CONTESTING IMAGINATIONS OF ROMANTIC LOVE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS FROM THE EUROPEAN BORDER

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Imagination has become an important social practice throughout the world in times of globalization and deterritorialization, as argued by the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai. This development has an effect on the formation of romantic relationships: more and more couples meet across borders. Migration through marriage has become one of the most important legal channels to Europe. In this article, I argue that romantic love can be understood as imagination and, thereby, as a driving force for migration. At the same time, imaginations of romantic love are in the focus of migration control and, consequently, highly contested and shaped by different state actors while travelling across borders.

Keywords: romantic love, marriage, migration, border regime, imagination

Imagination is the "fuel for action" in times of globalization and deterritorialization, as the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argued in his book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* published in 1996. While fantasy has always been part of societies in the sense of providing a mental break with social limits, today fantasy and imagination have become a social practice: they are the motor for the organization of the social life of many people in many societies (Appadurai 1998: 22). More people than ever before take more possible lives for themselves into consideration through the mass media and the connection to people from all over the world (ibid.: 21). Imaginations make people move (Römhild 2007: 215). This new power of imagination and the movements that accompany it also influence the choice of partner and the formation of romantic relationships. In addition to work and tourism, fleeing poverty, economic deprivation, war or political persecution, love and marriage – or the search for love and marriage – have become an important reason for global movements in recent years (Williams 2010). An increasing number of

couples meet across borders, and marriage migration is one of the main modes of entry into Europe. Imaginations are not just individual dreams or fantasies, but are shaped by social norms, beliefs and rules, and are constantly contested by different social actors. The global elites react to emerging imagined transnational connections, relationships and communities with new ways to discipline and control (Appadurai 1998: 23). Within the European border regime we can observe regulation and control does not apply only to physical movements but also to imaginations. In this article I argue – following the ideas of sociologist Eva Illouz – that romantic love can be understood as imagination and, therefore, as a driving force for migration. At the same time, imaginations of romantic love are in the focus of migration control and, thus, highly contested and shaped by different state actors while travelling across borders.

The article draws on extensive ethnographic research that was conducted in Morocco and Germany between 2012 and 2015. The research project aimed to analyze the meaning and effects of the institution of marriage within the European border regime. In addition to conducting interviews and participant observations in institutions involved in the state regulation of migration through marriage, such as the Goethe Institute, the German embassy in Morocco or the Foreigner's Authority in Germany, I followed about 15 couples for up to one and a half years during the entire marriage migration procedure. In this article, I focus on the perspective of the couples and that of the German embassy deciding on their visa applications and verifying the genuineness of such marriages. I especially look into the question of how these two perspectives collide during the selective entry procedure.

This is why the article is structured as follows. Firstly, I present the theoretical framework and argue that in the context of the border regime, struggles about imaginations of romantic love are also struggles about mobility and its control and the connected "paradigm of suspicion" (Shamir 2005). Secondly, I analyze the perspective of the German embassy in Morocco and, thus, the perspective of the state. How do employees of the embassy imagine romantic love, especially the romantic relationships of their clients? Which normative concepts come into play in this context? Thirdly, I argue that imaginations of romantic love are not only formed and contested by state institutions but also through local and global discourses on romantic love, which is often mistakenly understood as a Western invention. Finally, I focus on the perspective of the couples and, thus, the perspective of migration (Hess and Tsianos 2010). How do the transnational couples imagine romantic love and their future life? How is it connected to their movement? And how does their perspective collide with the one of the state? How do they deal with these conflicts?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ROMANTIC LOVE AS IMAGINATION AND THE TARGET OF MIGRATION CONTROL

In her book *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation* (2011), Eva Illouz defines romantic love as imagination. Like Arjun Appadurai, she argues that imagination is of central significance in modern times and has to be understood as a social and cultural practice

