

Same sex marriages in Spain: The case of international unions

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Abstract

Marriage between homosexuals has been legally recognised in Spain since 2005. This phenomenon has made visible many couples who lived “underground”, regardless of the nationality of the spouses. The purpose of this article is to discover the main patterns of same-sex marriage in which one spouse is Spanish and the other foreign. The *Movimiento Natural de Población* (National Population Movement) (MNP) is the source of statistics used in this study, as it has the most up-to-date data on this subject. The data show that, depending on the country of origin of the spouses, same-sex marriages in Spain are more heterogamous than heterosexual marriages. Equally, this greater heterogamy is shown in terms of age, occupation and education level.

KEYWORDS: heterogamy, homogamy, intermarriage, marriage market, same sex marriages

Introduction

On July 3, 2005, Law 3/2005, regulating the right of individuals of the same sex to marry, became effective in Spain.¹ This situation broke the universal nature of access to adult sexual life, especially paternity, imposed by heterosexual marriage (Andersson et al. 2006), while also reflecting the continual change that the institution of marriage is undergoing

¹ Before this reform in the Civil Code, 12 of the 17 autonomous regions in Spain had already legalized homosexual marriages, which could be registered as cohabitation (see Calvo 2010; Cortina 2007; Platero 2010).

(Chen 2008; Domingo 1997; Gunkel 2010; Marcus 2009), as the appearance of these legal regulations has at least made homosexual spouses socially and statistically visible. We are thus facing a case of equal rights (Moreno & Pichardo 2006) understood as the cultural construct that turns homosexuality into a regulated and legal area; therefore, the dissidence of this sexual orientation has been broken in the face of equal rights.

In any case, as Rosenfeld (2007) observed, marriages between individuals of the same sex are a clear indicator of social change and of the modernisation of social values (Pichardo 2009). This reality is even more obvious and transgressive when homosexual marriages cross national borders, and take place between people with different ethnic or cultural origins. The search for a partner outside the borders of their own country, in the frame of what King (2002) called the 'transnationalisation of intimacy,' and the migration process linked to it, adopts in most cases a perfectly structured scheme, differentiated in terms of gender and sexual orientation (Roca 2007).

The purpose of this article is, therefore, to delve into the phenomenon of international same-sex marriages from a demographic and sociological viewpoint. It is a first attempt offering future lines of work to explain it in countries where this new form of marriage is legal and in the process of consolidation. To begin with, it is based on the elements of analysis used to describe mixed heterosexual marriages, and then, their adequacy to the case of bi-national homosexual marriages is explored using the data available.

Therefore, in the first place, we explore the degree of marriage endogamy presented by homosexual international marriages in Spain, versus international heterosexual marriages. We start from the hypothesis that international homosexual marriages are more heterogamous than heterosexual ones. Furthermore, since this article concerns itself mainly with an international analysis, heterogamy is initially considered to be equivalent to the origins of the spouses. However, as the classic anthropologic conceptualisation of this practice includes other factors, marriage guidelines are also analysed; such guidelines refer to the marital status, occupation, education level, and age of homosexual and heterosexual spouses. In short, this study seeks to offer some figures and arguments to fill the empirical and theoretical vacuum that exists with regard to this phenomenon, while being aware of the significant limitations that must be confronted: its significant social invisibility and a lack of statistics on the entire phenomenon, which impede its quantification and characterisation.

Theoretical structure

The theoretical framework of the phenomenon of mixed marriages is structured around two themes, the patterns and/or factors in the choice of a mate, and the consequences of those marriages. Following the purpose outlined, special attention is given to the first line of work.

In the first place, and taking a rational logic – rational choice – as reference, the choice of a partner is made once the costs and benefits have been assessed (Becker 1974). In other words, marriage is an exchange of resources between two individuals who are perfectly assessed and, therefore, criteria based on available information are applied to the

choice of partner to maximise results. More recently, Blossfeld and Timm (2004) discussed limited rationality, since the time consumed in the search and the information found are both limited, which makes a comparison of candidates not always possible and, naturally, the choice does not depend only on an individual's decision.

The marriage market concept, understood as the physical and symbolic meeting space in which subjects who wish to get married can be found, appears as a result of this perspective (Cabré 1994; McDonald 1995). It is called a market because in this exchange place, just as in other markets, there are operating rules, based on supply and demand, and subject to the conditions of more or less free competition, although the mechanisms that are activated to find a balance do not include price, but other elements such as age, sex, single-ness, etc. Thus, later theoretical work pays attention to marriage market regulations.

