be an indication that men and women who participate in international matchmaking can have highly differing ideas about the arrangement of these relationships, also due to the way they are advertised by the agencies. Indeed, when a man meets a Polish woman who is described as taking care of the household or a Dominican woman said to be fond of children, this naturally raises expectations. When these expectations are not fulfilled afterwards, the women are usually blamed.

His impression he sees proved by the behaviour of Mary-Sol. At their second meeting, he was taken up with her by her “unmaterialism” when he wanted to pay her a taxi back home (upon the advice of the agency owner) but she refused.

Klaus: „...then she had to go home, and the guy from the agency told me ‘Go give her the money for the cab!’, because he’s used to it that women have little money there, and... er... and that they’re happy if... someone pays for it.... And I’ve said ‘There you go’... And he went to give it to her, and then she gave him her mind (laughs). How did he dare to ask me for money. She could pay for the cab herself.... And that made quite an impression on me. She didn’t simply take the money right away, but... she took it later... I’ve told her to take it, er, er... I’ve given it to her so she should take it and er... as a polite gesture from me... she shouldn’t think something funny, er... made myself understood, and then she eventually took it, but first she had refused.... I thought of it as being part of her character, right? Well, sure. For me, it was impressive.” (60)

The situation described by Klaus allows for some room for speculation about Mary-Sol’s actual intention when refusing his taxi money. It could have been out of modesty or independence, but also because she did not want to seem buyable. This possibility has probably come into Klaus’ mind as he felt the need to justify his offer („she shouldn’t think something funny“). Besides, the behaviour of the agency owner demonstrates that the common expectation is that men have to pay such costs. However, Mary-Sol explicitly wanted to avoid giving the impression that she wanted Klaus’ money or is financially dependent.

Wieland shares a similar opinion to that of Klaus. He has had several relationships with German women but got the impression that they took financial advantage of his good nature. And since, he does not want money to be the central point of the relationship but feelings and affection instead. He now wants a partner who puts less emphasize on financial issues and more on mutual acceptance. In spite of these positive characteristics that are attributed to Dominican women, Wieland is convinced that the two Dominican women he had met at first were essentially interested in his finances. Hence, when meeting Gabriela (his current wife), he particularly appreciated that she did not show any pecuniary interest. His opinion is based on, amongst others, her living conditions and a situation he experienced in a shopping centre. More precisely, the wife of the broker informed Gabriela about Wieland’s good financial means and encouraged her to choose some nice clothes.

Wieland: „...considering the circumstances, under which she lived there, she was the general dogsbody at home, anyhow, and er... then one could already realize, that she does... not ask ‘What can I afford with him?’ or, for instance... I also went shopping with her sometime... and then I realized, that she was uncomfortable and didn’t want, didn’t want me to buy her something,... because I also got the feeling that she would have been embarrassed if I would have bought her that stuff... and from that it became clear to me that she is not such a woman..., but... she tried on everything, but put it back on the rack and didn’t want anything either. I did buy her something, nevertheless, but well... not so much as,... was suggested to her by the other women.” (61)

The mostly cited reason to register at an agency – and repeatedly mentioned by both brokers and clients – turns out to be the wish to find a loving partner and to start a family. Ruenkaew

(2003, referring to Del Rosario, 1994 and Beer, 1996) points out that British, Dutch and German husbands of Filipino women named love as main motive to marry. In contrast, in her study on German-Thai marriages only 2 out of 31 men claimed they were in love and wanted to marry the woman because of their feelings. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that even if not labelled as love, feelings such as emotional affection do play a decisive role in such relationships and can work as a base for further, stronger feelings. In this regard, although it is difficult for Klaus to describe his feelings for Mary-Sol, he repeatedly states during the interview how well they get along and how happy she makes him.

Klaus: „Uh... that’s not that simple [to describe]... I mean, I’m not... I’m in love, but not head over heels!... But like that, she’s an amenable, loving woman, who, well, gives me a lot of love, and encounters me with openness and a lot of emotions! Right?... what I’m really relishing... So far I haven’t had the chance to experience something similar in Germany. Being so close to a person, and because... we met as total strangers,... from two different cultures! This further complicates the situation. And we really are,... we really get along well and we, ... completed each other very well and... the whole setting is alright, I’ve been received openly and cordially, by the family, the folks, and also her friends.” (62)

Internet-dating or matchmaking is a “*radical departure*” from the tradition of love as being the constituting factor of a relationship. “[T]he idea of romantic love has often been accompanied by the idea of the uniqueness of the person loved. Exclusivity is essential to the economy of scarcity that has presided over romantic passion.” (Illouz, 2010, p. 90). Instead, web-based matchmaking has a spirit of abundance and interchangeability, as “*mass consumption*” has been introduced to the “*realm of romance*” (Ibid.). However, love is not the aim of matchmaking. It is more about whether a couple *matches* and thus, has higher chances for a long-lasting and stable relationship (Drewes, 2011).

Other reasons for registering at an agency are that it appeared that many male clients who are in their 30s and still single feel the personal need or social pressure to start a family. Others indicate that until now, they had essentially concentrated on their professional career and led busy lives. But they now want to focus more on their personal life and they are therefore looking for a family and a home centred partner who is not career oriented.

Wieland: “I actually wanted to... to find somebody... with whom I could stay together in future. I mean, something that goes further. ... I’m 33... and um, therefore I’ve said, I want to commit myself at some point and,... also find a family, so to speak.” (63)

The prevailing opinion revealed by studies on this topic is that men who explicitly choose to marry a woman from a foreign country are in fact in a search for a partner who can accept living in a “*traditional*” partnership. By “*traditional partnership*” is meant a relationship where the traditional gender conceptions of men and women are lived out. Referring to the survey of Vartti (2003), German men in international matchmaking seem to prefer partnerships with comparable characteristics. This is, however, not just a German phenomenon, but it may be found in all countries where women start to emancipate and put their focus on other things

than family and husband, and where they want to pursue their own goals, possibly deviating from those of their partners.⁷¹ It is clear that “women, much more than men, have taken steps to expand their activities and aspirations into non-traditional roles. The situation thus created has left a large section of the male population desiring not only marriage but marriage that promises traditional roles and values, giving rise to a male demand for particular identities of potential partners associated with such roles and values” (Del Rosario, 1994, p. 197). Foreign women still accept this position – either because of their more traditional socialisation or because of their weak position as immigrants.

A main reason for German men to decide on Dominican women is that the latter are seen as being tender, warm-hearted, fond of children and not materialistic and career oriented (or in the case of a necessary decision, choosing in favour of their husband and family). This image is certainly constructed - or at least reinforced - by the agencies' advertisement. In addition, clients tell Richter that it is very difficult to find a woman in Germany to start a family with. According to them, German women prefer superficial contacts rather than stable relationships. They do not want to compromise nor take responsibilities, but live their lives independently and egoistically. In contrast, Dominican women have the reputation of being very family friendly and disposed to compromise or cut back their own interest for the benefit of their family.

Richter: „Dominican women are absolutely... drawn to the family. Absolutely! Really. That is, that is their dream, their fulfillment... And the job comes second. Even if she is a doctor, she will be home by 5, and then it's all about the family and then, then, she would never move for a promotion if her husband wouldn't want to go there. She would take her husband along, would make him to come along, right? But, let's say, to give up the family or not wanting to have children, just for er... egoistical reasons, and that's what I'm hearing for years, for years, from all areas of Germany.” (64)

Mary-Sol: “I would say that German women are like more... like drier, you know? Like we are more affectionate to each other,... I don't know, we are... I don't know if it's that we put more love into anything or something like that... because people in Germany, like, live together, you know, love each other and live together as a couple, but they are not so... so affectionate to each other... women are... like more affectionate, when being from here... And well... with our parents it's the same. We are affectionate with our families.” (65)

Hertz: “Well... men... would like women to be a little more modest and a little more affectionate, and passionate, not cold-hearted. Less materialistic... in attitude... a woman who is fond of children... more with an attitude in favour of the family... and not that focused on her career... That fits together [with the characteristics of Dominican women]. Well, yes, it's like that, yes.” (66)

Even if Hertz does not mention to whom he is referring, the context indicates that the comparison is made to German or Western women in general. Although most male clients desire a partner whose priority is the relationship and the family, they do not restrict their partners to the domestic sphere. Besides, most female clients do not want to limit their new

⁷¹ Oso (2003, p. 224) mentions the example of Spanish men interested in foreign women who still agree to fulfil the traditional female tasks while Spanish women start to reject their traditional role more and more.

life in Germany to family and household. Instead, women have the ambition to find a job in Germany and even if this is usually not demanded by their partners, they principally support their desire to work as becomes clear from the following quote (compare chapter 4.3.2, p. 85).

Hertz: "well, men usually say 'first of all, she doesn't have to do anything... first of all learn German, and accompany me on my travels'... but many support of course... one can say, that the majority supports.... that they... want to work." (67)

This quote thus confirms that generally speaking, men support their wives' desire to work. However, it also includes the wish that women should organize their lives according to their husband's life and be disposed to accompany him. They can work, study, etc., but family and husband should remain their priority. Similar results have been found by Simons (2001, p. 113) in her survey concerning the attitude of US-American men who participate in international matchmaking: "*Men were searching for women who wanted to stay at home for the children, whether this meant having no career or putting the career on hold.*" This means that men appreciate or support their wives' wish to hold down a job but in case of children, the wives' decision should be in favour of their children's care or family work in general. One could state provocatively that men want wives who react in a way that would not limit them: children and family: yes! Change of *his* life: no!

A further possible reason for German men using international matchmaking services is as Varti (2003) suggests that these men perhaps do not satisfy needs of German women and hence, do not succeed in finding an appropriate partner in their home country. This hypothesis was confirmed by Mentrup. Her service of international matchmaking is particularly offered to her male clients as her partner agencies in the Dominican Republic and Hungary only register female clients. When a male client is difficult to place with German women Mentrup suggests to him the possibility of getting in touch with a foreign woman. This is usually due to the man's physical appearance, his height or some particular handicap which makes it difficult for him to appeal to German women. Further reasons would be unrealistic requirements with respect to women's age or appearance in general.

Mentrup: "When I notice that there is one man where it is going to get difficult,... because he's very small or because there is some kind of handicap,... it's just a feeling... that makes me think that it will be difficult with him... or if one is very slim or whatever... where I think 'Well, with German women, they all want something different'.... I've a client... who is 68 but wants to place ads for women 40 and older. And to him I also made the offer... because I know, women in Germany around 40, they don't want a man who is 68.... Of course, I can incorporate such an age in the ad - I don't have to judge it - but I advise them that it is a risk because women don't like that... Because women do not want to have nursing cases." ⁷² (68)

⁷² See Simons (2001, p. 113) for an example where a US-American man used international matchmaking and a far younger bride exactly for this reason. He was looking for a "security blanket" because he was on his own and without family.

If presenting her client German women who would be closer to his age and thus accepting his age, Mentrup found that these women never matched up to the man's ideals.

Mentrup: „He wants a sporty, well-trained, attractive woman.... And at this age it's bound to be difficult to find such women.... That comes from the situation, where I realize, he has an idea that is hardly realizable with German women... given, what he wants. And what women ask for around here. That is a woman... who comes to me did pay [the fee], implying that she is self-confident and independent, and she just does not want to end up as a man's trophy, just because he's looking for a beauty. She will want more, right?” (69)

Thus, the prospect of a much younger partner is tempting for German men, and choosing a Dominican wife is also a result of divergent ideas of men and women with respect to the sought after partner (as will be seen later). More precisely, agencies depict women as being willing to take almost anybody as husband, and an age difference of up to 25 years is stated as common when advertising German-Dominican matches. The experience of Mentrup is also confirmed by some male clients of Hertz and Richter who complained that German women would not accept a partner who is five, ten or more than ten years older. Men thus face some difficulties to achieve their ideals with respect to partners in Germany and as a result, men who register at Richter's agency are sometimes looking for a partner up to 30 years younger.⁷³

Richter: „That's also very important and has to be added: Many men aged 40, don't want a 40 year old woman... They argue: ‘Gosh, I'm still somewhat handsome and sporty,... fancy myself. Then a young woman – 25 or 28 years of age – is what I want’ (laughs) And they also tell me ‘Simon, that would be impossible here in Germany.’... just as an example, one guy once told me: ‘I'm 60. I have... placed a lot of ads in classified, and only 62 or 63 year-old women replied’, because those who were like 50 and whom he actually wanted, actually said that er... ‘I am 50... that guy's much too old for me’. They want a man aged 45! They want a man (laughs) who is five years younger than themselves!” (70)

The question that could now be raised is whose responsibility it is that these men do not manage to find a partner in Germany? Is it the fault of the German women who do not want to have a partner who is 10-15 years older? Or is it the German men's fault in the sense that they have unrealistic demands? The desire of German men to find a much younger partner is not a phenomenon reserved for international matchmaking, as confirmed by Mentrup. Moreover, unrealistic ambitions are not always limited to visions concerning the age as it is illustrated in the next testimonial.

⁷³ Burkart (1997) states that a functioning marriage market requires the assumption that always the participating individuals know about their resources (that is, their characteristics that make them attractive for potential partners) and their “market value” and thus, orient their aspiration level to the market conditions. In international matchmaking men are explicitly invited by the advertisement to “reach” for women who would not be reachable under national circumstances (because of their age or physical attractiveness, profession). By expanding their partner search to the Dominican Republic men have automatically access to women who would not belong to their potential partners without the difference in nationality.

Mentrup: „Well, when I have clients who have no style whatsoever,... who are truly boring... and then ask for a woman who's charismatic, stylish, and attractive... then one has to hint at... well, that this may not match with the women's expectations.” (71)

All in all, the men's self-assessment may result in their perception that German women do not want them and they therefore attempt to find a Dominican wife for whom they feel good enough (more precisely, who fulfils all *their* requirements). The reaction of Richter concerning the age difference shows that if a woman desires a partner who is five years younger this is considered ridiculous but if a man wants a partner who is 15 years younger, this is normal.⁷⁴ In spite of this common perception that Dominican women do not care about an age difference of 25 years, too big a difference has been repeatedly noticed by Richter and Hertz as being a possible negative factor preventing the formation of a relationship, not necessarily because of the age difference, but more because of different life approaches. Indeed, Dominican women reject potential German partners when they feel the age difference is too large, so that in the end they are not necessarily different from their German opponents (although they are presented as different in advertisements). Yet, not all men are attracted by the possible age difference. When choosing two women out of the internet gallery, the most important factor for Klaus (being 59 years old) was the older age of the women. There were however only few women listed older than 30.

Klaus: „With young women, there are other things going on... That's not what I want, because those who look for something like that, to score a very young woman, will not live up to it, anyway... All the ideas about life are different, totally different... I want a person, want to live with a person, where we simply like and complete each other.” (72)

Richter: „A woman may be as beautiful as it can get... when she faces her newly divorced 40 year-old from Germany, who already has two almost grown-up children, and this 25 year-old will say: 'Er,listen... Friedrich, er, if I had known this before, I wouldn't have gotten involved, because I still want two children!!' Right? Well, that's what you have to avoid.” (73)

Richter: “Once I had again... one of these... 40-year old clients who I've regularly and who chose a 19-year old, right? And, well... that's always on the brink of ridiculousness when we (laughing ironically) visit a family where a 40-year old man encounters such a 19-year old eh, eh... creature... Afterwards it was also clear for him to say 'okay, you're right, she's just too young!'” (74)

As is clear from the above testimonials, some clients are first interested in much younger women, but come to realize (also due to the coaching of the agency owners) that a woman closer to their own age would fit better. The difference in age, despite being taken for granted, could lead to conflicts when the age range is too large, for instance a 68-year old man who chooses a 19-year old woman. Even if Richter disapproves such a conception, he would not refuse this man as a client. Instead, he would wait for him to realize that this is unrealistic for a relationship and that „a woman of 38 would be more appropriate“ (being still

⁷⁴ Contrarily, Mentrup states that nowadays it does not seem a problem anymore that within a relationship men are younger than women. Hence, when placing ads for women of 49 years she regularly receives requests for men who are several years younger.

an age difference of 30 years). Coming back to the third one of the just cited statements, one can perceive Richter's ambivalent reaction: He knew beforehand that such a matching would not work and even describes the interest of his male client for such a young woman as being ridiculous. Nonetheless, he did not prevent him from meeting her, which is in line with Mentrup's statement "*the customer is always right*".⁷⁵

To conclude this subsection devoted to the profile of German men in matchmaking processes, a final characteristic will be briefly discussed. It is well-known that men who are participating in international matchmaking and who marry a woman from a developing country are often confronted with the prejudice of looking for a wife inferior to themselves in everyday negotiations processes, and having control in mind rather than a loving and enduring relationship (Glodava & Onizua, 1994).⁷⁶ During her investigation, Simons (2001, p.84) noticed that most men felt the need to justify themselves by claiming that they were looking for a loving relationship with equal partners, as they were used to these "*media characterizations of domineering men looking for obedient*" women. Hertz is convinced that the majority of his clients do look for a partnership based on equality, too. He is however surprised that some men look for a foreign partner in order to display a dominant behaviour once the couple lives together in Germany, but he doubts that relationships based on the man's dominance actually work.⁷⁷ For Wieland and Klaus it is central that a relationship should be based on mutual respect.

Klaus: "Well... to respect your partner and to aim to live with her, and sticking it out through thick and thin, right? And even if trouble's brewing every now and then. That's just normal. Otherwise marriage would be boring, right? That there are, at times, differences in opinion and each... one has a mind of one's own, and you argue for your position, and sometimes even fiercely, and sometimes you quarrel, that's all normal! But it has to go by, and that's love! When you find common ground, and you're there for each other, and you try to solve the problem, right? That's important to me." (75)

In this chapter the general profile and the main motivations of men participating in German-Dominican matchmaking have been presented. It has been observed that contrary to the results of Ruenkaew (2003), who mentions timidity and lack of self-consciousness as a reason for men to contact an international agency, being courageous, self-conscious and adventurous are the essential characteristics of participating men. In this sense, the results

⁷⁵ The statement approves the already mentioned fact that even if agency owners can give advice to their male clients and direct the matchmaking process in many ways, the final decision is up to their clients. They decide whom to see, regardless whether it seems reasonable to the broker or not.

⁷⁶ Note that such reproaches are not raised when marrying a Swedish or a British woman.

⁷⁷ Nonetheless, there are clients who express openly their desire of a partner who is „easy to handle“. One of Hertz' clients stated that he had to take hold during the whole day at work and that after 7 pm, when being at home, he did not wish to feel the need of still making his point. It appears somewhat ironical that this man did not succeed in finding a partner via the agency, exactly because of a lack of time. So the actual intention of changing his life and focus more on personal than professional issues was not followed up. This also shows that agency (i.e. initiative) from part of the man is important to initiate the matchmaking but that it does not automatically result in a matching in the case of unavailability or lack of initiative during the process.

of other investigations (Ruenkaew, 2003; Simons, 2001) have been confirmed. Furthermore, it can be surmised that men look for foreign spouses because they do not feel comfortable with German (emancipated) women, and because they assume foreign women are less “materialistic”. In addition, men’s sometimes unrealistic requirements towards women (regarding for instance their age) can be fulfilled by making use of international matchmaking services. On the other hand, the prejudices that men look for inferior partners do not coincide with the motivations that the majority of the male clients in German-Dominican matchmaking provided in this study. Instead, a loving and equitable relationship based on mutual respect was expressed as of main importance.

4.3 Participants in German-Dominican matchmaking: Dominican women

4.3.1 Profile

*“Respectable, friendly, loving, open minded;
Age between 21 and 33 years old,
slim, no children,
willing to learn the language of your boy-friend at some time;
willing to live in the country of your husband in some months time;
willing to adapt to a different, but interesting culture.”*

(Conditions for women to fulfil when registering at one of the agencies, July 2011)

Dominican women who participate in international matchmaking differ in age, family and professional status. Their living conditions are generally simple compared to Western standards and participating women live within a radius of about 30-50km of the agencies’ offices.⁷⁸ Thereby, brokers can firstly verify the woman’s indications about her family status, etc. but can also visit her easily in case she is contacted by an interested man.

Female clients are mainly between 18 and 35 years old and the majority of placed women are in their early twenties. It is common that those women still live with their parents and often up to five siblings. In the case that the parents are separated women live with their mother or aunt.

The majority of the registered women has not been married before, since, as stated by Richter, only few Dominican women marry officially in their early twenties. This is clearly in contrast with other sources of statistical information, which declare that the rate of Dominican women who are married before the age of 20 lies between 25-75%.⁷⁹ Typically, women who

⁷⁸ Poverty is often named as a reason for women to try to escape their living circumstance through marriage with a man from a developed country. But, the decision to migrate through marriage is not only taken because of the economic situation of the women. Many women in the same situation decide against a registering. Thus, the economic situation cannot be the only reason, but acts as amplification factor.

⁷⁹ Ariza (2000) states that in the Dominican Republic an early age of marriage is common and 75% of the Dominican women get married before they are 20 years old. Instead, UNICEF reported for 2000-2009 that 25% of the 15-19 years old women were married or in union (Unicef, 2010).

do not live with their families anymore habitually live in consensual unions rather than as married couples (compare with chapter 2). Due to such informal relationships, many of the registered women are single mothers. Furthermore, the average age at which Dominican women give birth for the first time is 20.6 years (CESDEM, 2007). This implies that teenage mothers are not an exception in the Dominican Republic. Although the available numbers in this regard differ according to the consulted sources, they seem to agree that around 25% of the Dominican women have given birth before the age of 18.⁸⁰ This high number of young mothers is also reflected in the female client database of the agencies. Indeed, scrolling through the women's gallery and profiles of one of the agencies shows that only 90 out of the 240 currently online women are childless, implying that 63% of the women (being mostly in their early twenties) are mothers. Yet, having children noticeably decreases their chance for a German spouse, and it has been estimated by Hertz that a child from a former relationship would only be acceptable for about 10% of the male clients. With more than one child, a woman sees her chances of finding a spouse through the agency essentially going to zero. However, not all men reject a partner with children. As an example, Klaus did not hesitate to contact Mary-Sol who is mother of two children, aged two and ten, going against the mainstream preferences.⁸¹

Hertz and Richter describe Dominican women as very family oriented and giving priority to their families. In spite of their work in the waged labour market women strongly identify with their maternal role, "*which remains the prime source of female identity in Latin American society*" (Safa (1995), p.121). Regardless of their jobs and earnings, they mainly identify themselves as wives and mothers and "*[J]atina nannies celebrate motherhood as the sole vocation if financial sources are sufficient.*" (Simons, 2001, referring to Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). This identification could be rooted in the distinctly defined gender roles. More precisely, "*[m]en are seen as workers with family responsibilities, while women view themselves as wives and mothers with economic responsibilities; that is, women place their domestic responsibilities over their economic responsibilities*" (Safa, 1995, p. 183f.). This is expressed by the distinction between "calle" (public domains) and "casa" (private domains). Women aspire to full-time homemaker roles, seeing short term employment as necessary for "*helping their husbands*" (Pessar, 1995 as cited by Simons, 2001). Nevertheless, as has

⁸⁰ Unicef (2010) reports that 25% of the 20-24 years old women gave birth before the age of 18. Other publications present somewhat divergent estimates for teenage pregnancy, ranging between 10% (Worldbank, 2010) and 41% (García, 2006). Local estimates hold that 15% of all children were born to teenage mothers whereas 50% were born to mothers below the age of 24 (One, 2011).

