

ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-CULTURE FACTORS OF INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES – THE CASE OF WOMEN’S MARRIAGES TO TAIWANESE/KOREANS IN VIETNAMESE MEKONG DELTA

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Abstract: *International marriage has long time development with various forms depending on the purpose of migration. Since the 1990s, there has been a rising trend of women in the Mekong delta getting married to Taiwanese and Korean. It thus has received attention dramatically from theoretical perspectives to practical studies. However, the rate of domestic violence and divorce cases in multicultural families increased sharply in recent years. Socio-cultural differences are considered as the main cause of serious conflicts in family life. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyze the current situations and the factors affecting the Vietnamese – Taiwanese/Korean marriages through evaluating factors of socio-culture of international marriages in the context of globalization. Besides, it will attempt to emphasize the family’s livelihoods and communities’ perceptions about this phenomenon. In addition, the paper will discuss the factors contributing to the trends in transnational marriages in Vietnam. Finally, the paper will propose some recommendations to Vietnamese governments in order to have suitable policies to adjust this issue as well as to guarantee the rights of these brides, especially in the case of Vietnamese Mekong Delta when they are getting married to foreigners.*

Keywords: *Socio-Culture, Vietnamese-Taiwanese/Korean, Married To Foreigners, International Marriages, Gender, Vietnamese Mekong Delta.*

Introduction

Cross-border marriages or international marriage is considered as a normal social phenomenon in the development of society. After World War I and II, many women in the world marry foreigners including Vietnamese women. Marriage is not just a sexual union but also expressing the cultural aspects of people. Therefore, the ethnic diversity in a country leads to a diversity of forms and rituals that are related to marriage. Viet Nam is a multi-ethnic country with 54 ethnic group. In recent years, marital migration is as a consequence of globalization; thus, the analysis

of the socio-culture views that lead to marriage immigration is very complex because it is considered in many respects with different perspectives due to the different approach of the problem. There, however have not been many studies writing on cultural and social of transnational marriage (marriages with foreign elements). Furthermore, most of international marriage migration (IMM) was broken because of many divergent causes. The purpose of this paper thus is to analyse the socio-culture aspects of international marriage in Vietnam. This research will only focus on women's marriages to Taiwanese and Korean in Vietnamese Mekong Delta as a "hot pot" of the emerging trends. Throughout studying, the paper also appraises family's livelihoods to examine whether there has the contribution of the brides to household economic development or not. Based on overall international marriage pictures, some recommendations are proposed with the aim to adjust this issue and have appropriate regulations to protect the brides, especially in the case of Vietnamese – Taiwanese/Korean marriage in the Mekong River Delta.

This research was implemented on the synthesis of materials from judicial departments in Mekong River Delta region and other relevant studies on cross-border marriages.

The Basis of Theoretically

Definition and Concept of International Marriage or Marriage Migration

An international marriage or cross-border marriages or marriages involving foreign elements are marital relations between two citizens of different nationalities. This marital refers to the culture of arrival and departure because the culture is the source of the relationship of marriage, of love, of life and of harmony. Besides that, international marriage emphasizes geography, state, law, race, immigration conditions, economic conditions and even social class.

According to Article 3 of Marriage and family Law of Vietnam in 2014, marriage with foreign elements is defined as: "Marriage and family relations involving foreign elements are marriage and family relations involving at least one of the parties being foreigners or overseas Vietnamese".

Regarding to the modern view, cross-border marriages or marriage migration is also a form of labour migration. This is a form of migration based on the theory of economic and historical, political and cultural structures. Economic theory states that the cause of marital migration is the balance between the two forces of attraction and push. The forces of push often emerge in the country of emigration due to poverty, unemployment, low living standards, complex political conditions, learning opportunities deadlock meanwhile attraction forces appears at the destination in order to attract immigrant as high salary, employment opportunities, good living conditions, stable political and economy. Even with the current perception, compared with labours export, getting married to foreigners is as the "strategy" of livelihoods of women to be long-term migrant, having a husband, and also have a job to work until the rest of their lives as well as to express their filial piety with their parents; while labours export has to pay costs brokerage fees and labours contracts are limited (Thinh, 2011).

