

Education, Employment, and Ethnic-Specific Transition to Marriage in Kyrgyzstan

Lesia Nedoluzhko*, Kyrgyz-Russian-Slavic University, lesia.n@mail.ru

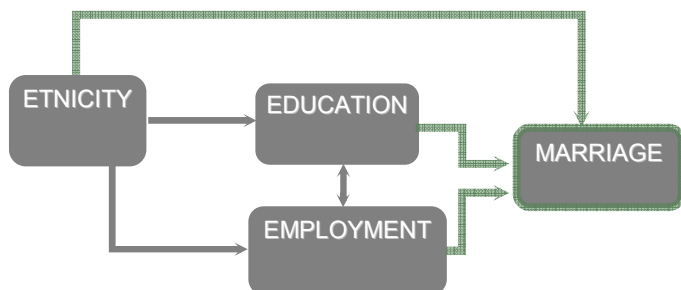
Victor Agadjanian, Arizona State University, agadjanian@asu.edu

Premchand Varma Dommaraju, National University of Singapore, prem@nus.edu.sg

Research Questions

- How education and employment influence marriage risks and marriage expectations?
- What are ethnic- and gender-specific connections between entry into marriage and educational or employment career?
- Are there ethnic differences in preference for marriage?

Conceptual model



Background

- Employment and educational attainment are typically seen as characteristics determining marriage value of a partner (e.g. Preston & Richards, 1975; Xie et al., 2003).
- For men career maturity/stability has been usually found to increase marriage risks (e.g., Goldscheider & Waite, 1986).
- Low marriage risks among highly-educated women and among women who are well-positioned in the labor market are commonly attributed to prolonged spouse-search or to the declining gain from marriage (e.g., Oppenheimer, 1988; McLanahan & Casper, 1995).
- Literature emphasizes the role of economic status/opportunities, often approximated by educational and employment characteristics, in shaping ethnic-specific attitudes towards marriage and desires to marry (Bulcroft & Bulcroft, 1993; Oppenheimer, 2003).
- There is dearth of studies looking at ethnic differentials in marital behavior of the population in post-Soviet settings.

Setting

- Kyrgyzstan, Central Asian nation of some 5 million inhabitants.
- Home for multiethnic population of Asian and European origin, characterized by relatively early marriage, especially among women.
- Kyrgyz – titular ethnic group – comprises 70 percent of the population; the share of Europeans (most of whom are ethnic Russians) is about 10 percent.
- The period following the demise of the Soviet system in 1991 has seen increasing delay of and retreat from officially registered marriage.
- Proportion of never married has increased in all ethnic groups, but more so among ethnic Russians and other Europeans than among the Kyrgyz.
- Ethnic intermarriage between Kyrgyz and Russians has not been common in Kyrgyzstan.

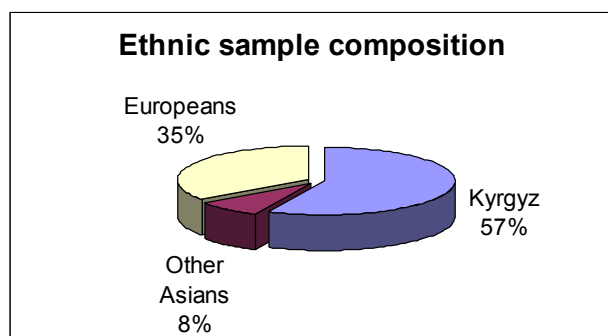
Data

- A survey conducted in 2005.
- Sample size 1,535 people, about equal number of men and women.
- Study areas: Bishkek, the capital city, and two northern provinces – Chui and Issyk-Kul.



- The **3-stage cluster sample**: village/urban cluster - households - individuals of target age, 18-29.
- For sound ethnic comparisons, in rural areas, where ethnic Kyrgyz greatly predominate, the non-Kyrgyz population was oversampled.
- The survey questionnaire modules: Household characteristics, Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, Marital history and spouse characteristics, Health and reproduction, Migration history and intentions, Social networks, Community characteristics, Political involvement and attitudes, and Gender attitudes.

- Data collection was supported by a grant from the **National Council for East European and Eurasian Research (NCEEER), USA.**



Statistical models

Event-history modeling - hazard regression.

Modeling of marital expectations - logistic regression.

