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# Marital Selection in Intercultural Marriages

Dobór małżeński w małżeństwach  
międzykulturowych

## ABSTRACT

Studies on the patterns of marital selection began in the 1920s, and since then researchers have identified a set of variables that should be taken into account in marriage selection research. In this study the following variables are considered: age, nationality, race, social class, environmental background, attitude to faith, religion, attitude to religious practices, education, current employment status, previous marital status, number of marriages, number of children from previous marriages, and financial situation before the present marriage. One hundred and twelve Polish women who married foreigners from non-European cultures took part in the study. Their husbands were representatives of African, Asian and Australian countries; none of them came from Europe or the Americas.

The aim of the study is to examine marital selection among intercultural marriages and to provide new knowledge on the subject. In connection with the adopted topic, the purpose of the research and the analysis of the literature on the subject, the main problem of the research was formulated as follows: what are the similarities and differences in marital selection in intercultural marriages?

## KEYWORDS

marriage,  
matrimonial choice,  
intercultural marriage,  
interculturalism,  
intercultural relations,  
consistent choice,  
eligibility field

## SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

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The study revealed that, in most cases, marital selection among the couples who participated in the study followed a similar social biography: the spouses were of a similar age (79.5%) and shared race (90.1%), social class (74.1%), environmental background (61.6%), education (56.2%), attitude to faith (92.8%), and their financial situation before the present marriage (65.2%). The results obtained confirmed Farley's theory, in which he distinguished three main factors influencing the frequency of intercultural marriages: military service, higher education and place of residence. The analysis of the data indicates that the majority of the respondents lived in big cities (57.1%), and higher education was the most common level of education among both the respondents (60.7%) and their husbands (41.1%).

## ABSTRAKT

Badania nad wzorami doboru małżeńskiego zostały zapoczątkowane w latach 20. XX wieku. Przez stulecie wielu badaczy określało zmienne, które należy wziąć pod uwagę podczas badań nad doбором małżeńskim. W niniejszych badaniach wyznaczono następujące zmienne: wiek, narodowość, rasa, warstwa społeczna, pochodzenie środowiskowe, stosunek do wiary, wyznawana religia, stosunek do praktyk religijnych, wykształcenie, aktualne zajęcie, stan cywilny przed zawarciem obecnego małżeństwa, liczba małżeństw, liczba dzieci z poprzednich związków oraz sytuacja materialna przed wejściem w związek.

W przeprowadzonych badaniach podjęto próbę zbadania doboru małżeńskiego wśród małżeństw międzykulturowych, który stanowił przedmiot podjętych badań. Celem było dostarczenie nowej wiedzy na powyższy temat. W związku z przyjętym tematem, celem badań oraz analizą literatury przedmiotu, główny problem badań sformułowano następująco: Jakie podobieństwa i jakie różnice występują w doborze małżeńskim w międzykulturowych małżeństwach?

Z badań wynika, że w większości przypadków badane pary dobierały się według podobnej biografii społecznej. W większości przypadków małżonkowie byli w podobnym wieku (79,5%), a także łączyły ich: rasa (90,1%), warstwa społeczna (74,1%), pochodzenie środowiskowe (61,6%), wykształcenie (56,2%), stosunek do wiary (92,8%), sytuacja materialna przed ślubem (65,2%). Uzyskane wyniki potwierdzają teorię Farleya, który wyodrębnił trzy główne czynniki, które wpływają na częstość zawierania małżeństw mieszanych: służbę wojskową, wyższe wykształcenie i miejsce zamieszkania. Z analizy danych wynika, że największa część badanych kobiet zamieszkiwała właśnie duże miasta

(57,1%), a wykształcenie wyższe było najczęstsze zarówno wśród badanych (60,7 %), jak i wśród ich mężów (41,1%).

## Introduction

Patterns of marital selection, like other elements of social life, are a historical phenomenon and undergo changes resulting from transformations of the conditions in which a given community lives (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 1974: 8). Studies on the patterns of marital selection were initiated in the 1920s. They were conducted by, among others, F.R. Savorgnan, J.H. Bossard, A.C. Kerckhoff, W.R. Catton, and A.B. Hollingshead. Their results indicated that, in most cases, both spouses shared their nationality, birthplace, race, religion, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, age, level of education, previous marital status, and proximity in terms of their place of residence (Warzywoda- -Kruszyńska 1974: 10).

