

Gendered Match-Making as Family Kin Keeping: The Involvement of Family Members in the Relationship Formation of Their Kin

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This paper examines the active and passive involvement of family members in the romantic relationship formation of their kin. We examine how female family members play a prominent role in partner introduction. To explore this topic, we use the first wave of the new HCMST survey fielded in 2009 (see Rosenfeld and Thomas 2010) which comprises of 3,009 adults with a current romantic partner. In this nationally representative study, 18% of respondents in different sex relationships (N=2,471) met their current partner through family (N=440). Fathers play a notably limited role in relationship formation: Mothers (N=69) are cited by respondents three times more than Fathers (N=21) as playing an active role in relationship formation. Sisters (N=105) are cited by respondents about a third more than brothers (N=80). Higher levels of shared religious upbringing among those who meet through family suggest that family match-making is aimed to perpetuate family culture.

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