(ibid.: 358). Illouz argues that the institutionalization of imagination also touches the nature of desire in general and of romantic desire in particular; that cultural fantasies, where human beings envision love as a story, an event or an emotion, are significantly more codified than before, and an imaginary desire has become a constant condition (ibid.). The imaginary evocation of the lover would be as strong as their presence, according to Illouz (ibid.). Sociologists Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim go one step further in their analysis of "distance love" (2011). They argue that while romantic love generally happens in the mind, romantic love within long distance relationships happens *only* in the mind (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2011: 67). The power of imagination is – according to Illouz – the capacity to come closer to what they – the couple – would be in real life through experienced sensory impressions, to create compensation for the real experience of a real object (2011: 360). In the case of physical distance between the partners, for example as a result of the immobilization of couples through the border regime, these imaginations of love and loving the other become even stronger. The media nurture, form and codify imaginations of a better life and they do the same for narratives and clichés of romantic love (ibid.). The spectrum of techniques to imagine desire increases through the acceleration of technological progress. Illouz speaks of an enormous number of "cultural arenas" that include the images and stories of romantic love, such as advertisement, film, literature, music, television, magazines, children and self-help books (ibid.: 379).

Furthermore, Illouz emphasizes that love is not a question of individual psychology but is based on the social experiences between the institutional and the psychological (ibid.: 33). In the case of migration through marriage from a "third country" to Europe – in this case from Morocco to Germany – the imagination of romantic love is (re-)produced in the context of a long bureaucratic procedure. Different state actors and institutions are involved in this procedure aiming to regulate migration. I see the practice of migration through marriage as a "stake within, as well as a product of emergent struggles around mobility" (Squire 2011: 5). The border regime – where marriage becomes an access to mobility – consists of a variety of different actors, institutions, practices and discourses and can be understood as a more or less unorganized ensemble of practices and knowledge-power complexes (Karakayali and Tsianos 2007: 13) that establishes anticipative strategies against the flexible, unstable, temporary tactics of border crossing (Hess and Tsianos 2010: 250). The regulation of mobility and borders is deeply entangled with the regulation of other spheres of social life of the migrant subject. I showed elsewhere that doing border is also always doing gender (Gutekunst 2016). I argue in this article that imaginations of romantic love are also targets of migration control and, thereby, a field where marriage and family norms are contested.

THE EMBASSY: ROMANTIC LOVE AND THE PARADIGM OF SUSPICION

I observed right at the beginning of my research in very different contexts that those couples where one partner is a European Union (EU) citizen and the other a non-EU citizen

are constantly under suspicion. People always ask: "Is this really love?" or are these couples only marrying in order to get the visa and mobility for the non-EU citizen? The suspicion regarding these couples is part of a more general "paradigm of suspicion" (Shamir 2005) in the context of the European border regime and the regulation of movements. Suspicion is especially high in the German embassy where the decision on visa applications of those couples is taken.

German embassies in so-called "third countries" are the place where couples apply for a visa for family reunification, authorities verify the genuineness of such marriages and make the final decision about visa applications. The protection of marriage and family is not only part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but is also set down in the Charter of the EU and in national basic law, such as the German Basic Law. This should entail that citizens from so-called "third countries" married to a citizen of a EU member state also have the right to enter the Schengen area in order to join their partner – regardless of their social background and resources. However, in times of an increasing control of migration, states also intend to regulate this channel to Europe and marriage migration has become a specific target of new restrictive measures and control during the last two decades – not only in European but also in North American states (Block 2016; D'Aoust 2013; Gutekunst 2018). Decision makers in the embassy, therefore, have two tasks: on the one hand, to protect the basic right to protection of marriage and family and, on the other hand, to regulate migration. I conducted interviews with employees who decide on visa applications in the German embassy in Morocco, based in the capital of Rabat; which also means that they decide whether a couple is married based on love or just for economic reasons or a visa. Is it "real" love or just "fake" love? Is it a "real" marriage or just a "fake" marriage? This is why I asked the obvious question in the interviews: How do you know if it is love or not?