Since the 1920s, other researchers have presented their theories on marital selection, including selection in intercultural marriages. It is worth mentioning the most important of them:

1. Robert Winch (1968), who pointed at the so-called 'field of eligibles,' which consists of variables such as race, ethnicity, religion, income, educational level, age, socio-economic status, size of the professional group and place of residence. The author proved, however, that within the field of eligibility, individuals are chosen on the basis of heterogamy, taking into account the emotional structure of their potential partner that is complementary to their own structure. The choice of a spouse is therefore characterised by a tendency to both homogamy and heterogamy.
2. Alan Kerckhoff and Keith Davis, who pointed at so-called 'filters' in the process of marital selection. During its first stage, the social characteristics of a potential partner are taken into account, so the selection process is based on a similar social biographies. Then the system of values professed by an individual is taken into account, and only during its last stage is the selection process guided by heterogamy, i.e. people chose partners with a complementary structure of needs (Brzozowska 2016: 12).

3. Bernard Murstein, who presented the theory of stimulus-value-role (SVR), according to which, during the first stage of matrimonial decision making, satisfaction obtained from the partner's assessment on a visual and also non-interactional level (when it comes to e.g. reputation assessment) acts as a stimulus. During the second stage, individuals interact and exchange and evaluate their values. The third stage includes evaluations of the partner's ability to function in a couple and in mutually defined roles (Brzozowska 2016: 12).
4. Robert Merton (1941) and Kingsley Davis (1941), whose theory is based on the assumption that members of ethnic and racial groups with low social status who marry individuals from outside their group offer their partners a high economic status in return for their low social status.
5. Gary S. Becker (1991: 337), whose economic theory of marriage treats marriage as a voluntary organisation directed at combined production and consumption which is governed, like other economic organisations, by market mechanisms. In the process of selecting a future partner, two types of characteristics are essential: market characteristics (income and professional position) and non-market characteristics (age, education, nationality and religion). In the case of non-market characteristics, a positive selection is most frequent, i.e. individuals enter into marriage on the basis of similarity. What is important, according to Becker, is that in the case of intercultural marriages, the total product is of lower quality and burdened with a higher risk of divorce.
6. Peter M. Blau and Joseph E. Szwartz (1997: 30–31), who claimed that endogamy is negatively correlated with the level of population differentiation. This means that the tendency to enter into endogamous marriages increases in direct proportion to the decreasing rate of population differentiation. The members of small groups are less likely to marry a member of their own group.
7. Reynolds Farle (1998: 122), who identified three main factors that influence the frequency of mixed marriages: military service, higher education and place of residence (such marriages

being more common among people living in big cities and metropolitan areas).

The theories presented by these authors lead to the conclusion that mixed marriages in which spouses differ in terms of certain characteristics, such as nationality, race or religion, are nevertheless selected on the basis of similarities in other categories, such as age, education or social background. Nowadays, i.e. one hundred years after the first studies on marital selection, it should be emphasised that racial, cultural, national or religious dissimilarity in marriages is nothing surprising, unusual or unprecedented and, perhaps most importantly, is not treated as a factor condemning these marriages to failure. In this era of globalisation and almost unlimited possibilities to travel and explore various cultures, certain issues which made the functioning of intercultural marriages difficult decades ago are no longer a problem. Some studies (e.g. Sowa-Behtane 2016) reveal that it is the discrepancies in the spouses' education, standard of living and income that generate problems more often than racial or national differences between them.

### Methodological assumptions of the study

The aim of the study was to examine marital selection among intercultural marriages and to provide new knowledge on the subject. In connection with the adopted topic, the purpose of the research and the analysis of the literature on the subject, the main problem of the research was formulated as follows: what are the similarities and differences in marital selection in intercultural marriages?

The research used the representative method, the survey technique and a self-constructed questionnaire. Basic research was carried out from February to March 2018 among women declaring that they were in a binational marriage. The questionnaires were sent via the Internet. The base of people were women who were members of the Association of Multicultural Families, as well as members of the Facebook group called "Mixed Unions – Foreign Partners."

## Discussion of research results

On the basis of the well-established theories presented above, the following variables were analysed: age, nationality, race, social class, environmental background, attitude to faith, religion, attitude to religious practices, education, current employment status, previous marital status, number of marriages, number of children from previous marriages, and financial situation before the present marriage.