⁸¹ Not all men in matchmaking react like Klaus who feels as being part of Mary-Sol's family and as taking over the role of a father figure for her sons. Klaus' friend who told him about the agency and is married to a Thai woman had advised his wife to leave her child in Thailand with her family (as kind of condition to form a relationship to her). He is supporting it financially every month. This option did absolutely not come into consideration for Klaus, as "a mother suffers when being separated from her child" and he wants Mary-Sol to be happy. The example shows that conditions implemented on women in international matchmaking can go as far as telling a mother to leave her child behind when entering the relationship.

already been mentioned in chapter 2, the number of Dominican women engaged in waged labour work is high, even when also taking care of a family. This premise has been confirmed by a census made between 1980 and 1990 and which could attest that the rates of women involved in paid labour did not decrease during the most central ages of their life i.e. when women are involved in starting a family. Instead, the rates remained stable until the age of 40 (Ariza, 2000). This indicates that women do not necessarily abandon paid work when having or raising children. These numbers are not surprising, considering the already substantially high number of single mothers who, in many cases, do not benefit from any financial support from the children's father, or when accounting for women who are sole earners. It is especially the married women who were commonly assumed to be supplementary wage earners that are pushed into the labour force (Ariza, 2000). And because income is usually low and state services not well developed, children are given to family members who take care of them while the mother is at work.

Mary-Sol's family constellation shows the typical features of a female led household (already in the second generation) and reflects the common situation of Dominican women of working and caring for the family at the same time. She is a 39-years old school teacher and works half days at school to nourish her family. Before meeting Klaus she had been married but got divorced about three years ago. She has two children from her first husband, who are attended by her mother, aunt or sister (who live next door) when she is at work. Mary-Sol and her two sisters were raised by their mother as their father died early. It was only through the hard work of her mother that she and her sisters were able to go to university.

Many of the women at the agencies were raised solely by their mother and an example where the absence of the father and the lack of state support presents severe difficulties is the case of Gabriela's family. Her mother was dumped by her first partner with whom she has four children. Her second partner (the father of Gabriela) left her mother also for another woman, when Gabriela was 10 years old. Thus, she was raised by her mother who had to take care of her five children on her own and under difficult financial conditions. Gabriela's mother cannot work as she is suffering from diabetes among other things and does not receive reliable financial or other support from her former partners, either. Hence, she had to beg friends of her for clothes, shoes and items of need as she could neither earn to support her family on her own, nor receive help from the state or her former partners. She did not want Gabriela to undergo similar experiences with men as she did. Therefore, she countenanced her decision to register at the agency hoping that Gabriela, who was 20 years old at that time, would find a loyal partner for a (also financially) stable relationship.

The families of the participating women mostly support the women's decision to register at an agency, when getting to know the agency owner and noticing the respectability of the business. However, others are hesitant and doubtful about their daughter's decision.

Mary-Sol: "Oh, no! No, I didn't tell them (laughing) because they (laughing)... listen, when they found out that I got into it [they asked], 'into what?! You will register at an agency?' And I was like 'mhh (affirmative, laughing)'... No, they hadn't wanted 'Oh, when you know a man from there! Who knows, you might be looking for the cat's fifth leg [look for problems when there's nothing wrong].'" (76)

The family gets especially involved in the process of matchmaking when the daughter still lives at home. More precisely, when a woman has been chosen by a male client it forms part of the process that her family is visited. This visit is not only important for the man to get an idea of the woman's background and her everyday life, but also important for the woman's family to get an impression of the man.⁸² For Richter it is important to include the families in the decision making and in only few cases does a family advise their daughter not to participate, or ban her from further participation. Reasons range, from the age difference between her and the male candidate, to the fact that they cannot miss their daughter's help in the household.

Richter: "We... involve the whole family, because mother, father, or uncle – depending on where she's living – should immediately... also... have a say in the matter, and should state whether they're supporting it, what they think about the man." (77)

After establishing a relationship with a German man, many families benefit economically from this relationship. Many women and their families live in simple conditions and it is common that the boyfriend or future husband of the women sends regular financial assistance to his spouse's family.⁸³

Although Dominican women are very much attached to their families, nowadays, women in the urban centres in the Dominican Republic pursue a life apart from traditional roles as mother and wife. This means that a profession and good education have become a growing desire and of increased social value, leading to two diametrical societies: the rural and the urban. As most female clients come from urban areas, many have a degree enabling them to study which many wish to do. The educational and professional background of the participating women is of a wide variety; they are however expected to have at least finished the obligatory eight years of school (*primaria*), and to be able to read and write as illiteracy rates are as high as 13% in the Dominican Republic (CIA, 2011). Comparable to German matchmaking, partners often coincide concerning their education degree. Hence, as not all male clients finished secondary school (*Abitur*) or have an university degree, Richter pays attention to register women of different educational and professional background but prefers it if the women have finished secondary school (*secundaria*).

⁸² Most families take part in the matchmaking the very beginning. Gabriela was for example accompanied by her mother and sister to her first meeting with Wieland the day he was "presented" at the restaurant. The other women of the agency were also accompanied by siblings, cousins or aunts.

⁸³ Wieland, for instance, sends 100 Euro every month to Gabriela's mother. Furthermore, he financed her mother's and sister's flights to their marriage in Germany.

Richter: "...and these women then are really capable to think rationally, ... they are fit in arithmetic... they have their say, right?... and they really have some minimum requirements with respect to their own intellect. Naturally, that's the group we target." (78)

As has been mentioned, women who register at the agencies are usually in their early twenties and their age is often an important factor in attracting a German man to deciding on a foreign spouse. Furthermore, physical attractiveness is an essential resource. When choosing women to contact, men have no information besides pictures and a few details about the women's lives and hobbies. As a matter of fact, women are chosen principally by their pictures, thus their attractiveness is *the* convincing factor. Of preference are primarily slim women and corpulent women only have scarce chances, whatever their age is. Most clicks on Richter's webpage are for slim women with typical characteristics of femininity and Caribbean appearance (such as dark eyes and dark long hair). However, when actually meeting the women in reality, slimness becomes less important for the choice, and the importance of her charisma predominates.⁸⁴

Neither youth nor beauty are enough for women to have a chance in international matchmaking. Self-confidence is not only an important feature of the German men who participate but as well of the women who register as clients. Agency owners explicitly look for women who are extroverted, self-confident and open-minded as these are those with the best chances of "convincing" a man to stay with his choice. Similar to men (who need to show courage to fly to an unknown country), women need to have the courage to register at an agency and meet with an unknown man (despite having in mind the common prejudices and stories about men who use this service).

Gabriela: "Well, I always thought that. I said: 'well, if it's for prostitution eh...- It's a bit more of what I will do, but I also thought... that everything cannot be like that. The person has to meet the other first... and to analyse if it's convenient or not or if you observe something strange, [then] you just walk away... I think for myself, I do not follow what other people say... 'No! I will meet him' because if I follow what people say, then... I won't do anything." (79)

Mary-Sol: "[My family asked] 'But why do you get into that agency?' And I replied 'Well,... I have to try it... test my luck' (laughing)." (80)

⁸⁴ The way that women are displayed on the web sites of international matchmaking agencies is often criticised (compare 4.1.1) but can be looked at from another perspective. The internet makes the self a commodity on public display and it places "each person searching for another in a market in open competition with others" (Illouz, 2010, p. 79). Written in the context of web based dating sites, this applies as well for the web pages of international matchmaking agencies. It explains the way of presentation of some women in the pictures' galleries. Beauty has to do much with impression management and women know that physical attractiveness is important, hence, it seems plausible that women use beauty and attractiveness strategically. They are all in high competition to each other as their photographs are the first impression that men receive of them, deciding about a second click on their profile and a possibly resulting contact. Thus, at this moment their body is "the main source of social and economic value... [T]hrough their body they are made to compete with others... [as] their body and appearance are on public display" (Illouz, 2010, p. 81). Taking the importance of the pictures into account could explain the intention of women to present themselves in the best possible way irrespective of clothing and posture.

Authors such as Lloyd (2000) and Del Rosario (1994) state that women are clearly the passive objects of business transaction between the matchmaking agency and the man. In contrast, the above mentioned statements show not only courage but as well agency or initiative as essential characteristic of women who participate in international matchmaking. They cannot be generalized as passive as already their decision to register is in most cases actively taken. Agency is often displayed when migrating voluntarily in order to achieve better living conditions. Consequently, women *“who choose to correspond with and marry foreign men are not mobile simply by virtue of men’s initiative and power. Women actively seek out such opportunities for mobility and take initiatives to enable themselves to make moves that they view as empowering for themselves and their families. To view women as simply on the ‘receiving end’ of mobility is to downplay their central role in facilitating their own migrations.”* (Constable, 2005, p. 183). One could at most argue that they are passive when waiting for being contacted by a man. But then, having been contacted, they have again the chance to act and react. Thus, agency owners do not look for docile women when admitting female clients to their files. On the contrary, they try to clarify beforehand that the women have the motivation to facilitate their integration in Germany later, to learn the language, to make contacts and to probably start an apprenticeship in their new country of residence. Hence, when seeking women for their agencies, they are in search of cheerful, extroverted, self-confident and curious women; of women who are independent and ambitious of achieving something in life, and who expect more from life.

Richter: “My female clients should generally be, ... that you realize during the interview: They ask questions, they are curious, they want to know... like where you immediately realize that... um... if they’re getting along with me... and when they already convince me, then they will also convince the man, whom she might pick as her husband, ... then there will be a connection. They’re lively. They are simply... well, they are very open-minded.” (81)

Richter: “Women, who take their life into their own hands, ... who are active, who have ambitions, who take an English evening class, who... who have the ambition to make something of themselves, ... they stand out... stand out by some decision. Or by a kind of strong will, which they’ve developed throughout life. They don’t want to confine themselves to just sitting around, and well, ... at some time maybe marry someone... who made them fall in love and with whom they then move in... no, they rather somehow want to take their life into their own hands. They themselves want to contribute... they’re... simply exciting characters, and that’s what we’re looking for. That’s our target group.” (82)

As has already been mentioned in chapter 4.2, the expectations towards these women are high; not only on the part of the men but also on the part of the agency owners. During meetings with their potential partner, women are expected to be joyful, kind and optimistic. If they do not show interest for the man they are meeting, Richter does not hesitate to expel them from the agency if they continue with such behaviour. Anyhow, if not behaving “convincingly” men can decide to choose somebody else as happened with Wieland’s first choice who went dancing the night before their second meeting and overslept.

Richter: "and we can be rather brusque, concerning well... eliminations, 'cause when we see that one of the women grossly overreacts or is really phlegmatic or just dull or... well does not let her hair down, while the man is really eager for her to lead the conversation for a change... then you can easily tell: She's the wrong kind of woman for the agency, right? We need cheerful; we need agreeable and optimistic personalities. That's really, really, really important!" (83)

Wieland: "and, er... that's when I called the broker to tell him,... that I don't agree with ... with her just going out to party, and if it wasn't possible to be presented to another woman... because I just realized then that she wasn't really interested in me, just by the way she behaved, er... when someone comes all that way... basically I lost interest in keeping in contact, since, er... if she just doesn't care, that someone has expressed interest in her, and she has to go to party that same evening, well that... from my point of view that's like: 'Forget about it!'" (84)

Having given an insight into the profile and characteristics of Dominican women in international matchmaking, their motivations to register will now be discussed.

4.3.2 Motivation

"We look for a German love for you. Men who are single, respectable, healthy, attractive, professional and elegant. They will travel to the Dominican Republic to get to know you. All in an individual ambience. We go out together, have dinner together, spend time together... And you will strongly fall in love. If you want. Everything is voluntary. Everything is without obligation. Your heart decides, his heart decides. A good idea?" (Extract of a web site for German-Dominican matchmaking, July 2011)

"People choose international marriage in large measure due to the belief that it is a way to resolve the contradiction between life goals and the reality that limits their realization." (Simons, 2001, p. 4). More precisely, women who opt for a marriage to a foreign man are driven by different motivations⁸⁵ that are identified by Simons (2001) as including the aim of having a better life, namely financially (financial security), occupationally (better work opportunities), and emotionally (e.g. emotional support).⁸⁶ Nevertheless, women in international matchmaking are often reproached for having purely financial interests or the wish to get the residence and/or work permit in a Western country. This latter motivation has been cited as the main reasons by some studies (e.g. on women from the Philippines). However, Dominican women who look for a German spouse are primarily driven by other reasons such as finding loyal and non-violent partners who offer them stable relationships and families.

As clarified in chapter 2.2, the high rate of families led by female heads of households, who raise their children alone or with the minimal financial support of their spouses, is partly due

⁸⁵ See Mullan & Dovlatov (2006) for motivations of Russian women in Russian-American matchmaking; Simons (2001) for motives of Russian and Filipino women; Ruenkaew (2003) for reasons of Thai women to marry a German man.

⁸⁶ A case study of UN-instraw in Colombia found a significant number of middle-aged women whose reason to migrate to Spain was neither related to economic factors nor for family reunification. Instead, they were driven by the expectation of new relationship opportunities. More precisely, for women of their age it was easier in Spain to find a new partner in Spain than it was in Colombia where youth is an essential factor of male attraction (UN-instraw, 2007).

to the economically weakened position of men as breadwinners; but also partly due to unstable relationships. Thus, one main reason for women participating in matchmaking, which has been mentioned by brokers and couples, is the pervasive disloyalty of Dominican men towards their women as well as widespread domestic violence. In the Dominican Republic there seem to be the attitude that a man has to have relationships to several women simultaneously in order to be a “real” man.⁸⁷ As a matter of fact, disloyalty to women is widespread and after having passed through several liaisons, Dominican women wish to form a stable marriage with a spouse on whom they can rely. Furthermore, women do not want to go through the same experiences as their mothers did. Gabriela’s mother even took good care that her daughter would not end up in a similar situation as she did (compare 4.3.1, p. 74). Hence, she supported Gabriela’s registration out of the wish that Gabriela meets a man who is loyal to her and her future children.

Hertz: “Well... that’s something like a general sport around here and... many women just overlook it... but you quickly notice, that the young ones, that have to grow up this way... often with their parents being separated... maybe just don’t want to go through the same as their parents did.” (85)

Richter: “Dominican women hate infidelity!... but it is a men’s sport around here, to boast with having two or three women, right? Dominican women want to get away from this kind of infidelity, really, all they want is to ascribe to a man of whom they can say that he stands by her!... That they spend the weekends together, go on holidays together, that he wants two or three children of her... that they are a harmonic family! A family that stays together. Not a man who jumps from blossom to blossom, and who doesn’t even take his own family seriously.” (86)

Gabriela: “It’s like,... not all of them [are like that] but... he’s with you, um, he gives you affection, he gives you love but on the other hand... behind your back, he already gives love to another woman. And how knows? Maybe to other four or five.” (87)

Partly due to the agency’s advertisement, partly due to stories and own experiences, German men make up a similar opinion of Dominican men.

Wieland: “There are a lot of machos in the Dominican Republic as they’re called here in Germany. Well, this girl today, that one tomorrow, and yet another one the day after tomorrow. That’s the way it goes... because when children turn up many of them just walk off. They abandon the woman and the child... hence Dominican women ... look for men, who... who stand by her, who also, let’s say, love her, who stick it out with her, ... who also... stay and will stay with her. And not today this girl, tomorrow that one, passing themselves around like a travelling trophy.” (88)

The reason for such behaviour, Richter assumes is because many women grow up only with their mothers or aunts (because of the mentioned family situation) and consequently they are missing male attachment figures. When they are 18 or 19 years old, they are too naive and inexperienced and meet up and start relationships with men who dump them shortly afterwards.

⁸⁷ See as well Simons (2001) about disloyalty as push-factor in Filipino-US-American matchmaking.

Richter: "They often lack a male role model in the family. They never really got to know their fathers. They really cling to – so to speak - cling to a man here, 'cause they think: 'Finally! I didn't have one when I was a child, but now I have one'." (89)

Contrary to Dominican men, German men have a positive reputation of being more loyal and less violent with their spouses; of being interested in a harmonic family life and in spending their life with one partner in a respectful and constant relationship, an image reflected by Klaus and Wieland. This image, proved by experiences of women who already live with their German partner, is an important resource of German men and clearly a push-factor for women to register at the agencies.

Klaus: "staying faithful is a really important issue, and not fooling around at some point... because in the end it's noticed and it gets out at some point... I've a lot of trust in Mary-Sol... And that's really important to me." (90)

Wieland: "I'm rather frustrated... well, with Dominican men, because I mean, they really have some pretty women over there... but... you know, you have to take a decision at some point, which one to take, and then you have to stay with her, and stop... er... well running around, and chatting up a new one every day... Yes, standing faithfully... and honestly by your wife... and when, let's say, when another woman hits on you a little,... you should be able to resist and to tell her 'Listen, I'm sorry. You are a beautiful woman, no doubt, but I'm married and I'll stay with my wife.' ...Otherwise I wouldn't need to marry her or live with her, for that matter." (91)

Hertz further remarks that many women register at his agency because Dominican men are violent towards their partners, often in connection with alcohol. Indeed, the rate of violence against women is high and Unicef states that for example 14% of Dominican men aged 15-19 think that is okay to beat their female partner (Unicef, 2010).⁸⁸ "Nadie se mete entre problemas de marido y mujer"⁸⁹, this maxim seems common in Dominican society and expresses the general attitude towards domestic violence (including emotional, sexual and physical violence). Only in January 1997 the Dominican Republic issued „Ley 24-97“ or *La ley contra la violencia domestica* (The law against domestic violence), "making all forms of domestic violence completely illegal and punishable by law" (Jackman, 2010). Nevertheless, according to Roque Feliz, 24% of the Dominican women (14-49 years old) suffered abuse and more than 600 women have been assassinated in the last five years, mainly by their partners or ex-partners (Feliz, 2011).

As a matter of fact, many women who register at the agencies have experienced violent husbands or partners themselves or fathers violent towards their mothers. From a foreign partner they thus expect non-violent relationships based on loyalty and mutual respect. Mary-Sol went through a violent relationship herself. Her first husband was disloyal, violent and beating their oldest son when being drunk. She eventually hoped to find a German partner through the agency to build up a non-violent, stable and respectful family for her and her two

⁸⁸ For more information about domestic violence in the Dominican Republic see ONE, *Violencia conyugal en República Dominicana*, Panorama Estadístico 2/12, 2009.

⁸⁹ "Nobody interferes the problems of husband and wife."

children. Through two friends of her, who had found a German partner, she experienced the difference between German and Dominican men.

Mary-Sol: "Well, the German men were good men and so I said 'well! They are better than Dominican men' (laughing) and I was married here and I already have two sons and... getting married here was no good idea... The one I got married to was very violent... I spent so much time suffering all that violence, so much violence, he was violent and drinking a lot! And throwing things around in the house... and I realized that... that my friends' partners weren't like that. They were good men, so... oh no. Better, I go for the agency." (92)

Her personal experience of her former relationship and the difficulty of finding a man with similar priorities to hers, led Mary-Sol to register at the agency. After having met Klaus for a couple of times, she realized that he was not violent but well-adjusted and had the characteristics of a man that she was looking for. As well due to her two children, she took a well considered decision.

Mary-Sol: "Although I can tell you, not all of them [of the Dominican men are violent], because many of them are good. But my luck was not that good. I got one of the bad ones.... I was alone for two years [afterwards] and what I found were men that were either married, or men that were not for me or younger men that were not suitable for building a family.... Mh mh (negating), I couldn't find anyone with whom I could form a family, a home... I don't care about his age, the important thing is that he's a good man, that he's not violent.... Klaus isn't a young man. He is a man... who I could see, who was looking for some stability... and I already have two sons so I couldn't be jumping from one to the other. ...what I was looking for was to settle down with a man and my kids, a man that was good to my kids... and I realized that Klaus was on the same page as me.... When Klaus comes to my place, you know, he... would joke around, he was nice with the boys and I would watch that, you know, I would do like... keep away and look at them to see... how he treated the boys... I checked a lot of things before... before getting together with him... I wasn't gonna jump blind-folded." (93)

For the agencies it is important to select their male clients and refuse them if necessary in order to keep their reputation and business running. Apart from the brokers' own standard, it is essential because word to mouth propaganda is most frequent for advertising and a bad experience within the frame of the agency would be damaging for the agency's business.

Hertz: "That's quite tough around here and... when the woman realizes that the German man... is also that violent, well... for many this is a reason to turn their backs on our agency." (94)

By dating a German man, Dominican women have the hope to find a loyal and non-violent partner. Furthermore, they want to break free from established family patterns and gender relations by finding a partner who respects the woman's opinion and desires.

Mary-Sol: "Well, you know, there are good [Dominican] men... but... here they're like... what they like is to drink. They get drunk and then they get mean and violent... German men are... are more calm... they don't drink so much, they are not that drunkards (smiling),... And they're not that jealous either,... mh mh (negating). You know, they have a different temper." (95)

Gabriela: "I want a man who is loving, understanding and who doesn't... like so many of them, talk to women as if they were some I don't know what... and that um... that he values what one thinks, too... Dominican men are interested in a woman's body... but... they're not interested about whether she wants to work... or wants to study or what she thinks, they're interested in other things (laughing)... German men are always looking for a way to help. Making sure that you find your own way, and things like that." (96)

Gabriela: "There are many [Dominican women] who, who are beaten, who, I don't know... their husbands don't care if they need tights, if they need clothes... they have solely to be at home, taking care of the kids, cooking..." (97)

This last statement by Gabriela does not only reflect violence as reason to register but as well differing ideas of men and women of how to design a relationship. Dominican men imagine their women as clearly belonging to the domestic sphere (*casa*), as caring for household and children, and they perceive them as contributing but not as receiving. In contrast, Gabriela expresses the wish of women for partners who care for them in the sense that their needs are taken into account and seriously. They long for partners who respect them instead of seeing them only as workers for their families. Furthermore, it shows that the ideas about gender relations (e.g. within the family or the relationship) differ among Dominican men and women. To Dominican women who do not want to submit to the desires or requirements of Dominican men anymore, the decision to register at an agency thus becomes a possibility to find a man who shares similar ideas about a relationship, and hence is more attractive for her as a life partner or husband.