Predictors

Main predictors:

- Education** - 'in education', 'basic secondary', 'general secondary', 'vocational', and 'higher'.
- Employment** - 'employed' and 'not employed' (including temporarily and part-time employment).
- Ethnicity** - 'Kyrgyz' and 'Europeans'.

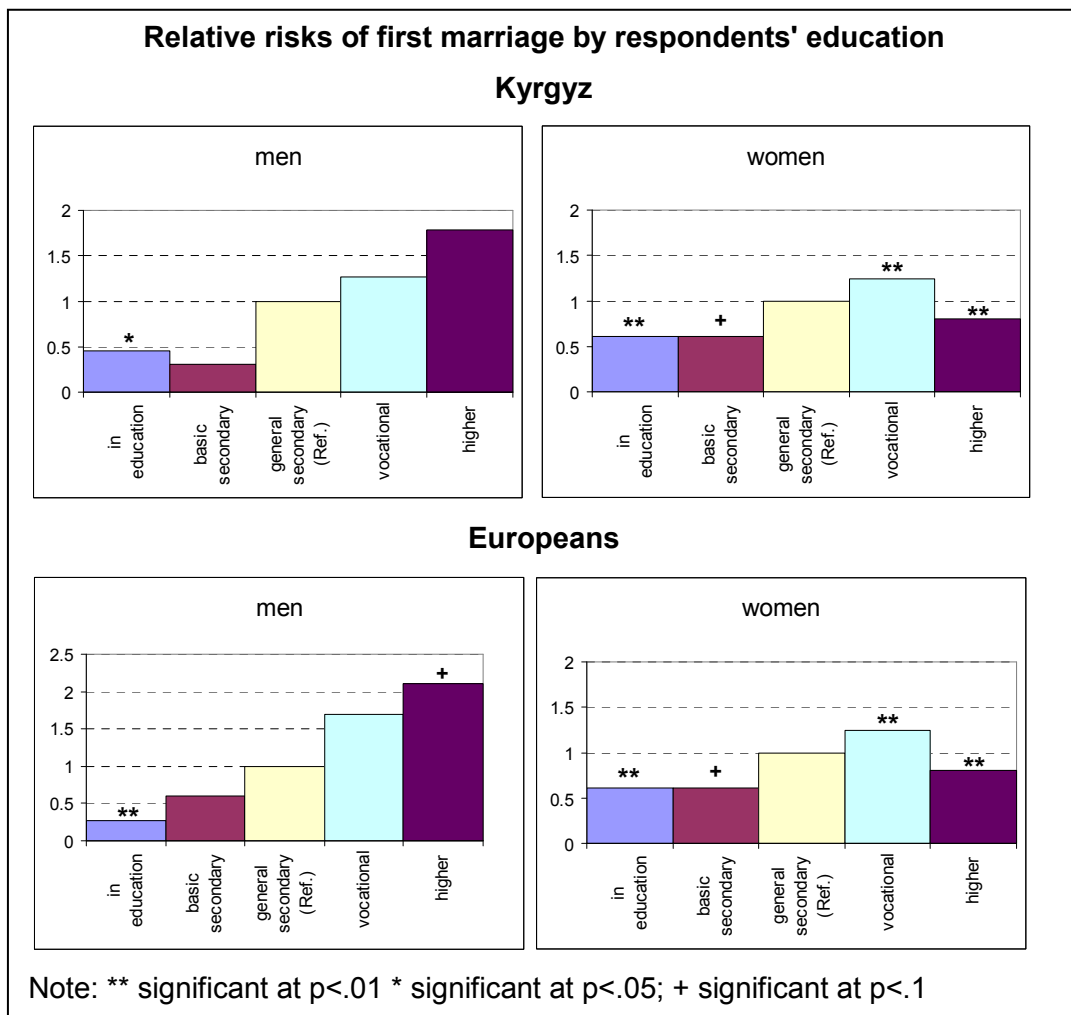
Other predictors/controls: age, gender, mother's education, degree of religiosity, place of residence, pregnancy/parity status (for women).