Among the elements that explain how it works in the configuration of mixed marriages, there are preferences for certain characteristics of potential spouses, especially socioeconomic and cultural. The socioeconomic resources refer to the possibility of improving their social status. The theory of exchange maintains that subjects belonging to ethnic minorities who marry into the majority group improve their social status (Heer 1974; Monahan 1976; Shoen & Wooldredge 1989; Wirth & Goldhamer 1944). Therefore, people with better levels of education, higher incomes and prestigious jobs are the most attractive candidates in the marriage market for prospective spouses (Nakosteen & Zimmer 2001). From this point on, there is no lack of literature that usually finds a positive correlation between mixed marriages and the man's income or higher education (Nakosteen & Zimmer 1987; Korenman & Neumark 1991).

Cultural resources include values, opinions, lifestyles or views of the world, and mastery of the language. Thus, the main candidates are those who share similar cultural patterns (Kalmijn 1998) and better linguistic competence, since these characteristics increase the opportunities for contact and communication with the native population. As a result, over time and generations, immigrants assimilate values and language, resulting in intergroup marriage (Gordon 1964). In other words, exogamy increases with the passing of generations (Giorgas & Jones 2002; Lieberman & Waters 1988; Lievens 1998). Thus, for example, Europeans arriving in the United States – especially English-speaking ones and Germans – present a higher rate of mixed marriages. However, this phenomenon has not occurred for all population groups: Latin Americans or Asians residing in North America, with the passing of generations, have not undergone marriage assimilation, as could be expected from this theory.

Based on this reasoning, bi-national homosexual marriages will increase over time, because while they will take place by consensus between individuals of the same nationality at the beginning, they will subsequently become consolidated with partners from other countries (Anderson et al. 2006; Festy & Digoix 2004). Nor should we forget that endogamous marriages, in some groups, regardless of their sexual orientation, may be attributed to family influence (Hurtado 1995; Hwang et al. 1997; Qian et al. 2001), when a discourse based on cultural "distance" between groups is built up.

Another theoretical element that explains intergroup marriages is based on opportunity, understood as the likelihood of meeting members of the outgroup. Thus when

subjects interact, mainly with others in their own group, marriages are endogamic. The elements that provide opportunities for contact are defined mainly by group size (Anderson & Saenz 1994; Hwanz et al. 1997; Lievens 1998), since this influences the chances of meeting members of one's own group. Thus, endogamy is more prevalent in heavily represented groups. Obviously, in same-sex marriages, this variable is fundamental, since homosexuality is less common than heterosexuality.

In the second place, and closely related to the above, is the sex ratio (Anderson & Sáenz 1994; Hwanz et al. 1997; Pagnini & Morgan 1990). In modern migration, the first to arrive are usually young men (Castles & Miller 2003), restricting the possibilities of marriage between Spaniards and foreign women, since in many cases they migrate for family regrouping or as heads of a household, but with their original partner from home. However, a society with information and new technologies leads us to rethink foreign migrations (Roca 2007). In other words, the World Wide Web has made migration for love possible, exceeding the migratory project for economic reasons. In some cases, even the traditional social network becomes unnecessary as relationships are established through various web-based social networks.

In the third place, there are the existing residential patterns (Iceland & Nelson 2010; Massey & Denton 1993). When segregation indices are high endogamy becomes stronger due to the lower probability of making contact with members of other groups. However, in same-sex marriages, this is not only minimised, but in some cases, the consolidation of residential spaces where gays and lesbians concentrate, regardless of their nationality, makes endogamic and exogamic marriages possible.

Finally, in the explanation of mixed marriages, the state, religion and family, play an outstanding role in regulating the phenomenon. The first defines and identifies different groups, even giving them a certain legal status, and regulates the form and requirements for marriage. Thus, for example, in Spain, the law carefully ensures that the reason for international marriages is love and not the desire to obtain legal status in the host country (Calvo 2010). However, in our case, the legal status of the foreign spouse also comes into play: if it is illegal, it can become an impediment. The state sees to it that all international marriages are due to love and not just to acquire documents legitimising the presence of the immigrant. Furthermore, few countries recognise same-sex marriages, so that people need to marry individuals from countries where the legislation is favourable to their sexual orientation, or when applicable, people from the same country have to marry abroad. And here the relevance of the internet and contact web pages is emphasised once more, since they act as a link between transnational couples, regardless of country and legislation.