As has already been mentioned, women participating in international matchmaking are usually accused of looking for a German husband to become able to move country or for financial benefit. Even if many women have the purpose of establishing a stable relationship based on love and mutual respect, there are women who have other things in mind. Gabriela dissociates herself from women who look for a German husband simply to be able to travel or for financial reasons and who, according to her perception, represent the majority of the women who register at the agency (*"Una o dos eran por amor y el resto era por dinero"*⁹⁰). Indeed, some women state openly that they look for a man who gets them out of the Dominican Republic, away from their problems, and who helps them in every day life. They want a German husband for his money and the opportunity to travel. Given the residential restrictions in Germany as in many countries (visa, immigration law, citizenship, etc.), *"marriage may appear to be a relatively efficient means of ensuring permanent migration to favoured destinations. ...Women and men may accept spouses who, though otherwise not very eligible, are well-located"* (Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008, p. 31). In some studies the desire of women to marry a man from Germany, the USA or other desired Western countries in order to be able to move there has been declared as essential motivation to register at a matchmaking agency. Thus, the country of residence becomes an important resource of the

⁹⁰ „One or two registered for love and the rest just for the money.“

men, increasing their attractiveness for women. For some Dominican women the financial resources of the man predominate as a reason to register but not the chance to move to Germany.

Gabriela: "Some of the Dominican women... stay in the Dominican Republic. So... the German husband always sends money... and they just enjoy themselves and do what they want." (98)

Gabriela: "Sometimes, the majority of those women are only interested in men in Germany... because they have money. And sometimes they are interested only in the money they have... for example, when I was at Simon's, there was a girl and... the way she talked showed that she was only interested in the man's money 'oh, look, he sent me that much, that much and that much' and... she had a daughter with a Dominican... so, um... the German got together with her having another man's daughter... and after a while... she didn't want to go to Germany anymore, she always wanted to stay in the Dominican Republic... they got married and everything in the Dominican Republic and he went back to Germany and then he would travel for holidays to the Dominican Republic where she was... he tried to take her to Germany, but she... I don't know, she always had excuses and then she got pregnant with the other's second baby, the first one... so I think they already got divorced... Imagine that! A man travels so far for a woman and finds a situation like this when he gets there." (99)

Gabriela states that in every country there exist such women who rip off men and that this is no special feature of Dominican women. Matchmaking agencies, where men register with the objective of finding a woman to marry, are notwithstanding good places for these women to simulate emotions in order to achieve their real desires (e.g. financial or residential benefits). Statements as "Polish, Russian or Dominican women, all take advantage of German men" are widespread but it has to be kept in mind that it is not a general characteristic of women from these countries. However, agencies are an ideal first port of call for those with such intentions. Hertz disagrees with the often heard reproach that registered women are only looking for a step to move to a better developed country and for financial security. Vartti (2003, p.197) made the observation that brokers in general do not state that the men's financial resources are the primary reason for the women's participation, but their search for "real love and marriage". "Thus, the matchmakers see poverty as a push factor, but they don't want to admit that hopes for wealth could be one of the pull factors for the women."

Hertz: "Our critics generally argue that the women are only trying to get abroad, in order to guarantee their financial situation... but when I interview the girls around here..., I get a totally different impression. Well, it is less... about material things, but more about finding someone who treats her well. And with whom she can live happily and have children... we also get cancelations from women, who just don't want that... who just don't want to leave." (100)

Klaus does not believe that economic reasons and financial advantages are the only reasons for women seeking German men either, and emphasizes that German men play their role by supporting the financial interests of the women (which can be compared to the story told by Gabriela).

Klaus: “[Dominican] women are very amiable and, and they don’t want to rip anyone off.... There may be the odd one – and you spoil them yourself... if you... bury them in gifts or money... and that takes a negative turn. You have to exercise a little caution, every now and then...” (101)

Prospective husbands emphasize that “citizenship and its potential benefits should, in fact, not be a concern for the women involved: only true, genuine, disinterested love should drive the prospective wife” (D’Aoust, 2009, p. 23). Referring to the study of Constable (2005), “men are generally very reluctant to link their marriage to political or economic aspects, and usually emphasized love as the single or most essential element of a marriage” (Ibid.). Nevertheless, men, women as well as agency owners acknowledge that there are women who participate in international matchmaking not for love but for other interests. However, most of the time, emotional and economic interest or benefit go hand in hand. Both women interviewed in this study, whilst emphasizing their interest in the *men*, also benefit economically from their relationships. Gabriela, who does not work because she is caring for her and Wieland’s child, cannot support her mother financially. Therefore, her husband Wieland is sending her mother a monthly amount of 100 Euro. This money has a function similar to remittances sent by labour migrants, as her mother is not able to work anymore and governmental benefits are nonexistent. Remittances mainly compensate for state deficiency, taking over the function of the non-existing welfare state and supporting people suffering from unemployment, retirement or illness. Similarly, Mary-Sol, who is still living apart from Klaus, is receiving his financial support that allows her, together with her work, to finance her and her children’s living without taking new loans.

However, women have sometimes distorted perceptions about what awaits them in Germany. More precisely, the image of Germany as a well developed country contributes to the women’s desire to marry a foreigner, that is, the imagined world conditions migration. Most of the women have never travelled to Germany or Europe before and the ideas of what to expect are often far from reality such as immediate economic benefits, more possibilities for self-expression or the ability to always fly wherever they want. The brokers try to limit and modify these illusions by explaining the costs associated with the high standard of living, taxes, insurance and by mentioning topics such as unemployment and the expectations of their husbands to contribute to their common life via waged labour.

Hertz: “The women quite often believe that if you can afford to take a plane, you have to have a lot of money. I mean, we’re saving up for our holidays... there’s not much saving here [in the Dominican Republic]. That’s not how the people are around here. Well, if they have money, they just spend it.” (102)

Richter: “I make clear that there [in Germany] is unemployment... that it’s usual that both partners are employed, in order to pay for all expenses, to be able to afford all expenses... I make all that understood, right? That the man’s going to ask much of his wife. Well, ... to contribute..., but they [Dominican women] aren’t like that anyway, right? Dominican women are hardworking,... A Dominican woman certainly is not a lean person!” (103)

Many of the women anyway express the wish to work in Germany or, if they have recently left school, to enter university or make an apprenticeship; a desire that is generally supported by their German partners (compare chapter 4.2.2, p. 68). Work in the waged labour market can empower women and help them to gain more authority in their home due to their economic contribution, whether in their home country or in the country of their husband. This means that it can give women a basis on which to resist male dominance (e.g. by providing them with greater legitimacy to negotiate).⁹¹ But even if paid labour has long been viewed as “*one way of breaking down women’s isolation and dependence on men*”, obstacles, such as the segregation in poorly paid jobs or a “*gender ideology that continues to portray women as ‘supplementary’ workers*” nevertheless prevent women from achieving their goals (Safa, 1995, p. 4). In the Dominican Republic, despite the important financial contribution of women to the households, their greater financial responsibility and men’s resignation from their role as economic provider, the gender concepts of the male breadwinner model persist in the family structure and household organization. “*Women, even if they are employed, are assumed to be responsible for domestic chores and child care, while male responsibilities in the household are minimized in favour of their primary role as breadwinner. Designating men as the primary breadwinner maintains male control over female labour, which is largely confined to the home and reproductive sphere.*” (Safa, 1995, p. 37). The requirement leads to a double burden as women are not only responsible for the household and children but additionally work in the waged labour market (compare 2.2). This implies that women who are enrolled in waged labour, experience emancipation and gain independence and bargaining power within their family and household. However, it can result in the desire of the woman to be just responsible for one sphere and thus, in the accordance of being “only” a housewife when living in Germany (Safa, 1995).

Hertz: “They just want to find someone,... who’s faithful, who’s not macho,... who treats them with respect... someone who takes care of them financially,... who’s no scrooge... and who would say: ‘You don’t have to work, and raise the kids on the side.’ ... but the main reason is always that they want to escape frustration.” (104)

When discussing the double burden of women, Simons (2001, p. 86) voices a similar thought by referring to the contradiction that aspects of both, patriarchy and feminist advances can exist simultaneously: “*The husband as sole breadwinner, from this perspective, is not viewed as a form of exploitation. To the respondents, both male and female, the sexual division of labour within the marriage, far from being an externally imposed distorted and denigrating straight-jacket, was viewed as deliberately chosen. To the women, this signified elevated social and economic status that translated into the concrete advantages of remittances to parents and siblings back home as well as personal benefits to the women themselves and their own children.*” More precisely, what is externally evaluated as the maldistribution of

⁹¹ See statements of Dominican women interviewed by Safa (1995, p. 112ff.).

resources and labour, can be seen as parity, “as equality between them and their husbands based on agreed division of labour within the family” (Ibid., p.89). However, as has been mentioned several times, most women at the agencies have the ambition to find a job in Germany and do not want to limit their life to family and household. Some have the ambition to improve their skills to achieve better positioned and paid jobs; others have the aim to earn quick money to be able to contribute to the common household, or to send money as remittances to their families in the Dominican Republic. Even if most husbands do not require that their Dominican wives work in the waged labour market, they support their desire to work. Speaking proper German is not only a condition of finding a job in Germany but also possibly prevents professional downgrading.

Klaus: “Mary-Sol asked me whether she would be allowed to work here, when she was living with me, and that’s basically a general attitude, right?... but here I thought that she should improve her language proficiency, first, ...I wouldn’t like to place her just anywhere... die-cutting in some factory, or anything like that. Well, that wouldn’t make her happy either, since she went to university, right? Well, and I’m not that kind of person. I wouldn’t just put her there...er, for the life of me, so that she’s making some dough, right? That’s an issue of consideration... why one has married a person in the first place, ... as a kind of tool or because you want to live with her.” (105)

Wieland: “Concerning that [Gabriela starts working], I’m absolutely supportive,... it would allow her to develop an intuition, let’s say,... what working actually means, and earning your own money, because, at times, I’m being reproached: ‘Oh, you pay for everything and I’m always depending on you...’. I’ve told her: ‘No, you’re not dependent.’ ... told her that it’s normal that the man earns the living and the wife takes care of the home, in case she’s not employed. But that’s all subject to change. That’s not supposed to stay this way. ‘...but you should improve on your German, first, because... it just makes no sense, that you start,... any apprenticeship or position now, when you don’t understand what they are actually asking from you!’.” (106)

As has already been noted in chapter 2.2, the economic marginality of Dominican men can result in marital instability as it can drive men from the home or make them reluctant to marry and at the same time increases the resistance to marriage among women, too. If Dominican men are not attractive anymore for women because of their marginal economic contribution and at the same time refuse to get involved in the domestic sphere, they have little to offer to women or their families. As a result, women will not accept their subordination anymore if men do not have anything to exchange or to offer (such as financial or emotional support and loyalty). Consequently, women look for foreign men as they are in search of an egalitarian relationship where they do not necessarily have to fulfil a double burden. They are looking for men who still act as providers in the case that they undertake domestic duties such as child education or housework, and they assume that a marriage with a foreigner will provide such options.

Hence, the reasons of Dominican women for participating in international matchmaking is based on the desire to find a loyal, non-violent partner with whom to build a stable relationship and a family that is based on mutual respect. Nonetheless, women also register out of other reasons such as financial or residential benefit. Usually, economic and emotional

interests are equally involved given that marriage as advancement strategy is not incompatible with romantic ties (D'Aoust, 2009). Women differ according to their ambitions, as well when making demands of their future partner: Some set value on a proper profession and income, others set store on character traits or physical appearance. For those who set more limits it is not assured that they will find somebody (or better said, are found by somebody who is good enough), given the generally low chances of being selected. Finally, even if many women decide to register at the agencies, nonetheless, many women decide against this step and the possibility of leaving their country. Reasons are the fear that something bad could happen to them, or negative stories that they heard from other expatriates. Besides, lack of flexibility, close bonds with their families and the worry that they cannot deal with the new culture prevent women from looking for a foreign partner.⁹²

⁹² Research is missing about what separates women who migration through international matchmaking from those who do not. Faist (2000, p.289ff.) lists several reasons for relative immobility that can be used to explain why women in similar situations decide against the registration at an agency. Among them are despondence (resignation for lack of resources for exit and choice), location-specific assets such as human and social capital (assets that are tied to certain places and can thus not be taken along when migrating as well as problems transferring human capital), alternatives to migration such as personal ties or loyalty to groups, and finally, alternatives to international migration such as internal or South-to-South migration. In addition, Simons (2001, p.142) refers to psychological studies of Samonte (1986, 1992, 1995) concluding that participating women tend to be "*adventurers, risk takers, self-confident, and resourceful*".

5. Conclusion

In 2007, approximately 3 million Latin Americans were resident in the European Union (Yépez de Castillo, 2007) and Latin-American women often outnumber male migrants leading to the claim that there has been a “*feminization of Latin-American migration to Europe*” (Hernández, 2007, p. 217). Currently, about 100,000 people from Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean are living in Germany. Among these, 65% are women, and among the Dominican population present in Germany, the proportion of women rises to 70%, with married women forming the majority (Destatis, 2010, see Figures 3 and 4 Appendix I, p. 103).

Due to the economic and political development of the Dominican Republic, emigration has continuously increased since the 1960s while classical migration theories used to ignore women as independent migrants, feminist migration research allows for the analysis of Dominican women as active protagonists in transnational migration. During the 1970s and 1980s, the economic crisis and decreasing income of households led to an increase of female waged labour in the Dominican Republic. The weakening of men as the primary economic provider combined with prevailing gender relations that impeded their insertion in the domestic sphere forced women into the double burden of household and waged work. In addition, work opportunities for women in the highly gender-segmented working sector are limited and thus, migration remains a means to broaden women’s opportunities, to improve their quality of life by increasing their social status or by changing gender or family dynamics. It also provides work opportunities such as more labour choice or professional advancement.

Since the 1990s, the gender component and the influence of family structure have been considered in Dominican migration research. Informal unions, unwed childbearing and frequent union disruptions have led to matrifocal families with women taking the role of household heads. A direct consequence of the need to compensate for the lack of male income has been female labour migration for domestic and care work to the USA or Spain (as a result of the gendered labour market in these destination countries). Hence, in 2004, the Dominican Republic was one of the Latin American countries with the highest percentage of women among all migrants, namely 70% (Mora, 2006). Even if labour purposes still constitute the main reason for the migration of Dominican women, others migrate by marrying a foreign man. Labour as well as marriage migration are highly constrained by gender relations in both the origin and destination countries, as gender is often the reason why some migration pathways are open for men but not for women, and vice versa. International matchmaking agencies offer the possibility to enter into a relationship with a foreign man, and the aim of this study was to investigate and illustrate this specific female pathway of Dominican migration.

The four main questions addressed in this thesis were: 1) How do German men and Dominican women, who participate in international matchmaking, explain their own motives? 2) How do participants and matchmaking agencies perceive this business? 3) What gender and cultural stereotypes do international matchmaking agencies use in order to attract clients? and finally, 4) Should a bi-national marriage through an agency used by Dominican women be seen a strategic step for migration purposes only? In order to answer these research questions, seven qualitative interviews were conducted. Three with matchmaking agencies (two German-Dominican agencies and one nationally working agency specialized in Germany) and four with two German-Dominican couples (each partner interviewed separately). By means of the gathered data, the process of German-Dominican matchmaking was illustrated, including a detailed description of the process itself, the advertisement of the agencies, and the profiles and incentives of the involved Dominican women and German men. In the following, an overview of the answers obtained to the aforementioned questions is outlined.

1) *How do German men and Dominican women, who participate in international matchmaking, explain their own motives?* The interviews with agency owners and their clients revealed numerous motives for using the services of an international matchmaking agency. Common to both men and women was the desire for a long-lasting relationship based on affection and mutual respect. It appeared that neither the German nor the Dominican clients were able to meet their ideal partners in their respective home country. Both had faced some difficulties in finding a partner who would fulfil their ideal image of a wife or husband, and they were convinced that a foreign partner was more likely to meet their expectations. Contrary to other studies that depict male clients of international matchmaking services as shy and sometimes even socially limited, German men who want to use the service to find a Dominican spouse turn out to need self-confidence, courage and agency. Not only their financial effort needs to be acknowledged but also their time, initiative and patience which are necessary to find a partner and keep the relationship progressing in spite of the cultural, geographical and linguistic distance. Among the motives that lead German men to find a partner from another country, and more particularly from the Dominican Republic, the decisive factors are firstly a positive image of the country and its people (formed through advertisements or based on personal experiences), but also the prospect of a much younger wife, the presumed “unmaterialism” of Dominican women, and their agreement to a traditional division of labour within the family. Thus, even if men support their wives’ wish to work in Germany, their future Dominican spouses are expected to put their own working ambitions in a second place, in favour of the relationship and the family. A professional career, which may compromise the woman’s ability to care for the family and

household, is therefore mostly not intended. Furthermore, the image of men looking for an subordinated and powerless bride could not be confirmed in this study.

Similarly, Dominican women who use the service to find a German spouse can be characterized as having courage, initiative and open-mindedness which are essential features when registering at an agency. They are also considered to be very attached to family and children. Being mostly in their early twenties, they still live with their families, who are also involved in the process of matchmaking by means of advice or support. They influence their daughter's decision by encouraging, sometimes even pushing her, or by discouraging her to register at the agency. Furthermore, families usually benefit economically from the situation by receiving monetary assistance from their daughters' husbands. It is a fact in the Dominican Republic that many women already have children from former relationships, but they do not receive financial aid from the children's father, nor benefits from the state. The disloyalty of Dominican men towards their partners and families is often criticized by many women and named as one of the main reasons to look for a partner from Germany. Another important reason is the widespread domestic violence that many women try to escape from. Hence, the image of German men being loyal and non-violent towards their wives and families encourages Dominican women to register. This image is in fact mainly created by the experiences of friends or family members (who themselves found a German partner through an agency) so that word to mouth advertisement regarding German men constitutes the main way of attracting Dominican women to the agencies. Furthermore, in addition to their desire for a loyal and non-violent partner, Dominican women struggle for more egalitarian relationships. Even if many women are the heads of households and the main economic providers within their families, gender relations within their families remain unchanged, unless the men are willing to share their role with their partners (Safa, 1995). This struggle for more egalitarian gender relations encourages women to migrate (see also Pessar & Mahler, 2003), as they believe that a relationship with a German partner promises an improvement in this respect. Hence, if Dominican men are not attractive to Dominican women anymore (because of their reduced economic contribution and their adherence to an old-fashioned view of gender relations), Dominican women will try to find a German husband offering to act as financial provider but at the same time willing to offer a more stable, loyal, non-violent and egalitarian relationship.

Some women register at the agencies out of financial or migratory interest, and thereby fulfil the common prejudice of women who engage in such marriages. Voluntary (marriage) migration is "*typically motivated by the desire for upward social mobility and better economic opportunity*" (Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008, p. 31). These women are driven by the expectation of a higher living standard either in Germany or, when still living separated, in the Dominican Republic through receipt of regular payments from their husband. Furthermore, the prospect

of the necessary papers needed to emigrate to Germany can constitute an additional motivation to register at an agency. However, it has to be kept in mind that in all marriages, emotional and financial benefits tend to go hand in hand, no matter what the primary purpose of the relationship was.

"The importance of marriage as a means of upward social mobility for women, in both developed and developing societies, has been generally acknowledged.... Implicit in this idea is an 'exchange theory' of marriage that posits a marriage market...– females offer the characteristics sought after by males in exchange for the characteristics and status they desire from males." (Thadani & Todaro, 1984, p. 47). Such an approach could be used to explain the existence of international marriages. More precisely, Dominican women offer characteristics that, according to German men, cannot be found among German women. Conversely, Dominican women cannot attain their desires concerning their partner and relationships with Dominican men. Hence, by expanding their partner search to another country or culture, both, men and women, find partners who satisfy their personal desires and needs.

2) *How do participants and matchmaking agencies perceive this business?* Besides their economic interest, agency owners describe their mission as the establishment of successful (i.e. stable) relationships and thereby pursue the main incentive of their German and Dominican clients. The brokers escort German men and Dominican women through the whole process of choosing and getting to know each other and can thus considerably influence the whole operation (in particular by guiding the man in his choice regarding women). Nevertheless, the final decision is always taken by the male and female clients. As has been explained and described in this thesis, there exists a quite substantial discrepancy between the different actions that can be taken by men and by women. First of all, men are the ones who pay for the service and who can select the women they would like to meet from a database containing several hundreds of female clients. On the other hand, women can, after their inscription at the agency, only wait and accept or reject the man's initiative. Secondly, while information provided by women is systematically verified at the time of their registration, men's statements cannot be checked prior to their arrival in the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, it is a fact that for women a relationship is highly bound up in conditions, such as learning German or agreeing to migrate to Germany. Thus, due to the inequality between men and women's range of choices for action in this context, the Dominican women may appear as though they are exchangeable and powerless. However, even if men are the main decision makers during this procedure, brokers draw attention to the importance of displaying women having their own opinions and the ability to guide the process. Moreover, they emphasize that their work primarily consists of looking for a functioning relationship, and that, for doing so they should not only take into account the

desires of the German men (as being the paying clientele) but also those of the Dominican women (as those who allow this business to exist).

Women in this business are often confronted with stereotypes as either being affectionate, family-loving and undemanding, or as being manipulative, calculating and taking advantage of German men to reach a higher living standard (Simons, 2001). However, common prejudice fails to explain female motivation. Latin American women in general are often seen as passive migrants, as having being “imported” by European men. But this passivity obscures the active role of the women in migration, as well as the diversity of motives, and the experiences and strategies in the migratory process (Hernández, 2005). Similarly, in media and literature, men are often depicted as looking for inferior partners and therefore, wanting a spouse from another country. It is noteworthy that, even if this might occur as motivation, the majority of the men look for an equitable and respectful relationship with their new partner. We can thus say that men and women perceive international matchmaking as an opportunity to meet a partner from another country and as an alternative to national dating.

