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A publication of the
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Asia Pacific: PERSPECTIVES

an electronic journal

Volume VIII · Number 1 June · 2008

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Gender Ideology Crossing Borders: A 'Traditional' Spouse in the U.S. International Migration Context

By Suzanne M. Sinke, Ph.D.

Abstract

Images, even false ones, can create desire. In the case of U.S. citizens and residents seeking marriage partners across borders, ideas about female purity, male dominance and women's rights, marriage arrangement patterns, and family responsibilities contributed to an (often inaccurate) juxtaposition of foreign, especially Asian, women as "traditional" compared to U.S. counterparts, just as it marked foreign, especially Asian, men as more patriarchal than men in the U.S. Immigration law, which favored dependent female spouses from the outset, helped foster this image. The stereotypes of current "foreign bride" websites reflect ideas that are more than a century old, ideas found in migrants' letters and soldiers' stories, though they are now used for more commercial purposes. This paper illuminates how gender ideals shaped marriage patterns across borders, encouraging more cross-national matches by the late twentieth century, and how migration helped shape U.S. gender roles related to marriage.

Geisha Song, one of hundreds of current companies designed to match Western men with women from Asian countries, advertises: "Traditional and delicate ladies are our specialty" (Geisha Song, 2001). It is capitalizing on a cultural image with a long history—one which until the late twentieth century was as likely to separate as unite different racial and national groups. In the U.S. context both migrant and native populations from at least the mid-nineteenth century associated most women from other cultures, and Asian women in particular, with "traditional" gender roles, meaning American women garnered an "emancipated" ideal. The gender counterpart images of American men as more egalitarian and foreign men as more patriarchal were and are part of the cultural capital people bring to courtship, whether they have any bearing on reality or not.

Changing perceptions of race, and changes in marriage patterns, not to mention immigration law, helped make this cultural capital a major asset in a transnational marriage market in the late twentieth century. This article describes some key ways in which attitudes about gender roles and marriage interrelate with international migration for the United States. Specifically it deals briefly with images of female purity, male dominance and women's legal rights, marriage arrangement patterns, and family responsibilities. Through these themes, the paper illuminates how gender ideals shape marriage patterns across borders, and how migration helps shape U.S. gender roles related to marriage.

Female Purity

Many cultures past and present place a high value on women's virginity at marriage and sexual propriety afterwards, though often such proscriptions do not apply as strictly (if at all) to men. The continuation of chaperonage of Mexican and Italian immigrant women at the turn of the twentieth century in the U.S. exemplified this pattern (Ewen, 1985: 232-233; Strom, 1978: 194; Ruiz, 1998: 51). Likewise Filipina immigrants in the twentieth century have been reluctant to accept American dating practices, as have many Hmong men in the late twentieth century (Espiritu, 2001: 416; Yongvang, 2000: 33-34). In such cases "ethnic" is associated with a different moral standard from which to critique American culture.

While virginity for brides may have been an ideal among the dominant U.S. population by the mid-nineteenth century, by the mid-twentieth century it was less often the reality (D'Emilio and Freedman, 1988: 334). Moreover, many newcomers, accustomed to institutional restrictions on access of young people to one another, viewed American dating customs (which allowed young people extended time alone together) as an invitation to abuse. This sentiment was shared by more conservative members of the dominant U.S. population as well. Ludwig Dilger wrote from St. Louis back to relatives in Germany in 1928: The women have taken over, especially the young ones, they smoke, drink, swear, show all they have and what you can get very cheaply" (Kamphoefner, Helbich and Sommer, 1991: 512). The image which migrants often saw in public, whether at Coney Island and Nu-Pike amusement parks in New York and L.A. respectively at the turn of the twentieth century, or at movies and dance clubs at mid-century, and more glaringly at the beach as well as on television since the 1970s, is one of a world where women as well as men are likely to engage is heterosexual relations prior to marriage (Weinberg, 1988: 206; Ruiz, 1998: 59; Sánchez, 1993: 186; Tenhula, 1991: 292; Gupta, 1999: 128). Such ideas could push groups to limit the migration of women, particularly single women, because their reputations could be sullied just by being in the U.S.