One hundred and twelve Polish women who married foreigners from non-European cultures took part in the study. Their husbands were representatives of African, Asian and Australian countries; none of them came from Europe or the Americas. European countries share certain common features, so it can be assumed that marriages between Europeans representing two different countries will be more compatible than intercontinental marriages. The nationality of the respondents' husbands is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Nationality of the respondents' husbands

| <b>Your husband's nationality</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Algerian                          | 28.6           |
| Australian                        | 0.9            |
| Beninese                          | 0.9            |
| Egyptian                          | 39.3           |
| Indian                            | 7.1            |
| Kurdish                           | 1.8            |
| Moroccan                          | 3.6            |
| Nigerian                          | 1.8            |
| Tunisian                          | 16.1           |
| Total                             | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

The women were aged between 21 and 53. Most of them (74%) belonged to the age group 25–35. At the time of the study, they lived in 10 different countries: most lived in Poland (66.2%), while others lived in Egypt (8.9%), Great Britain (7.1%), Germany (6.2%), Ireland (3.6%), Austria, Cyprus, France, Italy (1.8% each) and Australia (0.9%). They lived in big and medium-sized cities, small towns and

rural areas: most (57.1%) in big cities, 26.8% in medium-sized cities, 10.7% in small towns, and 5.4% in villages.

An important variable in marital selection is the age of the partners. Table 2 presents the age of the respondents, while Table 3 presents the age of their husbands.

**Table 2.** Respondents' age

| <b>Your age</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 18–20           | 5.3            |
| 21–30           | 50.9           |
| 31–40           | 29.5           |
| 41–50           | 13.4           |
| 51 and older    | 0.9            |
| Total           | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 3.** Respondents' husband's age

| <b>Your husband's age</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 21–30                     | 55.4           |
| 31–40                     | 32.1           |
| 41–50                     | 10.7           |
| 51 or older               | 1.8            |
| Total                     | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

The comparison of the data from the two tables above clearly demonstrates similarities in the number of women and men belonging to the same age groups. However, the most important point of the study was to analyse each case individually and to find similarities and differences between each of the one hundred and twelve pairs whose representatives (wives) took part in the study. The analysis revealed that:

- in 79.5% (n=89) of marriages the age difference between the spouses was smaller than 5 years;
- in 10.7% (n=12) of marriages the age difference between the spouses was between 6 and 10 years;

- in 9.8% (n=11) of marriages the age difference between the spouses was between 11 and 20 years.

The respondents also represented interracial marriages. G. Cuvier's criterion of skin colour was used to identify the races. He divided the human species into three distinct races: white, yellow and black. This fundamental division is still used today, despite the fact that modern anthropology often rejects the existence of race in humans. In Poland, the concept of race was rejected in 2001 by 25% of anthropologists (Kaszycka, Strzałko 2003).

All respondents represented the white race, while their husbands represented different races. The detailed data are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4.** Respondents' husbands' race

| <b>Your husband's race</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| White                      | 90.1           |
| Black                      | 2.7            |
| Yellow                     | 7.2            |
| Total                      | 100.0          |

Source: Own elaboration based on the survey results

90.1% of the respondents were of the same race, i.e. both spouses represented the white race. The remaining percentage of marriages were interracial marriages.

Another variable was the social class of the respondents and their husbands. The detailed data are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5.** Respondents' social class

| <b>Your social class</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Peasant                  | 8.9            |
| Intelligentsia           | 39.3           |
| Working class            | 51.8           |
| Total                    | 100.0          |

Source: Own elaboration based on the survey results



**Table 6.** Respondents' husbands' social class

| <b>Your husband's social class</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Peasant                            | 16.1           |
| Intelligentsia                     | 44.7           |
| Working class                      | 39.3           |
| Total                              | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

Comparing the data from the two tables above, it can be noticed that 8.9% of the respondents and 16.1% of their husbands came from peasant families, 39.3% of wives and 44.7% of husbands were members of the intelligentsia, and 51.8% of wives and 39.3% of husbands belonged to the working class. Analysing each couple individually, it turned out that:

- in 74.1% (n=83) of marriages the partners came from the same social class;
- in 25.9% (n=29) of marriages the partners came from different social classes.

