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# MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES

Marriage and the creation of family networks across state boundaries are an extremely important component of transnationalism. There are a variety of forms of transnational marriage. These include alliances between elites across borders, transnational marriages within ethnic or national groups, and inter-ethnic transnational marriages. Once these marriages take place there are issues concerning the type of family that is created. Within the immediate family the important question here concerns the extent to which it becomes a transnational family — i.e., to what extent are linguistic and cultural traditions of the migrating spouse maintained and to what extent are relationships with relatives of the migrating spouse maintained. The degree of assimilation of the family may have some impact on this. Relative wealth is also a factor: although in general it is easier now for even the poor to maintain transnational relations through communication (e.g., mail, telephone, and internet) and visits than in the past. Governments on both ends play a role as well: especially the extent to which governments in the home country of the migrating spouse allow communication and travel and the policies of the country of residence concerning encouragement of marriage to non-nationals.

## Marriage Alliances Between Elites Across Borders

Transnational marriages of elites probably date back to the earliest chieftanships as powerful figures sought to enhance their position and forge alliances through marriages with surrounding groups. This pattern of international political marriage persisted with the formation of early states and the histories of most states and empires includes numerous references to such marriages. Cleopatra VII Philopator (69–30 BC) of Egypt's marriage to the Roman Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony) provides one of the most famous examples of such transnational elite marriages in the ancient world. Transnational marriages were relatively common among the feudal elites of medieval and early modern Europe and remained widespread in the modern period. Among the more famous of such transnational marriages towards the end of the period of absolute monarchs in Europe was the marriage between Marie Antoinette of Austria and Louis XVI of France. Marie Antoinette

osèphe Jeanne de Habsbourg-Lorraine (1755–93) was born in Vienna to the Holy Roman Emperor Francis I and the Empress of Austria, Maria Theresa. She married Louis-Auguste, the Dauphin of France, when she was 14. After the death of Louis XV, Louis-August became King Louis XVI of France and Marie Antoinette became Queen of France and Navarre. Louis XVI was deposed during the French Revolution and during the Reign of Terror in 1793 she was beheaded.

As the political power of Europe's feudal aristocracy declined, transnational marriages to European aristocrats assumed a new role in the late 1800s and early 1900s in providing respectability to newly rich capitalists from the United States. Writing about the French Riviera at this time, Galbraith remarks, "the Riviera was pre-eminently the resort of the European aristocracy, and from this came its major service. Daughters of the American rich could here be traded for the esteem that went with older landed wealth or title, or sometimes merely the title. By this single simple step the new wealth achieved the respectability of age."<sup>1</sup> He cites the example of the Churchill family with its palace at Blenheim and title of Marlborough: "It was natural, therefore, that a Duke of Marlborough should marry Consuelo Vanderbilt for a initial payment of \$2,500,000. More was later invested in repairing Blenheim, which was run down, and a great new London house. In all, the Marlborough connection cost around \$10 million. The results, however, were excellent. The robber-baron connotation was almost completely excised from the Vanderbilt family tradition."<sup>2</sup> This business saw the appearance of marriage brokers ("often impoverished women of imagined social rank") and Galbraith highlights the scale of the business: "By 1909, by one estimate, 500 American heiresses had been exported for the improvement of the family name, along with \$220 million."<sup>3</sup>

Although modern nationalist politics may have made transnational marriages among political elites less popular than in the past they continue to take place. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip provide a contemporary example of a transnational marriage among political elites. Prince Philip was born on the island of Corfu in Greece as Prince Philippos of Greece and Denmark in 1921. His father was Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark (1882–1944), who was a son of King George I of Greece (1845–1913) and a member of the German House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, which includes the royal houses of Greece and Denmark as well as Norway. George I's wife was Grand Duchess Olga Konstantinova of Russia (1851–1926). His mother was Queen Olga of Greece. Formerly she had been Princess Alice of Battenberg. She was a daughter of the First Marquis of Milford Haven (formerly Prince Louis of Battenberg) and Lady Milford Haven (formerly Princess Victoria of Hesse and by Rhine). Lady Milford Haven's mother was the Grand Duchess of Hesse and by Rhine. Princess Alice was also a granddaughter of Queen Victoria of Britain and sister of Queen Louise of Sweden. He gave up his Greek and Danish titles shortly before he married Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of King George VI of Britain in 1947.

There are contemporary examples of transnational marriages among political elites from other parts of the world as well. Jordan's King Abdullah II's wife Queen Rania (Rania Al-Yassin), for example, was born in Kuwait to Palestinian parents who were from Tulkarm, Palestine. Queen Rania studied Business Administration at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and then went to work for Citibank and Apple Computer in Amman,

Jordan, after graduation. The case of Sonia Gandhi is an especially interesting one that highlights to political problems that may accompany a transnational marriage in the modern world of nationalist politics. Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru) married Edvige Antonia Albina Matono (Sonia Gandhi) from Italy (born 1946). Rajiv attended university at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom where Sonia was attending the Bell Educational Trust's language school. They met in a Greek restaurant in 1965 and after marrying moved to India where they lived with his mother for several years and he worked as an airline pilot. Rajiv initially remained out of politics, but became involved after the death of his younger brother Sanjay in 1980. Rajiv was elected prime minister after the assassination of his mother in 1984 and Sonia was forced into public life. Her foreign birth sparked criticism from extreme nationalist elements. After Rajiv's assassination in 1991, Sonia became more directly involved in politics and criticism of her foreign birth by nationalists such as those associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party, but within the Congress Party as well, increased. Despite such criticism she became President of the Congress Party, an elected member of the Lok Sabha, and chairperson of the ruling United Progressive Alliance within the Lok Sabha.

Transnational marriages by contemporary feudal elites can have adverse consequences in the face of nationalist sentiments or elitist traditions. Thun Kramom Ying Ubolratana Rajakanya Sirivadhana Barnavadi (aka Ubolratana, born 1951), the eldest daughter of Thailand's King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit, for example, was forced to relinquish her royal titles when she married American Peter Ladd Jensen. Ubolratana was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, prior to her father's return to Thailand and assumption of the throne following the death of his older brother. Ubolratana studied mathematics at MIT and public health at UCLA in the United States. She had met Peter Ladd while at MIT and in 1972 they married and settled in the United States. By marrying a commoner (and it did not help that he was a foreigner) she was forced to give up her royal titles and was given the title Thanpuying (i.e., Dame) Ubol Ratana Jensen in their place. The couple had three children and initially relations between Ubolratana and her family in Thailand were limited. Relations eventually improved and she paid a visit to her family in Thailand in 1980 and made several trips to Thailand over the next several years in relation to important family events (e.g., the wedding of her younger sister Princess Chulabhorn in 1982, the celebration of her father's sixtieth birthday in 1987, the celebration of her mother's sixtieth birthday in 1992, and the funeral of her grandmother in 1996). Members of her family also paid Ubolratana occasional visits in the United States during this period as well. Ubolratana and her husband divorced in 1998 and she and her family moved to Thailand in 2001. No longer married to a foreigner and commoner, Ubolratana was given a new quasi-royal title of *Tunkramom Ying* without restoring the royal *Chao Fa* title to her.

### Transnational Marriages Within Ethno-National Groups

Many of the pioneer migrants who settled away from their country of origin in the past were single males who settled within ethnic enclaves where there were relatively few

women. Marriage to women of other ethnic groups already living in the country was sometimes a possibility and this tended to hasten assimilation of the male migrants and lessen the prospects of maintaining not only a distinct ethnic identity but also transnational connection to the country of origin. A second option was to seek a spouse from one's country or place of origin and to bring her to the new country as a migrant. This strategy tended not only to reinforce a distinct ethnic identity in the country of settlement, but also to perpetuate at least a degree of transnationalism, especially where the assistance of co-ethnics was used in obtaining a bride.

