

Foreign Brides Research

**Psychosocial Profile
and Perspectives of
Foreign Brides**

*By the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)
Supported by the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst e.V. (EED)*

May 2007

Acknowledgements

The Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) wishes to thank the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst e.V. (EED) for providing support to make this research possible. We also wish to thank our partners and volunteers in APMM focus areas for assisting us in collecting the valuable data for this research. Finally, we wish to thank the brave women who have lent us their time and experiences so people can better understand the condition and challenges faced by foreign brides.

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1984, APMM's efforts on the issue of foreign brides began by exposing marriage bureaus in the commercialization of women im/migrants from Third World countries. The Philippines then became not just one of the sources of cheap and docile labour, but also a budding shopping mall for so-called "submissive, weak, helpless" and "beautiful dream girls who are desperate," as described in the promotional ads by a marriage service agency, Sunshine International. Back then, these women im/migrants were called "mail-order brides" or "brides for sale".

Then in 1990, APMM paid close attention and campaigned on its first case of domestic violence of a Filipino bride, Generosa Bongcodin, in Australia. Gene was murdered on July 9, 1989 by her Australian husband, who was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1993. Gene's shocking death signaled the need for a conscious effort to advocate for justice for the victims of violence committed against women migrants, including foreign brides. Her death was the 14th case of deaths and disappearance of Filipino brides in Australia since 1980. Since then, 17 other cases were documented until 2001.

While APMM's earlier efforts on foreign brides dealt on advocacy and campaign on outstanding cases of deaths and disappearances of Filipino brides who have foreign husbands, it never failed to respond to the immediate needs of foreign brides in distress, and women migrant victims of violence and trafficking. Over the years, this response has enlightened many people and brought a better understanding about the issue. Such was the need then, when the trend of labor importation and exportation was still predominantly male migrants, and the call for advocacy has just began.

But the trend has changed now. Millions of Asian women are working overseas, feeding their families, and boosting the economies of their countries, by remitting billions of dollars home. Women now make up more than 75% of registered migrant workers from Indonesia, 70% from the Philippines, and 69% from Sri Lanka.¹

Moreover, according to UN's Population Division, almost half or 48.7% of the nearly 200 million international migrants in 2005 are women.² This trend is seconded by Marcella Ballara of the Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe (REPEM) in 2002. She noted:

¹ *Human Rights Watch*, September 2004.

² *Global Commission for International Migration*, 2005.

“The first immigration flow was characterized by the companies’ preference for male workers. However, since male workers more often try to organize themselves in trade unions, ask for higher salaries, and also often start a family and permanently remain in the country they migrated to, the trend is changing. The second flow or migration is witness to a sharp increase in female migrant workers.”³

Hence, in order to respond to the current challenges ahead, the greater need now is to have a deeper understanding on this issue. Who are the foreign brides? Where do they come from? What are their reasons for choosing to become foreign brides? What are the processes they undergo to become one? How do they cope and adapt to their new situation and environment? What are their perspectives?

OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT OF THE STUDY

The study is a documentation on the demographic, psycho-social and perspectives of foreign brides in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Korea, as these are areas with concentration of foreign brides in Asia.

The research aims to identify views and perspectives of women married to locals in countries mentioned above and how do they adapt in such “unfamiliar” situations (with different communities, culture and traditions, beliefs, family values, etc).

It will also attempt to answer questions from their own perspective like: what are their surviving mechanisms? Are there available mechanisms in the country/ community in terms of government policies that will help foreign brides to integrate in the newly adapted family, community and society? If none, what do they think is the role of governments in this process?

The study will also try to look into the existing formations of foreign brides and how these formations can support and protect the rights and well-being of foreign brides.

In sum, the content of the study will have the following parts:

- I. Overall Context of the Foreign Brides Issue
 - a. Who are foreign brides? Where do they come from?

³ Marcella Ballara in “The Feminization of Migration” published by MediaSol (Le Portail de L’Economie Sociale et Solidaire) of Les Penelopes, February 4 2002. p.1. Also found in “Impact of Globalization on Women Migrants” prepared by Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), Asia Pacific Forum of Women in Law and Development (APWLD) and Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS), and published by Asia Pacific Resource Network (APRN), 2004. p. 3.