The public opinion of international matchmaking notwithstanding differs from that of the participants (see Appendix I, Table 2, p. 102). Although partner search via advertisements, the internet or agencies have become mostly accepted over the last decades (Lenz, 2003), people searching for a partner internationally still sustain a mostly negative image. German participants in particular revealed that reactions of their family and friends before and during the use of the service were hesitant, if not disapproving. As a result, some couples immediately give up the contact they had with the brokers and lie about how they got to know each other. Both the agency owners and the clients are aware of the negative image that international matchmaking has in society. Namely, the “exploitation of women in developing nations, the reliance on gender and ethnic stereotypes, and the abuse of the economic and power dynamic” between men and women (Lloyd, 2000, p. 352). Correspondingly, not all the women are convinced by the service and are even fearful of it. This is partly due to stories which associate international matchmaking with trafficking. In order to attract male and female clientele in spite of the negative media coverage, brokers accentuate their purely reputable intentions and dissociate themselves from dubious agencies.

3) *What gender and cultural stereotypes do international matchmaking agencies use in order to attract clients?* Generally speaking, female migration research questions the images of femininity and masculinity that prevail in migration (pathways as well as strategies), and agencies and networks play an essential role in the construction of these images (Aufhauser, 2000). “*Gender affects every aspect of migration: its causes, patterns, processes and impacts at every level, including the subjective personal experience of migrants.*” (Paiewonsky, 2007). Using a matchmaking agency to find a foreign partner

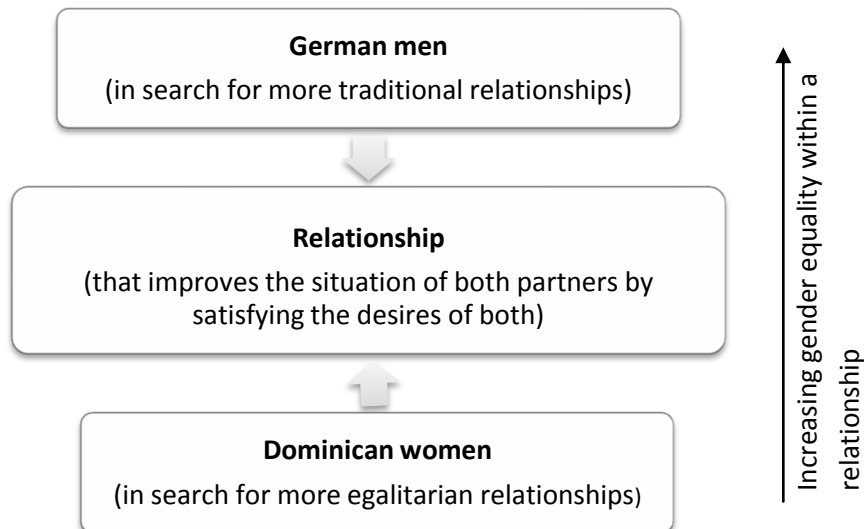
constitutes a possible migration pathway that is almost exclusively used by women and so gender relations are an important structural element. Consequently, the question that arises is how migration via international matchmaking is influenced by gender roles, and how these gender roles are used and enforced by the matchmaking agencies.

Women often stay in strict gender roles that influence their migratory pathways (such as labour migration for domestic or care work, or marriage migration to a Western country) in both sending and receiving countries (see five points of Aufhauser, chapter 2.1, p. 14). The agencies under consideration here promote their services on the internet, and address and attract German men with pictures and descriptions of Dominican women. The latter are promoted as ideal spouses for founding a family in the sense that they are advertised as affectionate, family-oriented and ambitionless in their professional career. Furthermore, they are depicted as “exotic” partners by emphasizing their cultural background. Women who do not show the expected characteristics or behaviours, or who do not agree to fulfil the designated role, run the risk of being described as materialistic or even of being set aside and replaced by other women (when they still are in the dating process). On top of that, in the advertisements (as well as during the interviews), the characteristics of Dominican women were also deliberately dissociated from those of German women, whose (unattainable) demands were mentioned as one of the major reasons for men to search for a foreign spouse. Therefore, the use of such a demarcation in advertisement is not very surprising.

Typically, agencies explicitly advertise the fact that they establish relationships based on traditional gender roles, where the men are responsible for the financial income, while women are responsible for the domestic sphere. This means that Dominican women, who struggle for more egalitarian relationships, may end up in a marriage that is organized alongside the gender roles that they actually wanted to leave behind. This implies that, even if it has repeatedly been stated that migratory movements can be empowering for participating women and challenge well-established gender norms, marriage migration is a good example of migration that may lead to further *“new dependencies and [can] reinforce existing gender boundaries and hierarchies”* (Metz-Göckel, Morokvasic & Münst, 2008, p. 17). On the other hand, *“if the men and women involved each feel a sense of disempowerment and rejection from the state of gender relations in their own country and community”* (Simons, 2001, p. 92), international matchmaking offers a possible way of bridging these differences by *“coming together across unequally stratified national boundaries”* (Ibid.). Such opportunities however mainly emerge between countries of divergent feminist movements, making *“international gender politics... an important precondition of this marriage market”* (Simons, 2001, p.102). As has been mentioned, German men and Dominican women both expect to fulfil their respective desires regarding

partners and relationships by dating someone from another country. One could conclude that in international matchmaking both partners achieve their desired gender roles by meeting in the middle and settling on a compromise which neither perceives as such as their expectations have been met (see Figure 1, p. 94).

Figure 1 Demand for Gender equality within a relationship



Therefore, German men who marry a Dominican woman can remain in established traditional role models of husband and wife and simultaneously, Dominican women experience a more egalitarian relationship than they could have in their home country.

“The international marriage market operates at the intersection of conflicting trends and is fuelled by certain conditions in gender relations. The advanced capitalist countries... have achieved more egalitarian relations between the sexes than the underdeveloped countries have done. While some feminists interpret correspondence husbands as a symbol of the backlash against feminism, third world women searching for these men have a different interpretation.” (Simons, 2001, p.102).

Simons goes a step further by concluding that unlike the common prejudice of unequal relationships established through matchmaking, her data gives *“preliminary evidence that the international matchmaking industry can be seen as a positive force in the context of shifting gender relations within and between the countries involved”* (Simons, 2001, p. 162).

Pessar and Mahler (2003, p. 819) raised the question of whether and how transnationalism favours the reinforcement of prevailing gender ideologies and norms, or whether it in contrast provides a case for questioning hegemonic notions of gender. They request that future research *“inquire[s] whether the changes observed [of gender norms or behaviour during migration] were emergent prior to migration, or if they would not have occurred in the absence of migration”*. Concerning this idea, Ariza (2000) concludes that the encouraging effect of migration cannot be taken for granted as the act of migration cannot be isolated from other variables. Indeed, female participants in German-Dominican matchmaking show

self-confidence, initiative and emancipation, and it can be argued that these are not characteristics that are the result of the migratory process, but are a precondition for this kind of migration occurring in the first place.

4) Should a bi-national marriage through an agency used by Dominican women be seen a strategic step for migration purposes only? In national matchmaking, marriage and living together are secondary and women usually prefer to stay independent. In contrast, couples formed through international agencies most commonly marry and the willingness to marry is a condition for women who register at such agencies. But the question is whether a marriage (which most probably will include migration) is the actual reason to join an agency, or if it is the result of having done so. In other words, we are interested in identifying if such relationships and marriages are instrumental ones and strategically chosen by Dominican women with a view to an assured gateway to a life in Germany?

Historically, women as spouses constituted the majority among family migrants and Thadani & Todaro (1979, p. 17) have described the importance of marriage as a "*distinguishing feature of female compared to male migration*". Family formation or reunification is the major official reason for international migration, as migration policies might favour the admission of migrants in those categories. As such, a marriage to a German man could promise a life in Germany that otherwise would not be possible because of, immigration restrictions (see also those mentioned by UN-instraw, Chapter 2.1, p.14), which often reduce the women's opportunities to enter the desired country for either temporary work (in gendered work areas) or marriage with a citizen. As many women who register at such agencies come from less developed countries and establish relationships to men from Europe or North-America, the opinion prevails that these women are looking for a means to improve their economic situation. From the part of the receiving countries there is suspicion on the correctness and credibility of these marriages, and laws had been put into force in order to prevent marriages of convenience (Kofman, Raghuram & Sales, 2000, p. 67) but also to diminish security anxieties about "*the uncontrolled sale of marriage for immigration and citizenship benefits*" (D'Aoust, 2009, p. 2).⁹³ According to Lutz (1994), cited in Kofman et al. (2000, p. 71): "*Marriage has become, more than ever, the backbone of legal entrance to the EU*". Besides a financial or residential motivation, the women's decision to migrate through marriage may also be taken as one of the few exiting strategies from their home country that are socially permitted for them in a strongly asymmetrical context of power relations (Ariza, 2000). Because of social constraints in the country or region of origin, "*women may use marriage as*

⁹³ However, despite the suspicion to these marriages, this migration route is far less common for deceptive border crossing than migration via work and tourist visas (Simons, 1999) and cannot be fought against by political means of "*liberal democratic nation-states honouring basic human and civil rights of migrants*" (Faist, 2000, p. 308). Even if entered primarily for an utilitarian purpose, by "*resorting to marriage as a channel of migration, the migrant capitalizes on the ethos and philosophy of family law and, to some extent, circumvents strict immigrant labour legislation in receiving countries*" (Del Rosario, 1994, p. 53).

a means for migration. To the extent that women are free to choose their spouse, their decision to marry someone living in another location or someone intending to migrate may be part of their conscious or unconscious strategy to relocate. Women thus achieve their goals through men." (Riley & Gardner, 1993, p. 203).

The actual reasons Dominican women use an international matchmaking service have already been discussed and summarized. According to this study, both factors play a role. There exist Dominican women who intend to marry or to form a relationship in order to be able to migrate; and conversely, there are Dominican women who migrate in order to live out their bi-national marriage or relationship. Marriage migration is generally defined as a dependent migration from part of the women (as they follow their husbands). If the migration takes place to enable a common life in Germany, this view is correct. However, if the marriage to a foreigner is intended to facilitate migration, it should be seen as an independent decision and a manoeuvre on the part of the woman, for the eventual migration was foreseeable (and also its actual aim) when starting the relationship. Usually the migration decision is taken by both husband and wife. The German man could thus support or demand the woman's relocation, but he could also pronounce the desire to move himself. This only happens in very few cases as "*[i]t is easier for women than for men to come as dependants because of the overall male breadwinner ideology that expects them to do so. Therefore, following the husband, joining him, or coming as a fiancée has been more common among women than among men*" (Erel, Morokvasic, & Shinozaki, 2003, p. 11). This statement generally applies to couples where the German husband is still professionally active. If in contrast the man is retired or has enough financial means to resign his job in Germany, the couple could consider a move to the Dominican Republic as an alternative. In addition to that, many couples marry because of the visa restrictions that prevent Dominican women of staying in Germany longer than three months (with a tourism visa) or six months (with a marriage visa). Living apart on two different continents and taking into account the difficulties of getting a visa incontestably casts a different light on the decision to marry. Couples do not necessarily decide to marry (quickly) out of free choice, but legal constraints force the couples to marry in order to be able to stay together in case the woman does not manage to acquire an independent German residence authorisation otherwise. In the same way, but for different reasons, men are usually not able to stay in the Dominican Republic for a substantially longer time due to their professional commitment (see also Ruenkaew, 2003). Hence, due to often narrow governmental restrictions, marriage is one of the few chances left to obtain a residence permit for the woman, although it is at the same time sometimes harshly denounced as being a fraud. This leads to the interesting paradox that marriage migration is often denounced by the governments as a fraud whilst being provoked by their own immigration laws.

To summarize the aforementioned observations, women participating in international matchmaking can be classified into three groups. Firstly, there are women who marry in view of the possibility of having a life in Germany and who thus see the marriage to a German as strategic step to circumvent the German visa restrictions. Secondly, there are also women who marry for the expectation of financial benefit or upward social mobility but do not have the intention of leaving their country. And thirdly, there are women (like those in my sample) who marry out of love and the desire for mutual support and companionship. Whether this means staying in the Dominican Republic (such as the case of Klaus and Mary-Sol) or moving to Germany (Wieland and Gabriela).

In addition to giving an answer to the four large research questions, in the following a conclusion will be drawn and an outlook will be given on what further research on this topic could contain.

Labour migration is one solution for Dominican women to deal with the absence of men and the absence of their financial support within the families. However, marriage migration is a migratory pathway by which women can achieve both financial and also emotional support. As Martínez Pizarro (2003) points out, most research on women's autonomous migration is based on economic factors as the main reason for migration. Marriage migration for emotional reasons would then be a new form of autonomous female migration that requires further research. Migration can be a utilitarian decision (leading to upward social mobility) but it ought to be clearly kept in mind that non-economic factors are important causes of and central for the understanding of female emigration in general and of marriage migration in particular. Thereby, the reasons that encourage labour migration of Dominican women also lead to female marriage migration to Germany. These reasons include essentially the limited work options due to the gender-segmented labour sector, the weakening of men as financial providers and a resulting increased inclusion of women in waged labour, a resulting double burden because of the women's family and household duties, and the matrifocal family structures with women as the head of households leading to more options for independent migration. In particular, the predominance of "loose-bonds"-relationships regularly appears in one of the main reasons for women to register at an agency, namely the disloyalty of Dominican men. Thus, comparable to labour migration, one could envision such international marriages as a *"private solution to a public problem for many of the migrants involved, be it in terms of marriageability prospects in various settings or lack of economic opportunities."* (D'Aoust, 2009, p. 26).

Both, labour and marriage migration, *"are inextricably connected to the gender division of labour within and outside the household"* (Mora, 2006, p. 9). When marrying a foreigner, Dominican women often take over the role of housewife and mother (a role-allocation that agencies systematically advertise). This traditional family division is often perceived as an

undesirable and rather conservative gender concept by Western women who define themselves not only through their partner and family, but also for instance through their job. However, when referring to the third generation of feminist migration research and its criticism of not adopting the perspective of the women involved in migration (chapter 2.1), the way in which the role of women in international matchmaking is often reported, can be understood. More precisely, for women who fought for their emancipation and rights to engage in the waged labour market, a Dominican woman who marries a German man and lives her life as housewife is considered as unsatisfactory or even suppressed. But by adopting the standpoint of Dominican women and keeping in mind the family structures in their home country (involving women's responsibility for household *and* labour), such a traditional work division enables women to escape the double burden that they face in their home country and therefore, represents an improvement of the women's situation (see also Appendix I, Table 3, p.103).⁹⁴

International matchmaking is often publicly criticized because women are seen as victims in some sort of trafficking that they cannot control. This image is maintained and supported by the use of information and data gathered by the media or women's shelters (confronted with a small and presumably not representative group of women) as proof for the supposed desperate and defenceless situation of the women involved in international matchmaking. However, this criticism of women being powerless and speechless can only partly be confirmed by the results of this study. On the one hand, women's power of action is limited due to their restricted options for action during the matchmaking process, but on the other hand, they show courage and agency through registering. Agency is important in all forms of voluntary migration and consequently, in spite of their exposure on the internet and their restricted options for action, these women are not passive "goods" that serve the business. The pure demand itself of the women is not enough to keep the business running but "*the women themselves must desire foreign husbands and the women must believe migration will serve their needs*" (Simons, 2001, p. 129). Reputable international matchmaking agencies are thus not selling people; they are selling the service which provides the ability to contact a marriage-minded woman. Furthermore, women who opt for an international marriage (even aspire to migrate) are not necessarily victims of the matchmaking business, but rather they are individuals who deliberately take this decision in order to expand their actual life choices and livelihood strategies.

⁹⁴ A similar critic has been voiced by Barrow (1996) concerning the treatment of the matrifocal family system in research. The matrifocal family structure preoccupies virtually every investigation on the Caribbean and Barrow comments on ethnocentrism of scholars who identify "*matrifocality as a pathological or deviant variant from the ideal nuclear household and family*". Following Smith (1973), he argues that instead of accepting matrifocality as one of the several ways of organizing a household, the emphasis on this phenomenon and the efforts to explain it show how unable scholars are to break away from the restrictions imposed on them by their own cultural tradition.

It is noteworthy that Dominican women in international matchmaking are displayed as exceptionally ambitious concerning their expectations of life. They would neither register at an agency nor consider migration if they were satisfied with their marital and occupational situation in their home country. As such, the international matchmaking business does not only satisfy the demands of German men but also those of its female clients. It offers Dominican women alternatives and *“chances to develop their own selves and lives in a way they did not find possible in their home country. The fact that international marriage implies risks must not blind us to the very real risks the women faced by staying at home”*, including for instance domestic violence (Simons, 2001, p. 69). *“[W]omen are agents, and in many instances they use migration to expand their opportunities, without denying that their active decision to migrate can subject them to different types of victimization as well, since migrant women leave and enter gendered and stratified societies.”* (D’Aoust, 2009, p. 27f.).

For about 300 years, romantic marriages have been the normative guideline in Western societies, so that love itself used to be considered as the only justification for marriage (Luhmann, 1982). Romantic marriages are dependent on personal interaction and emotional bonding, and in case of international partnerships, those are facilitated by commercial intermediaries such as matchmaking agencies. Marriages through international matchmaking are commonly reproached for deviating from the ideal of romantic love and of having other underlying interests (such as financial or residential benefit). Moreover, exchange positions of bi-national couples evoke suspicion as they contradict with the Western model of love. In my opinion, this is one of the main reasons why people typically react negatively on international marriages assisted by matchmaking agencies, imputing purely economic or strategic interest to the men and women who participate. However, whether the economic interest of a woman is in the foreground of an international marriage is difficult to say as *“material interest, considerations of social status and the search for love and emotional satisfaction may not be neatly demarcated”* (Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008, p. 35). A bi-national marriage as an alliance combining love and personal interests means a double anchoring of the relationship in love and in a relation of exchange. *“These couples are lovers who understand their relationship also a transaction team.... The question thus arises whether sentiment and utilitarian calculation do not go side by side in every love relationship.”* (Waldis, 2006, p. 6).

Of course, nobody is able to judge how much feelings are really involved in a relationship to “justify” it against others or the law, and it is impossible to say how much strategy and how much emotion influence the decision to marry a German and move to Germany, as both the emotional and financial benefit go hand in hand. It thus seems that both men and women need to be motivated to and interested in finding a foreign partner in order to benefit from it and reach the desired aims, no matter what they are. However, when taking a closer look at

the pronounced desires, the wish for a relationship consisting of equal partners and based on love, affection, co-determination and mutual respect, becomes apparent for both, German men and Dominican women, and constitutes the main arguments in favour of a marriage. Furthermore, the complementary needs of men and women support the marriage and ensure its success (such as the desire of both to found a family and a long-lasting relationship).

The topic of international matchmaking is largely understudied and since no institutions register whether or not the women who enter a country via a marriage to a citizen, got to know their husband via matchmaking, there is no data available and most numbers are based on estimations. Hence, pre-existing data about international matchmaking is also limited to non-existent in the case of German-Dominican matchmaking. Although the results of this survey allow new perspectives on the process of international matchmaking and the incentives involved, they must however be considered as exemplarily because of the scant number of interviews and the biased selection of the interview partners, chosen by the agency owners themselves. They indeed have a substantial interest in creating a positive image of their business and thus will (understandably) have mediated the contact to couples that fulfil the ideal of having married out of emotional interest.⁹⁵

More qualitative and quantitative research is thus required to explore more deeply the concept of international matchmaking, the motivations of the men and women involved and the factors that make it a migratory pathway, especially for women. Furthermore, a change in perspective is needed to refrain from seeing the participating women as necessarily speech- and powerless. Instead, it has to be recognized that this service also satisfies female demands. Furthermore, women's marriage migration should be considered inside the realm of political economy and modern market forces, because such established international marriages are only possible under certain combinations, taking into account class, nationality, ethnicity and gender. This topic is currently of particular interest and relevance, as social scientific attention needs to comprise a more balanced and context-sensitive consideration, including the motivations of the participants and gender roles.

In order to get a more informative insight into men's and women's motivation to participate in German-Dominican matchmaking, a much larger sample would be beneficial. It is common that all clients, men as well as women, fill out a sympathy check at the time they register at the agency (see chapter 4.1.2, p. 43), asking detailed questions about the clients' personal characteristics and motivation to register. An evaluation of these sympathy checks could thus be very helpful, as all the clients (including the women who do not succeed in finding a partner) would enter the analysis and thereby a substantial amount of information about their individual profile and motivations could be collected.

⁹⁵ This factor certainly limits the generalisability of this study and its results because only participants were given a voice that experienced a successful and positive matching, and who support an ideal vision instead of e.g. pursuing an exclusively economic interest or a highly unequal conception of a relationship.

Additionally, through the interviews with agency owners and clients it became clear that many of the statements referred to positive resources that men and women use in their partner search, resources that they can and want to attribute to their relationship. Such resources include agency, self-confidence, courage, the young age of the women and their disposition to marry notably older men, the women's physical attractiveness or their consent for a traditionally organized relationship, German men's financial situation, nationality, loyalty and diligence. In matchmaking – national as well as international –, people benefit from their resources, and a study on international matchmaking based on an exchange theory approach could be useful to investigate which are the priorities of German men and Dominican women (see also Ruenkaew, 2003). In the context of exploring matchmaking as a migration strategy, these resources would be interesting to analyse as well, in order to get a more detailed idea of which women actually have the potential to find a German partner and hence, migrate to Germany.

Reports tend to homogenize the motives of men and women involved in international matchmaking, as well as the outcomes arising from such introductions. This has led to an unbalanced and incomplete assessment of the phenomenon (Del Rosario, 1994). The format of a Master thesis is, unfortunately, too compact to fully explore and discuss such a vast and scarcely explored topic as international matchmaking. While it was unfeasible to go into much detail, it nevertheless offers a concise yet relatively complete insight into German-Dominican matchmaking. Moreover, it presents a first attempt to account for the role of women and men as social actors in international matchmaking, imbued with responsibilities, free decisions, and a broad variety of incentives to find and marry a foreign spouse.