### Mail-Order and Picture Brides

Settler immigrants seeking a spouse from their country of origin or ancestry or from the same ethnic group within that country may visit the country themselves in search of a spouse, but often they remain where they have settled and turn to an intermediary to assist in arranging a marriage. This was especially true in the past when travel was more difficult and costly. Such forms of matchmaking may be done by members of the immigrant's own family, by friends, or by professional matchmakers or matchmaking firms. Providing so-called mail-order brides to single male settlers dates to the early days of European settlement in the New World. Thus, in 1619 the Virginia Company of London sent 90 single English women to the Jamestown settlement with their passage being paid for in tobacco: "one hundredth and fiftie [pounds] of the best leafe Tobacco" per woman. Mail-order brides from Europe continued to go to the United States during the 1700s and 1800s, sometimes coming from the same country as the man seeking the marriage but sometimes from other European countries as well.

As was discussed in the chapter on migration, most of the East Asian migrants (e.g., from Japan, China, and Korea) coming to English-speaking settler colonies in the 1800s and early 1900s were either single unmarried males or married males who left their wives behind. Those who remained to settle in the new country either brought their wives over to join them or often sought to arrange for their marriage to a woman from their country of birth and then to bring her to the new country. Many of these women came as so-called picture brides, referring to the use of photographs of the men and women in seeking to arrange a marriage.

Makabe provides accounts of the experiences of Japanese picture brides coming to Canada in the early 1900s.<sup>4</sup> She notes that Japan at the time was undergoing rapid social and economic change in the form of industrialization and urbanization and, while it was not impossible for young women to go to the big cities and find work ... it was almost impossible for a country-bred, uneducated, ordinary woman to become independently either economically or socially. Going to Canada or the United States was practically the only means of improving one's status.<sup>5</sup> The author notes of the women she interviewed, they had "a strong drive to work and make money.... They also declared that if passage from Japan had been unrestricted they might have crossed the ocean alone, not as brides.... From the brides' viewpoint, a typical attitude was 'I would have married anybody, as long as I could get to America.'<sup>6</sup> She also reminds us that arranging marriages for "prac-

tical reasons" was fairly common in Japan at that time.<sup>7</sup> Here is one of the women's accounts of her desire to migrate and how her marriage was arranged: "From our village, two of us came to Canada.... In some parts of Oshima-gun, a lot of people emigrated to Hawaii or Canada, depending on the village. I'd heard tell of people from my village who'd gone to Hawaii. My cousin had gone too. But if you looked at the whole village, there weren't many emigrants... I wanted like anything to go to America, even though if couldn't have known anything about the country. My cousin was in Seattle, and he was running a big business with his wife. We wrote to each other, and it seemed America was such a good place to live that I started wanting to go.... My cousin had gone from Hawaii to the U.S. and was working in tailoring and sundries, and in his photos he looked as if he was really living in style.... My husband's village was about three miles from mine, and people there heard that I wanted to go to America. My husband's parents came around, saying that it was just about time for their son to get married, so our parents decided on it. I was still only 18 years old, I didn't know what kind of man he was, but I was happy as long as I could get to America. It was easy to make money in America. My family was poor."<sup>8</sup> Her husband was 30 at the time and, as was common practice, there was a wedding ceremony without the groom being present in his parent's house. The woman sailed to Canada with two other brides.

Most Japanese-Canadians at the time lived in British Columbia and many of the men worked in the forest or fishing industry. The society that they lived in was a very closed one in which people worked very hard and rarely interacted with people outside of their own ethnic group. Thus, Japanese-Canadian society prior to World War II developed largely in isolation from the wider Canadian society: "Canada was to the very end a foreign society that had little relation to them."<sup>9</sup> Some male migrants returned to Japan or moved on to the United States, while for those who remained in Canada ties back to Japan were maintained primarily through letters. For the picture brides, their trip to North America was almost always a one-way trip and the mail also formed their primary link with Japan.

After Japan annexed Korea in 1910, Koreans also became involved in arranging picture bride marriages. In her description of Korean picture brides in Hawaii, Kim makes the point, "Single Korean men [in Hawaii] sent for picture brides not necessarily because they could not find other women to marry — although that was true in many cases — but mainly because they specifically wanted to marry a Korean woman."<sup>10</sup> In the relatively open multi-ethnic environment of Hawaii at the time there were more opportunities for migrants to marry across ethnic boundaries than was the case for Japanese in British Columbia. One of Kim's informants said, "Neighborhood people with eligible daughters just wanted to marry their daughters off to my pap. There was this Portuguese man who wanted my papa to marry his nice-looking daughter. There was another Hawaiian family who had to have my papa as a son-in-law." In response to one generous offer, "Papa said he wanted the house and the lot, but he couldn't think of marrying anyone except a Korean girl."<sup>11</sup> For the Korean picture brides coming to Hawaii, in addition to ties back home through the mail, many of them also became actively involved in the Korean independence movement, which had an active and important base in the Korean migrant community in Hawaii. Thus, Korean women in Honolulu formed the Korean Women's Relief Society in 1919 as part of their effort to promote the cause of Korean independence.

The picture bride system was also widely used among some European and Middle Eastern migrant groups. Papanikolas writes of Greek immigrant picture brides coming to the United States in the early 1900s: "Young Greek women arrived, each sent by her family with a picture in hand to recognize the man she was to marry. A few women were fortunate to have a mother or father accompany them until the wedding took place, after which they returned to Greece. Several brides often traveled together, but most came alone and afraid."<sup>12</sup> One of the problems of course (and this was true with Japanese and Korean migrants as well) is that the photos did not always look much like the brides or grooms when they met: "Chicanery ruled: a younger, prettier sister's picture; a photograph of a better-looking friend with a full head of hair, or of the handsome American movie actor Rudolf Valentino."<sup>13</sup>

Members of the widely dispersed Armenian diaspora who had survived the Turkish genocide also often resorted to the picture system of arranged marriages. Kaprielian-Churchill writes, "Armenian and non-Armenian newspapers and tracing agencies and a far-flung informal network of family, friends and compatriots served to reunite families and to bring together eligible men and women. Through the auspices of intermediaries men and women in places as distant as Brantford, Ontario and Beirut, Lebanon, were linked up. In the pre-Genocide society, certain individuals had engaged in matchmaking, but in the post-Genocide period, everyone became a potential matchmaker: a woman chose a mate for her son and brought the girl to Canada with her; another woman picked a girlfriend from her orphanage for her brother in the United States; a man selected a bride for his nephew in Argentina. Another man travelled to Marseilles where he found his prospective wife, the cousin of a friend, in a shipload of refugees who had landed the previous day. They married and returned to Canada on the return voyage of the same ship that had brought him to France." In regard to the use of photos, she writes, "Sometimes, after being linked up by a matchmaker, a man and woman exchanged photos and corresponded. If they liked each other, the man proposed" and provides an example in one of the narratives: "A person came from Canada to our village. A friend in Canada had asked him to find him a suitable girl. He said he would pay all the necessary costs of bringing the girl to Canada. The visitor thought I was suitable. He showed me a man's picture. We didn't write, just a picture. I came here. We saw each other here. I arrived here on December 1 and was married on December 21."<sup>14</sup>

Communication and travel are easier today and while there are modern versions of male order and picture brides it is more common today for people looking for spouses from their country of origin or ancestry to travel there themselves and meet the prospective spouse face-to-face. Even where face-to-face meetings take place this often occurs after an initial connection is made by intermediaries or by one of those involved in response to advertisements.