- b. Where do they go to?
- c. Why do they marry foreign men?
- d. What are the processes and mechanisms they underwent?
- e. How do they cope and adapt to their new situation and environment?
- f. What are their perspectives?
- II. Issues and Concerns about Foreign Brides
 - a. Bride and Prejudice
 - b. Domestic Violence
 - c. Racist and Discriminatory Laws and Policies Governing Foreign Brides
 - d. Commodification of Women, Commercialization of Marriage
- III. Role of Organizations and Institutions
- IV. Summary
- V. Recommendations

METHODOLOGY:

This study basically relied on written literature (i.e. researches, studies, news articles) on foreign brides or im/migrant women who marry foreign men and actual interviews conducted on foreign brides in Taiwan, Hongkong, Japan and Korea. Such interviews were done not individually but through focus group discussion (FGD) whereby several respondents were gathered in one discussion meeting and they shared their experiences, views and perspectives to the group, just like in a workshop. Duration of each FGD spanned one and a half (1.5) up to three (3) hours. Target respondents for each country was 10.

The interviewer acted as the facilitator of the FGD. He/she explained the objectives, content and flow of the study, facilitates the exchange of experiences and views during the discussion and took note of important data that was said or shared by the respondents. A tape recorder was utilized to help the facilitator document the FGD. A video record of one of the two FGDs in Japan was also done.

The major players in providing data were the respondents. Their being foreign brides, though coming from different countries, and their search for good company and venue to share their experiences, provided a common ground for camaraderie and friendship. The presence of common friends, be they foreign brides themselves or institutional staff who have given them support services before, also helped in bringing a friendlier atmosphere and assisted in the smooth conduct of the FGD.

LIMITATIONS

Time posed a limitation as most of the foreign brides interviewed had to consider housechores, children's needs and special family errands. Hence, the FGD's generally were held for only one and half up to three hours, depending on the available time respondents can spare. This also explains why the ten (10) target respondents in Hongkong and South Korea were not met 100%. Moreover, uncooperative husbands who did not allow their wives (target respondents) to go out and share in the FGD posed a limitation and inconvenience in rescheduling the FGDs.

The social stigma hurled against foreign brides, especially the new ones and the unorganized, have generally kept them "aloof" from people of the host country. Many of them would not be open to be interviewed or share their life stories and experiences – hence, this presented another limitation. However, some of them who have been encouraged or endorsed by a trusted friend or organization they have heard of as helpful, would eventually agree to the FGD.

The situation in South Korea also opened another limitation. The series of crackdowns of Korean authorities on undocumented migrants also created an unfriendly atmosphere, affecting the would-be target respondents, and sowing fear among them.

I. CONTEXT OF THE FOREIGN BRIDES ISSUE:

Foreign brides came to be a phenomenon in the '80s when the number of migrant women from poor countries marrying foreign men from more advanced countries rose unprecedentedly. This was the time when cross-border marriages became not just a hype but also an alternative to poverty and starvation.

This was also the time when governments of poor countries have already gained headways in institutionalizing the export of labor as the solution to curb unemployment and underemployment, and the growing deficits in the balance of payments and balance of trade. As an offshoot of neoliberal globalization's three-tiered policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization came the proliferation of private recruitment agencies which heightened the labor export industry. Henceforth, the number of marriage bureaus and matchmaking agencies also rose.

Foreign brides were earlier popularly called "mail-order brides". They were called so because they were practically "ordered" and matched "by mail" or, in this age of cyber technology, the process is done through internet ads and postings. Marriage bureaus and their agents would facilitate the matchmaking process of male applicants looking for wives to the so-called "sweet and available women" desperately vying

to go abroad. Just like private recruitment agencies, they do so for a fee. But while this business blatantly commercializes women and marriage, those involved in the business and their apologists justify their existence as simply “bridging the gap” and providing a “romance network ... designed along the lines of an old fashioned penpal club” that will give “women living in non-Western countries the opportunity to correspond with men living the West.”⁴

In time, “mail-order brides”, marriage bureaus, and cross-border marriages drew public and international scrutiny as news of the rising tide of domestic violence and even deaths of foreign brides, “mail-order brides” and trafficked women caught the eye and attention of media.

A. Who are the foreign brides? Where do they come from?

Foreign brides in modern-day cross-border marriages usually come from poor countries such as Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand. They marry men from more affluent countries like USA, Canada, Europe, Japan, etc. Some researchers refer to this “south-north” cross-border marriage as “hypergamy”⁵ or “women marrying up into a higher socioeconomic group.”