The image sometimes went beyond young women and dating. Gaspare Cusumano wrote of immigrants from Cinisi, Sicily to turn-of-the-twentieth-century New York that they had serious doubts about the morals of American wives. A married woman who would talk to a stranger was assumed to have the makings of a prostitute. An Italian-American man complained that when his non-Italian wife took their child for a stroll in Central Park without a chaperone, his family disparagingly labeled the action "American" (In Thomas, 1921: 148). Many groups viewed separation and divorce in the nineteenth century and in some cases birth control well into the twentieth century as "American" (Lick, 1998: 82-84; Johnson, 1978). Marrying someone from the "old world" was thus a means of assuring a similar cultural idea of what constituted appropriate morality for a wife.

Some cultures were less willing to allow women to migrate because of the gender-specific risks to female sexual purity in the migration process. Parents in Mexico sometimes demanded a male family member accompany a daughter for undocumented border crossing, for example, in part because of fear of physical abuse (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 91). U.S. law has used the image of immigrant women lured into pros-

titution as a major part of the turn of the twentieth century campaign against "white slavery" (Slocum, INS, 1910). These laws had the effect of making it more difficult for European women to arrive alone. Marriage, or promised marriage, could be a way to avoid these restrictions.

Such was even more the case for Asian women in the same period, who faced restrictive laws and a much stronger presumption among immigration authorities of having come for prostitution. As an immigration inspector in San Francisco wrote in 1908 about incoming "picture brides" from Japan: ". . . if past experience is any guide. . . at least fifty per cent of such women will lead immoral lives in this country" (North, 1908). For some Japanese, however, it was American women who deserved scorn. As the Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. noted in 1919: "whereas the Japanese woman when she is married obeys her husband, is chaste, gentle and submissive in his service, the American woman, as seen by us Japanese, is generally willful and selfish in her conduct" (Ishii, 1919).

The stereotype of America as a land of sexual promiscuity could work in the opposite direction. Persons who wanted to escape sexual proscriptions might turn to the U.S. as a presumed land of freedom. The "American marriages"—bigamous marriages of men who had left their first spouses in the homeland—reported by social workers among Jewish families at the turn of the twentieth century were not the norm, but the idea of being able to start over by moving was not (Friedman, 1982). Many microstudies of migration point to personal crises such as pregnancy when unmarried, a broken engagement, an unwanted marriage proposal, or the refusal of a marriage proposal, as the precipitating factors in getting individuals to move (Hoerder, 1996: 218; Puskás, 1991: 225).

In the wake of World War II in Germany or Austria, or in Korea during the Korean War, economic conditions were poor and work close to U.S. military forces was one of few options available. Yet women who associated with U.S. soldiers would automatically gain an unsavory reputation. The terminology locals used to refer to them typically denoted prostitution. In Korea some faced familial excommunication for loss of honor. In former Nazi lands, mobs would sometimes attack interethnic couples if they appeared in public. Such women might seek marriage to an American as the most palatable option under major economic, demographic, and social duress (Yuh, 1999: 2; Moon, 1997: 7; Biddiscombe, 2001: 615-616).

In the late twentieth century the migrant might be a Guatemalan woman who was raped by military forces prior to emigrating (Kohpahl, 1998: 50). Migration might not have to be international in order to escape the negative association, but the possibilities of evading detection or putting distance between negative cultural evaluation of women who were victims of military attacks and military policies were often greater in the U.S. context or potential immigrants assumed they were. Further, the impression of the U.S. as a land where those associations would not exist, or at least not as strongly, relates more generally to images of women as having more rights in the U.S., and of the U.S. as a land of freedom and wealth at least for some (Kim, 1996: 29).

Women's Legal Rights/ Male Dominance

In some cases there was a basis in reality on which to suggest women had certain rights in the U.S. which did not exist in a sending area. Individual rights such as those of wives to property within marriage and to bodily integrity appeared somewhat earlier in the U.S. than in some European countries, though these kinds of distinctions rarely appear as direct causes for migration. Rather, in letters and other personal accounts migrants were more likely to comment on the degree to which U.S. norms challenged their own views of patriarchy. The contrasting images sometimes have appeared in court. U.S-born men were hardly exempt from spousal abuse, but a migrant had a more tenuous legal status, meaning that being charged with breaking the law might challenge his immigration status. A Hmong man in the 1980s attempting bride capture, a somewhat rare but accepted form of marital arrangement, might find that according to U.S. law this was considered kidnapping and rape (Scott, 1988). Under such conditions some migrants have turned to a "cultural" defense. This was quite successful in the case of Dong Lu Chen, who was sentenced in 1989 to five years of probation after killing his wife. Chen's lawyer argued that for a man from mainland China, the shame brought on by his wife's adultery was too much for him to bear, and thus killing her was justified in Chen's cultural tradition (Volpp, 2000: 394). Further, publicity aimed to change these attitudes and practices has reinforced a stereotype of extreme patriarchy among migrant men, as in the campaign to educate late twentieth century Nuer refugees which centered on letting women know they could (and should) call the police in cases of spousal abuse (Hotzmann, 2000). Women have sometimes welcomed these programs, but often they have viewed the negative publicity and its implication of "traditional" ways as inappropriate, as a challenge to ethnic communities which, for all their flaws, were still familiar, esteemed, and often better social safety nets than those provided by government agencies within U.S. society.