Transnational marriage or marriage with foreign elements on the world level and even in Vietnam is not a new phenomenon. It emerged very early in the world's migration process tens of thousands of years ago, leading to increased living conditions among members of ethnic groups, leading to ethnic and cultural exchanges. In the history of Vietnam, there have also been foreign marriage events such as the case Princess Huyen Tran was married to King Cham, Princess Ngoc Van in the South. International marriage in this research is the marriage between the brides of Mekong Delta married Taiwanese/Korean in the recent decades.

The Socio-Culture in Marriage with Taiwanese and Korean

In recent years, the marriages between Vietnamese women marry foreigners - specifically Vietnamese women married to the United States and Korea has increasing significant since 1995. Beginning from 2000 onwards has become a real "fever". From 2005 up to now, the trend of Vietnamese women getting married to Taiwanese has been reduced by only 1/4 compared to previous years (Thịnh, 2009). But there is an increase in the number of Vietnamese brides married to Korean.

With international marriages that occurred over the years, Professor Lê (2007), gives some initial remarks on this issue: First of all, transnational marriages often take place in the localities of Vietnam between Vietnamese and foreigners, just in one way: Vietnamese women marry foreigners. This trend will continue in the coming years. Secondly, most of the girls marry foreigners mainly in rural, remote and isolated areas where it is difficult to access resources for development. And so, people living in the countryside in such conditions, it is difficult to access sources of information from the outside, easy to cause misconceptions about the alienation of foreigners. Third, the level of education of women who married to foreigners is generally low; more than 80% have primary and secondary education, of which over 8% are illiterate. With this qualification, they cannot have enough ability to study foreign language. Most of them do not know English, Taiwanese or Korean, so this is the biggest obstacle in communication, causing the girls who marry foreigners have many difficulties in daily life. And finally, marriages involving foreign elements have taken place over the years, often through brokerage. Because of the lack of necessary information about marriage aspirants, the majority of marriages are through intermediaries. Legally, marriages with foreigners over the years, which are legitimate and voluntary marriages, are recognized by the laws of both countries.

An extremely difficult obstacle in heterosexual marriages is the cultural difference, which is distinctly different from, first and foremost, the difference in language. Language is always associated with a human race - each ethnic group speaks a language. Language functions to separate races, which function to link the races together. Therefore, overcoming or crossing the language barrier is not a simple task. In this case, simply the bride and groom are not proficient in each other's voices, nor can they use an intermediate language to communicate. From a research study in Korea (2010), the authors point out that after three or more years, many Koreans have been able to use Korean, as Korean is not a difficult language to learn. On the other hand, Vietnamese women who marry are Korean, well defined, they will settle permanently, so to integrate into the society where they live, there is no other way than to know Korean (Tuyên, 2010). Hence, after marrying, if they cannot understand the language of Taiwanese/Korean, it will be difficulty for them to integrate their lives into a new cultural space in their husband's land (Trang, 2005).

In addition, other difficulties such as customs in the family, social are also serious problems. In fact, each race, each society has different standards and sometimes do not bathe in that cultural environment, cannot be overcome. To receive new cultural values, there must be a preparation. But not everyone and can always be prepared. For the most part, Vietnamese women marry foreigners, they are almost unprepared for both language and culture. Due to their unpreparedness, they are facing a lot of difficulties, living in a culture of culture and lifestyle that is different from the cultural norms and lifestyles that have been attached to them for decades. The lack of willingness to accept new cultural values in the context of the specificity of Vietnamese women marrying foreigners will be a nuisance in their integration process (Xoan, 2005). For this reason, how to adapt a new culture is a requirement for Vietnamese brides in this circumstance.