Co-relating this with the interviewed respondents who are foreign brides, the results match. Table I.1 shows the country where the foreign brides originated, among other data.

Table I.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N=38):

	Country of Origin				Age Group				FB Source of Income					Spouse' Work				
	I	P	T	V	A	B	C	n.a.	H	P	F	B	n.a.	U	P	F	B	n.a.
Taiwan	4	0	2	6	10	0	2	0	2	2	6	2	0	2	1	2	2	5
Hongkong	1	5	2	0	3	3	1	1	1	0	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	5
Japan	0	11	0	0	1	2	0	8	1	0	1	0	9	0	0	1	0	10
Korea	0	0	1	6	7	0	0	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	0
Total	5	16	5	12	21	5	3	9	10	2	10	5	11	2	1	7	8	20
%	13	42	13	32	55	13	8	24	26	5	26	13	30	5	3	18	21	53

Legend:

- Country of Origin: I = Indonesia; P = Philippines; T = Thailand; V = Vietnam
- Age Group: A = 21-35 yrs old; B = 36-45; C = 46-55; n.a. = no answer/not available
- FB Source of Income: H = housewife; P = part time employed; F = full time employed; B = owns or manages business; n.a. = no answer/not available
- Spouse' Work: U = unemployed; P = part time employed; F = full time employed; B = owns or manages business; n.a. = no answer/not available

⁴ Commercial advertisement of Heart of Asia, a marriage bureau based in CA, USA, www.Heart-of-Asia.com.
⁵ Constable, Nicole (ed.), in Introduction entitled “Cross-Border Marriages, Gendered Mobility, and Global Hypergamy” in book entitled “Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia”, published by University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, p.8

• **Country of origin of respondents**

A total of 38 respondents were interviewed – 12 in Taiwan, eight in Hongkong, 11 in Japan, and seven in South Korea. Table 1.1. shows that the foreign brides interviewed came from Indonesia (13%), from Philippines (42%), from Thailand (13%) and from Vietnam (32%).

• **Age group**

Of the 38 respondents, about 55% come from younger age group (21-35 years old), while 13% belong to the age group 36-45 years old. Those who belong to the older age group (46-55 years old) are only 8%. It is unfortunate that 24% did not indicate their age.

Nicole Constable, in her introduction to the book “Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia”⁶ wrote:

“A majority of international marriage migrants are women, and most of these women move from poorer countries to wealthier ones, from the less developed global “south” to the more industrialized “north”—from parts of Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, to Western Europe, North America, Australia, and wealthier regions of East Asia—echoing some of the common patterns of women’s labor migration (see Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002, Piper and Roces 2003)”

Constable even likened the analogy, albeit prejudicial, to a surrealistic short story of a Japanese “mail-order bride” authored by Yoko Tawada (1998) entitled “Missing Heels”. In the story, the Japanese “mail-order bride” sought the help of a teacher who taught her the paradox of her life:

*“...recently women of an inferior sort were being brought into the country from poorer parts of the world, and since far too many of the men were interested in them, marriage opportunities for her more liberated countrywomen were becoming more and more limited... These are people who marry only for money, ... who come from poor villages, and get divorced and go back to them when they’ve saved up enough. They’re uneducated, which makes it extremely difficult to teach them what living as man and wife really means.... **Whatever they do, they have no choice in the matter—poverty drives them to it.** ... It draws attention to ideas about global patterns of inequality that are thought to pressure poor women to immigrate to richer countries...(or) the popular logic of the passive and desperate Asian bride who escapes from poverty and backwardness to a wealthy and advanced West.”(underscoring supplied)⁷*

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 3

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 1.

Constable continues to assert that “such marriages are especially interesting because they do not represent a global free-for-all in which all combinations—regardless of class, nationality, ethnicity, or gender, for example—are possible. Rather, they form marriage-scapes that are shaped and limited by existing and emerging cultural, social, historical, and political-economic factors.”⁸

One such factor referred to here is the “poverty and backwardness” of the country of origin of foreign brides, on the one hand, and the “wealthy and advanced West”.

B. Where do foreign brides go to?

In Asia, data indicate that foreign brides are increasing in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hongkong.

As can be gleaned from the data below, these countries are considered to be “mainly immigration” countries.