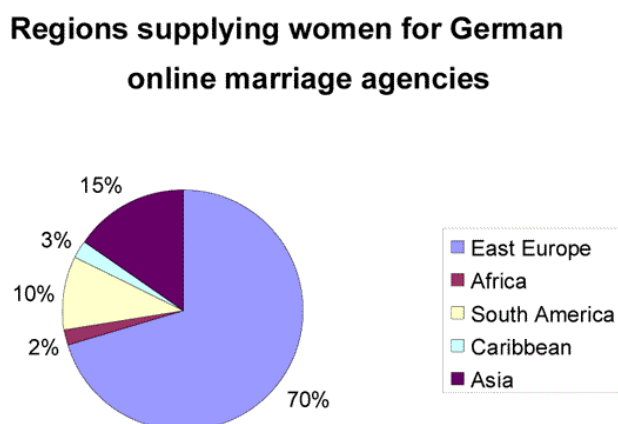
Appendix I: Tables and Figures

Table 2 Perspectives on the international matchmaking industry in the literature

	Media Reports	Advocacy Groups	Scholarship
Women Participants <i>Who</i>	PROSTITUTES, GOLD DIGGERS, SUBMISSIVE WOMEN	VICTIMS	CROSS-SECTION OF WOMEN. SOME INDICATION OF RISK TAKERS, ADVENTURERS
<i>Why</i>	ECONOMIC LIFE IMPORTANT	PRESSURED INTO IT BY RECRUITERS OR FAMILY	IMPROVE ECONOMIC AND EMOTIONAL LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES
<i>Consequences</i>	EXPLOITATION	MARITAL PROBLEMS AND ABUSE	SATISFACTION FROM ACHIEVING PERSONAL GOALS
Men Participants: <i>Who</i>	Social deviants, "dirty old men"	Domineering, abusive, controlling	Cross-section of men. Some indication of above average communication skills and well-educated
<i>Why</i>	Want younger more beautiful wives than they could get in the US	Want wives they can control	Want compatible life partner
<i>Consequences</i>	Men may achieve their goals - or may be conned by "green-card scammers"	Men get what they want and can abuse women without fear of punishment	Satisfied with marriage
Common reasons for participation	Economic incentives, exploitation of men and women	Economic incentives Trafficking in women	Economic incentives Serves social needs of men and women.
Common consequences	Short, unhappy marriages	High levels of domestic abuse and violence	High marital satisfaction, Average or below average abuse levels
Evidence	Individual dramatic case studies	Individual case studies from women's domestic abuse shelters	Multiple field interviews drawn from representative samples

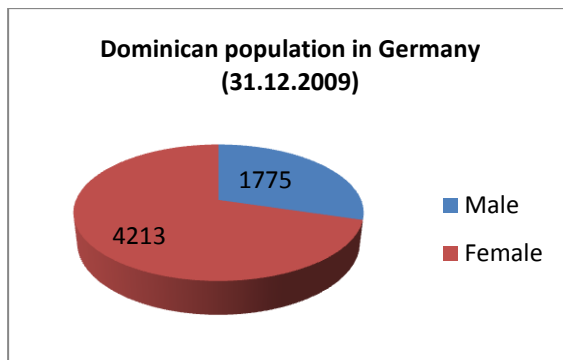
Source: Simons (2001, p. 22).

Figure 2 Regions supplying women for German online marriage agencies



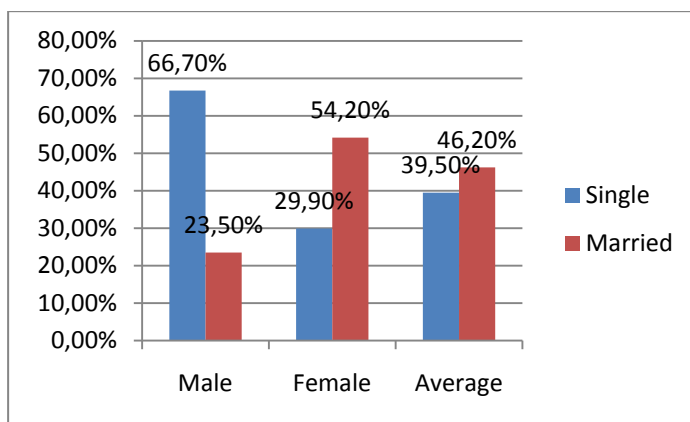
Source: Vartti (2003).

Figure 3 Dominican population in Germany on 31st December 2009



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Ausländische Bevölkerung in Deutschland am 31.12.2009

Figure 4 Family status of Dominicans naturalized in Germany in 2009



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Einbürgerungen 2009 nach bisheriger Staatsangehörigkeit und ausgewählter Merkmale.

Table 3 Views on international marriage

	Opinion of traditional gender role assignments for husband/wife	Opinion of using Internet dating/ marriage agencies to find foreign partner
Western feminist consensus	Oppressive patriarchal standards that are degrading to women	Filled with dangers for exploitation, abuse, inequality. Unlikely to result in safe and happy marriages
Interview respondents' consensus	Far less patriarchal than conditions in sending countries. Represents progress in the sense that women marrying foreigners will have better lives than their mothers had.	Risks acknowledged but understood to be worth undertaking. Women express agency and power by choosing to find partners this way.

Source: Simons (2001, p.116).

Appendix II: Quotes in their original form

Chapter 2

- (1) *“Die erste Generation der Arbeiten war einem kompensatorischen Ansatz verpflichtet. Sie machen Frauen sichtbar und zeigen auf, daß Frauen ebenso wie Männer an der Migration beteiligt waren und sind, daß sie (besondere) Leistungen erbringen, kurz, daß sie ein nicht zu vernachlässigender Teil von Wanderungen sind.“ (Prodolliet, 1999, p. 28f.).*
- (2) *“Die zweite Generation feministischer Arbeiten in der Migrationsforschung verfolgt einen kontributorischen Ansatz. Zentral in diesen Studien sind Themen, die die besondere Rolle der Frau im Migrationskontext hervorheben und auf die spezifischen Situationen, in denen sich Frauen mit Migrationsforschung konfrontiert sehen, eingehen.“ (Prodolliet, 1999, p. 29).*
- (3) *„Die dritte Generation feministisch motivierter Migrationsstudien seit etwa der Mitte der achtziger Jahre thematisiert die Macht- und Geschlechterverhältnisse, die sich durch die spezifische Situation der Migration ergeben. Dabei geht es um Konstruktionen von Weiblichkeit und Männlichkeit, um die Bedeutung von privat und öffentlich und um die Frage, welchen Einfluß Migrationserfahrungen auf die Beziehung zwischen den Geschlechtern haben.“ (Prodolliet, 1999, p. 29).*

Chapter 3

- (4) *„Qualitative Forschung beabsichtigt, allgemein betrachtet, die Aufdeckung von Bezügen, sie bevorzugt die Technik des Vergleichs zur Erfassung von Gemeinsamkeiten. (...) Qualitative Forschung ist im Kern ein Entdeckungsverfahren, die in unbekanntem sozialen Realitäten Verbindungen und Bezüge eröffnet. (...) Diese durch qualitative Methoden systematisierten Entdeckungsprozesse verlangen vom Forschenden Offenheit, ein sich ständig an die Struktur des Gegenstandes anpassendes Forschungsverständnis und Methodenflexibilität, insgesamt: eine sich in der hermeneutischen Tradition herausgebildete Verstehensbereitschaft und –fähigkeit, die nicht durch bestimmte Vorannahmen und methodische Restriktionen blockiert oder gar eliminiert werden.“ (Kübler, 1984, p. 63/64).*
- (5) *“In der Auswertung geschieht eine Deutung oder Interpretation der vorhandenen Texte. Der Proze[ss] der Interpretation ist durch die persönliche Deutungskompetenz des Forschers und durch seine Eindrücke von den jeweiligen Interviews beeinflusst.“ (Lamnek, 1993, p. 124).*

Chapter 4

- (6) *Hertz: “es gibt auch welche, die ehm.. die halten da nichts von, die haben Angst regelrecht davor (...). (...) das liegt dann wieder daran, ehm.. an.. dass die denken, ja, die werden dann irgendwo in Nachtclubs gesteckt oder.. also.. eben so schlimme Sachen, die die in ihrem Leben schon gehört haben, ne? (...) Muss man viel.. Aufklärungsarbeit leisten.“*
- (7) *Mentrup: „[bei einer älteren Frau] muss man schon reinbringen.. (...), dass die.. ja, gute Köchin ist und so ‘n bisschen häuslich dann formuliert, ne? Also immer auf den Kunden passend, dass man die anspricht, die man erreichen will.(...) dann rufen halt die älteren Herren an, die ich ja auch ansprechen will (...) Und deswegen muss man immer gucken, wie man’s formuliert, damit das passt.“*
- (8) *Richter: „Also (...) wir versuchen, die Aufmerksamkeit auf uns zu lenken, indem halt Exotinnen als Frauen einfach.. - mein Gott - repräsentiert werden! Das heißt, (...) wie’s halt ist in Deutschland, (...) ist halt Ausländer oder Ausländerin immer - so’n bisschen - der Exoteffekt, ja?“*

- (9) *Mentrup: „weil das bei manchen nicht gut ankommt (...) viele deutsche Kunden haben damit 'n Problem.. weil das für die wie..eh... na, nicht Frauenhandel ist, aber.. ehm.. ja, Schmutzdecke, so 'n Zwischending, also das kommt nicht so gut, ne? (...) weil ehm... ja, die Resonanz wirklich kam, dass die gesagt haben ja.. das wär nicht seriös oder so. So kommt das rüber! (...) Und deswegen hab ich gesagt, das möchte ich nicht, dass (...) ich diesen Touch bekomme und (...) mein Unternehmen darunter leidet. (...) Weil die Kunden sagen „oh ne, die macht Karibik, ne, die blätter ich weiter. (...) Viele sehen das eben so, dass die.. ehm... wirtschaftliche Not oder finanzielle Not der Frauen dort ausgenutzt wird... ehm.. ich hab's anders gesehen, aber es kommt so rüber und das muss ich akzeptieren, ne? Weil ich sag (...) es gibt ja Männer, die sagen, Mensch, das ist so mein Typ, so rassistische Frauen, ne?“*
- (10) *Richter: „leider, gibt es auch sehr viele (...) in Anführungszeichen ‚Verrückte‘ in der Partnersuche-gemeinschaft - ich hab mal einen gehabt, der kam für drei Tage hier her, wollte in den drei Tagen fünf Frauen sehen und klar! Mein Gott, ich muss auch Geld verdienen, (...)ich hab gesagt ‚okay, ich mach ihn, ich manage ihn, ich betreu ich‘, aber diese drei Tage waren halt nur 'n reines Chaos (...) Das artet nur in eine Riesenenttäuschung aus! Wenn da jetzt 'n Mann nur für drei Tage kommt und will da seine fünf Frauen vorgestellt haben, so nach dem Motto ehm ‚ja.. machen Sie jetzt mal die Fleischtheke auf und jetzt machen wir sie wieder zu‘, ne?.. Das hat schon fast 'n perversen Charakter.. ja weil, wir sind ja keine Fleischbeschauung, sondern es soll ja wirklich darum gehen, sich Zeit zu widmen (...). Man kann schon zwei, drei, vier oder fünf Frauen mal sehen, da spielen wir dann auch mit offenen Karten bei den Frauen, sagen wir ‚Wart erst mal ab! Verliebt dich noch nicht! Ich muss ihm noch andere Frauen zeigen, nur du bist jetzt in der.. in 'ner sehr guten Auswahl drin und eh.. sei mal vorsichtig‘. (...) Man dreht erst mal, sozusagen, 'ne Runde.. Die Frauen wissen das dann auch meistens alle, die wissen, hoppla, momentan noch nicht zu große Euphorie zeigen (...) Das ist halt das doofe, das - muss man sagen - ist wirklich etwas... unangenehmes.“*
- (11) *Richter: “Weil jetzt ist ja gleich der erste Abend, seid ihr total lasch und ich hab mich eigentlich nur geärgert, dass ich die, die falsche Frau mitgenommen hab (lacht).. weil überhaupt nichts loswar, überhaupt nichts rüberkam! Oder dann.. das, das krasse Gegenteil. (...) Mann muss sich ganz stark auf die Herren einstellen, auf die Mädchen (...), genau checken, eh.. wo kommt da was rüber, was empfinden die für einander oder haben die auch wirklich starkes Interesse oder ist es nur so nach dem Motto "Ach, jetzt geh ich da mal nachmittags mit auf die Flusstour, weil mmh.. das von der Agentur so erwartet wird", ne? Wir eh.. wie gesagt, wir bringen zusammen, was.. wo wir wirklich glauben, das macht Sinn.“*
- (12) *Richter: „ich muss da wirklich etwas langfristiges schaffen und das kann ich nicht locker nehmen, ne? (...) das ist die Kommunikation.. die muss passen, und eh.. die richtige, einfach die richtige Partnerin zu finden, ja?“*
- (13) *Klaus: „wir haben uns beide, also super ergänzt, in der Ausstrahlung und in der Verständigung und es war einfach 'ne gute Harmonie direkt von Anfang an da und ich wollte dann auch gar nicht noch 'ne andere kennenlernen. Das hätte die Sachen wieder verwässert, glaube ich (...) Ich bin dann auch 'nen Entscheidungstyp und nicht ‚ach, jetzt versuch die andere mal, vielleicht ist die ja noch besser‘.. so 'n Typ bin ich nicht! Nech? Das war für mich Ordnung und ich merkte, dass... (...) ihr das gefiel und wollen wir mal sagen, die Sympathie von mir kam auch zu ihr rüber. (...) Und da hab ich gedacht, wenn das klappt, dann würd ich mich freuen.“*
- (14) *Mentrup: „Und der hat sich nur eine rausgesucht aus der Galerie, hat gesagt ‚Nur die!‘ (...) und der will nicht mehr. (...) und ich sag ‚suchen Sie noch mehr raus, dass Sie noch 'n Puffer haben. Sie fliegen darunter, das ist 'n weiter*

Weg (...)' , sagt er ,Nein, ich weiß das und ich träum von der und ich will keine andere'... Ja. Was soll ich machen?"

- (15) Richter: „Weil, ich bekomme immer alles mit, ich kann selber filtern, es geht mir nichts eh, durch die Lappen, es kann mich keine Frau großartig anlügen, ich würde das alles wissen und die Männer, wenn ich sie dann hier empfangen, das, ich würde es nicht zulassen, dass die sich alleine mal treffen. Jetzt nicht nur wegen der Sprache! Auch generell, sozusagen, um zu wissen, Mensch, erstmal die Hemmungen wegnehmen, (...) sehr viele Männer, die hier herkommen, sind auch (...) etwas schüchterner. Oder einfach 'n bisschen gehemmt oder blockierter, deswegen, ich möchte da immer, derjenige sein, der, der die Fäden zieht. Oder der die Marionettenpuppen, tschuldigung (lacht), die Puppen tanzen lässt. (...) Einfach so, der die, der die Fäden mitzieht. Der weiß, wie man das gut in Einklang bringen kann. (...) Ich bin halt wirklich immer derjenige, der die beiden betreuen kann, auch betreuen will. Dafür verdien' ich ja gutes Geld, ne?“
- (16) Klaus: „[Es] wird super ergänzt und übersetzt und begleitet und wenn irgendwelche Probleme sind, werden die auch gelöst, beiderseitig. Und dann wird auch beobachtet, ob überhaupt die Chemie da stimmt und ansonsten wird dann vielleicht auch schon mal was gesagt, ,na, ich glaub, das passt nicht' oder ,das klappt nicht, das lassen wir lieber'. Da begleitet man also schon sehr verantwortungsvoll.“
- (17) Richter: „wir interviewen sie nochmal, ob es Sinn macht, was sie von dem Mann hält, ob wir weitermachen sollen oder mmh.. was sie jetzt denkt? (...) Sie sind einfach frei in ihrer Entscheidung. Sie müssen nichts machen, (...) ich lass sie gerne mit 'm Taxi nach hause fahren, wenn sie glaubt, hier einfach.. sich ungut zu fühlen, unwohl.“
- (18) Richter: „Die Männer haben hier allerdings den Vorteil, sie sind es, die bestimmen, wer seiner Auswahl die ‚Endwahl‘ ist. Alles soll auf Gegenseitigkeit beruhen. (...) Wo dann die Chemie am besten stimmt, wer am besten auf den Kandidaten zugeht, wo die beiden merken, da kann eine Liebe aufgehen.“
- (19) Gabriela: “Si entonces... en junio... yo conocí a Wieland... un sábado... pero ese día nosotros no... estuvimos juntos porque... ese día otra persona le fue a conocer. Pero una semana después él se decidió por mí, entonces comenzamos a conocernos... salimos un día... mmh (pensativa) después le dijo a XX [agency owner] que él quería estar conmigo, volvió... para Alemania y nos mantuvimos en contacto.”
- (20) Gabriela: “Cuando yo lo ví a Wieland... él me gustó. A primera vista. Pero yo dije ‘No. Yo creo que... que aquí no hay nada (se ríe), nada que buscar’, entonces... Simon - después que él termina de presentarse - eh, Simon dijo... que él nos llamaba. Y Wieland se decidía por una de nosotras. ‘Ah, yo las llamo en, en esta semana que entra si Dios quiere’, entonces pasan los días, vienen y él nos llama. Entonces eh, un jueves (...) después el sábado, eh... suena el teléfono de mi mamá... y yo lo, lo tomo y dijo ‘aló’... ‘aquí está Simon, se decidió por tí, él está allí... como en una hora’. Y yo estaba (acentuada)... (se ríe) y eso fue rápido, maquillaje y... todo.”
- (21) “Günther Schubert hat eine Anzahlung von 500 EURO gemacht fuer eine Vermittlung und Betreuung einer neuen festen Partnerin. (...) Er hat Mireldis Gonzáles, 0 Kinder, aus XXX als neue Freundin auserwaehlt. Wir haben beider Interessen und Zusagen abgestimmt und werden beiden nun tagelang helfen, damit sie sich finden koennen. Sollte Günther aus irgendwelchen Gruenden noch weitere Kandidatinnen kennenlernen wollen, hat er diese Moeglichkeit, bis er genau weiss, wer zu ihm passt und wer sich auch wieder fuer ihn entschieden hat.”

- (22) Richter: „Ich kann das jetzt nicht weiter kommentieren, weil sonst würd ich jetzt ausflippen, wenn ich wieder an diesen Fall denke! Wie man hier Menschen oftmals.. eh.. behandelt oder einstuft, ne? So ein.. .. Unfug! (...) Aber.. solche Sachen kommen halt auch vor! (...) man geht mit gutem Herzen heran, man merkt (...) die verstehen sich, die sind lustig, da könnte etwas, etwas entstehen, die könnten wirklich mal.. (...) viele Gemeinsamkeiten herausfinden im Leben, was man alles machen kann, zusammen leben, sich lieben lernen usw. und dann nach zwei Wochen, oder nach drei Wochen Abwesenheit des Herrn kommt plötzlich ein Mail ‚Herr Richter., bitte teilen Sie ehm.. der Person mit, dass er nichts mehr von ihr wissen will‘, ne?“
- (23) Klaus: „Ich wollte dann auch diese Verbindung halten, weil ich merkte, die Zuneigung war da von ihr und ich.. wir mochten uns und es ist eine Liebe entstanden (...) ich hab erst so gar nicht dran geglaubt im ersten Moment, aber dann, (...) auf einmal fiel der Groschen.. eh.. ja, wann ich denn mit dem Flugzeug wieder ankäme‘ und da hab ich dann gesagt ‚Zwei Monate‘... (...) hab ich mal kurz überlegt, und dann hab ich gedacht, kannste machen und warum nicht?“ (...) Sie [Mary-Sol] wollte das nicht soo.. eh... deutlich machen, aber ich hab das wohl gemerkt, sie war interessiert. Dass ich da..eh.. das ist da ernst mache. ja ja. Das ich auch nicht so 'n Luftikus da bin und dann eh..eh.. das mit ihr da genieße und dann Tschüss und auf nimmer Wiedersehen, ne? (...) Und da merkte ich auch, dass sie interessiert war, dass ich wiederkam.“
- (24) Hertz: “Weiblicherseits wird’s [die Heirat] eigentlich vorausgesetzt, weil es ist so die Erziehung hier. (...) grad wenn ich mich mit ‘nem Mann aus ‘nem fremden Land einlasse, dann möchte ich schon heiraten, doch.. es ist (...) einfach auch, (...) ob er’s ernst meint. Die sind halt katholisch.”
- (25) Klaus: „Also ich hab schon gemerkt, dass sie lieber da leben würde. (...) Ja, sie sagt, sie traut sich nicht so richtig, weil die erste, weil die erste.. also die wissen, die Frauen, dass die Männer hier leben möchten [in Deutschland]. Das wissen die. Nech? Und.. ich kann es mir aber erlauben, wollen wir mal sagen, weil ich schon vorgesorgt habe, privatversicherungsmäßig usw., dass ich also jetzt auch da leben könnte... mit ihr zusammen. Und, eh.. wenn ich sie befragt habe, dann hat sie gesagt, ‚Ja, Deutschland ist schön, aber auch kalt und.. nicht so gerne‘ (...) ich möchte ja auch nicht (...)mit einer unglücklichen Frau leben, die sich hier nicht so richtig zurecht finden. Lieber vielleicht in ihrem Umfeld leben würde und, sie sind sehr familienbewusst und eh.. sie haben sehr großen Familienkontakt. Den pflegen die auch und eh.. wenn man da jemand rausreißt, (...) der ist da nicht so glücklich drüber. Nech?“
- (26) Mary-Sol: “Tú sabes, yo me puedo adaptar porque Horst necesite. (...) yo podría porque también, tú sabes, no se puede solamente... forzar de un solo lado. Ya nosotros estamos casados y yo... tengo que aceptarlo pero el lo tiene que aceptar también. Porque si el acepta yo también puedo aceptar porque necesite... No, tú sabes, yo puedo adaptarme (...) así nada de los tres meses. Y ya yo me estaba como adaptando.... Pero, al principio estaba como... media desubicada todavía.”
- (27) Hertz: “ich sag den zwar, ‘ihr müsst schon bereit sein ‘ne fremde Sprache zu lernen‘, aber ich.. ehm..sag den nicht, also, ihr müsst das und (...) das müssen beide Seiten auch wollen. (...) Das muss von innen heraus kommen, sonst bin ich eh der Meinung, dass die Beziehung zum Scheitern verurteilt ist. Also wenn da irgendwo irgendwelche Verpflichtungen dahinterstecken, dann.. dann bringt das nichts. Unterstützt ich auch nicht. Sag ich auch zu dem Mann ganz offen..“
- (28) Hertz: “dann.. muss man feststellen, dass die Männer da oftmals, das für [sie] ‘n Trennungsgrund ist, ne? (...) gut, wenn der Mann selber Spanisch kann.. eh, selbst ‘n bisschen toleranter auch ist und.. eh.. viele sind aber leider eben nicht

tolerant. Die, die sagen dann 'naja, wenn sie kein Deutsch lernt und wenn sie's nicht bringt, dann ehm.. wird sie sich hier nicht integrieren können, dann ist's nicht meine Frau'. Also so ganz krass dann.“