Moreover, religions are, or have been, institutions that define the lines of the socialisation of people and their identifying structure. For example, Islam, the religion of most of the Africans who settle in Spain, not only forbids marriage between Muslim women and partners from a different creed or without religious beliefs (Hooghiemstra 2003; Kulzycki & Lobo 2002), but also prohibits it, like other religions, between individuals of the same sex (Sherkat & Creek 2010), which is regarded as anti-natural and contrary to religion. However, there are numerous examples in reality that show that religious guidelines have not been followed, nor have they marked people's process of socialisation. Thus, for

instance, there are many cases of Muslim women who marry non-Muslim men in their country of destination, thus ignoring one of the Koran's rules.² Furthermore, in Spain, in the previous year, over a dozen women from Islamic countries entered into homosexual marriages with European women.

Certainly, the family is the main socialisation agent on which the transmission of norms and values is based, and it can inhibit heterosexual or homosexual exogamy. More specifically, there are several theoretical arguments that explain the role of the family in establishing relations with the outgroup. In the first one, through the theory of equality, people seek partners who are like themselves, especially, in terms of occupation, education, religion or language. That is, homogamy, in which social networks have a fundamental role, as they regulate the norms and sanction behaviour, which does not comply with them. Thus, endogamy is emphasised by groups that want or need to maintain group cohesion, and domestic values and traditions (Clark-Ibañez & Felmler 2004; Sniderman & Hagendoorn 2007; Huijnk et al. 2010). Even families that emphasise conservative values are more likely to have prejudiced and negative attitudes toward the outgroup (Lambert & Chasteen 1997), and they therefore understand homogamic marriage as a value in itself.

Nevertheless, research has shown (Andersson et al. 2006) that same-sex marriages are more heterogamous than heterosexual marriages, especially with regard to age, education and nationality. Similar results were found by Festy and Digoix (2004) in France, especially with regard to age.

As stated above, social networks are fundamental for access to marriage,³ but the transgressive nature of homosexuality, in addition to having fewer opportunities because of the smaller number of foreigners with this sexual orientation, makes the choice of a partner less selective about following certain patterns. Therefore, it is not difficult to find homosexual couples with a great age difference between the spouses (Anderson et al., 2006). In Spain, Cortina (2007) points out how among homosexual couples, regardless of gender, the age difference is greater than between heterosexual couples. Figures increase even more, if possible, in international marriages, a situation that is due to the lack of balance between demand (Spanish homosexuals) and offer (foreign homosexuals) in this type of marriage, in which choice criteria are fairly limited.

Moreover, Schwartz and Graf (2009) suggest as an explanation for greater heterogamy among homosexuals, in addition to the abovementioned smaller number of homosexuals, different expectations with regard to fertility, since these marriages have fewer children than heterosexual marriages and so older partners can be chosen. They also have less social control of families, and therefore, marriages have more freedom.

The choice of spouse and the formation of mixed marriages is definitely a multi-dimensional process determined by interrelated factors, which can be summarised as individual preferences in the choice of partner, social group influence and the limitations or possibilities of the marriage market.

² See Koran, Surat 2: Aleya 221.

³ Roca (2007) speaks in some cases of a migratory love chain, which starts when love relationships begin to be encouraged between members of social networks for couples: immigrants' friends who are introduced at a wedding, on trips or through the internet.

Method and data

There are several sources in Spain that provide information on the marriage of Spaniards to foreigners, but the most applicable and useful for research on mixed marriages⁴ are the *2001 Population Census* and the *Movimiento Natural de Población* (Natural Population Movement) (MNP), both compiled by the National Institute of Statistics (INE); although they are each of a different nature, they complement each other in certain subjects.

The census reports on all self-declared cohabitating couples, regardless of whether they are live-in partners or married. This source has certain important limitations. First, it provides out-dated 2001 data; second, it reports on the nationality of only 5% of the population, and third, it underestimates the number of dwellings inhabited by homosexual couples because of the hostility this phenomenon generates, even more so than when such marriages were not allowed.

The MNP, however, provides annual information on the marriages that took place in Spain from 2005 to 2009. It also provides data on certain characteristics of the spouses, such as nationality, sex, profession and age, and in the previous two years it has even included their education. Nevertheless, this source also has serious limitations, as it does not record cohabitation, which is very frequent among Latin Americans, for example (see Castro 2001). Neither does it include foreign mixed or endogamic marriages of people currently living in Spain, although it does include marriages that may have had as their incentive a residence permit for the foreign spouse, rather than love, and a reduction of the residence time required for nationalisation.