In the next part of the study, the respondents were asked about their environmental background. Their answers are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

**Table 7.** Respondents' environmental background

| <b>Your environmental background</b>            | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Village and towns with up to 20.000 inhabitants | 12.5           |
| City with 20.000–100.000 inhabitants            | 32.1           |
| City with over 100.000 inhabitants              | 44.6           |
| Village   | 10.7           |
| Total   | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 8.** Respondents' husbands' environmental background

| <b>Your husband's environmental background</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|----------------|
| Village and town with up to 20.000 inhabitants | 12.5           |
| City with 20.000–100.000 inhabitants           | 7.1            |
| City with over 100.000 inhabitants             | 69.6           |
| Village  | 10.7           |
| Total  | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

Comparing the data from the two tables above, it can be concluded that the vast majority of the respondents and their husbands came from cities of different sizes, and only 10.7% of women and the same number of men came from rural areas. Further analysis revealed that 61.6% of the couples came from the same environment.

Another issue that seems very important in the context of marriage is the spouses' faith. Therefore, the study took into account the variable called attitude to faith. Tables 9 and 10 present the results.

**Table 9.** Respondents' attitude to faith

| <b>Your attitude to faith</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Very religious                | 10.7           |
| Religious                     | 51.8           |
| Moderately religious          | 32.1           |
| Not particularly religious    | 3.6            |
| Not religious at all          | 1.8            |
| Total                         | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 10.** Respondents' husbands' attitude to faith

| <b>Your husband's attitude to faith</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Very religious                          | 28.6           |
| Religious                               | 51.8           |
| Moderately religious                    | 16.1           |
| Not particularly religious              | 1.8            |
| Not religious at all                    | 1.8            |
| Total                                   | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

Comparing the data from the two tables above, it can be noticed that the vast majority of the respondents (94.6%) were believers with varying degrees of religiosity (very religious, religious, moderately religious). The respondents also described their husbands' attitude to faith: 96.4% of them were believers with varying degrees of religiosity. Further analysis indicated that most couples consisted of two believers – 92.8% (n=104) – although the spouses did not always share the same religion. More detailed data on this are presented in Tables 11 and 12.

**Table 11.** Respondents' religious affiliation

| <b>If you are a religious person, what is your religious affiliation?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Christianity  | 74.5           |
| Islam   | 25.5           |
| Sikhism   | 0.0            |
| Total   | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 12.** Respondents' husbands' religious affiliation

| <b>If your husband is a religious person, what is his religious affiliation?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|----------------|
| Christianity   | 5.5            |
| Islam  | 88.0           |
| Sikhism  | 6.5            |
| Total  | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

74.5% of the respondents were Christian, and the remaining ones were Muslim. Taking into account that all women were Polish and that the main religion in Poland is Christianity, the high percentage of Muslim women among the respondents came as a surprise. However, they were not Muslims from birth. Most of the respondents' husbands were Muslim (88.0%); only some were Christian (5.5%) or Sikh (6.5%). On the basis of the further individual analysis of the respondents' answers, religious compatibility was found in 29.5% (n=33) of marriages. The remaining marriages were interfaith ones.

On the basis of the subject literature (Sowa-Behtane 2016), it was assumed that the durability of and compatibility in marriage are affected by the spouses' openness to other religions and their acceptance of the religious practices of the husband or wife. The relation to the religious practices of the respondents and their husbands is presented in the tables below.

**Table 13.** Respondents' attitude to religious practices

| <b>Your attitude to religious practices</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Regularly practise                          | 23.2           |
| Irregularly practise                        | 17.9           |
| Observe only the main religious practices   | 30.4           |
| Do not practise                             | 28.6           |
| Total                                       | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 14.** Respondents' husbands' attitude to religious practices

| <b>Your husband's attitude to religious practices</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Regularly practise                                    | 30.4           |
| Irregularly practise                                  | 42.9           |
| Observe only the main religious practices             | 16.1           |
| Do not practise                                       | 10.7           |
| Total   | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

The respondents formed four groups with different attitudes towards religious practices. The number of women belonging to each group differed slightly. On the other hand, their husbands engaged in religious practices (regularly and irregularly) more often. Only 41.1% of women declared that they were practising Christians or Muslims, while 73.3% of them described their husbands as practising Christians, Muslims or Sikhs. Further analysis of the results demonstrated that only the couples who followed the same religion were regular practitioners of their religion, and in all cases it was Islam. The same religion was practised by spouses in 22.3% of marriages.

Another variable analysed in the study was education. The data detailing the respondents' and their husbands' highest level of education are presented in Tables 15 and 16.