- (29) *Richter: „Meinungen generell, (...) und dramatisierend ist eh, Partnervermittlungen werden immer als unseriös angesehen! Leider. Man hört nur, (...) immer "Ach, gibt's doch nicht" und "glaub ich nicht", "Ach, nöö! Das war doch bestimmt vorher eine.. aus dem Gewerbe und eh, mach doch kein Unzeug(?), das funktioniert doch eh alles nicht!" und eh, eh "Mädchen kaufen" und .. Gerede halt! Mein Gott, Gerede.. (...) Da kommt nie etwas positives. Nie etwas optimistisches, gar nicht! (...) Man hat hier immer.. schwer genug zu kämpfen, um wenigstens eh.. eine kleine Klientel hier heranzuziehen.“*
- (30) *Mentrup: “Also Partnervermittlung an sich, da ist eben das Problem, dass wir sehr zu kämpfen haben mit dem Negativimage (...), weil in den Medien die Negativpropaganda (...) mehr.. gepusht wird. (...) Das verkauft sich eben.. Und das sehen die Leute und sagen: Alle Partnervermittlungen sind so”*
- (31) *Mentrup: “Und Sie müssen entscheiden, haben Sie Vertrauen..? Weil sonst können wir so oder so nicht zusammenarbeiten.. ne? (...) Hier geht's nicht um Schuhekaufen oder Autokaufen, hier geht's um 'nen Partner.. Aber die meisten sagen „ne, Partnervermittlung! Die sind alle unseriös.“*
- (32) *Wieland: „Ja, es hieß da immer, ich hätte mir 'ne Frau gekauft“*
- (33) *Wieland: „was ihr euch da immer erzählt, das ist alles.. Blödsinn sozusagen. Natürlich gibt es so 'ne Frauen, wie beschrieben wird! Aber die gibt's auch in normalen Umkreis, sag ich jetzt mal, wo es jetzt nich um Partneragenturen geht“*
- (34) *Klaus: „‘Ja, was ist das denn für einer? Der holt sich da 'ne Frau aus der Dominikanischen‘, wie das so geht..Holt sich da 'ne Frau, der hat sich die hier eingekauft oder was weiß ich? Und ... das ist ja manchmal 'nen bisschen, wird ja schonmal 'nen bisschen drüber geflachst, nech?“*
- (35) *Gabriela: “Bueno.. sí, este.. así he entendido decir a la gente que eso no funcionaba, que.. esos solamente querían el dinero de las personas, como que también eso era para prostitutas. Que eso era, que iban ahí los hombres, como que compraban a mujeres y se la llevaban para otro país a prostituirse. Eso, eso lo oía yo siempre!”*
- (36) *Klaus: „Ich hab einen Sohn, der weiß das auch so [dass er und Mary-Sol sich durch einen gemeinsamen Freund kennengelernt haben], (...) wie er darüber denkt, weiß ich nicht. Eh.. hab ich das so erzählt.. ich wollte nicht, dass ich da... man muss nicht alles erzählen. Ich weiß nicht wie das aufgenommen würde – (...) ich weiß nicht, ob sie's mir geglaubt haben (...) das muss ja auch nicht jeder wissen.“*
- (37) *Wieland: „nicht dass sie [Gabrielas Mutter] denkt, hier, wer weiß, was wir hier machen oder wo wir leben, dass sie da auch gleich 'n Eindruck kriegen, dass sie [Gabriela] hier.. soweit gut lebt und dass es ihr nicht schlecht geht.“*
- (38) *Hertz: „viele haben auch die rosarote Brille auf (...) er denkt halt, dass ist nur Zurückhaltung und die äußert sich nur nich so, aber ich seh dann eben an ihrer Zugeknöpftheit, dass sie eben da 'n Problem damit hat.“*
- (39) *Richter: „ich hat mal einen, einen Mann da, (...) dem haben wir 10 Tage hingeredet, haben gesagt ‚Mensch, bitte, schau, die Sara (...) ist immer nur stumm und still und wenn du mit ihr spazieren gehst, sie geht 10m links neben dir!“ Sind wir so zusammen beim Abendessen (...). sie sitzen gegenüber, 3m auseinander! Das war wirklich eh... haarezersträubend! Wir (...) haben gesagt ‚Bitte vergiss diese Frau, schau doch - natürlich ist sie sehr hübsch, aber da sind doch noch*

andere Hübsche - die passt nicht zu dir, das merkt man auch! Die interessiert sich für dich nicht (?), die, die kommt vielleicht dort hin, weil sie von den Eltern gesagt bekommen ‚Du, heirate einen Deutschen‘ und dann ist sie vielleicht aus'm Schneider, ne? Mach das nicht. Widme dich einer, wo, wo etwas von ihr überkommt, wo sie dir mal was erzählt!.“

- (40) *Wieland: „weil ich ihm auch gesagt habe, (...) dass ich jetzt nicht so eine... Draufgängerin brauche, die jetzt jedes Wochenende da irgendwelche Partys besuchen muss (...), weil.. das hat früher in meiner Jugend, da war ich das, aber irgendwann war das für mich nicht mehr interessant, das war nicht mehr.. nicht mehr so mehr mein Thema.“*
- (41) *Klaus: „Ich hab schon einiges im Leben durch, also.. eh.. und ich bin trotzdem, ich bin ein sehr lebensfroher Mensch (...) Ja, ja, (...) ich hab immer 'n Scherz auf Lager und.. und bin so schnell nicht kleinzukriegen (...) Ich bin auch 'nen Mensch, der Entschlüsse fasst und die auch umsetzt, ich bin nicht so 'n Traumtänzer, wie ich das dann hier oft erlebe, wenn die Leute [die an einer Vermittlung interessiert sind] anrufen ‚ja, ich weiß noch nicht‘ und ‚ja, aber jetzt noch nicht und in fünf Monaten‘ und naja..“*
- (42) *Klaus: „Ich bin (...) so 'n Draufgängertyp, also ich hab vor nichts Angst (...) Ich bin aber 'n sehr lebenslustiger Mensch und bodenständig.“*
- (43) *Mentrup: „gerade auch, wenn es jetzt einfache Männer sind, sag ich mal, wo ich sehe, solche wollen die deutschen Frauen nicht, ne? Wo ich sage, für 'ne Dominikanische ist das immer noch.. der Herrgott! Der ist 'n Mann aus Deutschland, ne? Da schlag ich's dann auch schon vor, aber die (...) kriegen dann schon die Krise, wenn die mal auf'n Bahnhof gehen müssen, geschweige denn auf'n Flughafen! Die würden verloren gehen! Und das schreckt manche schon ab (...) also die Entfernung.“*
- (44) *Wieland: “es war damals eigentlich nur Neugierde.. weil einfach mal gucken, weil wie gesagt, ich hatte immer Probleme mit deutschen Frauen, (...) auf jeden Fall eh, hab ich mich dann nur umgeguckt, (...) und.. ja, wie gesagt, dann (...) bin ich dann auf die Seite gestoßen, (...) und dann eh.. hab ich eben, bin ich da aus Versehen 'n Vertrag eingegangen, sozusagen.. ja, und dann hab ich mir eben überlegt, ja, (...) probierst es eben mal auf 'ne andere Art aus und nicht auf die konventionelle Art und Weise (...) ja komm.. was soll's, du bist alleine.. ob du jetzt noch Jahre lang weiter alleine rumlaufen willst oder du probierst es einfach mal auf diese Art und Weise.. weil mit den deutschen Frauen hat ich immer so meine Probleme..“*
- (45) *Wieland: „die [seine Eltern] haben natürlich dann auch eh.. Oh, Gott, was machst du? Wieso? Wieso, weshalb, warum? Eh.. meinst, ist das gut? und oh, da hat man schon so viel drüber gehört.. deswegen hab ich gesagt, ja gut, man hört viel aber eh.. sagen, ob es so ist, kann man nur, wenn's man selber erlebt hat und, was andere einen sagen, dass.. da kann ich nichts zu.. das kann ich nicht bestätigen in der Hinsicht sozusagen. Und deswegen hab ich gesagt, ich probier das jetzt aus... weil in der Hinsicht hat ich da schon immer so 'n.. Dickkopf, dass ich dann eben das durchgesetzt habe, was ich gerne machen möchte..“*
- (46) *Wieland: „das kostet schon Überwindung, wenn man.. eigentlich (...) immer mit mehreren gereist ist, dann.. kostet einen schon irgendwo 'n bisschen Überwindung, klar! Aber.. es war auch irgendwo zu gucken so, wie, wie reagierst du jetzt auf.. fremde Kultur, fremdes Land, ganz alleine, wie kommst du da.. selbst zurecht.. kannst die Sprache nicht eh.. was passiert jetzt? Einfach zum testen.“*
- (47) *Richter: „wenn jemand 'n Pessimist ist,.. das kann man dem auch nicht ausreden!.. Das ist auch gar nicht die Schicht, die ich treffen will! Ich treffe hier immer auf Leute, (unverständlich) die dann hier herkommen, die, die, die grenzen*

sich auch von ihrem Freundeskreis ab, die sagen ‚Du, Simon, ich hab 20 Kumpels, aber alle 20 haben gesagt Eh.. So'n.. Scheiß‘ Ja? (...) Aber dann der, der kommt, den brauch ich hier! (...) die Charaktere, die wir hier haben wollen, die 'n bisschen Abenteuergeist mitbringen, Mut, Risikobereitschaft, (...) das sind alles so Leute, die haben.. die wollen etwas, neues schaffen, die wollen, die sind wirklich... das sind ganz be-, bestimmte.. eh... Formate.“

- (48) Klaus: „ich sag ‚Hören Sie mal‘, ich sage ‚Ich kann Ihnen so eine Frau beschaffen.. Wenn Sie das wollen‘ (...) Ich hatte so 'n bisschen Mitleid mit ihm, das war jetzt nicht von der Geschäftsseite, ich hätte das auch gar nicht über den X [seinen Agenturkooperationsleiter] gemacht, ich hätte das eh.. eh.. das kann man dann organisieren von ihrem [Mary-Sols] Bekanntenkreis oder so.. das wär überhaupt kein Problem gewesen! (...) Und er war so begeistert und ich sag ‚Ja, da gibt es noch mehr von‘. Von diesen Frauen, nech? Und ich sag, das ist was anderes wie Russland oder Polen oder sonst irgendwas.. die nur hinter deiner Kohle her sind oder was weiß ich..eh.. hier könnte man offenherzige Begegnung mal eh.. eh.. zusammenführen.“
- (49) Klaus: „Und dann sagt der mir.. ‚das tut mir so leid, dass ich Ihnen das absagen muss, aber ich hab nicht die Courage dazu, ich bin nicht so ein Mensch wie Sie‘ sagt er. (lacht) (...) So forsch und, und auf Dinge zugehen und einfach machen und damit fertigwerden und sagt er ‚Ich bin 'ne Mimose.. ich glaube nicht, dass ich damit klar käme. (...) ich würde die Frau.. eh.. ich würde daran scheitern und mach die unglücklich‘ Da hat der schon solche Ahnungsprobleme! Und das tat mir so leid für den, da kann man nicht mehr helfen, ne? Was will man machen?“
- (50) Richter: „wenn ein.. ein Mann halt da zu aufdringlich.. wird oder wirkt, das muss man dann auch.. das kann man nicht bringen. Das kann man in keinem Land der Welt bringen (...) Man muss immer, 'n bisschen Stil bewahren, immer.. eh... wenn man jemanden verlieben möchte, bedeutet, man möchte sein Herz erobern, darauf kommt's an. Da kann man sich ruhig Zeit lassen.“
- (51) Richter: „Also schwere, schwere (betont) Verhaltens.. eh... ..-störungen, z.B. ... wenn einer gleich z.B., wenn, wenn einer, Frauen behandelt, als seien sie eh, käufliche Ware? (...) Wenn jetzt einer gleich meint, er müsste.. über die Frau herfallen, herfallen dürfen und sie sei jetzt nun ehm.. seine, sein sexuelles Objekt von der ersten Minute an? (...) einen überzogenen Anspruch hinsichtlich, so nach dem Motto ‚Ja.. jetzt eh.. geh'n wir doch gleich miteinander ins Bett‘, ne?(...) wir haben halt ihn gemäßregelt. ..mmh (zustimmend), und als er dann gemerkt hat, die eine will nichts mehr mit ihm zu tun haben, haben wir ihm klar, noch weitere Chancen gegeben, aber.. nur.. eh.. er war einfach unvermittelbar.“
- (52) Richter: „Dann hab ich auch einige Interessenten hier, die waren schon immer Latino-orientiert (...) und als sie jetzt frisch geschieden sind, haben sie gemerkt, mensch.. ihr kleiner Traum, vielleicht mal eine Dominikanerin oder eine Venezolanerin oder eine hübsche Kolumbianerin kennenzulernen, machen sie jetzt einfach wahr. Die sind frei! Die haben keine Verpflichtungen! (...) Jetzt probieren Sie's! (...) Und jetzt sagen sie.. Mensch, warum nicht mal was neues? Was.. etwas außergewöhnliches, ne? (...) jetzt probieren sie einfach etwas exotisches... a-a-ausgehend von einem tollen Urlaub, den sie mal gehabt haben in der Karibik, in Lateinamerika oder.. wohl auch mal in Thailand, wenn sich Mensch! Warum nicht einfach sich mal mit 'nem ganzen anderem Kulturkreis beschäftigen, auch 'ne andere Sprache dazulernen und, sich in eine Frau verlieben wollen!“
- (53) Hertz: „Viele haben mir gesagt, die haben schon über (...) andere große Portale (...) welche angeschrieben (...), die [Frauen] haben dann vielleicht 50 Kontakte, schreiben mit 30 Männern und aber... das ist dann nicht so ernst gemeint meistens. Deswegen sprechen die dann eher uns an.“
- (54) Richter: „Wenn man nicht hier schon einige Jahre wohnt.. an der Art, wie

sie spricht merkt man sofort, das ist a ganz a ausgefuchste, aber ganz a ausgefuchste oder ganz a schlaue, ganz a listige, aber großartig mit, sich verlieben wollen, das kann man bei ihr vergessen. Und das kann ja einer nicht wissen!“

- (55) Mentrup: *“wenn der sagt 'Ich will 'ne große, schlanke, sportliche', dann schick ich dem keine, die 1,50m ist und mehr breit als hoch und mit der Schürze kommt und keine Zähne hat und das passiert aber bei Chiffre”*
- (56) Hertz: *“viele sind schon gezielt auf der Suche nach 'ner Ausländerin. (...) einige, die haben eben dann in anderen Ländern schon Erfahrungen gesammelt, in Polen schon (...), auch Rumänien oder Russland und das ist aber oftmals schiefgegangen, ne? (...) weil (...) es ging nicht um Liebe da, ne? Also das war eher.. wurden dann eben betrogen (...) den wurde einfach nur das Geld aus der Tasche gezogen! Da gibt es in Polen einige Agenturen, die scheinbar partnersuchende Frauen vermitteln, aber.. das ist halt nur so.. Scheinagentur.. Da hat ich schon einige hier gehabt, die da reingefallen sind.”*
- (57) Richter: *“Sehr viele sagen, Thailänderinnen oder Asiatinnen würden ihnen so - die könnten sich nicht in eine Frau verlieben... Bei Polinnen und bei Russinnen haben teilweise schon.. Leute Vorerfahrungen gehabt, die sagen, die sind noch viel schlimmer als die deutschen Frauen (lacht).. eh, so nach dem Motto, die kommen in ein Haus rein und dann heißt's, dann fragen die Polinnen gleich eh ‚Ja, wo ist jetzt meine Putzfrau? (lacht) Um wieviel Uhr kommt eine Putzfrau?‘ und deswegen, die sind total materialistisch! (...) deswegen ist ein Teil, die schon so 'n bisschen wissen, dass diese Ostblockländer sehr materialistisch geworden sind.. ehm..“*
- (58) Klaus: *„Dass ich jetzt einfach schwärmen würde ‚ahh.. da ist alles so toll und das andere ist alles Mist. Hier in Deutschland sind alle Frauen blöde..‘ Das wär also erstmal ungerecht und wär auch nicht richtig. Ich kann das jetzt nur so sagen, dass ich hier auch deutsche Frauen in meiner Einsamkeit hier kennengelernt habe und hab da auch Schiffbruch erlitten, weil die einfach..eh.. zickig..eh.. waren.. und launisch und zänkisch und.. ich hab's erlebt.. und ich möchte jetzt auch nicht darauf rumhacken..“*
- (59) Klaus: *„Ja, ja.. das war eh.. eh.. ja..eh.. also eher eh.. eh.. ... eh... ich hab glaub ich gehört - ich kann's jetzt nicht mehr so genau.. sagen- dass, dass doch die Mentalität der Frauen eh.. eh.. - man trägt ja immer andere an, das weiß man ja nie - also doch so liebenswertiger sind, ist. Nicht so, nicht so .. eh.. so 'ne.. eh.. so.. eh... materiell orientiert! So! Möcht ich mal sagen, nech? Und eh.. eh.. das wollt ich mal ausprobieren und das hat direkt gefunkt und gezündet.“*
- (60) Klaus: *„dann musste sie wieder nach hause und da sagte er [der Agenturleiter] zu mir "Aber gib der mal Taxigeld", weil das ist der so gewöhnt, dass die Frauen da auch.. dann wenig Geld haben und eh, und eh dass die dann sich freuen, wenn dann jemand da.. das bezahlt.. (...) und da hab ich dann, ich sag "hier" .. Und dann hat er das gegeben und da hat die den angeranzt. (lacht) Wie er dazu käme, mich zu fragen, dass ich da Geld geben soll. Sie könnte sich 'n Taxi selber zahlen. (...) Und das hat mir auch imponiert. Die hat das nicht einfach genommen, sondern.. sie hat's nachher genommen.. ich hab gesagt, sie soll das nehmen, eh.. eh.. Ich hab ihr das jetzt gegeben und sie soll das auch nehmen und eh.. (unverständlich) Höflichkeitsgeste von mir... soll da nicht irgendwas denken..eh.. hab ich ihr dann so verständlich gemacht, dann hat sie das genommen aber sie hat da erst, hat sie das abgelehnt. (...) Fand ich auch auch so 'ne Charakterfrage, nech? Ja, ja klar. War imponierend für mich.“*
- (61) Wieland: *„an dem Umstand, wie sie da gelebt haben, sie [Gabriela] war eigentlich so eh.. das Mädchen für alles da zu hause und eh,.. ich hab schon, da hat man irgendwie schon dran, dran erkannt, dass sie eben jetzt... jetzt nicht so,*

guckt, was kann ich mir von dem leisten oder, z.B. auch eh, war ich mit ihr dann irgendwann noch mal kurz einkaufen, (...) und ich hab schon immer gemerkt, dass sie da so rumgedrückt hat und das nicht wollte, dass, dass ich ihr das kaufe, (...) ich hab auch so das Gefühl bekommen, sie hätte sich dafür geschämt, dass ich ihr das jetzt alles kaufe.. und daran hab ich schon gemerkt, dass sie dann eben nicht so eine ist (...) sondern.. die hat sich das zwar alles anprobiert und, aber dann hat sie's wieder aufgehängt und.. wollte auch nichts. Ich hab ihr da zwar was gekauft, jetzt aber.. aber nicht so viel, wie eh.. es ihr teilweise auch von den andern [Frauen nahegelegt worden war].“

- (62) *Klaus: „Puh.. das ist nicht so einfach.. (...) ich mein (...) ich bin verliebt, aber ich bin jetzt nicht bis über beide Ohren verliebt! (...) Aber so ist sie also eine zugängliche, liebe Frau, die also mir auch sehr viel Liebe entgegenbringt und einfach 'ne Offenheit und sehr viel Gefühl! Ja? (...) was ich sehr genieße (...) Ich hab's noch nicht hier in Deutschland so erleben können. So 'ne Nähe von einer Person, und weil wir uns überhaupt noch, wie sind ja vollkommen fremd aufeinander zugestoßen, eh.. aus zwei verschiedenen Kulturen! Das ist ja auch noch. Und wir haben uns also sehr, wir verstehen uns sehr gut und haben uns eh.. sehr gut ergänzt und eh.. das ganze Umfeld ist in Ordnung, überall in der Familie, in der Verwandtschaft bin ich sehr offen, herzlich aufgenommen worden und auch die Freundinnen!“*
- (63) *Wieland: „ich hab mir ja eigentlich im Grunde genommen gewünscht, jetzt irgendwie.. jemanden zu finden.. mit dem ich dann nachher auch zusammenbleiben könnte.. Also, wo sich dann mehr raus ergibt. (...) ich bin jetzt 33, (...) Und eh.. da hab ich gesagt, ich will mich irgendwann binden und eh... da auch 'ne Familie gründen, sozusagen.“*
- (64) *Richter: „Die sind total (...) familiär eingestellt. Total! Wirklich. Das ist, das ist.. ihre, ihr, ihr Traum, ihre Erfüllung (...) Auch danach der Beruf, das kann trotzdem 'ne Ärztin sein, aber die ist dann um 5 Uhr zu Hause und dann nur Familie und dann, dann, die würde niemals wegen jetzt 'ner Beförderung dann irgendwo anders hinziehen, wo ihr Mann nicht wohnen würde. Die würde den Mann mitnehmen, die würd den verpflichten, mitzu-, mitzugehen, ja? Aber niemals, sozusagen, Familie aufgeben oder keine Kinder haben zu wollen, nur aus eh.. egoistischer Sicht und so sagt man mir halt jetzt schon seit Jahren, seit Jahren aus allen Gegenden [Deutschlands].“*
- (65) *Mary-Sol: “yo diría que las mujeres de allá [de Alemania] son como más (...) Como que son más secas, tú sabes. Como que uno es más, más apegado, más.. no sé como que uno.. no sé si que uno le coge más cariño a la cosa o no sé qué... (...), porque la gente ahí, (...) como que viven juntos, tu sabes, y se quieren y viven juntos y son pareja Pero que no son como tan.. tan apegados (...)Las mujeres son.. como más apegadas, son de aquí. Ay sí. (...) a los papas, igualito. Uno es apegado a su familia.“*
- (66) *Hertz: “Also... die [Männer] (...) haben also den Wunsch, dass die [Frauen] etwas bescheidener sind und etwas zärtlicher, auch warmherziger.. nicht gefühllos. Weniger materialistisch (...) eingestellt (...) 'ne kinderliebe Frau.. die familiär eher ist.. und nicht so karriereorientiert (...) Das passt zusammen. Also ja, das ist so, ja.“*
- (67) *Hertz: “ja, der Mann sagt in der Regel ‘die muss erstmal nichts machen.. erstmal Deutsch lernen, die soll mich begleiten auf meinen Reisen‘ (...) aber viele unterstützen natürlich auch, (...) also man kann sagen, mehrheitlich unterstützen die das schon (...), dass die.. arbeiten wollen.“*
- (68) *Mentrup: „wenn ich jetzt merke, es ist einer, wo es wirklich schwierig wird, ehm,.. weil er sehr sehr klein ist oder wo irgendwie 'n Handicap ist, (...) es ist so 'n Gefühl dann, (...) wo ich denk, das wird schwierig mit dem (...) oder wenn einer*

sehr dünn ist oder irgendwas.. wo ich denk ‚Mensch, mit den deutschen Frauen, die wollen alle was anderes‘. (...) ich hab’n Kunden, (...) der ist 68 und will eben für Frauen 40+ und so, ja? Und dem hab ich das auch angeboten (...) weil ich weiß, die Frauen in Deutschland um die 40, die wollen keinen, der 68 ist. (...) Ich kann das gerne aufnehmen, der Wunsch vom Kunden ist für mich – ich hab das nicht zu beurteilen, aber ich weise dann schon darauf hin, ehm.. dass sie das Risiko eingehen müssen, dass die Frauen das nicht mögen. (...) Weil die [Frauen] wollen keine Pflegefälle.“