In short, as pointed out by Surra et al. (2007), there is no single source, even international, which compiles and quantifies the diversification of couples and the variables of interest for the study of this phenomenon. This is a problem which should be solved by the managers and technicians who arrange and design information collection.

Therefore, in view of the specific purpose of this text, we used the MNP. The total number of marriages performed in Spain from 2005 to 2009 is 996,313. But we worked mainly with the 4,772 same-sex marriages of natives to foreigners during this period. More specifically, considering how the INE records mixed marriages, we grouped Spouse A as being of Spanish nationality and B as being of foreign nationality.⁵ Finally, it should be mentioned that, as can be observed in the tables at the end of the article, the total figure is not always equal to the total number. The differences are due in the first place, to the absence of information on some of the variables, either by deliberate or involuntary omission of the person recorded. In the second place, since 2008, indicators such as education have been included; which had been missing in previous years.

⁴ Encuesta de Población Activa (Active Population Survey) (EPA), Encuesta de Fecundidad (Fertility Survey) (EF), Encuesta de Hogares de la Unión Europea (European Union Household Survey) and Encuesta Nacional de inmigración (National Survey of Immigration) also provide information on mixed marriages.

⁵ Cases where both spouses are foreigners, when there is no information, or nationality of one or both spouses is not given have been omitted from the analysis.

Results

This section attempts to quantify the scope of the phenomenon of mixed homosexual marriages, taking into account the sex of the spouses. It is then analysed, considering the main socio-demographic characteristics of the spouses given by the MNP: origin, marital status, profession, education and age.

The first point observed in the data is the gradual increase of mixed homosexual marriages in Spain (see Table 1). In 2005, there were only 280, while the following year the figure rose to 1089, and in 2009 it reached 1212. However, the significant increase from 2005 to 2006 is due to the fact that in 2005 such marriages were only recorded from July onwards, the month when this type of marriage was legalised.

The same trend is repeated when the data are analysed according to the sex of the spouses; the number of marriages of both homosexual men (hereinafter: gays) and women (hereinafter: lesbians) are gradually increasing over time. However, the trend appears to be stronger among gays, since the number of lesbians only increased from 63 to 286, while the number of gays rose from 217 to 929 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Homosexual marriages of natives to foreigners (2005–2009)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Men–Men	217	887	781	950	926
Women–Women	63	202	206	254	286
Total	280	1,089	987	1,204	1,212

Source: MNP. By author.

Moreover, this matrimonial logic is not only repeated among couples married in Spain, but where both spouses are foreigners (see Table 2). In the beginning, only 41 couples were married, of which six were lesbians and 35 gays. In 2009, there were 306 homosexual marriages among foreigners, of which 81 were lesbians and 225 gays.

Table 2: Homosexual marriages of foreigners in Spain (2005–2009)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Men–Men	35	185	194	187	225
Women–Women	6	49	82	77	81
Total	41	234	276	264	306

Source: MNP. By author.

However, are these overall patterns the same for both homosexual and heterosexual marriages in Spain? The data show that they are not.

The first detail observed in Table 3 is that mixed heterosexual marriages in Spain accounted for 13.2% of the total heterosexual marriages, while homosexual marriages of Spanish gays to foreigners were 37.3% and of Spanish lesbians to foreigners 20.4%. Therefore, it can be stated that on the basis of the nationality of the spouses, same-sex marriages have a greater tendency to heterogamy than heterosexual marriages, and these differences are stronger in marriages between gays.

Table 3: Marriages in Spain by sexual orientation and type of relationship (2005–2009)

		Mixed	Endogamic	Total
Homosexual	Male	(3,761)	(6,329)	(10,090)
		37.3%	62.7%	100%
	Female	(1,011)	(3,950)	(4,961)
		20.4%	79.6%	100%
Heterosexual		(129,719)	(851,543)	(981,262)
		13.2%	86.8%	100%

Source: MNP. By author.

Concentrating exclusively on the figures corresponding to mixed homosexual marriages, and considering the main variables acting on the marriage market, it can be observed that homosexual marriages are more heterogamous with regard to origin than heterosexual marriages, although the places of origin of the spouses are similar.

As we can see in Table 4, Spanish gay marriages occur primarily with North and South Americans, followed by Europeans, as opposed to unions established with Africans and Asians. Likewise, the majority of lesbians also marry North and South American women (83.6%), reaching a higher percentage than gays, and on very few occasions, Africans or Asians. Heterosexual unions are also established mainly with North and South American (56.1%) and European partners (26.5%), although in this case the figures are lower, since the numbers of marriages to Africans (14.6%) are much higher than those for gays and lesbians.