Classification of Asian nations on the basis of their international labor migration situation

Mainly emigration

Philippines	Bangladesh	Cambodia	Laos
China	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	Vietnam
India	Pakistan	Burma	Nepal

Mainly immigration

South Korea	Taiwan	Singapore
Japan	Hong Kong	Brunei

Both significant emigration and immigration

Malaysia
Thailand

Source: - Global Commission on International Migration, Migration in the Asia-Pacific region by Graemo Hugo, 2005, pg: -8.

⁸ *Ibid.* p.3.

A Factsheet Asia article⁹ in 2005 reported that:

“Due to a high demand for foreign brides, migration for marriage is increasing in Asia. In many East and South-East Asian countries, the increase in women entering the workforce – coupled with a trend towards delaying or forgoing marriage and childbearing altogether – is leading to a demand for more ‘traditional’ brides in order to maintain the household.”¹⁰

In Taiwan Province of China, brides now represent about half of the total migrant population.¹¹ Since the 1990s, nearly 100,000 Vietnamese women have married Taiwanese men.¹² There is also a surge in the numbers of women migrating to South Korea to marry local men.¹³ Significant numbers of Filipino women have married men in Japan, Australia, North America and Europe.¹⁴”

On the micro-level, data gathered from South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Hongkong reveal the following:

South Korea:

Referring to Table 2A below, data shows that :

1. Of the total of 495, 622 foreign residents in Korea, there are 74,176 (14.97%) men and women who reside there as spouses of Korean nationals. Of these, women spouses comprise 65,846 (88.77%) or a large majority. The rest (11.23%) are men.
2. Of the total number of foreign residents in Korea, women comprise about 191,668 or slightly more than a third (38.67%). Of these foreign women residing there, 65,846 (34.35%) are spouses of Korean men. The rest are women migrant workers, entertainers, and undocumented ones.

⁹ “Migration by Region: Asia and the Pacific” published in Factsheet Asia. 2005.

¹⁰ G. W., and K. Ramdas (eds). 2004. *(Un)tying the Knot: Ideal and Reality in Asian Marriage*. Singapore: Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Cited in: “Transnational Migration, Marriage and Trafficking at the China-Vietnam Border,” p. 4 by Duong, L. B., D. Bélanger, and K. T. Hong. 2005. Paper prepared for the Seminar on Female Deficit in Asia: Trends and Perspectives, Singapore, 5-7 December 2005. Paris: Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography. SWOP.

¹¹ Tsay, C.-L. 2004. “Marriage Migration of Women from China and South-East Asia to Taiwan.” Pp. 173-191 in: *(Un)tying the Knot: Ideal and Reality in Asian Marriage*, edited by G. W. Jones and K. Ramdas. 2004. Singapore: Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Cited in: “Recent Trends in International Migration in the Asia Pacific” (ESID/SIM/13), p. 12, by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNFPA, International Organization for Migration, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. 2005. Regional Seminar on the Social Implications of International Migration, 24-26 August 2005, Bangkok. Bangkok: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNFPA, International Organization for Migration, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. SWOP.

¹² Wang, H., and S. Chang. 2002. “The Commodification of International Marriages: Cross-border Marriage Business in Taiwan and Viet Nam.” *International Migration* 40(6): 93-114. SWOP.

¹³ Lee, H.-K. 2003. “Gender, Migration and Civil Activism in South Korea.” *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 12(1-2): 127-154. Cited in: “Recent Trends in International Migration in Asia and the Pacific,” p. 34, by M. B. Asis. 2005. *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 20(3): 15-38. SWOP.

¹⁴ Hugo, Graemo. 2005. *Migration in the Asia-Pacific region: A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration*. Global Commission on International Migration.p:20.

Table 2A: Foreign residents in Korea¹⁵

Sex	Trainee	Trainee -2	EPS	ECW*	Entertainer	Hotel Entertainer	Undocumented	Spouse	Total (person)	Rate (%)
M	52,032	53,184	40,611	28,850	178	575	120,194	8,330	303,954	61.3
W	11,308	7,152	19,291	24,605	616	2,252	60,598	65,846	191,668	38.7
Total	63,340	60,336	59,902	53,455	794	2,827	180,792	74,176	495,622	100.0

Source: Korean National Statistics Office (2006)

Table 2B below details the nationalities of foreign brides married to Korean men. It shows that foreign brides coming from People's Republic of China have consistently topped the list of foreign brides entering South Korea in terms of number from 2001 (70%) till 2005 (66.2%). They are followed by brides coming from Vietnam with 18.7%.