### *Transnational Indian Arranged Marriages*

While many overseas Indians find spouses within the country where they reside these days, quite a few also seek spouses either in India or from among Overseas Indians

visa, which she got six months after getting married. Her husband, an electrical engineer, had come to Sydney four years ago under the skilled migrant programme.<sup>218</sup>

### Transnational Chinese Arranged Marriages

Oxford provides a case study of transnational marriages between members of ethnic Hakka Chinese communities in Calcutta and Toronto and residents of Mei Xian County in Guangdong Province, China.<sup>19</sup> She refers to these as "marriages in a de-territorialized community," noting the "de-territorialized community in this case is created at least in part by the very marriage alliances across national borders" that she describes.<sup>20</sup> The country has a history of people migrating to Southeast Asia and India as far back as the 1800s. During the 1800s and early 1900s young men who were about to migrate would sometimes marry before leaving. The fate of these marriages varied with the men occasionally sending for their wives once they had successfully established themselves economically abroad, others merely sent money back to their wives but never themselves returned, while others were never heard from again and either died or established new lives abroad. She describes one fairly typical marriage in which the woman went to live in the home of her future husband while an infant, where she was referred to as a "little daughter-in-law."<sup>21</sup> When the two came of age they were married and her husband migrated to India with his brother. He returned after a few years for a brief visit, she became pregnant with a son, and he went back to India. He returned once more, this time she became pregnant with a daughter, and he then went back to India and she never heard from him again. On a happier note, Oxford mentions the case of a man who migrated to Calcutta in 1936, where he established a tannery and once it became successful he sent for his fiancée, who had been living with his family, and his younger brother.<sup>22</sup> The economic success of such migrants appears to have played a major role in determining the fate of the marriage or engagement.

After the communists seized power in China, maintaining links between Hakka in China and overseas became difficult: "The policies of the Communist government did not favor families with overseas relatives. Not only were there practical difficulties in traveling in and out of China, but a woman's natal family could actually suffer as a result of having an overseas Chinese relation." While initially remittances could still be sent, actual visits by relatives living overseas were rarely possible, and during the period of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s and its aftermath in the 1970s almost all contact between Chinese Hakka families and their relatives overseas were cut: "If you had an overseas Chinese relative, one villager told me, 'they might even accuse you of being a spy. So people, if they had any connections, just kept it a secret.'<sup>23</sup> The communists began to reverse this isolationist policy after 1978 and not only did they make it easier for family members to renew their connections with relatives overseas, but gradually they came to encourage such links.

Oxford's study highlights the multi-state nature of such transnational ethnic marriage networks. As with Overseas Indians, Overseas Hakka not only marry Hakka from China, but also Overseas Hakka living in countries other than their own. Many Hakka and other

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living in other countries. Thus, Indo-Fijian parents of Gujarat origin will sometimes send a daughter on a chaperoned world tour to explore marriage possibilities—the preference being a spouse from a comparable background. Nearby Overseas Indian communities in Australia and New Zealand are the most common hunting grounds and this works both ways with ethnic Indian families in these countries also sometimes looking to Fiji for spouses for their children. Thus if an ethnic Indian family in Australia hears of an Indo-Fijian family with a marriageable daughter they may contact her parents who, if interested, will supply her photo. If things go well, the girl's father may then travel to Australia to start making arrangements.

Divakaruni has surveyed thirty years of matrimonial columns in *The Times of India* and discovered a number of trends relating to transnational marriages. He comments, "The first ad I cited from 1969, when the original swell of Indian immigrants came to the United States, declared that the bride-to-be should be willing to go abroad. This would demonstrate her adaptability: she agreed to endure the hardships of a strange land. But resettlement was certainly not something that either she or her parents would wish for: the popular feeling was that only boys who couldn't make it in the home country went abroad. As late as 1979 expatriate men looking for hometown wives needed to prove their worth and not be finicky.... Over the course of the next twenty years the tide turned. By 1989 being a prospective groom or (rarer) bride who lived abroad was a distinct advantage. Someone thus situated could unabashedly demand more.... And although England, Canada, or Australia was acceptable, by last year [1999] the United States had become the destination of choice, for which many bargaining points were willingly surrendered.... By last year *The Times of India* had a long column titled 'NRI [nonresident Indian]/Green Card.' And the Internet had arrived in the marriage supermarket.... As more immigrants settle abroad, NRIs are beginning to prefer other NRIs, or at least 'Green card holder H-1 visa'—a status that allows the recipient to live and work in the United States for long periods. This is in part to ensure cultural compatibility and in part a response to a prevalent urban legend about unscrupulous Indians who marry NRIs in order to get a green card and then shrug off their spouses with a quick divorce."<sup>15</sup>

The improved status of Overseas Indians in the overall Indian marriage market is highlighted in a recent quote by an Overseas Indian living in Australia who told a reporter from *The Australian*, "There is a lot of interest in leaving India and an Indian-born person with Australian permanent residence who is looking for a spouse is in a favourable situation in selecting an attractive partner."<sup>16</sup> The quotation is cited in an article on what is referred to as "a surging number of Indian brides heading the migration growth in Australia."<sup>17</sup> The article notes that in the year 2007–8 Indian-born migrants in Australia sponsored 2,782 brides and 496 grooms, an increase from 434 brides and 149 grooms in the year 1996–7, while the total number of visas issued under Australia's spouse and fiancée program to Indians increased from 25,500 in 1996–7 to 38,931 in 2007–8. A large number of the migrants who are sponsoring brides and grooms from India entered the country under the category of skilled migrant: 15,865 migrants from India applied for permanent residence in Australia under the skilled migration program in 2006–7. Bhandari cites the example of "Mamta, 29, [who] came to Australia two years ago on a spouse

Chinese in India were deported or interned during the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. This treatment by the Indian government left many of the Hakka living in Calcutta, where Oxford conducted her study, feeling insecure and "By the early 1980s, emigration of some family members had become an important strategy for the Calcutta Chinese, economically and politically, and there are now few Calcutta Chinese families who do not have at least some family members who live abroad."<sup>24</sup> Toronto is a particularly popular locale to search for a spouse and migrate. As Oxford notes, this trend made it more difficult for those who remain in Calcutta to find a spouse and resulted in young men increasingly looking to China for brides. Looking for a bride is somewhat different today than it was in the past, however, since Hakka women in China are more independent than they were in the past: "While 'love marriages,' or marriages where the partners choose each other based on an emotional and romantic bond, are still in the minority, almost all marriages in Mei Xian are at least undertaken by mutual consent. A matchmaker may introduce a couple, or try to set up a channel of communication between them, but ultimately the decision is theirs."<sup>25</sup> The relative independence of young Hakka women from Mei Xian has made it more difficult for Overseas Hakka to find a bride there than in the past. Even when a young woman's parents may favor such a proposed union the young woman has veto power and may well already have a local boy friend.