Table 4: Marriages of natives to foreigners by home country of foreign spouse (2005–2009)

Home country		Europe	Africa	N. & S. America	Asia	Total
Homosexual	Male	(659)	(113)	(2,880)	(50)	(3,702)
		17.8%	3.1%	77.8%	1.4%	100%
	Female	(139)	(19)	(833)	(6)	(997)
		13.9%	1.9%	83.6%	0.6%	100%
Heterosexual		(34,026)	(18,672)	(71,994)	(3,556)	(128,248)
		26.5%	14.6%	56.1%	2.8%	100%

Source: MNP. By author.

With regard to the characteristics of the married couples, the marital status of the foreign spouse, as shown in Table 5, is predominantly single. In the case of gays it reaches 93.8%; for lesbians 90.2% and for heterosexuals 82.5%. However, certain differences can be appreciated in marriages to divorced partners. While it is 6% for gays and 9.6% for lesbians, the figure rises to 16.4% for mixed heterosexual marriages.

Marriage is considered an important factor in social mobility. Table 6 shows that there are no important differences in occupation between Spanish homosexual marriages and Spanish heterosexual marriages. In the case of gays, marriage is most common among blue collar workers (47.3%) followed by white-collar workers (43.6%). Lesbians show a very similar trend to that of gays; i.e. Spanish lesbians marry mainly foreign blue

collar and white-collar workers. In heterosexual couples, this marriage pattern is repeated again, although the difference lies in the fact that the number of blue collar workers is higher by 15 points than that of white collar workers, versus the four points that separate homosexuals.

Table 5: Marriages of natives to foreigners by marital status of the foreign spouse (2005–2009)

Marital status		Single	Widow	Divorced	Total
Homosexual	Male	(3,471)	(8)	(223)	(3,702)
		93.8%	0.2%	6%	100%
	Female	(899)	(2)	(96)	(997)
		90.2%	0.2%	9.6%	100%
		(105,791)	(1,485)	(20,972)	(128,248)
Heterosexual		82.5%	1.2%	16.4%	100%

Source: MNP. By author.

Furthermore, the data from the MNP show that when the professions of both homosexual spouses are compared, white-collar Spaniards (61.8%) tend to marry foreigners with white collar jobs, but 34.8% marry blue-collar workers and 2% unemployed foreigners. In other words, over a third of the foreigners achieve social mobility by marrying a Spanish homosexual.

Table 6: Marriages of natives to foreigners by occupation of the foreign spouse (2005–2009)

Occupation		White collar	Blue collar	Private income	Unemployed	Student	Total
Homosexual	Male	(1,462)	(1,587)	(27)	(146)	(130)	(3,352)
		43.6%	47.3%	0.8%	4.4%	3.9%	100%
	Female	(390)	(429)	(2)	(34)	(31)	(886)
		44%	48.4%	0.2%	3.8%	3.5%	100%
		(44,938)	(65,333)	(180)	(4,865)	(1,623)	(116,939)
Heterosexual		38.4%	55.9%	0.2%	4.2%	1.4%	100%

Source: MNP. By author.

The second indicator considered in measuring social mobility through marriage is education. Unlike the above case, there are important differences between homosexual and heterosexual marriages. As shown by the data in the following table, among homosexuals, the level of education of the foreign spouse is higher than among heterosexuals.

For example, gays tend to marry partners with university education in 27% of cases, lesbians in 34.8% and heterosexuals in 22.3%. In fact, when the education of the spouses is compared, from the data supplied by the MNP, in homosexual marriages, 57.7% of homosexual Spaniards with university degrees marry partners with the same level of education, 28.7% marry a foreigner with secondary education and 13.1% someone with primary education. This also shows how highly heterogamous mixed homosexual marriages are.

Table 7: Marriages of natives to foreigners by education of the foreign spouse (2005–2009)

Education		Illiterate	Can read and write	Primary education	Secondary education	University education	Total
Homosexual	Male	(1) 0.1%	(15) 1.1%	(417) 29.6%	(596) 42.3%	(381) 27%	(1,410) 100%
	Female	(1) 0.2%	(3) 0.7%	(112) 26.7%	(157) 37.5%	(146) 34.8%	(419) 100%
Heterosexual		(366) 0.8%	(1,561) 3.6%	(18,020) 41.8%	(13,555) 31.4%	(9,635) 22.3%	(43,137) 100%

Source: MNP. By author.