Table 2B: Nationalities of migrant women spouses of Korean men¹⁶:

	'01		'02		'03		'04		'05	
	person	%	person	%	person	%	person	%	Person	%
	10,006	100.0	11,017	100.0	19,214	100.0	25,594	100.0	31,180	100.0
Japanese	976	9.8	959	8.7	1242	6.5	1224	4.8	1,255	4.0
Chinese	7,001	70.0	7,041	63.9	13,373	69.6	18,527	72.4	20,635	66.2
American	265	2.6	267	2.4	323	1.7	344	1.3	285	0.9
Filipino	510	5.1	850	7.7	944	4.9	964	3.8	997	3.2
Vietnamese	134	1.3	476	4.3	1,403	7.3	2,462	9.6	5,822	18.7
Thais	185	1.8	330	3.0	346	1.8	326	1.3	270	0.9
Russian	157	1.6	241	2.2	297	1.5	318	1.2	333	1.1
Magnolias	118	1.2	195	1.8	318	1.7	504	2.0	561	1.8
Others	660	6.6	658	6.0	968	5.0	925	3.6	1,022	3.3

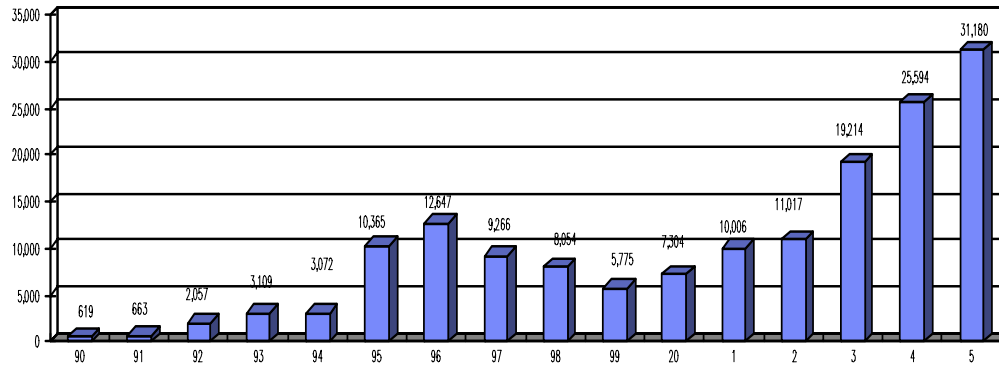
Source: Korean National Statistics Office (2006)

Table 2C (bar graph) below shows the trend – that the number of migrant women, through marriage in Korea, has rapidly increased for the last 10 years. Starting out with a few hundred foreign brides entering South Korea in 1990, the annual entries have steadily grown, with 2005 registering the highest number — 31,180.

¹⁵ Kim Min Jeong, "Migrant Women through marriage in Korea", a comprehensive report for the Human Rights Solidarity for Migration & Women in Korea (2006).

¹⁶ Ibid.

Table 2C: Number of women spouses of Korean men (1990-2005)¹⁷



Source: Korean National Statistics Office (2006)

Taiwan: (please refer to Tables 3A and 3B)

Looking at the Table 3A below, we can note that:

- Foreign brides in Taiwan constitute 2% of total population
- Foreign brides coming from Mainland China, including Hongkong and Macau, are by far the most numerous, comprising 65+% of total foreign bride population in Taiwan (as of 2006) or 61% of total foreign spouses in Taiwan (as of 2006)
- Total number of foreign brides comprise 383,204 (84%) of total aborigines (458,000)
- As per government data, 1 out of 5 marriages in Taiwan is between a Taiwanese national and a foreigner, and 1 out of 8 newborns are children of foreign spouses. (Napiere.2006)

Table 3A. Foreign Brides in Taiwan (as of 2006)¹⁸

Country	Number	Male	Female
Mainland China (inc. HK & Macau)	249,118	15,810	233,308
SEA countries	134,086	9,820	124,266
Total	383,204	25,630	357,574

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁸ Napiere, Fr. Eliseo "Taiwan New Immigrants Foreign Spouses", reported in the conference "The Catholic Church in Asia Cares for the Migrants in Taiwan" held March 16-19, 2007 in Wencui Center, Taipei, Taiwan.