**Table 15.** Respondents' education

| <b>Your education</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Elementary            | 0.0            |
| Secondary             | 10.7           |
| Vocational            | 8.9            |
| Post-secondary        | 10.7           |
| Incomplete higher     | 8.9            |
| Higher                | 60.7           |
| Total                 | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 16.** Respondents' husbands' education

| <b>Your husband's education</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Elementary                      | 3.6            |
| Secondary                       | 19.6           |
| Vocational                      | 10.7           |
| Post-secondary                  | 5.4            |
| Incomplete higher               | 19.6           |
| Higher                          | 41.1           |
| Total                           | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

The analysis of the data from the above tables reveals that 60.7% of women and 41.1% of their husbands had university degrees. 3.6% of husbands finished their education at the elementary level, while the lowest levels of education among the wives were secondary and vocational. Further analysis indicated that 56.2% of the respondents shared their highest level of education with their husbands. In the remaining marriages there were differences between the spouses' education, however they differed only by one level. No great differences of the type "basic education of one person and higher education of another person" were found in the respondents' marriages.

In the next part of the study an attempt was made to determine the current employment status of the respondents and their husbands. The data obtained are presented in Tables 17 and 18.

**Table 17.** Respondents' current employment status

| <b>At present...</b>         | <b>Percent</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| I am unemployed              | 17.9           |
| I am on a disability pension | 3.6            |
| I am in employment           | 66.1           |
| I am studying                | 5.4            |
| I am studying and working    | 7.1            |
| Total                        | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 18.** Respondents' husbands' current employment status

| <b>At present your husband...</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| is unemployed                     | 8.9            |
| is on a disability pension        | 0.0            |
| is in employment                  | 82.2           |
| is studying                       | 3.6            |
| is studying and working           | 5.4            |
| Total                             | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

At the time that the study was conducted, the majority of the respondents (66.1%) and their husbands (82.2%) were professionally active. 17.9% of women and 8.9% of their husbands were unemployed. The remaining persons either studied or combined working and studying at the same time. None of the unemployed women had an unemployed husband: if one of the spouses was unemployed, the other was professionally active.

For some of the respondents, their present marriage was not their first marriage. The data regarding their marital status before their present marriage are presented in Tables 19 and 20.

**Table 19.** Respondents' marital status before entering into the present marriage

| <b>What was your marital status before entering into your present marriage?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Single  | 76.8           |
| Divorced  | 22.3           |
| Widow   | 0.9            |
| Total   | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 20.** Respondents' husbands' marital status before entering into the present marriage

| <b>What was your husband's marital status before entering into his present marriage?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|----------------|
| Single   | 91.1           |
| Divorced   | 8.9            |
| Widower  | 0.0            |
| Total  | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

The study demonstrated that for as many as 22.3% (n=25) of the women, their present marriage was not their first marriage. 8.9% of their husbands were divorced persons for whom their marriage with the respondent was their second or third marriage. The respondents were also asked about their number of previous marriages. Their answers are presented in the tables below.

**Table 21.** The number of marriages in the respondents' lives

| <b>This marriage is the ... in my life:</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| First                                       | 76.8           |
| Second                                      | 19.7           |
| Third                                       | 3.5            |
| Total                                       | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 22.** The number of marriages in the respondents' husbands' lives

| <b>It is the ... marriage for my husband:</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| First   | 91.1           |
| Second  | 8.9            |
| Third   | 0.0            |
| Total   | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

An analysis of the data indicated that a significant proportion of women (19.7%) had already had one or even two (3.5%) husbands. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents' husbands



(91.1%) had not been married before. Analysing each marriage separately, it was found that:

- 19.2% (n=5) of the women for whom the present marriage was not the first one were married to men for whom this marriage was the second one;
- the remaining 80.8% (n=21) of women for whom the present marriage was not the first one were married to men for whom this marriage was the first;
- 16.3% (n=5) of women for whom the present marriage was the first one were married to men for whom it was not the first marriage;
- 27.6% (n=31) of all marriages consisted of at least one person for whom it was not the first marriage, while for 72.4% (n=81) of the analysed families it was their first marriage.

Remarrying often marks the beginning of a patchwork (reconstructed) family, i.e. a family in which at least one of the spouses has previously been in a relationship from which they have a child or children. In the next stage of the study, an attempt was made to determine how many of the marriages analysed in the study formed patchwork families. The data are presented in the table below.

**Table 23.** The number of children from respondents' previous relationships

| <b>Do either of you have children with a partner from your previous relationships?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|----------------|
| No   | 85.8           |
| Yes  | 14.3           |
| Total  | 100.0          |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the survey results

An analysis of the data revealed that 14.3% (n=16) of the respondents were members of patchwork (reconstructed) families.