Finally, among the basic variables that explain any kind of marriage is the age of the spouses. The MNP data show that the average age of Spanish homosexual spouses is 37.5 compared to 31.7 for the foreign spouse. More specifically, it is common among gays to marry people who are between the ages of 19 and 40 (78.3%), a situation that is repeated in the case of lesbians (81.6%) and of heterosexuals (81.6%). However, in 21.6% of the cases, Spanish gays marry foreigners who are over the age of 41, which in the case of lesbians is 18.3% and 13.3% in heterosexual couples (see Table 8).

Table 8: Marriages of natives to foreigners by age of the foreign spouse (2005–2009)

Age		Under 18	19–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	Over 60	Total
Homosexual	Male	(6) 0.2%	(1,685) 45.5%	(1,213) 32.8%	(507) 13.7%	(155) 4.2%	(136) 3.7%	(3,702) 100%
	Female	(0) 0%	(435) 43.6%	(379) 38%	(145) 14.5%	(31) 3.1%	(7) 0.7%	(997) 100%
Heterosexual		(475) 0.4%	(64,789) 50.3%	(45,931) 35.8%	(12,889) 10.1%	(3,372) 2.6%	(795) 0.6%	(128,248) 100%

Source: MNP. By author.

To summarise, Spanish gays are generally the ones who present the highest rates of heterogamy, since they show the greatest tendency to marry foreigners of different education levels, professions and ages. Although lesbians present marriage trends that are similar to those of gays, the figures obtained are lower. Put in a different way: a relevant number of foreign homosexuals attain social mobility through marrying Spaniards. Finally, it should be pointed out that heterosexual marriages in Spain are more endogamic than homosexual ones, not only with regard to the origin of the spouses, but also to their age and education levels.

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this text is both to quantify mixed same-sex marriages in Spain, and to discover any trends in homosexual marriages and compare them to their heterosexual counterparts.

The first item shown by the data is an increase in same-sex marriages among gays and lesbians, although less so for the latter. This trend is repeated to a lesser extent among foreigners, i.e. homosexual marriages between foreigners in Spain.

The main cause for the increase in this phenomenon is that a reality which was more or less veiled has now been made visible, not only by legal difficulties, but also by social pressure, which rejects homosexual practices and relationships. Moreover, there is no lack of politicians in the Partido Popular (a conservative party) who argue that they will abolish this law (Calvo 2010), as they consider it anti-natural, regarding the concepts of matrimony and homosexuality as incompatible among other things.⁶

Likewise, as in heterosexual marriages in Spain (see Camarero 2010; Cortina et al. 2008; Cortina et al. 2009; Rodríguez 2004; Sánchez-Domínguez, De Valk & Reher 2001), endogamy is predominant in homosexual marriages (Gil 2010). In other words, most of them take place between individuals from the same country. This shows that there is a positive relationship between the imbalance in the numbers of people and the difference in levels of endogamy. Thus, the greater the excess offer, the more endogamy there is. Therefore, it is in the groups with the largest numbers that members marry their compatriots. To put it in a different way, as there are more Spanish than foreign homosexuals, this fact facilitates exclusively native marriages. Nevertheless, endogamy in same-sex marriages is lower than in heterosexual marriages and especially among gays.

The differences between gays and lesbians in homosexual marriages open possible lines or hypotheses for future research work, since they are more closely linked with the characteristics of the marriage than with the number of homosexuals of one sex or another. Thus, explanations would need to be sought for the differentiated motivations that one or the other shows when they enter marriage or declare cohabitation. For example, Andersson et al. (2006) in Sweden and Norway discussed protection against AIDS (more frequent among gays) or acquiring legal status for the spouse in the case of mixed marriages.

To all of this, as in any marriage we must add the new position of women in the marriage, associated first with their participation in the labour market, delaying their age for marriage and, second, and as a consequence of the above, the fact that women are starting to lose their subsidiary character in economic matters, which they had in heterosexual couples (see Oppenheimer 1997). In other words, economic independence not only enables women to choose a partner, but also to select the option of remaining single. Nevertheless, there is no lack of cases in which women in paid employment continue to be subjected to their husbands, either for cultural reasons or because of their insufficient earnings.

⁶ Vidal-Quadras recently even noted that not annulling the law placed the marriages of center/right voters in Spain at risk. See <http://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-vidal-quadras-exige-derogar-matrimonio-gay-aborto-no-poner-riesgo-unidad-centro-derecha-20111102183345.html>.