As eastern European immigrants at Ellis Island at the turn of the twentieth century encountered the unfamiliar "ladies first" attitude, they also faced a new legal system which often allowed greater freedom of marriage and divorce, at least for white women (Seller, 1981: 3-4) . For German immigrants of the nineteenth century the right to marry without major economic obstacles or landlord permission was a major part of the image of "freedom" in the United States (Knodel, 1967: 282; Blaschke, 1997: 41). But the idea that American women were lazy—meaning they did not like to work in the tasks which a sending culture assumed were female—and that men had less leeway to enforce women's subordination was a major point of contention. Among Dutch Protestant immigrants at the turn of the century, there were few cases of divorce. In part this was because the immigrant group and ethnic churches would excommunicate a woman who demanded divorce on grounds of abuse, yet many states allowed this and a handful of women took advantage of their civic rights despite the cost in ethnic dissociation (Sinke, 2002: 216).

Rights were less likely to be granted de facto if not de jure to foreign groups with less cultural proximity to a dominant U.S. pattern, who not coincidentally were often considered non-white. Two visa petition cases before the immigration authorities in 1952 illustrated the pattern. In one, an Air Force officer was allowed to marry a German woman, despite having a mail-order divorce from Mexico—not legal in the U.S—to dissolve his first marriage. The officials argued that the marriage was legal in Germany, where it took place, hence they would allow it in the U.S. In a second case a U.S. serviceman arranged for a "proxy" marriage in Japan, where he had been stationed until recently and where his fiancée lived. Though the marriage was legal in Japan, the officials ruled it was not legal in the United States and refused entry to his spouse (INS Decisions, Vol. 4, 56324/762 and VP4-7802). In other words the principle that a marriage that was valid where it took place should be accepted in the U.S. as well had various exceptions.

Changing images of male dominance in marriage imbued immigrant and migrant life. *Songs of Gold Mountain*, an early twentieth century anthology of Cantonese language folk songs/ poems included chapter titles such as "Too Much Freedom for Women Leads to Oppression of the Husband" and "Freedom for Women Upsets the Moral Order" (Wong, 1991: 254-255). At the same time some images of foreign men, such as of Chinese men in New York City in the nineteenth century, could be less "manly" than an American standard. This feminization of men from Asia illustrated the malleability of gender images mattering on the context (Teng, 2000: 96). Orientalism, the study of "others" by those in the "West" in the context of colonial relationships, contributed extensively to the stereotyping of foreign men. And yet the racial discrimination which placed men in servile positions could counter the patriarchal images found elsewhere, and sometimes make them more appealing partners. In the case of New York City in the nineteenth century, it was sometimes Irish immigrant women who were attracted. On a national scale, however, matches across national lines for Chinese men were often illegal and in most locations rare (Tchen, 2001; Ruggles and Sobek, 1997).

The stereotype of American women as less submissive than foreign women was part of the challenge to male dominance, particularly for foreign born men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the mid-twentieth century native born men increasingly adopted a similar stance. A post World War II correspondent in Paris explained that U.S. women would expect to be equal partners in a conversation at a restaurant, while French women would sit and listen and laugh at appropriate points (Dallaire, 1946: 15). It was the same kind of association which led many immigrants of earlier years to look for spouses from the "old world" rather than the more Americanized second generation available locally. Though many of the women who came from Japan early in the twentieth century were non-conformists in a number of ways, all had still been trained as "Meiji women," a term which embodied "impressions of extreme dedication, enormous strength of will, patient self-sacrifice, and duty to family" (Sarasohn, 1998: 17). Many did not want to marry Meiji men, a term with negative connotations about a lack of household participation and strict patriarchal rule. The most desirable women were unavailable to migrants because such women would not leave Japan. Hence the men sometimes chose women who had characteristics undesirable in Japan: women with more education than average, with aggressive personalities, women who had converted to Christianity or otherwise were atypical in their homeland. They were part of an international marriage market (Sinke, 1999).