### *Relative Status and Vietnamese Transnational Marriages*

Constable draws attention to issues related to the relative statuses of transnational marriage partners.<sup>26</sup> While sometimes women marry men of higher socio-economic status than themselves in transnational marriages, as she notes, "Contrary to popular assumptions, the brides [in transnational marriages] are not necessarily poor, nor do they categorically marry men who are above them on the socioeconomic ladder."<sup>27</sup> Even though the bride's home country may be poorer than that of the groom, the bride herself is not necessarily poor. Modern transnational marriages often involve brides from the middle class in their home countries, where, as Constable remarks, "a middle-class income can afford them meals out, maids, entertainment, and other luxuries that are far more expensive and difficult to come by in the United States, Western Europe, or Japan."<sup>28</sup> In her study of Filipina-Japanese marriages, Suzuki examines "the tensions between the lived realities of Filipinas married to Japanese and their Filipino families' fantasies about the women's presumed upward mobility through transnational marriage" and the "clash between lived realities and imaginations" of the brides themselves once they settle into such a transnational marriage and find that in some ways they have married down and face unexpected hardships.<sup>29</sup>

Thai examines such status difference in Vietnamese transnational marriages between those who are to some extent unmarriageable in their respective countries, highly educated women in Vietnam and low-wage ethnic Vietnamese males in the United States.<sup>30</sup> The difficulties faced by such people are in part related to the demographics of their respective societies. As a result of warfare during the 1960s and 1970s Vietnam, as is often the case with countries that have been at war, subsequently found itself with more women than men, an imbalance that persisted even two decades after the war. The imbalance is

even more marked in the overseas Vietnamese (*Viet Kieu*) population, but in reverse. Within Vietnam, this demographic situation has made it difficult for some women to find husbands, including those with higher education who are somewhat older than the norm when they start to look for a husband because of the years that they have spent in school. *Viet Kieu* people with lower incomes are disadvantaged in their search for a spouse by their relative lack of wealth. One option is to marry outside of the ethnic Vietnamese community, but low-income (and generally lowly educated) *Viet Kieu* are less likely to be in a position to do this since they generally are more cut off from the surrounding society than their co-ethnics who are wealthier and better educated. The result on the one hand is a number of highly educated women in Vietnam looking for husbands from abroad (*Viet Kieu* or others) and on the other hand, poor and poorly educated *Viet Kieu* men looking for brides in Vietnam. As Thai illustrates, where such marriages occur there are often problems because of a clash of expectations since the men want traditional wives while the women are hoping for a husband who is more liberal in outlook.

As in the case of the Hakka Chinese, the contemporary rise in the number of Vietnamese transnational marriages has been made possible by changing policies on the part of the communist government in Vietnam from one of isolationism to more openness. In Vietnam this greater openness only began to take shape in the late 1980s and was slow to develop, but in recent years official attitudes towards *Viet Kieu* have changed considerably from suspicion and underlying hostility to viewing the *Viet Kieu* population in a relatively positive light, especially as potential sources of capital. A similar transformation has taken place within the *Viet Kieu* population, which for years was dominated by anti-communists who made it difficult for their fellow *Viet Kieu* to visit or have any relations with communist Vietnam. Their hold on the *Viet Kieu* community has weakened considerably in recent years, especially as the number of second-generation *Viet Kieu* increases—people with no first-hand experience of the war or the harsh realities of life under the pre-reform communist regime. Thus, the number of *Viet Kieu* visiting Vietnam increased from 160,000 in 1993 to 360,000 in 2002. This trend has continued to increase with the number of *Viet Kieu* returning home for New Year (*Tet*) increasing from 200,000 in 2002 to 500,000 in 2007.

A look at transnational marriages within the *Viet Kieu* community of Vancouver, where about 30,000 of Canada's ethnic Vietnamese live, presents a somewhat different picture than that presented by Thai's study of *Viet Kieu* in the United States and points to the importance of changes that have occurred over time. Most ethnic Vietnamese in Vancouver either migrated as a family unit or married ethnic Vietnamese or non-Vietnamese from Vancouver or elsewhere in North America rather than seeking spouses in Vietnam. The demographic imbalance is largely taken care of among younger ethnic Vietnamese in Vancouver by marrying outside of the Vietnamese community. To the extent that there have been transnational marriages between ethnic Vietnamese in Vancouver and Vietnamese from Vietnam these appear to be most common among those who were born in Vietnam or in refugee camps in the 1970s and early 1980s and then raised in Canada rather than those who were subsequently born in Canada. There also seems to be a marked decrease in interest of finding a wife with traditional values over time to the point that such a consideration is relatively rare among those born in Canada.

That said, there does seem to be a correlation between educational and income levels and the extent to which young men are likely to prefer a wife who is more traditionally Vietnamese in her cultural orientation.

As for the spouses' relative levels of education, until recently only a few ethnic Vietnamese in Vancouver remained in school after high school. This situation has changed as more of those who were born in Canada go to college or university. For the few highly educated ethnic *Viet Kieu* living in Vancouver finding a spouse within the overseas Vietnamese community has been a challenge. In one instance, a young woman with a Ph.D. who had been born in Vietnam went back to Vietnam where she took up with her boyfriend from high school. Another young man who had been a teacher in Vietnam before migrating to Canada married a medical doctor from Vietnam and she migrated to Canada to join him. In both of these cases the relationships are between people of roughly similar socio-economic statuses and with similar cultural orientations. Most transnational marriages between Vancouver ethnic Vietnamese and Vietnamese from Vietnam are between ethnic Vietnamese men in Vancouver with relatively low levels of education and non-professional jobs ranging from factory workers to fishermen to women in Vietnam who also have relatively low levels of education and who are either from rural areas (the Mekong Delta region in particular) or from the lower socio-economic strata of Saigon or other cities. Thus, they come from comparable backgrounds, although the families of the brides are generally materially poorer than the Canadian groom. As for the grooms, usually they will only look for a wife in Vietnam once they feel that they have the material means to support her. Nevertheless, there is often a degree of initial disappointment on the part of the young woman as she is confronted with the realities of life in Canada and finds that it is not like in the movies — that she often has to work harder and that money is more difficult to come by than expected. This is especially true of those from urban backgrounds.

### Inter-Ethnic Transnational Marriages

The marriage of Mark Antony to Cleopatra attests to the existence of inter-ethnic marriages since antiquity. Such marriages, however, have always been relatively rare, which may account for the attention that they often receive. There are a variety of ways that such marriages come about and a couple of these are the most common. This includes temporary migrants, travelers, or tourists who meet someone during their sojourn abroad. Another pattern is for marriages to be arranged as with foreign mail-order brides. This is a modern development on a large scale, but arranged transnational marriages among political are certainly an ancient form of such marriages.

#### *Inter-Ethnic War Brides*

So-called war brides are one version of transnational inter-ethnic marriage involving temporary sojourners. Such marriages have probably been taking place for as long as

young men have been going off to war, but the term is usually used to apply to marriages that took place in relation to wars of the 1900s, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War in particular.<sup>31</sup> They commonly involve soldiers who are stationed in a foreign country for a time marrying local women and then arranging for them to migrate when the soldiers return to their home country. Most of the war brides of World War II who migrated between 1942 and 1952 were European — about 100,000 from the United Kingdom, 150,000 to 200,000 from elsewhere in Western Europe (especially France, Italy, and Germany) — or from Australia (15,500) and New Zealand (1,500). While the majority of these brides went to the United States, there were also about 44,000 who migrated to Canada, mainly in 1946 on so-called war bride ships that took them to Halifax.