One of my interviewees – the director of the visa section of the embassy – told me that from a legal perspective, this procedure is not about love but about the question whether or not a marriage is worthy of protection according to Article 6 of the German Basic Law. It would mean that a marriage has to be on a voluntary basis, of a long-lasting nature and out of serious intent, he explained. However, the logic of a "marriage of convenience" already corresponds to the bourgeois ideal of a romantic love marriage, because it means that a "real" marriage may not have economic reasons or be arranged (Bethmann 2013: 10; De Hart 2006). The analysis of the practice of assessing and verifying these marriages in the embassy shows that heteronormative concepts of romantic love also come into play. It became clear in the interviews in the embassy that one criterion for a "true" marriage is comprehensive knowledge about one's partner. One of the employees suggested the following questions a couple should be asked "What is the favourite colour of the other? Does he have hobbies? Which allergies does he have? What is his favourite holiday destination? Does he smoke? How much? What is the partner's job? How much does he earn?" Furthermore, an interviewee explained to me that the knowledge about the partner's family is decisive: the birth name of the mother, the number of siblings and

their marital status, etc. Another favourite topic for questions is the story of their first encounter and the process of getting married: "Did you celebrate? Do you have rings? What was the marriage proposal like? What was the wedding party like? Did you go on honeymoon? How long did they spend time together after the wedding party?" In addition to the Eurocentric perspective on the practice of marriage that is included in such questions and can differ in Morocco even regionally, in this context the embassy officials I interviewed reproduce an ideal image of a romantic marriage, which implies that the first encounter and the act of marrying happens in the name of love defined as a subjective feeling and not out of economic or other rational reasons (Bethmann 2013: 20; Illouz 2011: 26ff.). One employee involved in the decision-making on the marriage visa in the Foreigner's Authority in a big city in Germany explained that it is important to know the circumstances under which a couple has met: "It's not about what else happened in the context of the first encounter. But to say for example: Yes, we met while dancing in such and such a pub or something." In an official letter from the embassy a German-Moroccan couple was asked to answer the following questions in detail in writing: "1. When, how and where did you meet? (Was a third person involved?) 2. How often did you see each other? (Do you have tickets or stamps in the passport?) 3. How do you keep in touch with each other at the moment?" Even though the verification of "true" feelings is not the official aim of these authorities and they do not explicitly ask about feelings, the logic and norms that shape their decision-making in practice – focusing on the first encounter, the wedding as well as the communication between the partners – follow an understanding of romantic marriage as an emotional community as well as a long-life project. It was also emphasized in the interviews that it is important to know whether someone has the desire to have children, how many and which gender as well as whether someone would care for the partner in case of illness. The heterosexual relationship and marriage – defined as a contract for life – is, therefore, also understood as the basis for creating a family and biological reproduction.

These notions of love and marriage of the officials I interviewed were also highly gendered and culturalized as well as linked to class, as I will demonstrate in what follows. An interviewee in the embassy emphasized that it is only Moroccan men who cause problems, while Moroccan women are "reasonable or just clever". Here is what he said regarding male visa applicants: "From the Moroccan part, these marriages are just business. […] [In Morocco] they don't find work. Not everyone is suitable for a criminal career. That's why they are looking for a German woman." Whereas the Moroccan women are seen in this context as "passive" and "innocent", the Moroccan men are seen as "dangerous" and "criminal", which means under suspicion for a "marriage of convenience". They more often face verifications such as a simultaneous interview, which means that both spouses are separately interviewed in the German Consulate in Morocco and the Foreigners' Registration Office in Germany. They have to answer the same questions. Questions in these interviews are very intimate and detailed, such as how they celebrated their wedding; which shoe size the partner wears; which drink the partner prefers for breakfast; what the

favourite meal of the partner is; how many children he or she wants to have and what the names of their family members are. At the end, the answers of both partners are compared, and the final decision is left to the discretion of the authorities. During the visits to the consulate, the couples can face repeated personal questions about their relationship and background, as they stated in my interviews with the couples. At the same time, first observations are made by the officer at the counter when they hand in their documents: How does the couple interact and communicate? Do they fit together? Furthermore, they are often requested to hand in photos of the time spent together as well as protocols of their online communication, such as *Skype*. These practices of control mean that the authorities intervene deeply in such relationships in order to verify the genuineness of the marriage and they show that the notions of "real love" imply intimate and personal details.