In *A.R. M. Around Moscow* (1994) film makers Jeanne C. Finley and Gretchen Stoeltje interviewed the U.S. men and Russian/former Soviet women meeting in the context of an arranged matchmaking opportunity in the 1980s. Fifteen men paid handsomely to meet over 500 potential spouses. The numerous Russian women quickly recognized that many of the Americans were not necessarily their ideal: divorced and bitter, with few social skills, sometimes blatantly racist and sexist; likewise the men recognized that they were trading on "cultural capital" as one anthropologist describes the gender associations tied to national identities (Robinson, 1996). The men were U.S. citizens who could afford to go overseas to look for a spouse, and the impression the women had was often one that saw such men as less likely to be alcoholics, poor providers, or physically abusive than the Russian men caught in deteriorating economic conditions. For all the U.S. men's social ineptitude from an American perspective, marriage to one of these men could still be a ticket to the U.S., and out of conditions the women evaluated as even more undesirable.

One of the paradoxes of the late twentieth century "mail order bride" phenomenon has been that many of the women seek more enlightened spouses while men were often looking for more conservative women. As one well-educated woman from Mexico explained when justifying why she listed with a foreign matchmaking company: "Mexican men are very conservative. . . it's a different culture. The women are getting educated—they're changing—but the men are staying the same" (Garin, 2000: E-1). At least some women who have come to the U.S. from Mexico agree. In one set of interviews of Mexican-born women in Atlanta in the 1990s, the women cited more egalitarian distribution of housework and legal protection from domestic violence as key features of a reorganization of gender roles (Hirsch, 1999).

Migrants and potential migrants have often evaluated gender roles in their decisions about whether or not to move. In 1858 a German newspaper targeting emigrants noted that women in the U.S. could marry the man of their choice for the father was no longer head of the household, and moreover divorce was relatively easy ("Familie," 1858, 43). The information which chains of migration as well as media offered, created opportunities to think about gender roles beyond a local or national context. Changes in gender roles in marriage associated with migration also went back to sending areas in other ways, particularly with return migrants. Some Sicilian women began attending literacy programs in response to high out-migration rates by men there. American men were less servile than before migration, but the wives who remained in the village also changed their role in the family, becoming more active in decision-making and adopting higher

consumption patterns (Reeder, 1998). Though such changes were often underway in the homeland, experiencing them in the U.S. first, or adopting them faster because of connections to the U.S. provided a mental image of women's rights that contrasted "traditional" patriarchy.

Marriage Arrangement Patterns

A third way in which migration interacted with ideas about tradition and marriage has been in shifting marriage arrangement patterns. For Jewish immigrants of the turn of the twentieth century, it often meant abandoning arranged marriage in favor of marriage for love (Sinke, 1999; Glenn, 1990: 238). Emma Goldman was not alone in "escaping" to America in part in order to avoid an unwanted match (Goldman Papers). Jewish immigrants in the U.S. began organizing social activities to bring those they considered potential spouses into contact (Weinberg, 1988: 206). Similarly in the late twentieth century Indian immigrants often find their children challenging the idea of arranged marriage, and have shifted it to a sort of introduction service (Gupta, 1999).

Women who did come as part of arranged marriages sometimes faced scrutiny by immigration officials who had doubts about the "foreign" customs, particularly at the turn of the twentieth century, when such women were most commonly from Asia. Immigration officials sometimes performed wedding ceremonies for so-called "picture brides" from Japan, though consular officials protested repeatedly that the couples were already married. Groups accustomed to polygyny for the elite, found that U.S. law refused to honor multiple marriages, despite the general rule of allowing as spouses those who were officially wed according to the laws of another country (Sargent, 1907; Administrative Decisions, 1978, Vol. 16, #2656: 543-544). For those coming from China in the nineteenth century, or Ghana in the late twentieth, such legal barriers to multiple marriages meant either leaving a spouse or spouses behind when one migrated, or finding ways to subvert the system.