- (69) Mentrup: „Der will ‘ne Sportliche, Durchtrainierte, Attraktive (...). Und in dem Alter ist da nunmal schwierig, solche Frauen zu finden.. (...) Also das kommt aus der Situation, wo ich merk‘.. der hat jetzt Vorstellungen, die man mit Deutschen Frauen schwer realisieren kann (...). Mit dem, was er will. Und was die Frauen hier wollen. Also ‘ne Frau, (...) die zu mir kommt, die hat ja bezahlt.. also ist sie auch selbstbewusst und eigenständig und die will nicht die Trophäe nur des Mannes sein, nur weil der ‘ne Hübsche will. Die will dann schon mehr, ne?“
- (70) Richter: "das ist auch noch 'n ganz wichtig und muss man hinzufügen: Sehr viele 40-jährige Männer wollen keine 40-jährigen Frauen.. Die sagen halt ‚Mensch, wenn ich jetzt schon noch ausschau und sportlich bin und (...) mich für toll halte, dann will ich halt auch (lacht) auch dann ein, eine junge Frau, die 25 ist oder die 28 ist‘ Und das sagen sie mir auch "Simon, das wär bei uns unmöglich. (...) jetzt als Beispiel, hat mir mal einer gesagt ‚Ich bin 60. Ich hab, (...) lauter so Partnerschaftsanzeigen gemacht und da haben sich dann immer die 62- oder 63-jährigen Frauen gemeldet‘, weil die, die er mit 50 haben wollte, sozusagen, wo sie gesagt haben eh, ‚ich bin 50 (unverständlich) der ist doch viel zu alt‘, die wollen 'n Mann mit 45! Die wollen dann einen Mann (lacht), der fünf Jahre jünger ist als sie selber!“
- (71) Mentrup: "also wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel Kunden hab, die vollkommen stillos sind, (...) die richtig langweilig sind (...) und die wollen dann aber ‘ne Frau, die charismatisch ist und Stil hat und attraktiv ist (...) da muss man dann schon mal drauf hinweisen.. ja, dass das nicht der Vorstellung entspricht.“
- (72) Klaus: „So junge Frauen, da geht das schon 'nen bisschen was anders (unverständlich). Möcht ich auch gar nicht, weil die das Anstreben, da unbedingt 'ne ganz junge Frau zu haben, das können die sowieso nicht erfüllen.. Die ganzen Lebensauffassungen sind verschieden, grundverschieden dann (...) Ich möchte 'nen Mensch, mit einem Menschen zusammen leben, wo wir uns beide eben mögen und ergänzen“
- (73) Richter: „'ne Frau kann noch so hübsch sein.. wenn sie da plötzlich ihren 40-jährigen frisch Geschiedenen vor sich hat, der schon zwei fast erwachsene Kinder hat aus Deutschland und diese 25-jährige sagt dann "Eh.. du.. lieber.. Friedrich eh.. wenn ich das vorher gewusst hätte, hätte ich mir dir gar nichts angefangen, weil ich will noch zwei Kinder!!" ne? Also das alles muss man halt vermeiden.“
- (74) Richter: „Einmal hat ich (...) da hatte mal wieder so einer.. dieser 40-jährigen, die ich öfters hierher bekomme,.. hat sich eine ausgesucht, die war 19 Jahre alt. Ja? Und ehm.. das ist für uns dann immer am, am Rand der Lächerlichkeit, wenn wir jetzt da (lacht ironisch) nach Haus reinfahren, wo ein 40-jähriger Mann jetzt auf so 'n 19-jähriges eh..eh.. Wesen stößt. (...) War dann halt für ihn auch klar ein Kriterium, zu sagen, ‚Ne, ihr habt recht, ist einfach zu jung‘.“
- (75) Klaus: „Also.. den Partner respektieren und auch das Ziel verfolgen, mit dem Partner zu leben und auch durch dick und dünn zu gehen, nech? Wenn auch mal, wenn die Luft auch mal brennt, das ist ganz normal, sonst wär die Ehe langweilig, nech?.. Dass da schonmal Meinungsverschiedenheiten sind und jeder.. eh.. jeder auch mal 'ne andere Meinung hat, vertritt und dass darüber diskutiert

wird und auch mal heftig und auch mal gezankt wird, das ist normal! Das, man muss sich aber wieder finden und das ist dann Liebe! Wenn man sich findet und jeder ist für den anderen da und versucht, dieses Problem zu lösen, nech? Das find ich wichtig."

- (76) Mary-Sol: "Ah, no! No, yo no se los dije (se ríe).. (...), porque e-ellos (se ríe).. oye, (...) cuando ellos supieron que yo me metí que "qué? tú te vas a a meter en una agencia?" y yo "Mmh." (afirmativo, riéndose) (...) "no, no habían querido "Ah, conoces un hombre de pa' allá! Quien sabe "Se pueden a buscarle las cinco patas al gato."
- (77) Richter: „Wir (...) gehn das ganze dann auch mit der Familie an, weil auch die Mama oder der Papa oder Onkel - je nachdem, wo sie halt wohnt - sollen sofort.. mit.. eine Einflussnahme haben, zu sagen.. (unverständlich) fördern sie das jetzt weiter, was haben sie für einen Eindruck von diesem Mann?"
- (78) Richter: „ die können dann wirklich.. logisch denken, die können wirklich rechnen (...) die können auch mitreden, ja? (...) und haben wirklich auch 'n bisschen Anspruchsdenken an ihren eigenen Intellekt. Das ist dann natürlich auch unsere Zielgruppe."
- (79) Gabriela: "Bueno, yo siempre pensaba eso. Yo dije "bueno, si es para prostitución eh.. - Está un poco más de la cosa pero yo también pensé.. algo, que no todo puede ser así, que la persona tiene primero que conocer y cosa y.. y si no le conviene o ve algo raro, pues alejarse. (...) yo pienso por mí sola, no por lo que la gente diga.. (...) 'no! yo lo voy a conocer' porque si yo me llevo de la gente, entonces después.. no hago nada."
- (80) Mary-Sol: "[Mi familia preguntó] 'De qué, por qué tu te metes en esa agencia?' y yo le dije 'Ay, sí.. lo hay que probar. Probar suerte' (se ríe)."
- (81) Richter: „das sollen immer Frauen sein, (...) wo man beim Interview merkt: Die stellen Fragen, die sind neugierig, die wollen was wissen,.. da merkt man sofort mmh.. wenn's die mit mir können (...) und die überzeugen mich schon, dann ist es auch mal später dann so bei dem Mann.. den sie dann sozusagen dann auch also möglichen Ehemann auswählen würden.. da kommt dann was rüber. Die sind spritzig, die sind einfach.. die haben einen offenen Charakter."
- (82) Richter: „Frauen, die ihr Leben selber in die Hand nehmen,(...) die machen was, die wollen was, gehen noch in Englischkurs abends, die.. die möchten etwas aus sich machen, (...) die stechen hervor einfach durch.. einen bestimmten Entschluss. Oder einen bestimmten.. starken Willen, den sie im Leben entwickelt haben. Die wollen eben nicht nur.. rumsitzen oder ja.. vielleicht mal da einen heiraten.. , der, der einen dann verliebt und zu dem man dann zieht, sondern.. die haben so 'n bisschen das Leben selber in die [der] Hand. Die möchten selber 'n Beitrag leisten.. das sind eh.. einfach interessante Persönlichkeiten, suchen wir. Das ist unsere Zielgruppe."
- (83) Richter: „und wir sind auch manchmal sehr abrupt mit (...) naja, mit Eliminationen, weil wenn wir sehen, das 'ne Frau völlig falsch reagiert und wirklich nur lätschert ist oder langweilig oder (...) gar nicht aus sich herausgeht und der Mann gierig drauf ist, mal was von ihr zu hören, (...) da wissen wir auch: Das ist die falsche Frau in der Agentur, ne? Wir brauchen (...) fröhliche, wir brauchen lustige, wir brauchen nette und optimistische Charaktere, das ist ganz, ganz, ganz, ganz wichtig!"
- (84) Wieland: „und eh.. da hab ich dann den Herrn X [agency owner] angerufen und gesagt, ... dass das ja nicht nach meinem Interesse ist, dass ich.. dass die da zum Feiern gegangen ist und eh.. ob man da nicht mal irgendwo nach 'ner anderen Frau gucken könnte. .. weil, da hab ich dann irgendwie gemerkt, die hat auch kein großartiges Interesse an mir gehabt, so nach der Art, eh... wenn da

schon jemand von so weit wegkommtt (...) da hat ich dann, irgendwie kein Interesse, da weiter Kontakt zu suchen, weil eh.. wenn ihr das so egal ist, dass.. jemand Interesse für sie hat und sie dann abends noch feiern gehen muss, also das.. war aus meiner Sicht dann irgendwo gleich ‚Haken hinter und weg‘.“

- (85) *Hertz: “Also.. das ist hier aber so Volkssport und (...) viele Frauen sehen darüber hinweg (...) .. aber man merkt, dass die jungen, die so heranwachsen.., die.. haben oft, dass die Eltern halt getrennt leben.. und vielleicht möchten die auch nicht das selbe durchmachen, was ihre Eltern erlebt haben“*
- (86) *Richter: „bei sehr vielen.. sie [die Dominikanerinnen] hassen Untreue! (...) aber es hier ein Männersport zu sagen, er hat zwei oder drei Frauen.. ne? (...) Die [Dominikanerinnen] wollen von der Untreue loskommen, die wollen wirklich nur sich einem Mann verschreiben und sagen ‚der hält zu mir!.. der kommt am Wochenende zu mir, wir sind zusammen, wir fahren gemeinsam in Urlaub, er will von mir ein oder zwei oder drei Kinder, aber wir sind.. (...) eine harmonische (...) Familie! Die zusammenhält.‘ Nicht ein Mann, der nur immer von einer Blüte zur anderen springt und eigentlich, noch nicht mal die eigene Familie ernstnimmt.“*
- (87) *Gabriela: “Es así que, (...) no todos pero.. él está contigo, ehm, te da cariño, te da amor y por otra parte.. en tu espalda ya le da amor a otra mujer. Y quién sabe, tal vez cuatro, cinco más.”*
- (88) *Wieland: „in der Dominikanischen Republik gibt's sehr viele Machos, wie man sie hier bezeichnet. Also.. ‚heute die, morgen die, übermorgen wieder 'ne ganz andere‘, so nach der Art. (...) weil wenn's da auch meistens um Kinder geht, dann sind viele, die hauen dann ab. Die lassen dann die Frau mit dem Kind allein da sitzen.. (...) und das die Dominikanischen Frauen eben.. Männer suchen, die... die zu ihr stehen, auch sag ich mal, die, die sie lieben können, sozusagen, die zu ihr, zu denen halten sozusagen, und.. sag ich mal, auch eh.. ge-, gebunden sind und gebunden bleiben und nicht ‚heute die, morgen die‘, sondern wie so 'n Wanderpokal da rum-, rumreisen.“*
- (89) *Richter: „Denen fehlt ja auch oftmals die Vaterrolle in einer Familie. Die haben ja den Vater nie so richtig kennengelernt.. Die tuen sich ja hier an, an einen Mann sozusagen klammern, weil sie denkt ‚Oh, man, endlich! Als Kind hat ich ihn nicht und jetzt hab ich ihn‘.“*
- (90) *Klaus: „treu bleiben ist 'n ganz wichtiger Punkt, dann nicht irgendwo auszureißen, (...) weil irgendwann fällt das sowieso auf und irgendwann kommt das alles raus (...) ich hab sehr Vertrauen zu ihr! (...) Und das ist für mich wichtig!“*
- (91) *Wieland: “ich bin ziemlich teilweise auch... ja von den dominikanischen Männern teilweise auch enttäuscht, weil ich mein, die haben teilweise so hübsche Frauen da unten... aber.. wissen se, und dann muss man sich eben entscheiden, welche nehm ich jetzt und dann muss ich da auch bei bleiben und nicht eh... ja, da rumlaufen und mir jeden Tach 'ne neue suchen. (...) Ja, treu.. ehrlich, zu seiner Frau stehen.. jetzt.. und eben, sag ich mal, wenn man von 'ner anderen Frau, sag ich mal, so 'n bisschen eh.. "angemacht" wird, sag ich mal, auch irgendwo widerstehen können und sagen "tut mir leid, du bist zwar 'ne hübsche Frau, schön und gut, aber ich bin verheiratet jetzt, ich bleibe bei meiner Frau“, sonst.. bräucht ich se nich heiraten oder mit ihr zusammen leben“*
- (92) *Mary-Sol: “Well, the German men were good men and I told myself “Well! They are better than Dominican men” (laughing) and I’ve been married here and I already have two sons and... getting married here was no good idea... The one I married was very violent... I spent so much time suffering all that violence, so much violence, he was violent and drinking a lot! And throwing stuff within the house... and I noticed that... that the partners of those friends of mine weren’t like that. They were good men, so... no. Better, I go for the agency.”*

- (93) *Mary-Sol: "Aunque yo te digo, no todos, porque hay muchos buenos. Pero la suerte que me tocó, no, no fue la suerte mía. Me tocó la de los malos. (...) yo tuve dos años aquí sola y los que conseguía eran hombres, o que ya estaban casados o.. hombres que ya no estaban pa' mí. U hombres más joven, hombres que.. no servían para una familia... tengo dos años [sola] aquí, no mh mh (negando). No me encuentro ninguno que yo pueda ubicarme un hogar, una familia.. (...) No importan lo años que tenga, importante es que sea un hombre bueno (que no sea) violento.. (...) Klaus no es un hombre muy joven. Ya sabe que era un hombre que sí buscaba una pareja para estar estable. Un hombre.. que ya yo veía como que ya buscaba una estabilidad.. y ya yo tengo dos hijos y no podía estar brincando con uno, brincando con otro. Ya, lo que buscaba era estabilizarme con un hombre con mis hijos, con un hombre que fuera bueno con mis hijos (...) y yo me di cuenta que eso, él [Klaus] también estaba en lo mismo. (...) cuando el [Klaus] viene en la casa, tú sabes, él.. él le hacía gracias, era simpático, con los muchachos y yo miraba eso y ya sabes.... hacía así.. me alejaba y me quedaba mirando así para ver.. cómo él trataba a los muchachos.. yo mire mucha cosas antes de.. de.. meterme ya.. con él.(...) ...no me voy a meter a lo loco."*
- (94) *Hertz: "Das ist ziemlich heftig hier und (...) wenn die Frau natürlich dann mitkriegt, dass der [deutsche] Mann.. auch.. so [gewalttätig] ist, dann.. ist das für viele 'n Grund (...) sich von unserer Agentur abzuwenden."*
- (95) *Mary-Sol: "Ay, tú sabes, hay hombres buenos, (...) pero.. aquí les gusta, (...) mucho beber. Se ponen borrachos, se ponen muy impertinentes. (...) cuando se borrachan, se ponen violentos y se ponen malos. (...) los alemanes son hombres.. más tranquilos.. eh.. como que (...) no beben tanto, no son tan borrachones (sonríe), (...) Son, como que son más tranquilos (...). Y tampoco son tan celosos, (...) Mh mh (negando). Tú sabes, como que tienen carácter diferente, diferente.."*
- (96) *Gabriela: "[Quiero un hombre] que sea cariñoso.. comprensivo y que no.. sea como muchos, que siempre les gusta.. hablarle a la mujer como si ella fuera no sé qué.. y que ehm.. y que valore lo que uno piensa, también... (...) [los Dominicanos] se interesan en el cuerpo de la mujer (...) pero.. eh, no se interesan.. si ella quiere trabajar..o si ella quiere.. estudiar o qué ella piensa, se interesan por otras cosas (se ríe)..(...) Ellos [los Alemanes] siempre buscan.. como la forma de ayudar. De que uno siempre salga a camino y cosas así."*
- (97) *Gabriela: "hay muchas que, que las golpean, que, no sé, que los.. que a los maridos no les importa si ella necesita un panty, si ella necesita ropa.. que [las mujeres] solamente deben estar en la casa, atendiendo los hijos, cocinando.."*
- (98) *Gabriela: "algunas.. se quedan allá en República Dominicana. Entonces (...) el marido alemán manda siempre dinero.. (...) y allí disfrutan y hacen lo que ellas quieren."*
- (99) *Gabriela: "a veces a la gran mayoría de esas mujeres solamente les interesan estos hombres para acá [en Alemania].. ,porque ellos tienen dinero. Y a veces se interesan solamente por el dinero que ellos tienen.. Eh, por ejemplo cuando yo estaba donde Simon [el gerente], había una muchacha conmigo y.. (...) como ella hablaba solamente se interesaba por el dinero del hombre 'Ah, mira, el me mandó tanto, tanto, tanto..' y.. pasó que ella tenía una niña con un dominicano.. entonces ehm.. (...), el alemán se metió con ella teniendo esa niña de otro hombre.. y en un tiempo ... ya no quería venir a Alemania, siempre quería estar en República Dominicana (...) se casaron y todo, y allá en República Dominicana, y el venía para acá [Alemania] y después iba de vacaciones para República Dominicana, para donde ella.. él trató de traérsela para acá, para Alemania, pero ella.. no sé, siempre tenía excusas y después salió embarazada del otro, del primero. (...) Entonces yo creo que ya se divorciaron.. (...) Imagínate!"*

Un hombre, que se vaya tan lejos de un país por una mujer y cuando llegue allá, encuentra unas cosas así."

- (100) Hertz: "Unsere Kritiker sagen halt, die [Frauen] suchen nur 'n Schritt ins Ausland, um auch mal sich finanziell abzusichern.. aber wenn ich die Mädchen hier interviewe (...), hab ich 'n ganz anderen Eindruck. Also.. da geht's (...) weniger um materielle Dinge, sondern es geht eigentlich darum, jemanden zu finden, der die halt gut behandelt. Und mit dem die glücklich werden und Kinder haben (...)wir haben auch viele Absagen von Frauen, die das einfach nicht wollen. (...) die nicht weggehen wollen."
- (101) Klaus: „die Frauen sind sehr liebenswürdig und, und die wollen keinen ausnehmen (...) mag schon die eine oder andere geben - und man versaut sie selber. .. Wenn man die eh.. überschüttet mit Geschenken oder mit Geld (...) und das entwickelt sich dann negativ. Muss man eben mal 'n bisschen aufpassen.."
- (102) Hertz: "Die denken auch oftmals, wenn man fliegen kann, dann muss der Mann viel Geld haben. Ich mein, wir sparen halt für unseren Urlaub.. hier spart man eigentlich nicht. Das ist nicht im Bewusstsein der Menschen.. Also, wenn die Geld haben, (...) dann geben die das aus"
- (103) Richter: „ich stell schon klar, dass es auch Arbeitslosigkeit gibt, (...) dass eigentlich immer zwei Partner arbeiten, damit man sich auch die ganzen Unkosten teilen kann oder leisten kann, ja? (...) Ich stelle schon vieles klar, ne? Dass auch der Mann viel fordern wird von der Frau (betont). (...) Ja, eh.. mitarbeiten (...) wobei, die sind eh so, ne? Eine Dominikanerin an sich ist fleißig, (...) 'Ne Dominikanerin ist keine faule Person!"
- (104) Hertz: "die wollen halt jemanden finden, (...) der treu ist, der kein Macho ist, (...) der sie respektvoll behandelt.. (...), der für sie aufkommt auch in finanzieller Hinsicht, (...) kein Geizhals ist (...) und sagt ‚Du musst jetzt arbeiten gehen‘ und nebenbei noch die Kinder großziehen. (...) aber der Hauptpunkt ist immer, die wollen.. von der Enttäuschung weg."
- (105) Klaus: „Sie [Mary-Sol] hat mich ja auch gefragt, ob sie hier arbeiten könnte, wenn sie mit mir hier lebt und das ist ja erstmal die Grundeinstellung, nech? (...) aber hier hatte ich eher gedacht, dass sie auch erstmal sprachlich fit sein muss, (...) ich möchte sie auch nicht überall unterbringen. (...) nicht irgendwo in 'ne Fabrik stanzen oder sonst irgendwas. Also da wär die auch nicht so glücklich drüber, weil sie hat studiert, nech? Ja, und da bin ich 'n anderer Mensch, ich würde sie nicht da umsetzen ...eh.. um alles in der Welt, um dass sie da Geld rankarrt, ne? Das ist immer 'ne menschliche Sache, wie einer darüber denkt ..eh..eh.. warum er den Menschen überhaupt geheiratet hat.. als Werkzeug oder um mit dem zu leben, nech?"
- (106) Wieland: "Da bin ich voll und ganz dafür [dass Gabriela eine Arbeit annimmt], (...) dann kriegt sie auch mal 'n Gefühl für die Arbeit eh, sozusagen. Was das überhaupt heißt, sag ich mal, zu arbeiten und.. sein eigenes Geld zu verdienen, weil.. manchmal krieg ich hier eben so den kleinen Vorwurf ‚Oh, du bezahlst alles für mich und ich bin immer nur abhängig (...)‘, ich hab ihr auch gesagt ‚du bist nicht abhängig.. das ist normal, dass der Mann irgendwo arbeiten geht und die Frau, wenn sie jetzt nicht berufstätig ist, den Haushalt macht, das können wir aber alles ändern, das soll ja nicht so bleiben.. aber dafür musst du erst noch mehr Deutsch können, weil.. es bringt nichts, dass du irgendwo jetzt eh.. 'ne Ausbildung oder 'ne Arbeit annimmst und verstehst dann überhaupt nicht, was die von dir wollen!'."