The stereotyped image of the "young Moroccan man" as a "fraudster" becomes stronger in the case where he is in a relationship with a German woman who is, for example, older or more educated than him. Such a relationship does not fit into the heteronormative concept of a romantic relationship and is seen as suspicious from the point of view of the logic of the embassy. Notions of "romantic love" have always implied a gender difference, emphasizes the sociologist Stephanie Bethmann: the superiority of the man and socio-economic hierarchization regarding the gendered, heterosexual division of labour (Bethmann 2013: 21). The production of gender difference in the context of romantic love is also a constitutive part in the representation of love in the media and everyday life (ibid.: 22).

These norms and ideals of romantic love, marriage and family – which can differ within an institution like an embassy as well as regionally – are (re-)produced and stabilized in the context of the regulation of marriage migration through the decision-makers. Therefore, the notions of the employees of the embassy regarding love and marriage – that are part of what Colin Hoag calls "situated bureaucratic knowledge" (Hoag 2011) – have an impact on the decision about the visa applications and, thus, on the mobility and the future of the couples. Anna Jüschke and Katharina Schoenes also observed an "unwritten definition" of the conjugal relationship, which is guided by a bourgeois romantic ideal of marriage and has an impact on the practice of legal practitioners (Jüschke and Schoenes 2013: 595). Romantic love becomes an "informal norm" structuring decision-making in visa procedures (Infantino 2014; Scheel 2017). The interviews I conducted in the embassy also showed that romantic love was often seen as a Western concept, while marriages in Morocco were assessed as pragmatic and strategic relationships.

ROMANTIC LOVE AS LOCAL AND GLOBAL: THE CONCEPT OF *ULFA*

This perception of romantic love and marriage as an emotional communion – as a Western invention – is especially strong in the European view of the Arab countries, as the

anthropologist Michael Oghia points out (2015). Romantic love, as a concept of modernity (Giddens 1992; Luhmann 1986), is seen as something that was imported through European colonialism (Oghia 2015: 282). Nicola Piper and Mina Roces also criticize the concept that women from low-income countries who marry men from high-income countries are thought to marry only for economic reasons (Piper and Roces 2003: 11). They stress that there are also many women who enter into such a marriage "such as out of a sense of adventure, the desire to escape narrow family relations, because of a failed relationship back home, and purely love" (ibid.). But what does love mean in this context? What other non-Eurocentric perspectives on romantic love exist?

In her book *L'Amour dans les pays musulmans*, published for the first time in 1984 and republished in 2009 and 2012, Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi writes about the work of the Arab poet and philosopher Ibn Hazm (Al-Andalusi), who lived from 994 to 1064 in Andalusia (Mernissi 2009). Love is Ibn Hazm's main topic. His central book was translated into German in 1941 and was published in 1961 under the title *The Ring of the Dove: About Love and Lovers* by the Insel editing house (Al-Andalusi 1961). The reason for republishing her analysis of Ibn Hazm's book was a new increasing demand for his book on platforms such as *Amazon* and *Google*. Mernissi also received information that young people in Morocco returned to reading his book. Ibn Hazm defines love as *ulfa*, which can be translated as "to become attached to someone" (Mernissi 2008). It is about the partners trusting each other in order to allow each other to come closer. Ibn Hazm depreciated "love at first sight" as, in this way, love (*hub*) would be confused with desire (*hawa*). Ibn Hazm's concept of love is about building a long-lasting relationship (Mernissi 2008). I do not know if the protagonists of this study read Ibn Hazm's book. However, it shows that concepts of romantic love are also embedded in Arab history (Oghia 2015). The narrations of the protagonists also showed that many of them had a concept of a relationship or love in the sense of *ulfa*. The stories about their partner were not so often about love at first sight or sexual desire, but rather about the feeling that the partner is respectful, responsible, humorous, caring, open to talk about everything and leave space and freedom to each other. Love was not described as a central moment or an act but rather a process. Oghia also stated in his study about current interpretations of romantic love among young people in Lebanon that the central narrative of the definition of romantic love would be a connection in the sense of a common everyday life and building a community (Oghia 2015). However, love was understood quite differently for some protagonists: some, for example, emphasized the physical desire and appearance as the most important criteria for the choice of the partner. There are different understandings of romantic love among the couples, and they are always produced and contested within the relationships, but also in interaction with their environment. This is how love becomes a social reality; it has to be recognizable and comprehensible not only for the lovers themselves but also for others who interact with them, argues Bethmann (2013: 12). As soon as the decision on someone was taken, romantic love was constantly produced: through presents (especially on Valentine's day), love declaration via SMS or *WhatsApp*, trips to