Furthermore, as Platero (2007) maintains, the recognition of lesbians as mothers and wives does not produce great changes in the traditional roles assigned to women. There are many lesbians, who in the eyes of society, appear as women who are available for unpaid work. In other words, lesbian relationships are not granted the same legitimacy and recognition as heterosexual unions, but are perceived as temporary and unstable.

Concerning nationality, it has been found that there is more exogamy among homosexual than heterosexual marriages. The differences may be due to how the marriage market works, as well as to preferences and selection criteria.

The first component in any marriage, and especially in mixed marriages, regardless of their orientation, is the shortage or abundance of candidates. Therefore, in most marriages in Spain, both spouses are Spanish. However, in the case of mixed heterosexual marriages, the greater the deficit of foreigners of the required gender, the more endogamic they are, or vice versa. A clear example is found in marriages between Spaniards and foreign women, specifically, Latin American, of whom there is an excess, because there are more of them than men in Spain; therefore, they cannot marry someone from their own group. This explains why, according to INE data, Brazilians are currently the group that produces most of the marriages to Spaniards. Conversely, of the groups with a male majority settled in Spain, such as Algerians and some Europeans like Italians or British, the proportion of endogamy is higher among females than males, since it is the number of men which is higher. Thus, many Spanish women are married to men of those nationalities. Therefore, the composition of mixed marriages in Spain can be explained largely by the size and imbalance of the numbers of males and/or females, which cause endogamy to increase in the sex with lower numbers.⁷

As seen above, the percentage of same-sex marriages of both Spanish gays and lesbians to North and South Americans is also very high, especially to Latin Americans.⁸ The first explanation is that this community is overall one of the most numerous in Spain, and therefore, there is a wide margin for the marriage market. Moreover, some of these countries have much greater female migration, while in other cases there are many more males, often leading to an excess of that population.⁹

In same-sex marriages, new elements of analysis have to be added, the transparency of offer and demand and the different value placed on candidate characteristics. Suffice it to say that in almost all the countries where immigrants come from to Spain, homosexual marriages are prohibited, and often persecuted and severely punished, such as in the case

⁷ However, in certain cases, as in that of Brazilian women, the data show that Brazilian nationals are in fourth place among Latin American countries that are trusted by the Spanish population, behind Argentina, Mexico and Chile. Special mention should be made of the social representation of the Brazilian community differentiated by gender, which is considered especially sensuous and exotic, i.e. Brazilian women (mixed race, above all) who are regarded as sex symbols or icons (see Malheiros 2007; Masanet & Baeninger 2010).

⁸ Marriages of Spaniards to natives of the United States and Canada barely make up 2% of marriages to North and South Americans. The rest are mainly with Latin Americans.

⁹ For example, there are 73,526 Brazilian women residing in Spain, compared to 44,282 men; 122,221 Bolivian women compared to 90,948 men, 161,831 Columbian women compared to 130,831 men.

of Islamic countries.¹⁰ Therefore, the offer is often also hidden in the host country due to pressure from compatriots in particular, and from the host society in general, since the fact that they are foreigners is another negative aspect to add to their homosexuality, producing in them to a state of fear and helplessness.¹¹

This also explains why in most same-sex marriages of Spaniards, Latin Americans prevail, more so because of their cultural proximity, essentially derived from speaking the same language, which is a facilitator for contact (Roca 2007). This also works for other groups with similar linguistic roots, such as Romanian, Italian or French and so forth. Therefore, as suggested by Blossfeld and Timm (2004) in their discussion of limited rationality, the time allotted to choosing and the information acquired is greater for Latin Americans.

To overcome this type of barrier, homosexuals, aware of the difficulty in making contact, have tried to create alternatives to make meeting potential partners possible. One of them is the place of residence. While for mixed heterosexual marriages residential segregation restricts the contact with natives, the concentration of homosexuals in a certain place has just the opposite effect. For example, the neighbourhood of Chueca, in Madrid, is considered the one with the highest concentrations of homosexuals in Spain.

Along with cultural characteristics, the characteristics of the Spanish labour market and its ethnic segmentation (Arjona 2006; Veira, Stanek & Cachón 2011) allow greater contact with potential Latin American spouses, both for homosexual and heterosexual marriages. According to the information from the National Survey of Immigrants, women are highly employed in proximity services, domestic help and care of the elderly and children, while men work in services or construction where their direct daily contact with Spaniards is more frequent than that of other groups inserted in labour niches, such as freight transport and agriculture, where contact with the indigenous population is very limited. Furthermore, this proximity by employment, as pointed out by González (2006) in the United States, sometimes favours homosexuality, which is subjected to and obligated by subordination and job dependency, sometimes, by discovering love with a sexual orientation brought from home or acquired at destination. However, research work in Spain has not reflected that homosexuality may be occurring due to the work situations involved.