In the above instances, the bride and groom were from different countries but they often shared a generally similar cultural orientation and often the same language. More problematic from a cultural and immigration perspective, especially in light of the racist immigration policies and attitudes of many people of the day, were marriages between Western Allied soldiers and Asian women. As Reimers notes, "Wherever American troops have been stationed, GIs have married foreign women and brought them to the United States. Thus the Philippines, Thailand (during the Vietnam War), Vietnam, Japan and the NATO nations have produced a sizeable number of such immigrant women, and they help account for how nations such as the Philippines and Korea can exceed the 20,000 annual limit."<sup>32</sup>

During World War II and during the occupations immediately after the war American and Australian soldiers married women from a number of Asian countries, including Japan, China, the Philippines, India, and Burma. The American Congress repealed the Chinese exclusion acts during the war since China was an ally and not only allowed Chinese living in the United States to bring family members from China but also to become citizens. The War Brides Act of 1945 and Soldier Brides Acts of 1946 and 1947 temporarily gave soldiers the rights to bring wives back to the United States, with the 1947 act in particular allowing this "irrespective of race." These acts were temporary and it was not until passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952 that racial restrictions were permanently lifted and American soldiers were allowed to bring back brides without concern for their race.<sup>33</sup> The result was the largest influx of Asian migrant women in American history as 72,700 Asian women migrated to the United States between 1947 and 1964. The largest number of these came from Japan (45,853), but there were also 14,430 from the Philippines, 6,423 from Korea, and about 6,000 from China. The impact of this legislation in the case of Japanese brides meant that while less than 900 had come prior to 1952, 4,220 arrived in 1952 alone.<sup>34</sup>

Most of the Korean war brides came as a result of the Korean War, when over 500,000 Allied troops served in Korea, and the continued presence of American soldiers in South Korea has meant that there has been a continuous stream of Korean wives married to American soldiers migrating to the United States. Initially there were very few Korean migrants coming to the United States: only 10 in 1950, 32 in 1951, and 127 in 1952. The numbers increased sharply after passage of the McCarran-Walter Act. As



Reimers points out, "When [American soldiers] married Korean women, they began a new immigration channel. Korean 'war brides' constituted the largest single share of the newcomers during the first years of renewed immigration, and since that time Korean women have continued to marry GIs and follow them when the soldiers were reassigned to the United States or elsewhere. Between the outbreak of the war and 1965, when a new immigration law was passed, over 15,000 Koreans entered the United States, 40 percent of whom were married to United States citizens, mostly soldiers."<sup>35</sup> He estimates that the total number of Korean women married to American soldiers migrating to the United States from the 1950s to the mid-1990s to have been between 90,000 and 100,000.

In the case of Australia, as was mentioned in the chapter on immigration there were a few war brides from Japan as a result of the participation of Australian troops in the postwar occupation of Japan. As O'Malley writes, "By 1952, Japanese war brides were permitted to enter after Gordon Parker married a local girl early in the occupation of Japan and asked to bring her to Australia. Other Australians with the occupation force in Japan also applied to be married, quickly creating a policy headache for the government. But there were strict rules, overseen by the Australian embassy in Japan and the local police, which screened all prospective brides to ensure they were not communists, criminals or prostitutes and had passed an exhaustive medical check. The examination and investigation was considered more stringent than that required for any other migrant. Even tougher was coping with attitudes to Japanese in the 1950s. The first war bride to arrive in Queensland, Shigeko Brown, who travelled to Cairns in 1953 to live with her husband Bill, remembered the painful taunts when she ventured out."<sup>36</sup>

### *Contemporary Transnational Cross-Cultural Marriages*

While most contemporary transnational marriages are between people with similar national or cultural backgrounds, there are also a large number that take place between people with different backgrounds. To some extent such marriages reflect the nature of international travel, higher education, and work in the modern world as more people, especially young people, travel abroad as tourists, to study, and for employment. Those who travel or live away from their home countries often mingle with people of like backgrounds, but many also come into contact with people from different countries and cultures and end up forming relationships that end in marriage. Choice of residence in such cases following marriage varies. Often the couple comes to reside in the husband's country, but especially in instances where one person is from a relatively poor country and the other from a wealthier one the relative economic status of the countries may be a determining factor. There are, however, many examples of young men from developed countries marrying young women from developing countries and the couple then residing in the wife's country. The number of Italian restaurants scattered throughout Thailand is testimony to the number of Italian men who have married Thai women and decided to seek their fortunes in Thailand rather than returning to Italy. Such marriages take place within the context of the laws of the respective countries regarding travel, marriage, residency, and citizenship and the bureaucratic difficulties associated with such marriages

often serves to test the strength of the bonds between newly married or engaged couples — to say nothing of the problems associated with cross-cultural relationships.

The marriages discussed in the paragraph above are the result of chance encounters. Another form of transnational marriage, although less common, has received the most attention in scholarly and popular literature as well as from the mass media. These are arranged transnational marriages involving some type of brokering agent or agency. As Constable notes, most of these marriages are between men in developed countries and women from poorer countries.<sup>37</sup> She cites the example of the Philippines as "a popular place of origin of marriage migrants."<sup>38</sup> Of the 175,000 Filipinas who engaged or married foreigners between 1989 and 1999, 40 percent (over 70,000) married someone from the United States, 30 percent (over 53,000) someone from Japan, 8.8 percent from Australia, 4.2 percent from Germany, 3.8 percent from Canada, 1.9 percent from the United Kingdom, and 11 percent from other parts of the world (mainly other Western European countries and Asian countries such as Taiwan). While some of these marriages were to overseas Filipinos, many were to non-Filipinos such as the Japanese men discussed by Suzuki.<sup>39</sup> Constable adds, however, "Whereas many contemporary marriage-scapes fit the pattern of brides from poorer countries and grooms from richer ones, it is important to stress that such migrations are shaped not only or simply by economic geographies but also by 'cartographies of desire' [or] 'sites of desire'.... Recent marriage-scapes both reflect and are propelled by fantasies and imaginings about gender, sexuality, tradition, and modernity."<sup>40</sup> Thus, "Men's openly stated assumptions about the 'traditional' moral values and character of Asian women as well as their less openly expressed ideas about their erotic sexuality, and women's assumptions about 'modern' outlooks, power, or attractiveness of Western and other foreign men are factors in their motivations to meet and marry."<sup>41</sup> Such images do not always reflect reality, and the failure of the marriage to a foreigner to meet expectations can lead to loneliness, depression, and even to brides running away or divorcing their husbands. Of course, such marriage may also simply be part of a strategy to obtain foreign residency or citizenship in which the wife plans from the outset to leave her husband as soon as these are obtained.

Demographics and a range of other socio-economic factors have contributed to the growth of transnational marriage markets in Taiwan and South Korea involving men from these countries seeking brides from poorer Asian countries such as Vietnam and Thailand. South Korea is an especially interesting case since it is ethnically one of the world's most homogeneous countries. The number of marriages between South Koreans and foreigners has increased dramatically in the 2000s. They represented 4 percent of marriages in 2000 and by 2005 had grown to 13.6 percent of marriages,<sup>42</sup> but declining to a still high 11.1 percent in 2007.<sup>43</sup> Demographically the pattern reflects an imbalance of males over females, which is in large part a result of South Korea's favoring sons over daughters (a similar pattern has emerged in many other Asian countries). Technology that allows parents to determine the gender of a fetus, which has been widely available since the 1980s, has played a major role in this development because of the resultant common practice of aborting female fetuses. The situation has been exacerbated by South Korea's low birth rate. Thus, an article in *The Korea Times* entitled "South Korea's

Birthrate World's Lowest" (22.05.09) highlighted that fact that "South Korea's birth rate was the world's lowest for the second consecutive year.... A South Korean woman gives birth to 1.2 babies on average, based on statistics of 2007. The figure was the same as a year before, and has fallen from the 1990's rate of 1.6 and 2000's 1.4. The country ranked at the bottom among 193 nations, along with Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine."<sup>44</sup> Other countries with very low birth rates include Russia and Japan at 1.3, Germany, Spain, and Macedonia at 1.4, and Canada and Cuba at 1.5, while Nigeria at 7.2 and Afghanistan at 7.1 have the highest rates.

