SERIES FOREWORD

The politics of marriage (and divorce) is an often-used strategic tool in various social, cultural, economic, and political identity projects as well as in symbolic conflicts between ethnic, national, or religious communities. Despite having multiple strategic applicabilities, pervasiveness in everyday life, and huge significance in performing and managing identities, the politics of marriage is surprisingly underrepresented both in the international book publishing market and the social sciences.

The Politics of Marriage and Gender: Global Issues in Local Contexts is a series from Rutgers University Press examining the politics of marriage as a phenomenon embedded in and intensely interacting with much broader social, cultural, economic, and political processes and practices such as globalization; transnationalization; international migration; human trafficking; vertical social mobility; the creation of symbolic boundaries between ethnic populations, nations, religious denominations, or classes; family formation; or struggles for women's and children's rights. The series primarily aims to analyze practices, ideologies, and interpretations related to the politics of marriage, and to outline the dynamics and diversity of relatedness—interplay and interdependence, for instance—between the politics of marriage and the broader processes and practices mentioned above. In other words, most books in the series devote special attention to how the politics of marriage and these processes and practices mutually shape and explain each other.

The series concentrates on, among other things, the complex relationships between the politics of marriage and gender, ethnic, national, religious, racial, and class identities globally, and examines how these relationships contribute to the development and management of social, cultural, and political differences, inequalities, and conflicts.

The series seeks to publish single-authored books and edited volumes that develop a gap-filling and thought-provoking critical perspective, that are well-balanced between a high degree of theoretical sophistication and empirical richness, and that cross or rethink disciplinary, methodological, or theoretical boundaries. The thematic scope of the series is intentionally left broad to encourage creative submissions that fit within the perspectives outlined above.

Among the potential topics closely connected with the problem sensitivity of the series are “honor”-based violence; arranged (forced, child, etc.) marriage; transnational marriage markets, migration, and brokerage; intersections of marriage and religion/class/race; the politics of agency and power within marriage; reconfiguration of family: same-sex marriage/union; the politics of love, intimacy, and desire; marriage and multicultural families; the (religious, legal, etc.) politics of divorce; the causes, forms, and consequences of polygamy in contemporary societies; sport marriage; refusing marriage; and so forth.

Making the Right Choice: Narratives of Marriage in Sri Lanka shows in a fascinating way why the desire to be modern has emerged and become a key identity-forming ideology in the urban middle class in Sri Lanka and how this process has been shaping marriage patterns and practices from the early years of the twentieth century. Based on fifteen months of field research among Sinhala Buddhist families in Colombo, Abeyasekera convincingly demonstrates the complex sociocultural dynamics of the shift from “arranged” marriage to “love” marriage—emphasizing that this transformation took place much earlier in Sri Lanka than in other South Asian societies.

Abeyasekera’s book offers a brilliant picture of why “choice” rather than “love” is defined as the central factor of modern partner selection and convincingly highlights how the key narrative of choice—and its central element, “a choosing person”—has been created jointly by various generations. *Making the Right Choice* not only explains how the narrative of choice is closely connected to ideologies of gendered self, modernity and progress of the family, women’s education and employment, and caste and class identities but also provides a thought-provoking analysis of how women’s marital agency works in the urban middle class in Sri Lanka and why the moral and emotional effects of that agency are manifold and often ambivalent.

PÉTER BERTA
University College London
School of Slavonic and
East European Studies

Making the Right Choice