In the U.S. several practices associated with marriage in other countries had a harder time continuing among migrants. A popular song in Yiddish neighborhoods at the turn of the twentieth century indicated that a young man in the U.S. would marry a woman without a dowry if he loved her. In some cases this was true. Rachel Bella Kahn, an orphan, a Jew, and an older single woman in Russia in the late nineteenth century, had no dowry at all, so her passage to America was paid by her husband-to-be, who brought her to North Dakota to homestead (Calof, 1995: 8-9). The possibility to marry without a dowry, which even in the U.S. context was typical though not necessarily mandatory, was a key selling point which nineteenth century European immigrants used to entice women to migrate. As one German immigrant wrote: "You write that Roessle is not married yet and lacks sufficient wherewithal, in America one doesn't need anything, because the husband has to buy everything, here everything is totally different, because one doesn't need a dowry" (Monn in NABS, 1871). In the U.S. context a formal dowry became less necessary for many groups. While this relieved women and their families of a major financial burden, it also meant less financial leverage for a woman in the marriage, especially in times of dispute, and a poorer economic start to the marriage in some cases. Likewise in the late twentieth century some groups faced a similar challenge to marriage payment expectations. For many Hmong, marriage payment (also known as bride price) signified the linking of two clans and a commitment by both to make the marriage succeed. But at least some young people sought to challenge their elders and choose spouses themselves or simply abandon the practice, which they saw as out-dated ("The Bride Price Community Forum," Moua, 2000: 19-24).

The absence of parental consent in the U.S. context has often shocked migrant populations. Though required in many parts of the U.S. into the twentieth century even for young adults, parental consent laws were less likely to be enforced among the migrant population. Parents were less likely to be present, and officials did not always concern themselves with transnational family dynamics (Sinke, 2002: 27). Immigrant letters of newlyweds conveying the news to their relatives after eloping sometimes had the undercurrent of justifying what was clearly a step against parental will.

One of the most striking changes for nineteenth century immigrants in terms of marriage arrangements was the growth of an international marriage market. Most matches took place between those of like national background, but because of sex ratios in the migrant population, men were likely to have to return for a spouse, or send for one. Letters arranging marriage, often with exchanges of pictures if the persons did not know one another previously, were common among many groups by the late nineteenth century. While Japanese "picture brides" were the most well-known, and married prior to leaving Japan, marriages arranged by letter (including by e-mail in the late twentieth century) have become a common way to link those with similar background and interests. Danish immigrant Carl Jensen was typical in his letter from Elba, Nebraska in 1908: "If you can find a nice and reasonably pretty girl, send her over here so that I perhaps can get myself a wife" (Stilling and Olsen, 1994: 140).

Often parents and other relatives were crucial in such exchanges, locating suitable spouses with whom a migrant son (or in more recent times daughter) might finalize nuptial plans through the mail (Ikels, 1985: 258). For those such as Cape Verdeans in the early twentieth century, a quick trip back to marry and then bring the spouse to the U.S. was typical. Because of the regular shipping trade between a key Cape Verdean settlement area in New England and the islands, oral messages as well as letters kept this link strong and fostered transatlantic matchmaking. A key reason for seeking a spouse from the homeland in this case, as in so many others, was the sense that women were more subservient there—they fit the more patriarchal roles with which migrant men were raised. Among Cape Verdean migrants interviewed in the 1960s, men expressed nostalgia for family relations in the homeland, while women generally stressed their preference for the individual autonomy they had achieved in their new setting (Halter, 1993: 84-92). Further, for a group racially "in-between," marrying someone from the same background was less likely to pose problems.

Dutch immigrants sometimes turned to classified ads to help find spouses either transatlantically, or across distances within the United States. "Matrimonials" were common in Finnish and Yiddish papers as well. Classified ads have continued in the twentieth century and have moved into major matchmaking enterprises in some cases (Sinke, 2006). While foreign bride web companies may gain more attention, typically the personals of ethnic news services from *Laiks* (a Latvian weekly in New York) to *India Abroad* to *Islamic Horizons* to "Mundohispanica.com" to Iranian Singles Network seek to match those of similar background. Finding a spouse, thus, has shifted from print to electronic media for some. In these cases as well, one element of looking across borders or long distances for a mate of the same national background at least sometimes relates to the perceived traditionalism of women from that area. In cases of U.S. men looking outside their own national background, an element of that traditionalism is the power men hold, at least for a period of time, over a woman's immigration status if she comes as a spouse. In the late twentieth century laws changed to allow abused women in such cases to still remain in the U.S., and in areas like the Philippines, mandatory counseling informing fiancées of this was part of the paperwork required to marry someone in the U.S.