The last variable determining similarities and differences between the spouses was their financial situation before they entered into the present marriage. The respondents' answers are presented in the two tables below.

**Table 24.** Your financial situation before entering into the present marriage

| <b>How would you describe your financial situation before marrying your husband?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|----------------|
| Very good  | 12.5           |
| Good   | 39.3           |
| Rather good  | 25.0           |
| Not very good  | 17.9           |
| Bad  | 5.4            |
| Total  | 100.0          |

Source: Own elaboration based on the survey results

**Table 25.** Your husband's financial situation before entering into the present marriage

| <b>How would you describe your husband's financial situation before marrying you?</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Very good   | 7.1            |
| Good  | 41.1           |
| Rather good   | 33.9           |
| Not very good   | 16.1           |
| Bad   | 1.8            |
| Total   | 100.0          |

Source: Own elaboration based on the survey results

Comparing the data in the above tables, it can be concluded that the respondents' and their husbands' financial situations before they entered into their present marriage were very similar. It was found that the situation was very good for 12.5% (n=14) of the women and 7.1% (n=8) of their husbands, good for 39.3 (n=44) of the women and 41.1% (n=46) of their husbands, rather good for 25.0% (n=28) of the women and 33.9% (n=38) of the men, not very good for 17.9% (n=20) of the women and 16.1% (n=18) of the men, and bad for 5.4% (n=6) of the women and 1.8% (n=2) of the men. An analysis of all the marriages also revealed that:

- 65.2% (n=73) of the couples were formed by spouses in the same financial situation before they entered into their present marriage,

- 22.3% (n=25) of the couples were in different financial situations before entering into their present marriage, but the difference was not significant and on the five-point scale (very good – good – rather good – not very good – bad), the difference was one point, e.g. wife – a rather good situation, husband – a not very good situation;
- 12.5% (n=14) of the couples were in different financial situations before entering into their present marriage, and the difference on the five-point scale indicated above was greater than one point, e.g. wife – a bad financial situation, husband – a good financial situation.

## Summary and conclusions

Summarising all the variables used in the study and analysing them according to Winch's theory of the 'field of eligibles' and Kerckhoff and Davis' 'filters,' it can be stated that similarities in the selection of partners most frequently occurred in the following variables:

- age of the respondents (79.5%)
- race (90.1%)
- social class (74.1%)
- environmental background (61.6%)
- education (56.2%)
- attitude to faith (92.8%)
- financial situation before entering into marriage (65.2%)

Significant differences were observed in the following variables:

- religion (29.5%)
- religious practices (22.3%)

Therefore, it can be concluded that, in most cases, the spouses analysed in the study followed a process of selection based on a similar social biography.

According to Becker's economic theory of marriage, in the process of selecting a future partner, two types of characteristics are particularly important: market characteristics (income and professional position) and non-market characteristics (age, education, nationality and religion). In the case of non-market characteristics, positive selection is most frequent, i.e. individuals enter into relationships on the basis of similarity. The study revealed that the majority of spouses

in intercultural (binary) marriages were of a similar age (79.5%) and shared the same level of education (56.2%).

The results obtained also confirmed Farle's theory in which he distinguished three main factors influencing the frequency of mixed marriages: military service, higher education and place of residence. The analysis of the data demonstrated that the majority of the respondents lived in big cities (57.1%), followed by medium-sized cities (26.8%), small towns (10.7%) and rural areas (5.4%).

Higher education was the most common highest level of education achieved both among the respondents (60.7%) and their husbands (41.1%), which also confirmed the theory that people with higher education enter into multicultural marriages more frequently than others.

It is worth focusing on the respondents' religious beliefs, which was a differentiating variable, but in 92.8% of marriages analysed in the study the attitude to faith was shared by both spouses. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that the partners' religion is not a problem in intercultural marriages, as long as their attitude to faith is the common denominator.

During further research, the following questions should be asked: what is the significance of cultural differences in the functioning of multicultural marriages? How did the partners get to know each other, what was the period of engagement and getting married, and what were the motives for entering into multicultural marriages? What are the mutual attitudes of the spouses towards another culture? Does negative social evaluation determine the functioning of multicultural marriages, and if so, how? What are the strategies for dealing with cultural diversity and cultural conflicts? What are the opportunities and threats of multicultural marriages?

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