Appendix III: Letters of recruitment and confirmation

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Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena
Magistra: Soziologie (10. Semester)

Jena, 24. März 2011

Guten Tag,

ich bin Studentin an der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena und schreibe meine Abschlussarbeit über den Einfluss des Internets auf die Bildung deutsch-dominikanischer Paarbeziehungen. Mein Schwerpunkt liegt auf Singlebörsen und Partnervermittlungsagenturen.

Zum einen stelle ich die Arbeit von Vermittlungsagenturen dar.
Außerdem suche ich binationale Paare, welche Lust haben mir ein Interview zu geben und von ihren Erfahrungen zu berichten, um auch die andere Seite der Vermittlung -jene der Paare- darstellen zu können.
Die Interviews dauern jeweils ca. 1 Stunde und können persönlich oder über Internet/Telefon geführt werden. Da es sich um eine wissenschaftliche Erarbeitung des Themas handelt, sichere ich Ihnen Vertraulichkeit und Anonymität zu.

Ich würde mich sehr freuen, wenn Sie mich mit einem Interview bei meiner Magisterarbeit unterstützen. Wenn Sie Interesse haben oder Fragen, können Sie mir gerne eine Email schreiben.

Mit vielen Grüßen,
THERESA ERFILING.

Buenos días,

soy estudiante de la universidad Friedrich-Schiller en Jena/Alemania y por el momento escribiendo mi tesis sobre la influencia del internet en la constitución de parejas alemanes-dominicanas. Mi foco de investigación son sitios de encuentros y agencias matrimoniales.

Por un lado voy a presentar el trabajo de una agencia matrimonial.
Además estoy buscando parejas binacionales que tienen interés de ser entrevistadas y contar sus experiencias.

Las entrevistas duran más o menos 1 hora cada una, serán confidenciales y anónimos (por ser una investigación científica) y pueden ser hechas personalmente o por internet o teléfono.

Me alegraría mucho si usted estuviera disponible a ayudarme con mi tesis. Si usted tiene interés o preguntas, estaré contenta de recibir un email.

Con muchos saludos,
THERESA ERFILING.



SCHILLER

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Sekretariat: 03641-949520

Dr. Klaus Dörre

E-Mail: klaus.dorre@

uni-jena.de

Jena, den 15.03.11

To whom it may concern

The undersigned hereby certifies that **Theresa Erling, born on 31st of October 1985 in Mettingen/Germany** is a student at the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Jena and currently conducting a research project on female migration from Latin America to Germany. The aim of the project which will culminate in her Diploma thesis is to understand the role of new media and communication technologies in spouse search and spouse finding in a cross border context.

I would appreciate if you support Theresa Erling in her work and scientific research.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Klaus Dörre



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Institut für Soziologie

Univ.-Prof.
Dr. Klaus Dörre

Frau **Theresa Erling**, geboren am **31. Oktober 1985** in **Mettingen/Deutschland**, ist Studentin an der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena und führt derzeit im Rahmen ihrer Magisterarbeit ein Forschungsprojekt über weibliche Migration aus Lateinamerika nach Deutschland durch.

Ziel der Studie ist es zu verstehen, welchen Einfluss moderne Technologien (wie bspw. das Internet) auf internationale Paarsuche und -konstitution haben. Dazu sollen internetbasierte Partnervermittlungsagenturen (u.a. die Agentur www.██████████.com unter der Leitung von ██████████ und ██████████ herangezogen werden, um zu ihren Erfahrungen mit deutsch-dominikanischen Paaren, deren Vermittlung und den daraus resultierenden Ehen interviewt zu werden.

Ich würde mich freuen, wenn Sie Theresa Erling in ihrer Arbeit und wissenschaftlichen Forschung unterstützen. Bei Fragen können Sie sich jederzeit gern an mich wenden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen


Prof. Dr. Klaus Dörre

Appendix IV: Interview topics and guide lines

a) Agency owner

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Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena
Magistra: Soziologie (10. Semester)

Jena, 28. März 2011

Interview
am 30. März mit Herrn [REDACTED] („[REDACTED]“)

Themenübersicht:

1. **Allgemeines zur Arbeit der Agentur „[REDACTED]“**
 - Ablauf einer Partnervermittlung
 - Angebot (Betreuung durch die Agentur, etc.)
 - Werbung, Feedback (bspw. von vermittelten Paaren als auch allgemeine Resonanz auf die Agentur)
 - Chancen und Schwierigkeiten bei Vermittlungen
2. **Weibliches Kundenprofil**
 - Zielgruppe (Alter, Bildung, Familienstand, etc.)
 - Motivation, Wünsche, Gründe (Warum Partner aus dem Ausland? Warum Partner aus Deutschland? Welches Partnerprofil erwünscht? etc.)
3. **Männliches Kundenprofil**
 - Zielgruppe (Alter, Bildung, Familienstand, etc.)
 - Motivation, Wünsche, Gründe (Warum Partnerin aus dem Ausland? Warum Partnerin aus der DR? Welches Partnerprofil erwünscht? etc.)
4. **Steckbrief Agentur „[REDACTED]“**
 - Die Agentur besteht seit:
 - Hauptsitz in:
 - Grund der Firmengründung:
 - Wieviele männliche Kunden in Kartei:
 - Wieviele Kundinnen in Kartei:
 - Wieviele Vermittlungen pro Jahr/seit Firmengründung:
 - Welcher Vermittlungsradius:
 - Zukunftsaussichten

Interviewleitfaden Agentur

Wie ist der Ablauf einer Partnervermittlung? Welche einzelnen Schritte werden unternommen?
(werden mehrere Frauen/Männer gleichzeitig kontaktiert? Was passiert, wenn sich Paar mag/nicht mag?)

1. Agentur

Werbung

Wie werben Sie neue Kunden und Kundinnen? (Werbekanäle in D und DR, etc.)

Gibt es Kunden/Kundinnen, die sie abgelehnt haben oder ablehnen würden? (Gewalttätig, etc.)

Werben Sie eher offensichtlich/direkt oder zurückhaltend/diskret? (Welche Eigenschaften/Stereotype werden zu Werbezwecken genutzt?)

Angebot

Welches (Betreuungs)angebot bieten Sie Ihren Kunden/Kundinnen?

Passen Sie Ihr Angebot an die Kundenwünsche an? (Kooperation mit anderen Agenturen? Aufnahme neuer Nationalitäten?)

Chancen und Probleme

Was passiert nach erfolgreicher oder missglückter Vermittlung?

Leben Paare tendenziell eher in D oder in der DR?

Welche Schwierigkeiten treten bei Vermittlungen am häufigsten auf?

Bekommen Sie Feedback von vermittelten Paaren?

Mit welchen Schwierigkeiten ist eine Vermittlungsagentur allgemein konfrontiert?

Welche Meinung kursiert über Kunden bzw. Kundinnen von Vermittlungsagenturen?

Gibt es Unterschiede in der Bewertung, wenn Männer oder Frauen den Dienst nutzen?

2. Kundenprofil DR

Zielgruppe

Wie setzen sich ihre Kundinnen zusammen? (Alter, Bildung/Beruf, Familienstand, Einfluss der Familie, etc.)

Was fällt auf?

Warum vor allem dt. Männer und kaum weibliche Klientel aus D?

Motivation/Partnerwünsche

Was ist das Männerprofil, das von Ihren Kundinnen gesucht oder bevorzugt wird?

Was versprechen sich Ihre Kundinnen von einer Heirat mit einem Ausländer?

Welche sind Ihrer Erfahrung nach die Hauptgründe für eine Partnerschaft mit einem Deutschen?

Warum nutzen Frauen den Service nicht, sondern bleiben in der DR?

Welche Ambitionen haben die Frauen in Deutschland? (Beruf, Hausfrau?) Stimmt dies mit den Vorstellungen der Männer überein?

3. Kundenprofil D (vgl.o.)

Zielgruppe

Wie setzen sich die Kunden zusammen? (*Alter, Bildung/Beruf, Familienstand, Kinder, Nationalität, etc.*)

Was fällt auf?

Warum wird Agentur gewählt und nicht eine Singlebörse genutzt?

Motivation/Partnerwünsche

Was ist das Frauenprofil, das von Ihren Kunden gesucht oder bevorzugt wird? Welche Informationen sind bekannt und bewegen zu einer Entscheidung? Reaktion auf vorhandene Kinder?

Welche sind Ihrer Erfahrung nach die Hauptgründe für eine Partnerinnenwahl im Ausland?

Wodurch wird die „Initialzündung“ gemacht? (Erzählungen Dritter, Werbung, Zufall, etc.?)

Welche sind Ihrer Erfahrung nach die Hauptgründe für eine Partnerschaft mit einer Frau aus der DR?

Allgemeine Informationen zur Agentur

- Die Agentur besteht seit:
- Hauptsitz in:
- Grund der Firmengründung:
- Wieviele männliche Kunden in Kartei:
- Wieviele Kundinnen in Kartei:
- Wieviele Vermittlungen pro Jahr:
- Welcher Vermittlungsradius:
- Wie sind die Zukunftsprognosen? (*bspw. Konkurrenz mit Singlebörsen, etc.*)

b) German men

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Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena
Magistra: Soziologie (10. Semester)

Jena, 19. April 2011

Interview
am 20. April mit Herrn [REDACTED]

1. Eingehen der Partnerschaft

- Wie entstand der Wunsch, eine Partnerin aus der Dominikanischen Republik zu finden?
- Wie haben Sie sich kennengelernt? (Ablauf des Kennenlernprozesses/der Vermittlung)
- Vorheriges Wissen über Land und Leute

2. Partnerschaft

- Gemeinsame Sprache und Entschlussfindungen
- Gestaltung des gemeinsamen Lebens in Deutschland
- Reaktion Ihrer Familie, Ihres Bekanntenkreises auf die Partnerschaft und Heirat
- Mögliche kulturelle Unterschiede zwischen den Ehepartnern

3. Soziodemographische Angaben

- ♦ Geburtsort:
- ♦ Alter:
- ♦ Verheiratet mit dominikanischer Partnerin seit:
- ♦ Kennengelernt:
- ♦ Kinder: (davon aus vorherigen Beziehungen:)
- ♦ Vorheriger Familienstand:
- ♦ Höchster Bildungsabschluss:
- ♦ Beruf/ ausgeübte Tätigkeit in der Deutschland:

Interviewleitfaden Mann

Warm-up: Wie haben Sie ihre jetzige Partnerin kennengelernt?

1. Initiierung der Partnerschaft

Entschlussfindung/Motivation:

Wann und wie entstand der Wunsch, eine Partnerin über eine Agentur zu finden?

Wann und wie entstand der Wunsch, eine Partnerin aus dem Ausland zu haben?

Warum haben Sie sich für eine Partnerin aus der DR interessiert bzw. entschieden?

Welche Rolle spielten Familie und Freunde bei der Entscheidungsfindung? (auch evtl. Vorhandene Kinder?)

Wurde der Plan von ihrer Familie und von Freunden unterstützt?

Wahl und Ablauf des Verfahrens

Wie sind Sie darauf aufmerksam geworden? (Werbung, Freunde, eigene Erfahrung, etc.)

Wie gut hat es geklappt? Wie zufrieden sind Sie? (bspw. mit der Agentur)

Vor der Heirat

Waren Sie vorher bereits in der DR oder Lateinamerika?

Was wussten Sie zum Zeitpunkt der Heirat über DR und die dominikanische Kultur?

Haben Sie sich auf die Heirat mit einer Dominikanerin (und die evtl. Auswanderung nach DR) vorbereitet? Wie?

Welche Eigenschaften haben Frauen in D und DR? (Bewertung eher positiv oder negativ?)

Welche Eigenschaften haben Männer in D und DR? (Bewertung eher positiv oder negativ?)

Eingehen der Partnerschaft

Wie haben Sie den Kontakt zu Ihrer jetzigen Partnerin aufgebaut und während der Kennlernphase gehalten? Welche Probleme traten auf?

Wie haben Sie erkannt, dass sie die Person sein soll, mit der Sie eine Partnerschaft eingehen wollen?

Wie lange kannten Sie Ihre Partnerin, bevor Sie sich zum ersten Mal leiblich getroffen haben?

Warum haben Sie entschieden, zu heiraten? (und nicht so zusammenzuleben?)

Wie haben Sie entschieden, wo Sie heiraten und gemeinsam leben möchten?

Auf welcher Sprache kommunizieren Sie?

(Welche Erwartungen, Wünsche und Ängste hatten Sie? (an Partnerin, Beziehung))

2. Binationale Paarbeziehung

Familie des Mannes

Wie hat Ihre Familie auf die Heirat reagiert? (und darauf, dass Sie Ihre Frau über eine Agentur kennengelernt haben)

Welche Beziehung hat Ihre Frau zu Ihrer Familie? (Kennen Sie ich bereits?)

Freunde und Bekannte des Mannes

Wie haben Ihre Freunde auf die Heirat reagiert? (und darauf, dass Sie Ihre Frau über eine Agentur kennengelernt haben)

Familie der Frau

Kennen Sie die Familie Ihrer Frau?

Stehen Sie in Kontakt mit der Familie in der DR und falls ja, wie? (Telefonate, Urlaube, finanz. Unterstützung?)

Gestaltung/Aushandlung des Alltagslebens

Welche Eigenschaften sollte ein Mann bzw. eine Frau Ihrer Meinung nach haben? (auf welche Gebiete wird Schwerpunkt gesetzt? (bspw. Familie, Beruf, Charakter, welche Eigenschaften werden mit Nationalität oder Kultur in Beziehung gebracht?)

Würden Sie sagen, dass Ihre Partnerin typisch Dominikanisch ist? (In welcher Hinsicht?)

Welche Probleme gibt es in ihrer Partnerschaft, die Ihrer Meinung nach bei Partnern, welche beide aus D/ der DR kommen, nicht auftreten würden? (Erkennen und Deuten von Problemursachen national, kulturell oder persönlich?)

Was ist für Sie schwierig und bereichernd an einer Partnerschaft mit einer Person aus der DR?

Wie ist das gemeinsame Leben in D bzw. DR geplant? (Berufsausübung, Zuständigkeiten, etc.)

Rückwirkende Bewertung der Entscheidung

Würden Sie es empfehlen, eine Partnerin über eine Agentur zu finden?

Wie bewerten Sie jetzt im Nachhinein die Entscheidung, eine Frau aus der DR zu heiraten?

Können Sie sich auch vorstellen, in der DR zu leben?

Soziodemographische Angaben

- Geburtsort:
- Alter:
- Verheiratet mit dominikanischer Partnerin seit:
- Kennengelernt:
- Kinder: (davon aus vorherigen Beziehungen:)
- Vorheriger Familienstand:
- Höchster Bildungsabschluss:
- Beruf/ ausgeübte Tätigkeit in der Deutschland:

c) Dominican women

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Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena
Magistra: Soziologie (10. Semester)

Jena, 19. April 2011

Entrevista
con [REDACTED], el 20. de abril.

1. Iniciación de la pareja

- Como se formó el deseo de encontrar una pareja alemana?
- Como se conocieron? (proceso de conocerse por una agencia)
- Conocimiento precedente sobre el país y la cultura de Alemania

2. Relación

- Idioma común y proceso de tomar decisiones
- Configuración de la vida común en Alemania
- Reacción de su familia y sus amigos de casarse con un hombre alemán
- Posible diferencias culturales entre las parejas

3. Datos socio-demográficos

- Lugar de nacimiento:
- Edad:
- Casada con una pareja alemana desde:
- Conocido la pareja alemana:
- Niños: (de relaciones anteriores:)
- Estado civil anteriormente:
- Finalización de estudios:
- Profesión/actividad en República Dominicana:
- Profesión/actividad en Alemania:

Interviewleitfaden FRAU

1. Initiierung der Partnerschaft

Entschlussfindung/Motivation:

Wann und wie entstand der Wunsch, einen Partner aus dem Ausland zu haben?

Warum haben Sie sich für einen Partner aus D interessiert bzw. entschieden?

Welche Rolle spielten Familie und Freunde bei der Entscheidungsfindung?

Wurde der Plan von ihrer Familie und von Freunden unterstützt?

Wahl und Ablauf des Verfahrens

Wie sind Sie darauf aufmerksam geworden? (Werbung, Freunde, eigene Erfahrung, etc.)

Wie gut hat es geklappt? Wie zufrieden sind Sie? (bspw. mit der Agentur)

Vor der Heirat

Waren Sie vorher bereits in D oder Europa?

Was wussten Sie zum Zeitpunkt der Heirat über D und die deutsche Kultur?

Haben Sie sich auf die Heirat mit einem Deutschen vorbereitet? Wie?

Wie haben Sie sich vor der 1. Abreise nach D gefühlt?

Welche Eigenschaften haben Frauen in D und DR? (Bewertung eher positiv oder negativ?)

Welche Eigenschaften haben Männer in D und DR? (Bewertung eher positiv oder negativ?)

Eingehen der Partnerschaft

Wie haben Sie den Kontakt zu Ihrem jetzigen Partner aufgebaut und während der Kennlernphase gehalten? Welche Probleme traten auf?

Wie haben Sie erkannt, dass dies die Person sein soll, mit der Sie eine Partnerschaft eingehen wollen?

Wie lange kannten Sie Ihren Partner, bevor Sie sich zum ersten Mal leiblich getroffen haben?

Warum haben Sie sich entschieden zu heiraten?

Wie haben Sie entschieden, wo Sie heiraten und gemeinsam leben möchten?

Auf welcher Sprache kommunizieren Sie?

Welche Erwartungen, Wünsche und Ängste hatten Sie? (an Partner, Beziehung, neue Heimat)

2. Binationale Paarbeziehung in Deutschland

Gestaltung/Aushandlung des Alltagslebens

Welche Eigenschaften sollte ein Mann bzw. eine Frau Ihrer Meinung nach haben? (auf welche Gebiete wird Schwerpunkt gesetzt? (bspw. Familie, Beruf, Charakter, welche Eigenschaften werden mit Nationalität oder Kultur in Beziehung gebracht?)

Welche Probleme gibt es im Alltag, die Ihrer Meinung nach bei Partnern, welche beide aus D/ der DR kommen, nicht auftreten würden? (Erkennen und Deuten von Problemursachen national, kulturell oder persönlich?)

Was ist für Sie schwierig und bereichernd an einer Partnerschaft mit einer Person aus D?

Wer ist in Ihrer Familie für den Haushalt zuständig? Teilen Sie sich Aufgaben? (wer ist berufstätig? herrscht Unzufriedenheit darüber, falls kein Job ausgeübt wird?)

Falls Kinder vorhanden, wer ist zuständig für Betreuung, etc.?

Familie der Frau

Struktur der Familie in der Dominikanischen Republik (Geschwister, Wohnverhältnisse, etc.)

Wie hat Ihre Familie auf die Heirat reagiert?

Wie hat sie darauf reagiert, dass Sie einen Mann über eine Partnervermittlungsagentur kennengelernt haben? (auch auf den Wegzug nach D)

Stehen Sie in Kontakt mit der Familie in der DR und falls ja, wie? (Telefonate, Urlaube, finanz. Unterstützung?)

Wann waren Sie das letzte Mal in der DR?

Rückwirkende Bewertung der Entscheidung

Würden Sie es weiterempfehlen, einen Partner über eine Agentur zu finden?

Können Sie sich vorstellen, für immer in D zu leben?

Soziodemographische Angaben

- Geburtsort:
- Alter:
- Anzahl der Geschwister: ___Brüder (davon im Ausland lebend:)
 ___Schwestern (davon im Ausland lebend:)
- Höchster Bildungsabschluss:
- Beruf:
- Verheiratet mit deutschem Partner seit:
- Kennengelernt:
- Kinder: (davon aus vorherigen Beziehungen:)

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Abstract

This thesis gives an insight into German-Dominican matchmaking. Qualitative interviews with three agency owners and two German-Dominican couples provide the necessary data display the German-Dominican matchmaking business and describe the incentives of women and men to register at such an agency to find a foreign partner.

The study firstly clarifies the development of and reasons for female Dominican migration, including the weakening of men as main financial provider within the families and the matrifocal family structure with a high number of female-headed households due to unstable relationships and new financial responsibilities of Dominican women. Migration is seen by Dominican women as broadening life and work opportunities and although most Dominican women migrate for labour, some decide to register at an international matchmaking agency which mediates relationships between Dominican women and German men. Such marriage migration via matchmaking agencies is a migratory pathway, which is almost exclusive to women and the images of femininity, used by the agencies to run their business will be presented. Furthermore, it will be discussed, if a marriage is seen as migration alternative or as a strategy by Dominican women.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Magisterarbeit gibt Einblick in Deutsch-Dominikanische Heiratsvermittlung. Anhand von qualitativen Interviews mit drei Agenturleitern und zwei Deutsch-Dominikanischen Paaren konnte der Heiratsvermittlungsprozess detailliert dargestellt werden und es konnten die Gründe herausgearbeitet werden, welche Dominikanische Frauen und Deutsche Männer dazu bewegen, einen Partner im Ausland zu suchen.

Zunächst werden Faktoren dargestellt, welche die Entwicklung der Migration Dominikanischer Frauen entscheidend begünstigen: Darunter zum einen die Schwächung von Männern als Hauptversorger innerhalb der Familien und zum anderen die matrifokale Familienstruktur mit Frauen als Familienvorstand (welche sowohl durch den mangelnden finanziellen Betrag der Männer bedingt wird, als auch durch die unsteten Beziehungsstrukturen in der Dominikanischen Republik). Der Hauptteil dominikanischer Frauen migriert auf der Suche nach Arbeit ins Ausland. Einige Frauen migrieren jedoch durch eine Beziehung oder Heirat mit einem Deutschen, welche meist durch eine internationale Heiratsagentur vermittelt wird. Heiratsmigration durch eine Vermittlungsagentur ist eine spezifisch weibliche Art der Migration und in dieser Arbeit wird unter anderem erläutert, welche Motive von Seiten Dominikanischer Frauen vorliegen, um sich bei einer solchen Agentur zu anzumelden. Es wird gezeigt, dass die Gründe denen von Arbeitsmigration ähneln. Desweiteren werden neben den Motiven deutscher Männer auch vorherrschende Genderzuschreibungen vorgestellt, welche internationale Heiratsvermittlung entscheidend begünstigen, wenn nicht überhaupt ermöglichen.

Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und nur unter Verwendung der angegebenen Hilfsmittel und Literatur angefertigt habe.

Jena, 15.08.2011

Theresa Erling