Inequality in intercultural relationships appears in other ways as well. Spouses who enter a new area without the same cultural background are at a disadvantage and may have to be more reliant on the U.S. spouse for a number of years if not for life. The military brides whose spouses never learned their languages, and who themselves never really became fluent in English, had a hard time trying to maintain authority in the home (Yuh, 1999: 136). Since the 1950s women have been able to sponsor spouses for immigration, just as have men, but fewer have done so. This is more striking in light of female majorities among immigrants. The switch to female majorities among migrants beginning in the mid-twentieth century, though primarily a reflection of economic opportunities for "women's work," are related in part to marriage patterns because men consistently imported more "brides" than women did "grooms." Across time, marriage has been the most common reason for migration in many societies. In virilocal and patrilocal cultures, both men and women or just women respectively, would move to a new location at marriage. These moves were generally within a local or regional context, though there were exceptions. Among the elite, rulers or nobility or the most wealthy, marriage across national borders was more common. Political and economic alliances were key elements in those cases. Further, sex-specific migrations, such as military men stationed outside borders, could produce many local marriages if state policy made this a legal option and the people considered one another suitable (or were desperate enough). Troops carried with them an image of the manly warrior, often a powerful figure. Further, in colonial and occupational settings, these men (and there were few military women) often appeared to have greater wealth than the local population (Enloe, 1989; Moon, 1997; Yuh, 1999).

Technology, whether in the form of the steamship and railroad, or more recently in the form of air travel, has lengthened the distances that some individuals have been willing and able to go to find a suitable spouse. Likewise the development of more widespread literacy and postal systems (not to mention photographic advances) made it possible for potential spouses to correspond and gain images of one another across borders, sometimes filtered through intermediaries like matchmakers and dating services. In the late twentieth century this has gone a further step to include telephone and internet connections.

Family Responsibilities

It is rather ironic that people use the latest in technology to find traditional women, those who "want to keep the house, cook the meals, etc." and generally embody an ideal of womanhood associated with the 1950s in the United States (Russian American Alliance web page, 1999). The desire in some cases is to maintain a home with male breadwinner and female housekeeper, though not all could afford this. Moreover, the web sites make it clear that the men are seeking women who will not expect a husband to share household work and who generally are more submissive than their idea of "American" women. At the same time women expect to be treated well, perhaps better than what they might anticipate in their homeland and have the economic benefits of an ideal U.S. world. As one woman from Trinidad wrote of her ideal man/husband: "I would like him to be my Prince Charming. Mature, honest, hardworking, tall, sexy and financially stable" ("Island Girls," 2002). Not surprisingly, many women's matchmaking ads list children and family as key priorities for themselves. This coincides with the traditional image that wives will handle child care and housework with little or no assistance from a husband beyond his monetary contribution.

In intercultural marriages the stereotypes can be gender reversed as well. More educated Ghanaian men in the late twentieth century, for example, were less likely to expect wifely subordination, and in turn, they were more likely candidates for marriage to American women, particularly African-American women, with whom they would form relatively equal partnerships. These men would be likely to cook, clean, and share child-care, though Akan men in Ghana often expect wives to handle more of these tasks. African *women* who married African-American men, on the other hand, were more likely to be subordinate to their spouses, and the men were more likely to complain about domineering U.S. women (Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh, 1998: 108-109).

The image of traditional women links in part to the assumed responsibility of women who marry those of similar background to prepare foods common in sending areas, and to maintain elements of ethnic culinary practice, whether eating with chopsticks or making homemade pasta. Food preparation is one of the tasks most likely to be associated with women across a wide variety of cultures. For nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants, the monetary and labor contribution of the wife through cooking and cleaning was often one of the main reasons men cited for wanting to get married, as did this single Hessian immigrant in 1855: "Here in America it's better to be married than single, think of all the *Board*, that is *Kostgeld*, both husband and wife can

live on that" (Weitz in Kamphoefner et al., 1991: 349). Taking in boarders or doing laundry were common methods for immigrant families to get ahead economically, contributing as much as a man's wages in some cases (Morawska, 1986). For the Paik family, refugees from the Japanese occupation of Korea, making ends meet in Riverside, California in the early twentieth century consisted of cooking for about thirty Chinese citrus workers. Though the entire family helped with the business, preparing food was primarily the wife's job (In Dublin, 1993: 177). Many migrant men viewed doing housework as a breach of gender roles. The laundry and cooking businesses started by some Chinese immigrants, who had few choices because of the lack of women and poor wages, helped feminize their public image.