Results

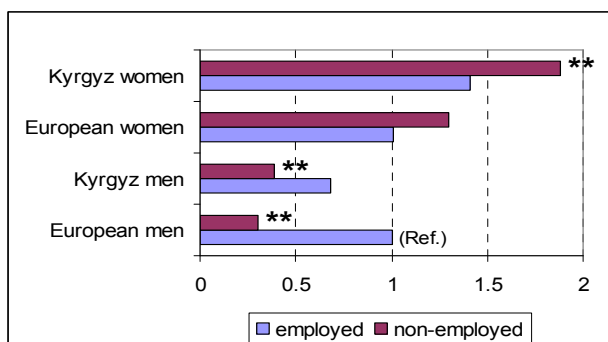
1. Transition to first marriage

- ✓ Kyrgyz tend to marry earlier than Europeans.
- ✓ Gender gap in marriage timing is wider among Kyrgyz than among Europeans.
- ✓ Entry into first marriage is positively correlated with educational attainment for Europeans of both sexes but only for men among Kyrgyz.
- ✓ Kyrgyz women with general secondary and vocational education, have higher marriage risks than university-educated women.

- ✓ Currently studying as well as being in the early stage of educational career is related to lower risks of marriage.
- ✓ In both ethnic groups the effects of educational attainment and enrollment are stronger for men than for women.



Relative risks of first marriage by respondents' employment

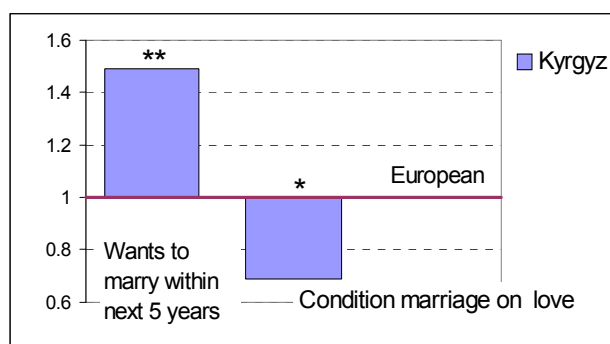


- ✓ Employed men have higher marriage risks than non-employed men, while the opposite is true for women.
- ✓ Non-employment depresses marriage risks more for European men than for Kyrgyz men.
- ✓ Out-of-wedlock pregnancy is associated with increased marriage risks of women.

2. Marital expectations

- ✓ No net ethnic differences in overall preference for marriage.
- ✓ No ethnic differences with regard to economic pre-conditions for marriage.
- ✓ Kyrgyz want to marry earlier than Europeans.
- ✓ Europeans are more likely than Kyrgyz to condition marriage on finding a partner they would fall in love with.

Odds ratios of intending to marry



Conclusions

- Male breadwinner family model is typical for both ethnic groups; employment and educational attainment are important characteristics determining the marriage value of a male partner and thus his marriage risks.
- Traditionally early marriages among Kyrgyz women result in increased marriage risks of women with only secondary education.
- University-educated women of European origin have higher marriage risks than their less educated counterparts, which contradicts a popular assumption that high educational attainment and related employment prospects decrease benefits from marriage for women.
- Employment is associated with relatively low marriage risks of women, i.e., there is some incompatibility between labor force participation and starting family life.
- Pressures for early marriage are stronger among Kyrgyz.

- Europeans are more likely than Kyrgyz to condition their marriage on more 'modern' romantic attitude.

References

- Bulcroft, R.A., and K. A. Bulcroft, 1983. Race differences in attitudinal motivational factors in the decision to marry. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 55: 338-365.
- Goldscheider, F. K., and L. J. Waite. 1986. Sex differences in the entry into marriage, *The American Journal of Sociology* 92(1): 91-109.
- Mclanahan, S., and L. Casper. 1995. Growing diversity and inequality in the American family. In Farley, R. (Ed.). *State of the Union: America in the 1990s*. New York: Russell Sage Found, pp. 1-45.
- Oppenheimer, V. K. 1988. A theory of marriage timing, *The American Journal of Sociology* 94(3): 563-591.
- Oppenheimer, V. K. 2003. Cohabiting and marriage during young men's career-development process. *Demography* 40(1): 127-149.
- Preston, S. H., and A. T. Richards. 1975. The influence of women's work opportunities on marriage rates, *Demography* 12: 209-222.
- Xie, Y., J. M. Raymo, K. Goyette, and A. Thornton. 2003. Economic potential and entry into marriage and cohabitation, *Demography* 40(2): 351-367.