romantic places, conversations all night long on *Skype*, the writing of songs and poems, or by posting pictures with the partner on Facebook.

Romantic love is not a Western invention and has a history in other regions of the world, even though connected to different understandings. At the same time, notions of romantic love circulate around the globe – even faster in the times of digitalization and deterritorialization – and are consumed worldwide through popular culture. The media is, thus, not only a direct reservoir of new images and scenes of life opportunities but also a powerful tool of characterizing social code systems (Appadurai 1998: 21). Young people in Morocco, especially from the urban middle class, consume texts, music and videos from all over the world which also transport images and content of romantic love that are – also in Morocco – commodified as products and goods. Eva Illouz also pointed to the consumptibility of romantic love against the background of capitalist societies (Illouz 2003). At the same time, there are, for example, Moroccan pop singers and film producers who are part of the global business and who use and form such globalized concepts of romantic love. It is on a local and a global level that romantic love is constantly (re-)produced.

These different discourses about love and marriage are contested during the bureaucratic procedure where couples face "love checks" in the embassy and have to perform romantic love. What do love and marriage mean for the couples who pass through these institutions and how do they imagine their life from the perspective of romantic love?

THE COUPLES: LOVE AS FUTURE

The couples I interviewed had very heterogeneous backgrounds concerning their gender, age, education and professional status. I mostly interviewed the Moroccan partners, but sometimes I was also in contact or met the partner in Germany. My interviewees also had different ideas of love and marriage. However, what they had in common was that their imaginations of love and marriage were highly linked to imaginations of their future life in Europe and, consequently, highly linked to their migration project. Here, I would like to draw on the ethnographic example of a couple which I will call Samah and Ahmed. Compared to the other couples I did research with, they were more educated, which means they had an academic education – other women of my sample did not even go to elementary school. They were both at the same age and relatively young – in their early twenties – and they were both part of an urban middle class in Casablanca and in a large city in Germany, respectively. Their story shows that even though they see romantic love as the basis for their relationship, economic reasons play an important role in their decision to marry and to migrate and how they become unsettled through the verification practices of the authorities.

Samah grew up in Casablanca and lived there at the time of the family reunification process. She is 22 years old and has a licence in business administration. She is part

of an urban middle class. Three years ago, she met Ahmed at the coast, a 23-year-old man from Germany who went to Morocco for his holidays. Samah remembered their first encounter and told me that she did not fall in love at the beginning, because he did not fit her imagination of her future husband. But when they started to meet more often, she liked how he treated her, and she was falling in love more and more.

Three years passed since they first met. She never went to Germany and visited her boyfriend as it is almost impossible for a young woman from Morocco to get a tourist visa for Europe. Marriage is the only option for her to move to her partner in Germany. Meanwhile, they got married. But before applying for a visa – a procedure that already takes a long time – the Moroccan partners also have to prove their German language proficiency at an A1 level. Language has become a new instrument of border control in this context (Gutekunst 2015). It means that within the European border regime, those transnational couples are, on the one hand, forced to have a long-distance relationship over quite a long time, up to several years, due to restrictive migration, while the Moroccan partner cannot visit his or her partner in Germany. On the other hand, marriage becomes an important migration strategy. This situation produced by the border regime already contradicts the romantic ideal of a marriage as based solely on a subjective feeling of love between both partners.