Another major responsibility of wives was to provide sex. One of the most potent elements of cultural capital for Asian and Pacific women in the late twentieth century was the association of women with sex to please, an image that had a base in the reality of prostitution surrounding U.S. colonial and military endeavors. This linked back to Orientalist views of Asian women from the nineteenth century to some extent, but was grounded in occupation inequalities and military policies. One study indicated that over a million Korean women provided sex for U.S. military forces, despite the strong cultural value on chastity and on racial purity (Moon, 1997: 1-3). A study of Japanese "war brides" indicated that nine of twelve couples lived together prior to marriage, at a time when this would have challenged existing moral norms in both spouses' countries (Lark, 1999: 189). The need for American economic and military aid pushed Asian governments to support such programs, such as rest and relaxation stops which have become major sex tour destinations (Enloe, 1989). The connection of military men having sexual contacts with local women on unequal terms, however, was not limited to Asia. Stories of near starvation local conditions contrasted with the abundance accorded American military men abound in Europe in the wake of World War II as well. Relationships under such conditions were prone to difficulty. As one woman in Austria explained about her romance with a U.S. GI: ". . .we wanted to get married. Then, in October, [his] entire division was transferred back to America. . . . I was naive and of course I believed that I would receive some word from him. But I never heard from him again. . . . My daughter was born in 1946" (Gertrude D., in Boltzmann-Institute Collection).

Within marriage (and similar co-habiting unions for some groups) sex was also for procreation, a major life goal for many men and women. New immigrants in the turn of the twentieth century United States had higher fertility on average than their native-born counterparts, though the second generation typically had much lower rates (King and Ruggles, 1990). To be a good Polish Catholic woman in that period, for example, meant foreswearing birth control (Bukowczyk, 1987: 24). In the late twentieth century, a medical study indicated pregnant women in an area of high migration in Mexico were more strongly tied to motherhood roles than were Mexican women in the U.S., and Mexican-American women in turn were even more likely to see life plans as combining motherhood with other tasks (Guendelman et al., 2001). Motherhood, in other words, could have different meanings based on migration. Within some Asian cultures the stress on producing a male heir could be particularly strong. For some, the stress on procreation, or at least certain kinds of procreation, went on beyond mid-century. In one Korean family the father named the fourth daughter *Chai-Nam*—"to be a boy"—in hopes this would promote the next child being male. Two more daughters followed. As the oldest daughter later reminisced: "I could see my mother's exploitation and suffering because she couldn't give birth to a male child" (Kim, 1996: 48).

Child care was also heavily gendered in many migrant communities. Widowers in the nineteenth century sometimes sent their children to orphanages if they could not hire housekeepers or remarry rapidly. Among Dutch Protestant immigrants the standard assumption was that a widow with young children might survive on her own, but a widower could not (Sinke, 2002: 40). One of the compensations for strong paternal authority in Italian and Mexican immigrant families in the mid-twentieth century was the centrality of maternal roles to the home. "Traditional" women in these cases gained particularly strong ties to their children (Sánchez, 1993: 146; Johnson, 1978: 237). Conversely, the assumption that American men might be more involved in child care was also an attractive feature to some foreign women. American men would push baby carriages in public, something which shocked the older generation, explained one Austrian woman who married an American GI during the occupation after World War II (Elizabeth C., 1993 in Boltzmann-Institute Collection).

A typical model of late nineteenth century industrial work was for a migrant man to engage in this activity on a temporary basis in the United States while leaving the social reproduction of his family in a homeland, often in the hands of a wife or parents. For Chinese immigrants it was enshrined into law, making it almost impossible to bring in a wife after the Page Act of 1875, and later even to go back to China temporarily (Chan, 1991). High return migration rates from Southern and Eastern Europe attested to the prevalence of this "sojourner" pattern (Wyman, 1993). Transnational fatherhood in this context primarily meant sending funds to support the family, though it also included correspondence or other contact (sending instructions at times about major purchases or decisions), and returning at some point if possible, perhaps temporarily. This model continued to exist in the twentieth century among temporary migrants, though women became a larger part of the group. In the late twentieth century this included many migrant mothers, employed doing child care in the U.S., who shifted care of their own children and other social reproductive tasks to fathers, grandparents or other extended family in a homeland, a pattern labeled transnational motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Parreñas, 2001). In some cases grandmothers (though less likely grandfathers) would be sponsored into the United States as well, so that working parents could have more contact with the children (Donato and Tyree, 1986: 227). For the late twentieth century the continuation of the "traditional" ideal of women as child care providers and of the home as the best place for this care combined with the stereotype that "foreign" women were

more traditional and hence good mothers to create a market for foreign care givers, despite (and some would argue because of) legal barriers.