As shown by Cortina et al. (2009), the economic position is quite homogamic in mixed marriages in Spain, i.e., any differences that existed initially have been reduced by the profession and education of the spouses. In fact, the classic marriage between a woman with little education and an economically well-off man is no longer the predominant model in endogamic marriages of Spaniards to Spaniards (Cabré 1994; Cortina et al. 2009; Domingo 1997), and marriage is losing its capacity for raising social mobility.

However, it is not clear that this is also true to the same extent in same-sex marriages, and although the majority trend is to marry a person in the same profession or with

¹⁰ So, for example, in Iran homosexuality is punishable by prison and even death.

¹¹ The Kifki association of Moroccan homosexuals, lesbians and transsexuals in Spain says that up to 30% of them have thought about suicide at one time or another, either because of their unsustainable situation or in response to marriage pacts with someone from the other sex. See <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/10/19/internacional/1319053011.html>.

the same level of education, there are significant percentages in which substantial differences exist between the native and the foreign spouse. Profession is especially significant here, since (as mentioned above) most foreigners are subject to a highly segmented labour market in which human capital is not effective.

Age also becomes an important variable to explain how couples are formed. According to Cortina et al. (2009), mixed heterosexual couples in Spain are more heterogamous in age than exclusively Spanish couples. In over 50% of marriages between a Spanish man and a foreign woman, the man is at least three years older than the woman. The figures rise considerably in homosexual marriages where the difference is six years, because there is so little margin in the bi-national homosexual marriage market that offer and demand overcome some of the basic cultural difficulties imposed on the patterns of endogamic homosexual marriages.

The figures show that more homosexual men than women marry at all ages. This might mean that there are more gays than lesbians. However, we think the basic explanation is that there is greater social pressure on women showing their sexual orientation (lesbianphobia) (Platero 2007). The literature examined shows that negative opinions about homosexual marriage make people very reluctant to acknowledge their sexual orientation, more so in the case of lesbians and particularly if they are foreigners, as well, since nationality alone already generates rejection (see Pérez & Drués 2005).

Finally, marital status is like the cornerstone marking matrimonial patterns. The majority of homosexual marriages are formed by single people. Although the data show that singleness is a stronger marriage strategy among homosexuals than heterosexuals, this could be partly explained by the short time that this type of marriage has been available, minimising the probability of marrying a divorced person. This does not imply, of course, that one may not have had other partners previously and even cohabited, but the legal vacuum prevents any discussion of divorce.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the percentage of Spanish homosexuals married to divorced foreigners is high, especially for the short time this type of marriage has existed. Furthermore, the vast majority of marriages are to Latin Americans, where this type of marriage is unregulated.¹² Therefore, it might be thought that some of these foreigners come from previous heterosexual marriages, a situation which is appearing increasingly among women.

The figures show the following general conclusions: first, there are important numerical discrepancies between men and women who cohabit with partners of the same sex, as women marry individuals of the same sex less frequently than men. Second, heterosexuals and homosexuals do not follow the same patterns, as the latter are more heterogamous. This situation should be the hypothesis of future work (Sassler 2005), especially when there has been more experience with the phenomenon of both mixed and endogamic homosexual marriages, and the roles of the different demographic variables in establishing preferences of one group or another can be found. Third, this study has important limitations derived mainly from the deficiencies of the statistical data sources and from the fact that we are dealing with a very recent phenomenon.

¹² The first Latin American country to regulate homosexual marriages was Argentina, which did so in 2010.

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POVZETEK

Istospolne poroke so v Španiji pravno priznane od leta 2005. Zaradi tega je veliko parov, ki so prej živeli v “ilegali”, postalo vidnih, ne glede na državljanstvo zakoncev. Namen tega članka je ugotoviti glavne vzorce istospolnih zakonskih zvez, v katerih je eden od zakoncev Španec, drugi pa tujec. *Movimiento Natural de Población* (MNP) je vir statističnih podatkov v tej študiji, saj vsebuje trenutno najbolj ažurne podatke o tej temi. Podatki kažejo, da so mednarodne istospolne poroke bolj heterogamne od heteroseksualnih zakonskih zvez. Prav tako se ta pogostejša heterogamija kaže z vidika starosti, poklica in stopnje izobrazbe.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: heterogamija, monogamija, mešane zakonske zveze, poročni trg, istospolne poroke

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