Samah talked a lot about Ahmed in our interviews and mentioned repeatedly how much she loves him. She told me about the time they spent together when he visited her the last time and about their daily talks on the phone and the many *WhatsApp* messages they wrote every day. It is the internet where they produce closeness and overcome the physical distance through daily interactions, messages and phone calls. The storytelling about their first encounter and their romantic relationship – related, for example, not only to the researcher but also friends and family as well as the authorities – therefore, functions as an important mechanism to be recognized as a couple (Bethmann 2013: 12).

However, the decision to move to her partner in Germany was not only for romantic but also for economic reasons. She liked her life in Casablanca with her family around her, she said, but she could not demand that her partner came to Morocco, as the economic situation is difficult. He had a scholarship for his studies in Germany – a technical degree course – and a small job. The opportunities for access to employment and incomes were higher. She was convinced that, even for her, it was better to go to Germany. She had the plan to learn German quickly and continue her studies. In the longer run, she wanted to find a job that fitted her education and paid an income on which she could live – which was very difficult to find in Morocco, where many young academics remained unemployed or worked in low paid jobs under their qualification level (Miller 2013: 230). She already had a license in business administration and was aware of the better economic situation and the social protection system in Germany. Samah was also someone who liked to go shopping and was an expert on fashion labels and cosmetics. She often spent her weekends in the neighbourhood and shopping area of Maarif in Casablanca with her friends. Her

consumption was important for her and, therefore, a certain living standard she would like to achieve. Moreover, leaving her country and moving to her partner was a step to more autonomy for Samah. She would be more autonomous from her family and expected the same for her partner. He still lived at his parents' house, but they were already looking for a flat of their own in a different city. She hoped that they would be able to finance their own place. It was important to her that they should move to another city, that Ahmed should take responsibility, work and have an income to be able to provide for their future family. She also dreamed of the right to travel around Europe and the world.

Samah's imagination of her future in Germany is connected not only to romantic love and the idea of starting a family with her partner, but also to an improvement in her living standard, access to education and work, the consumption of certain products, the freedom of movement and more autonomy. However, Samah was insecure about her future. My interview took place at a time when she had just passed the German language exam successfully and got in contact with the embassy in order to apply for the visa. She was afraid of contacting the embassy. Her cousin had been waiting for five months for the decision; finally, she got a positive response. Her insecurity regarding the embassy did not come from a lack of language or technical skills, a hurdle for many other applicants, but rather the fear of doing something wrong within the very complex bureaucratic procedure. Her fear was not groundless. The embassy works within a complicated bureaucratic structure and a distancing from the clients, for example, through an online appointment management system (Gutekunst 2018: 197ff.). The anthropologist Colin Hoag points out that it is also this opacity through which power is exercised in bureaucracies and by bureaucrats (2011: 82). However, Samah also reflected whether she fitted in with the imagination of a "real" couple to the employees of the embassy. She already had some knowledge and insight into this institution through her cousin's application process and the exchange with others on the German language course. She worried that the fact that her husband had not yet finished his studies and only had a small job would be a problem when applying for the visa. Moreover, she explained to me that she had also already decided that she would not tell the embassy officials at the counter that she planned to continue her studies, because then they would think that she only married because of her studies. She was aware of the suspicion that all couples – some more, some less – encounter in the embassy. And indeed, her plans for her future life only fit with the notions of love and marriage that circulate in the embassy to a limited extent. According to the law, the only legitimate reason for an application for a visa for family reunification is a serious, long-lasting, voluntary marriage with someone based in Germany. Samah considered it a certain risk and thought a lot about her strategy with regard to the embassy. After the couple submitted their application, they received a letter from the foreigners' office in Germany. The letter said that there was a problem with the recognition of the Moroccan marriage certificate. Samah and her partner panicked and feared that there were doubts concerning their relationship. Samah called me on that day and asked me for help. She suggested submitting a DVD with a film of their wedding. She also thought about handing