Another family responsibility of major concern in migration decisions was the need to care for the elderly. While providing elder care within a child's home was a pattern common in many sending regions, it decreased in the U.S. in the late twentieth century as families relied more and more on commercial homes for the elderly. As Hung Cam Thai has shown, the desire to have a spouse fulfill duties to ones parents, including caring for the elderly, is part of the reason recent Vietnamese male migrants seek to marry women from their homeland (Thai, 2001). While women may assume they are escaping these duties by migrating, their prospective husbands may assume the opposite. This "ethnic" ethic of care has contributed to the shift in which households are most likely to contain elderly kin (Lavender, 1986). Whereas it was the wealthy in the late nineteenth century who most often had households containing elderly kin, by the late twentieth century it was most often the impoverished (Ruggles, 1994: 125).

For the late twentieth century and beyond men who marry those in sending regions may do so in part because women of like background in the U.S. anticipate careers, and are less wiling to put those careers on hold for children or elderly parents. Such was the late twentieth century case of Rani, a woman from India who came to the U.S. in an arranged marriage and put her nursing aspirations on hold to be a full-time housewife. After returning to India on a visit eleven years later she found that more women were working outside the home there, so she decided to return to her premarriage occupation of nursing once back in the United States (Balagopal, 1999, 156-157). Once it was no longer atypical in the homeland, she could justify it. Even with fairly regular contact, images of the gender roles in sending areas can become outdated rapidly. Those who start to think about marriage after a number of years in the U.S. may have a perspective based on their own experiences in the past, rather than the current reality.

At the turn of the twentieth century migrants coming from cultures which practiced family forms other than virilocal residence often found it difficult if not impossible to maintain these patterns in the new setting. Women from Asia sometimes preferred not having to live with a mother-in-law who would control the household activities (Ling, 2000: 50). Dutch immigrant women were more likely to bemoan the loss of consanguine kin, who no longer could fulfill roles of informal care, sporadic assistance, advice and other day-to-day sociability (Sinke, 2002: 42-43). In general transnational migration has made it more difficult to maintain extended family ties.

Yet immigrant households have sometimes had higher ratios of extended family members present than the U.S. population as a whole, at least if they did not face formal legal barriers to bringing in these individuals. Thus at the turn of the twentieth century siblings, cousins, and eventually even parents might sometimes appear on census schedules for a period in the life course of Dutch immigrant households. Many judged the success of migration in familial rather than individual terms. Shifts in transportation have made family reunification even more feasible in the late twentieth century, and U.S. immigration policy has reinforced this. In fact the impression that women come as wives or mothers rather than workers, though they are often both, is in part due to immigration law.

Conclusion

Images are not reality. This needs stress, for in many cases the women or men in marital relationships that cross borders do not fit the stereotypical images of "traditional" or "patriarchal," and at times they would reject them vehemently. Any linkage of less-Western to "traditional" re-inscribes stereotypes, some gleaned from Orientalism, others from a cultural chauvinism based on ideas of American superiority or individual rights. Still, cultural images help create cartographies of desire—who one thinks could be a suitable partner, if one seeks a partner at all (Pflugfelder, 1999). These images work their way into many cultural settings. The popular Chinese soap opera of the 1990s, "Foreign Babes in Beijing," featured the character Jiexi, an American woman who embodied sexual liberation, seducing a married Chinese man (De Woskin, 2005). Popular culture, particularly in the form of American movies and television, have added significantly to these stereotypes in the twentieth century and beyond.

What I have tried to suggest with these examples is the relationship between images of tradition/emancipation and the migration and marriage patterns they create and sustain. The transnational marriage market, both in the form of marriages of persons from the same homeland who unite after one has migrated, and those who marry across national lines, has contributed significantly to the image of foreign individuals, particularly foreign women, as "traditional." The challenges of U.S. popular culture to ideals of purity have fed into gendered migration patterns and the desire of some men for "traditional" women. Likewise ideas of male dominance, seen most often in images of non-U.S. men demanding submission from wives, and eliciting it at times through force, reinforces the cultural capital of U.S. men in this context. The presence of extended family members in the home, and of stronger commitment to care for the elderly and children within a familial context, and of wives holding sole responsibility for housework are part of the "traditional" image, though like most of these images they are not necessarily accurate for either individuals or groups. U.S. laws, whether in prosecuting abuse, setting up standards of divorce, or determining who qualifies for family reunification, all contribute to a general model of "traditional" being associated with foreign. These are not the only images present, but they are very powerful ones both within migrant communities, and in the general U.S. population. With migrants coming and going from most corners of the globe, they contribute to a global discourse of gender.

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