Rural areas in South Korea have been especially hard hit by the demographic imbalance that has resulted not only from abortions of female fetuses—with 110 boys being born for every 100 girls—but also by a large number of young women leaving for cities to study or work. Thus, whereas nationally in 2006 one in every eight marriages was to a foreigner, in rural areas four out of every ten marriages was to a non-Korean. The other group that is prominent in actively searching for foreign wives is urban divorced men, which is a relatively large group as a result of South Korea's relatively high divorce rate.<sup>45</sup>

Who are these foreign brides? Kim found that in 2007 53.4 percent were Korean-Chinese, 19.8 percent Vietnamese, 4.9 percent Japanese, 4.5 Filipino, and 1.9 percent Mongolian.<sup>46</sup> Other countries that are popular for recruiting brides include Thailand, Cambodia, Uzbekistan, and Indonesia. Thus, although the number of foreign brides coming to South Korea has increased sharply in the 2000s, over half of them are Koreans from the PRC who share roughly similar cultures and languages. There were about 2 million ethnic Koreans in the PRC in 2000. Most of them live in the northeast of the country near the border with North Korea and many have relatives in North Korea. There are also about 60,000 to 70,000 ethnic Koreans living in Beijing.

Among those who are culturally and linguistically different, Vietnamese brides are especially popular. Lee, Seol, and Cho found that Korean-Chinese tended to marry South Korean men from cities who were divorced and that many of these Korean-Chinese women themselves were divorced.<sup>47</sup> They also found that these women were the most likely to subsequently divorce or separate from their South Korean husbands. In contrast, women from Vietnam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia tended to marry South Korean men from rural areas who had not been married before. Moreover, these marriages had a low rate of divorce and these women were the most adaptive to South Korean society as indicated by relatively high rates of South Korean citizenship and employment.

A survey of 1,235 Korean-Chinese, 677 Vietnamese, 516 Filipino, and 389 Japanese wives in North Cholla province found that 56 percent said that they were generally happy with their marriage and only 8 percent said that their married life was unsatisfactory. A large number of the women said that economic difficulties had made their marriages harder than expected—75 percent said that they wanted to get a job to improve their financial security. As for their reasons for marrying to begin with, 36 percent said that they had married because they loved their grooms and 38 percent because they wanted to move to a more affluent country and be able to help their families back home. In response to the results, Lee Yong-Hwan of the Hansun Foundation for Freedom and Prosperity commented, "If love is the reason for a cross-cultural marriage, there would be

little room for disillusionment, but if money is the reason, the marriage is more likely to end up being a disappointment."

Most of these marriages are arranged by matchmaking agencies and typically involve the men going on marriage tours where they are introduced to possible brides. Such tours typically cost around U.S. \$10,000 and rural government often subsidize this cost in an effort to overcome problems of depopulation. Such firms emerged in the late 1990s specializing in finding foreign brides (mainly Korean-Chinese) for rural farmers and the physically disabled. By 2003 there were between 2,000 and 3,000 such firms and the range of people they were serving and of countries where they were recruiting brides had expanded considerably. The national government has provided encouragement for the search for foreign spouses as seen through its 2006 "Transition to a Multicultural, Multicultural Society" policy, and views such marriages as an answer to a number of problems such as the low birth rate, high divorce rate, and imbalance of the sex ratio.<sup>48</sup>

Onishi provides an account of the experience of a young man from South Korea on a marriage tour to Vietnam: "It was midnight here in Hanoi, or already 2 a.m. back in Seoul. But after a five-hour flight on a recent Sunday, Kim Wan Su was driven straight from the airport to the Lucky Star karaoke bar, where 23 young Vietnamese women seek—decide now? Kim asked, as the marriage brokers gave a brief description of each of the women sitting around a U-shaped sofa. Thus, Kim, a 39-year-old auto parts worker from a suburb of Seoul, began the mildly chaotic, two-hour process of choosing a spouse. In a day or two, if his five-day marriage tour went according to plan, he would be wed and enjoying his honeymoon at the famed Perfume Pagoda in the Huong Tich Mountain southwest of here. After an initial setback—his first three choices found various reasons to decline his offer—Kim narrowed his field to a 22-year-old economics major in college and an 18-year-old high school graduate. 'What's your personality like?' Kim asked the college student. 'I'm an extrovert,' she said. The 18-year-old asked why he wanted to marry a Vietnamese woman. 'I have two colleagues who married Vietnamese women,' he said, adding, 'The women seem devoted and family-oriented.' One Korean broker said the 22-year-old, who seemed bright and assertive, would adapt well to South Korea. Another suggested flipping a coin. 'Well, since I'm quiet, I'll choose the extrovert,' Kim said finally, adding quickly, 'Is it O.K. if I hold her hand now?' She came over to sit next to him, though neither dared to hold hands. She spelled out in her name in her left palm: 'Vien.' Her name was To Thi Vien."<sup>49</sup>

Onishi also interviewed the owners of international marriage agencies. One of the interviewees pointed to the difficulties faced by young men in finding brides: "Nowadays, Korean women have higher standards.... If a man has only a high school degree, or lives with his mother, or works only at a small- or medium-sized company, or is short or older, or lives in the countryside—he'll find it very difficult to marry in Korea." In addition to Vietnam's relative poverty when compared to South Korea, returning to our discussion of intra-ethnic transnational marriages it will be remembered that Vietnam has a gender imbalance of females over males, which is a factor that encourages the export of brides. One of the marriage agency owners, however, pointed to the prospects for the market



becoming more difficult in the future: "But this business will get more difficult as those countries get richer.... Now, even a disabled Korean man can find a Vietnamese bride. But eventually Vietnamese women will ask why they have to go marry a Korean man when life in Vietnam is good."<sup>50</sup> Given Vietnam's rapid economic growth in recent years it is increasingly likely that the market there will become more difficult for Koreans and other foreigners very soon.

While Taiwan is more multi-ethnic than South Korea, ethnic Chinese constitute the vast majority of its population. Taiwan's Ministry of Interior indicates that 240,837 foreign spouses migrated to Taiwan between 1987 and 2003 with 57.8 percent of these coming from the PRC and 42.2 percent from Southeast Asia. By 2006 the number had increased to 384,000 with 65.1 percent coming from the PRC and 34.9 percent from Southeast Asia and elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> As for where the women came from, in Southeast Asia: 57.5 percent were from Vietnam, 23.2 percent from Indonesia, 5.3 percent from Thailand, and 5.3 percent from the Philippines. Marriage is the only legal means of immigration to Taiwan from the PRC. Vietnamese brides are especially popular in part because of the perception that they share Confucian family values with ethnic Chinese men from Taiwan. The demographic impact of this large number of foreign brides is that they and their children now number more than the country's aboriginal population. Beyond demographics the presence of Vietnamese women in Taiwan can also be seen in the increasing number of Vietnamese restaurants and stores run by them throughout the country.

The reasons why Taiwanese men seek foreign brides are similar to those in South Korea. In addition to demographic factors, men must also contend with changing attitudes towards marriage on the part of women. As an article on BBC News notes, "Many Taiwanese men travel to China and South East Asian countries, especially Vietnam and Indonesia, to find brides. They say they have to do so because Taiwanese women are putting careers ahead of marriage, delaying getting married or not marrying at all."<sup>52</sup> The Taiwanese grooms tend to be in their 30s, not to be very well educated (9 years of school on average), and relatively poor. These factors combined make it very difficult for them to find brides in Taiwan. As for the Vietnamese brides, they tend to be several years younger than the grooms, many of them being 15 to 18 years old. On average they have about 6 years of schooling and most come from relatively poor rural families.