in all the messages from *WhatsApp*, *Skype* and *Viper* they had sent each other. "I don't have anything to hide", she said. At this moment, Samah was searching for a kind of "proof of love" and was willing to present very private documents and details about their relationship. Even though this is a serious encroachment on their privacy, most of the applicants provide pictures, films and documentations of their communication in order to prove their love and credibility. Laura Block speaks of a kind of a "trade-off" in this situation: "Either the couples cooperate with the authorities and give up part of their privacy in order to (hopefully) be granted the right to reside together, or they protect their privacy but risk their family" (Block 2016: 70). In the end, Samah got a positive decision from the embassy. Samah and Ahmed were convincing, and the argument of class predominated in this case: both partners come from the middle class and have an academic degree. Irene Messinger also concludes in her study that in the institutions which control marriages of partners with different citizenships – in her case in Austria – the perspective dominates that "marriages of convenience" are a practice that is reserved for the lower social classes (Messinger 2012: 215).

CONCLUSION: (DE-)STABILIZING ROMANTIC LOVE WITHIN THE BORDER REGIME

The analysis showed that imaginations of romantic love are not just individual fantasies or dreams in this context but are culturally and socially formed, contested and a social practice, in the sense that the imagination leads to concrete acts – in this case, to the realization of migration projects. Eva Illouz also points out that imagination is the driving force for the colonization of the future and the image that one has of the future is the reason for present decisions which, in turn, form the future (2011: 371). It became clear that in the institutions of the border regime, such as the German embassy in Morocco, a romantic marriage ideal that implies certain gender, race and class differences is dominant. Moreover, there is a prevailing assumption that romantic love has to be the only reason for a marriage understood as an emotional communion and a subjective feeling. The imaginations of romantic love of the couples can be mobilizing or immobilizing in the context of the European border regime, depending on how much they fit into heteronormative ideas of romantic love, marriage and family that are used in the assessment of the couples by the employees of the German embassy in Morocco or the foreigners' office in Germany. Romantic love can be understood as a technology of government in the context of the border regime (D'Aoust 2013; Scheel 2017). Categorizations such as citizenship and class, and gender and age have an impact on how far and deep imaginations are controlled and disciplined. At the same time, the imaginations of romantic love and a common future life reinforce the relationship between the partners during the difficult time of passing the bureaucratic procedure of entry for several years, while being forced to have a long-distance partnership. However, while trying to fit into the normative concepts of love and marriage

of the authorities to get a visa, these couples also constantly disturb and irritate and, thus, destabilize the unreachable ideal of romantic love through their migration projects. It is not by coincidence that they are repeatedly asked: Is this really love?

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OSPORAVANJE ZAMISLI ROMANTIČNE LJUBAVI: ETNOGRAFSKA ANALIZA S EUROPSKE GRANICE

Arjun Appadurai ističe važnost imaginacije kao društvene prakse širom svijeta u ovom vremenu globalizacije i deteritorijalizacije. Broj ljudi koji svoj budući život zamišlja na sve različitije načine veći je nego ikada ranije. To utječe i na izbor partnera i stvaranje romantičnih veza: sve više parova susreće se preko granica. Bračne migracije postale

su jedan od najvažnijih legalnih načina dolaska u Europu, a tu migracijsku pojavu prati sve veća politizacija i problematizacija. U europskom graničnom režimu reguliraju se i kontroliraju ne samo fizička kretanja nego i imaginacija. U ovom članku – slijedeći ideje Eve Illouz – tvrdim da se romantična ljubav može shvatiti kao imaginacija, a samim time i kao poticaj za migraciju. Istodobno, migracijska se kontrola bavi imaginacijama romantične ljubavi, odnosno kod prekograničnih putovanja različiti državni akteri preispituju i osporavaju pojam romantične ljubavi. Članak se temelji na opsežnom etnografskom istraživanju koje se tri godine provodilo u Maroku i Njemačkoj, a sastojalo se od razgovora s podnositeljima zahtjeva za vizu, kao i s predstavnicima graničnih institucija.

Ključne riječi: romantična ljubav, brak, migracija, granični režim, mašta