However, cultural adaptation, which in particular is adaptation in family life, social relations, in the new environment is a big challenge. In terms of historical aspects, both Vietnamese and Taiwanese/Korean culture are influenced by Chinese culture through the influence of Confucianism. The current Korean family, due to the impact of exogenous cultural factors (co-influence), especially Western culture and endogenous effects (historical impact), especially the industrialization process, modernization of the country, the process of urbanization after the war, there have been profound changes. Korean families today maintain a patronage regime under the influence of Confucianism, and paternalism remains profound, although generations and members of the family simplify and lessen. The concept of division of work in the family is still maintained traditionally. The woman is still the main concern for the family and caring for the children.

The majority of marriages are dominated by economic factors. In fact, the purpose of the marriage is to achieve a life change not only for the individual bride but also how to contribute to their families' lives. Economic factors and desire to escape from poverty are the main motivations that the brides decide to get married. It considers as the gamble of her life. Despite success or failure, it is more or less influenced by the youngest brother in the family, whose sisters are grateful, respected and sympathetic. Her sacrifice was recognized and appreciated by the family. In addition, the influence of the Korean "spread" movement spread throughout the village, some successful marriages as a result for other Koreans to follow. Korean film also played a significant role that affect the decision of marriage. Rural girls dream to live in wealthy families and happy life; there are romantic love like Korean movie etc. It is these factors that urge girls want to be live, to be loved like that.

Throughout researching, Piper (2009) emphasizes the role of migrants in economic factors and the impact of remittances on social attitudes towards migration. In Viet Nam, labour migration (men and women in general) is considered as livelihood strategies, while married migrants with Taiwanese and Korean are considered as "trafficked" by women. They labelled as "national humiliation", not fulfilling her obligations to her country and her family (Chowdhury, 2009). This negative perception has overshadowed women's labour contributions and gender roles in sending remittances as well as their influence in the host family (Kim and Shin, 2007).

Due to the influence of Confucian thought, order hierarchical culture, class hierarchy is very strong, thus the brides are often stigmatized and discriminated. Once they are on the lower scale, they must comply absolutely with orders. The family in-law is subjected to heavy pressure of gender inequality and class inequality (Thịnh, 2013). Moreover, because of poor country, poor family, the position of Vietnamese bride is lower. They want the bride to take responsibility for submitting her husband's family as a filial daughter, a virtuous, tolerant, and compassionate wife in the Confucian tradition. For this reason, many brides cannot continue as well as accept living in this context. This is also a major cause leading to divorce.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Transnational marriage is a normal phenomenon and is the result of the integration process. Economic reasons play an important role in promoting marriage migration. Marriage immigration cannot be denied, contributing to the improvement of the family and community economy, emphasizing the role of women and their voice in respect of the family. Marriage migration not only solves the problems of employment and employment in the two countries, but also the gender balance among the countries in the region. In particular, International marriage migration can spread culture and link the relationship between Vietnam, Taiwanese and Korean. More than anyone else, Vietnamese brides are the best cultural ambassadors of all time if multicultural families are built on the basis of voluntary love, limited cultural barriers and

conflicts of interest. helpful. Parallel to these positive aspects, marriage immigration arose a series of social problems. The "success" of some cases is exaggerated and becomes a belief for other women. In the past, they desperately seek out the change of life but no steps to prepare. Nowadays, the number of women failures in marriage brings the children back to the country, the local knowledge only when they need legal support. The rest floating somewhere in Vietnam or living illegally in Taiwan and Korea. Therefore, to manage this issue, there are some recommendations to adjust international marriage:

- Vietnamese government should have a private law to adjust about cross-border marriages. At the present, there has only a little part in Law on Marriage and Family in 2014. It cannot solve all problems that occur in this situation;
- Local authorities should cooperate Women Union with the aim to educate for the brides who consider to get married in the future. They have to learn from language to local culture to prepare everything for their lives in Taiwan or Korea.
- Vietnamese government should build a relationship as well as a legal system with Taiwanese/Korean government in order to manage and to ensure the brides' rights before and after marrying.

As the perspective of Nuôi (2006) can be considered as a concise statement of this content: "Marriage with other people in the context of multilateral relations and global integration is normal. But only normal and supportive when they have equal marriages, come together through a process of communication, have true love and Vietnamese brides have enough cultural level to integrate human culture".

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