Friends or family members who are already married to a Vietnamese or who have worked in Vietnam arrange many of these marriages. As in South Korea there are also matchmaking agencies in Taiwan that operate in Vietnam, sometimes with a branch office located there. The same BBC News article reported, "matchmaking agencies have developed a booming business, charging men as much as \$9,000 to help them find a wife.... The men are shown photo albums or videos of the women, they pick the one they want and after only one trip to see the woman, they marry her, sometimes on the spot. Our correspondent says that many of the women agree because they are motivated by the chance to live and work in Taiwan and send money home."<sup>53</sup>

The growing number of foreign brides in Taiwan and difficulties that they face there as well as problems associated with matchmaking agencies have given rise to concern both in Taiwan and Vietnam and to legal reforms. Hsia complains that foreign wives

in Taiwan suffer from economic difficulties, social isolation, and discrimination.<sup>54</sup> The term *dalu mei* (mainland wench) that Taiwanese commonly used to describe wives from the PRC is indicative of discriminatory attitudes. The widespread perception is that many of these marriages are not real and that the women have come to work as prostitutes. The children produced by such marriages also often face discrimination. Hsia also points to problems that foreign wives have in obtaining citizenship because of various legal constraints (including financial requirements).<sup>55</sup>

In the face of abuses of the system, such as fake marriages to allow women to come to Taiwan to work as prostitutes, in early 2009 the Taiwanese government announced plans to reform the commercial international marriage business: "To preserve Taiwan's image and ensure that marriages are treated as a serious matter not as a business, the government says that from now on companies can only charge the customers for the airfare, hotel expenses and administrative costs. Violators will be fined up to \$30,000. The agencies will also be strongly advised to encourage both parties to get to know each other better."<sup>56</sup> Around the same time the Vietnamese government announced its own plans to reform the business by setting up a government-run matchmaking agency to arrange marriages between Vietnamese women and foreign men based in Saigon: "The authorities say they want to regulate the sector, which they say is currently run by illegal groups. Police have targeted events in recent years where dozens of women from poor backgrounds, seeking a better life, are paraded before potential suitors. The men are often on short 'marriage holidays' from South Korea and Taiwan. Correspondents say that some women in Vietnam see overseas marriage as a route out of poverty and the practice is widespread in some rural areas. But many women fall foul of unscrupulous brokers and are sold into prostitution; while others are forced into marriages they do not want.... The government says it hopes the plan will help prevent the abuse of Vietnamese women by criminal organisations, or by their new husbands."<sup>57</sup>

The use of matchmaking agencies to arrange marriages of local men to foreign brides has also proliferated in recent years in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe. The brides come from a variety of sources with the Philippines, Russia, Ukraine, Colombia, and Mexico being especially popular sources. Constable compares contemporary inter-cultural transnational arranged marriages from an American perspective with those in the past: "Today's correspondence relationships are notably different from the older historical cases of frontier brides, proxy brides, and picture brides in terms of the technology they utilize. But they are perhaps not so different in the extent to which they are regulated by laws and policies that are in turn influenced by public opinion and racial prejudice.... A key difference in [such] marriages today is how they cross ethnic/racial and national lines, whereas the older forms of marriages involved couples whose experiences differed greatly but who were of the same ethnic or national background."<sup>58</sup> The main technological difference, of course, is the introduction of the internet, which is widely used today in searches for foreign spouses. The racist issues are especially evident in cases involving marriages between men of European ancestry and Asian women.

Constable reports that in 1998 there were over 350 websites with the stated aim of introducing American western men to prospective foreign brides and 70 percent of the

women listed on the sites were from the Philippines.<sup>59</sup> The number of sites has increased since then and the nationality of the women has become more diverse, there being a larger number of women on these sites from Russia and other Eastern European countries in particular.<sup>60</sup> As for matchmaking firms in the United States that specialize in arranging transnational marriages, Harris writes, "Over the past decade, the number of such brokers nationwide has grown from a handful to roughly 600.... Each year, up to 12,000 American men find wives through for-profit international marriage brokers, say sponsors of the congressional legislation."<sup>61</sup> Harris provides an example of one such marriage: "Divorced, single and in his mid-30s, Sam Baar wasn't comfortable with the bar scene or nightclubs. Yet the Phoenix computer technician still longed to meet someone and settle down. So Baar went online and did what hundreds of other spouse-seeking men have done: He pursued a relationship in another country, and he found a wife. In November, Baar went to Cartagena, Colombia, with Phoenix-based A Foreign Affair, one of the largest international marriage brokers in the United States. On the first day, Baar said, he found the love of his life, and four days later he proposed."<sup>62</sup> Harris interviewed Lynn Visson<sup>63</sup> about such men: "Visson said the men are typically between 35 and 45, divorced or never married, and many are in the computer business. Most earn between \$50,000 to \$80,000 a year, she said. 'They [the men] have been very busy, completely zonked out or devoted to work, and they are too old for the bar scene,' Visson said. 'So, where do you find someone?' She said the American men appeal to foreign women, especially those in Russia, because the men are willing to adopt their children and American men live longer than Russian men on average. They also are perceived to drink less."<sup>64</sup>

As in Taiwan, there has been criticism of the role of commercial firms in arranging transnational marriages in the United States. In the case of America such criticism has focused largely on spousal abuse of foreign women and critics have sought to link the business with exploitative forms of human trafficking. Constable offers a critique of the critics who she views as often being overly simplistic and misleading by focusing on the more sensational cases of abuse in such marriages.<sup>65</sup> Harris interviewed the operators of one such firm, A Foreign Affair, who characterized "their international dating service is as harmless as a 'high school dance'" and took offense by characterizing them as running a mail order bride firm: "You can't pay us any amount of money to arrange a marriage for you.... We simply introduce people who think they would like to meet and hopefully build a relationship and marry someday."<sup>66</sup> Harris also cites a report by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services stating "marriages arranged through these services would appear to have a lower divorce rate than the nation as a whole, fully 80 percent of these marriages having lasted over the years for which reports are available."<sup>67</sup>

## Transnational Family Networks

The Philippines provides a good example of a country where transnational family ties are of considerable importance. About 10 percent of the population of the Philippines lives overseas and a very large percentage of families in the Philippines have family mem-

bers living in other countries. Tyner estimates that transnational Filipino families have members living in 160 countries.<sup>68</sup> Similar figures exist for many other countries such as those in South Asia. Many other countries in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the South Pacific also have large numbers of transnational families, but they tend not to be spread quite so widely around the world. Transnational families are also a common feature of the main countries that receive migrants such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina.

There are two means by which transnational family networks are formed. Migration across borders and transnational marriages may lead to the creation of transnational family networks where members of the family make an effort to maintain relationships across borders. Transnational family networks may also be formed where the creation of state boundaries has divided families but family members continue to maintain relations despite this political obstacle. No matter how they are formed analysis of such networks entails examination of the context within which they develop and the content of the networks.

The context or social space within which transnational family networks exist, which we discussed initially in the first chapter, includes such factors as government policies that favor or dissuade communication and travel across borders, the cultural environment within which family members live, their economic statuses, and technical factors related to cross-border communication and travel. Cultural values that promote family solidarity are important motivating factors as are related calculations based on the perceived advantages to be gained through reciprocity among family members.

Hindrances on the parts of governments in modern times include especially the isolationist policies of communist governments that seized power in various countries around the world in the 1900s, which cut off family members from their relatives living in non-communist countries for a time. Liu provides an interesting case study of a transnational ethnic Chinese family.<sup>69</sup> Family members migrated to the United States in the late 1800s where they worked as asparagus farmers and ran an herbal medicine business. Family members subsequently moved back and forth across the Pacific for business and education. Liu argues that instability and other problems in China and racial hostility in the United States combined to make transnational family life a focal point of the social existence of family members. Vietnamese refugees who left Vietnam following the communist seizure of power in northern Vietnam in 1954 and their conquest of the central and southern part of the country in 1975 found maintaining contact with family members remaining in Vietnam difficult until reforms began to open the country more to the outside in the late 1980s. Once communication with and travel back to Vietnam became easier in the 1990s overseas Vietnamese still had to contend with the hostility of anti-communist extremists in the overseas Vietnamese community that made open contact with family members difficult and especially actual visits to Vietnam. It was not uncommon for overseas Vietnamese to try to keep such visits secret for fear of reprisals at home that sometimes took the form of physical attacks and having their homes set afire. There were also lingering problems on the Vietnamese side, especially from low-ranking government officials. Such problems have receded in recent years as Vietnam has become

increasingly open, as government officials have become more tolerant of overseas Vietnamese, and as the hold of anti-communist extremists on the overseas communists has waned. Economic growth in Vietnam has also provided an attraction for overseas Vietnamese, who have invested in businesses and real estate back in Vietnam to a considerable extent in recent years. A growing number of older overseas Vietnamese who were born in Vietnam have also considered returning to Vietnam to retire. All of these factors have combined to create a large number of transnational ethnic Vietnamese families with bases in two or more countries.

Family reunification policies on the part of governments have played an important role in maintaining relations between migrants and family members in their countries of origin. In the case of the United States, for example, the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act eliminated the old quota system based on national origin and established a new system based on family reunification and occupation. Especially important is the distinction between quota (i.e., those categories of migrants that continued to be subject to various quotas) and non-quota categories of immigrants. Immediate relatives of American citizens (whether naturalized or not)—including spouses, minor children, and parents—constitute a non-quota category. As Constable points out, the “unintended consequence of the reforms was a sharp increase in Asian and Latin American immigration.”<sup>70</sup> Another consequence was an increase in the percentage of women. Thus, she notes, “during the 1997 fiscal year, out of 796,000 immigrants over 25 percent were spouses of U.S. citizens (170,226) or legal permanent residents (31,576). Of these spouses, 66 percent (over 132,000) were women.” Looking at Filipino migrants to the United States, Constable found not only that the absolute number of immigrants increased (665,000 Filipinos coming to the United States between 1965 and 1984), but that while during the first ten years following the Act the number entering under the employment and reunification categories was about equal, in the mid-1970s the occupational category dropped to about 20 percent of all immigrants, due to stricter entry requirements for professionals,” and the vast majority of immigrants came under the reunification category.<sup>71</sup>

Technological changes and access to means of travel and communication, which were discussed in the first chapter, have had an important impact on the maintenance of transnational family networks. Changes in communication include such things as the introduction of the penny post and other improved and less expensive mail delivery, the spread of access to telephones, and the internet. The internet has revolutionized communication within transnational families by allowing low cost almost constant communication to an increasing number of people worldwide. Air travel has also played an important role in making face-to-face contact among family members easier.

The content of transnational family networks may include exchange of news, information, and resources as well as other forms of assistance (such as help in obtaining visas). The sending of remittances by temporary labor migrants to their relatives back home was mentioned in the chapter on migration. What is of particular interest in the present context is the continuing flow of remittances by settler migrants back to relatives in their country of origin or ancestry. Hugo uses the term remittance to refer not only to money, but also to other goods, services, and guarantees that migrants deliver to their

place of origin.<sup>72</sup> Hugo's study of Javanese migrants is of relevance in the present context also because of its finding that circular migrants sent the most money home while permanent migrants sent back far less. Looking at households receiving money from migrant family members, he found that circular migrants provided 60.2 percent of the incomes to the households to which they were associated, whereas permanent migrants provided only 8 percent.<sup>74</sup> This difference reflected not simply the type of migration, but also the fact that the households of circular migrants tended to be poorer than those related to permanent migrants.

Hugo's study points to the importance of the economic status of migrants in determining the level and role of remittances. Remittances from those who have migrated to wealthier countries from poorer ones are of most importance to families from poorer backgrounds that see migration primarily as a means of improving the family's pool or access to wealth. In her study of transnational Filipino families, Suzuki refers to how “families originally located in economically weak countries have begun to maintain themselves transnationally,”<sup>73</sup> and the flow of remittances is the primary form that this maintenance takes. Their significance (and often frequency) declines among wealthier families. For middle class transnational families the flow of money often resembles that of many non-transnational families where money is sent on special occasions as a gift (such as for birthdays and weddings) or in cases of emergencies.

Suzuki has noted in the case of Filipino transnational families that the “form and content of family ties” among members are different from those of families that are more localized within the Philippines.<sup>76</sup> This is especially true in the case of gender roles and gender-based expectations whereby Filipino women living outside of the Philippines are confronted with both increased expectations of their ability to play the traditional male role of provider to family members back in the Philippines while also being subjected to traditional expectations of as female as a care giver: “As women's earning power increases, their new role of family provider ironically incorporates material care into their maternal care.”<sup>76</sup>

Skeldon points to how the two-way flow of migrants in the contemporary Asia-Pacific region has led to the creation of “a curious new form of spatially extended family” that is a product of Asian migration and modern communication and includes “astronaut” fathers who leave their wife and kids in a home purchased in the destination country and returns to his initial homeland to work and “parachute” children who are placed in a home in the destination country (sometimes with relatives) while the parents stay in their homeland to work.<sup>77</sup> By 1993 there were already an estimated 40,000 parachute Asian children living in the United States.

An additional issue concerns differences between role and behavioral expectations of family members in the country of origin or ancestry and those associated with dominant cultural traditions within the countries of settlement. This is an especially important issue in regard to gender and the socialization and behavior of children. Where cultural differences between countries are not so different, as with transnational marriages between Taiwanese men and Vietnamese women, problems may be minimal. However, when cultural differences are greater, as in the case of Muslim migrants from Middle Eastern and

North African countries living in North America and Western Europe, there can be considerable tension. One of the more dramatic and highly publicized manifestations of such tensions is so-called honor-killings by Muslims. Honor killings involving the murder of a family member who is believed to have brought dishonor on the family.<sup>78</sup> The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that around 5,000 take place annually. Most of these occur in Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African Muslim countries, but they also take place among Muslim migrant families in Western Europe and North America. Such murders in North America and Europe reflect problems of adapting to a very different cultural environment on the part of migrant families rather than something specific to transnational families, but they relate to transnationality insofar as they represent efforts by families to maintain the cultural traditions of their home or ancestral country.

## TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Transnational corporations (TNCs) are also known as international corporations, multinational corporations (MNCs), or multinational enterprises (MNEs). A TNC is a corporation that manages production or delivers services in more than one country. While it is common to think of TNCs as massive corporations that span the globe like Royal Dutch Shell and Wal-Mart, they can also be small enterprises (sometimes referred to as micro-multinationals) employing relatively few people but still operating in more than one country. In the present chapter we are more concerned with the social and cultural aspects of TNCs than their economic dimension. This relates both to their role as transnational employers and as a transnational link between people living in different countries.

### Modern Transnational Corporations

The Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, United East Indian Company, VOC), which was established in 1602, is generally considered to be the first modern transnational company since it was the first transnational enterprise to issue stock.<sup>1</sup> Unlike its modern counterparts, beyond simply trading, the VOC established colonies, waged war, negotiated treaties with states, and issued its own coins. Although it was a Dutch company its employees included not only people from the Netherlands, but also many from Germany and from other countries as well. Also, while most of its shareholders were Dutch, about a quarter of the initial shareholders were Zuid-Nederlanders (people from an area that includes modern Belgium and Luxembourg) and there were also a few dozen Germans.

While the VOC mainly operated in what later became the Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia), the company also had important operations elsewhere. During the 1640s and 1650s the VOC pushed the Portuguese out of Sri Lanka and took over their control of the cinnamon trade with Europe. The VOC then conquered the Malabar Coast of southern India, leaving the Portuguese with only Goa. The VOC established a base at the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa in 1652 in order to re-supply its ships sailing between the East Indies and Europe. The company established additional trading posts along India's