Table 3B. Foreign Brides Statistics by Nationalities¹⁹:

Nationalities	Total # in Taiwan	Total # in the Diocese of Taichung	Taichung	Changhua	Nantou
Vietnam	75,946	13,790	5,464	5,464	2,861
Indonesia	26,182	3,960	1,487	1,576	897
Thailand	9,396	1,094	466	425	203
Philippines	6,108	700	309	306	85
Cambodia	4,516	1,268	575	439	254
Japan	2,474	111	55	41	15
Korea	803	21	11	7	3
Others	8,977	522	263	185	74
PROChina	239,972	25,487	13,500	7,927	4,060
HK/Macao	10,984	591	424	118	49
TOTAL	385,358	47,544	22,554	16,488	8,501

In Table 3B, foreign brides from PROChina topped the list of foreign brides in Taiwan, followed by those coming from Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand. This also validates the earlier observation that foreign brides from these countries have increasingly flocked to countries like Taiwan, Korea, etc.

Japan:

Japan’s Ministry of Justice’s (MOJ) Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd edition) noted a continuing increase in the number of foreign residents in Japan (please refer to Charts 1 and 3 below)²⁰:

“Between the end of the war and 1965, the number of registered foreign nationals residing in Japan remained between 550,000 and 650,000. Special permanent residents, mainly comprised of Korean nationals accounted for nearly 90% of the total. Since the late 1960s, the number of special permanent residents has decreased, while the number of foreign nationals coming to stay in Japan for various purposes has increased. An increasing number of foreign nationals have been living in Japan for a medium-length or long time. Therefore, the number of foreign nationals residing in Japan has risen year by year. At the end of 2003, the number of registered foreign nationals residing in Japan hit a record 1.92 million. Their share of Japan’s total population also posted an all-time high of 1.5% (Chart 3). Special permanent residents made up 24.9% of the registered foreign residents at most, while the share increased for newcomer foreign nationals. This trend is expected to continue with the number of foreign residents in Japan increasing.”

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Japanese Ministry of Justice’s Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd edition). “II. Salient Points Concerning Foreign Nationals’ Entry and Stay”. 2006. pp. 2,4.

In Chart 1, The Japanese MOJ also noted that the number of foreign nationals with re-entry permits have increased steadily from 81,400 in 1965 to 1,247,904 in 2004. Thus, from 1965-2004, foreign nationals with re-entry permits rose by as much as fourteen (14) times.

But the above numbers pale in comparison with the increase of foreign nationals entering Japan under “New Arrivals”. Chart 1 again demonstrates this staggering increase: from 269,903 in 1965 to 5,508,926 in 2004. In a span of almost forty (40) years, foreign nationals who came to Japan increased by about twenty (20) times.

In Chart 3, this increasing inflow of foreign nationals co-relating with the Japan’s total population, shows foreign nationals comprise 1.5% of total population in Japan.

Chart 1 Changes in the number of foreign nationals entering Japan

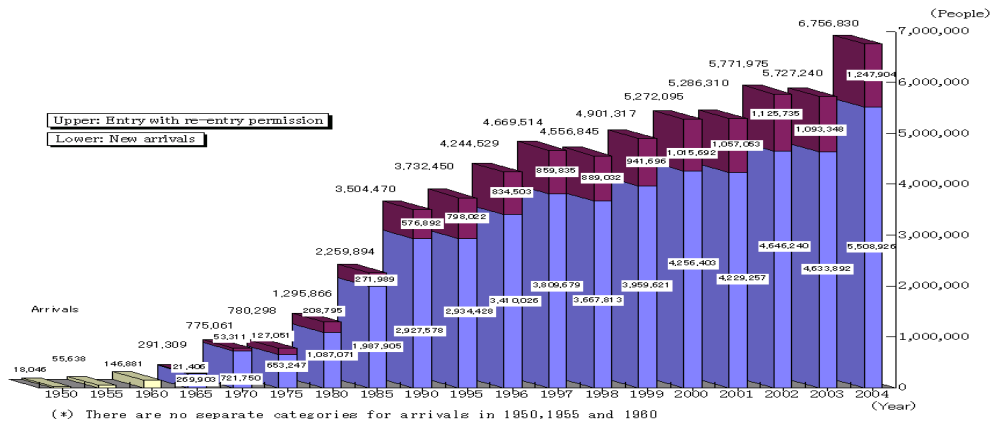
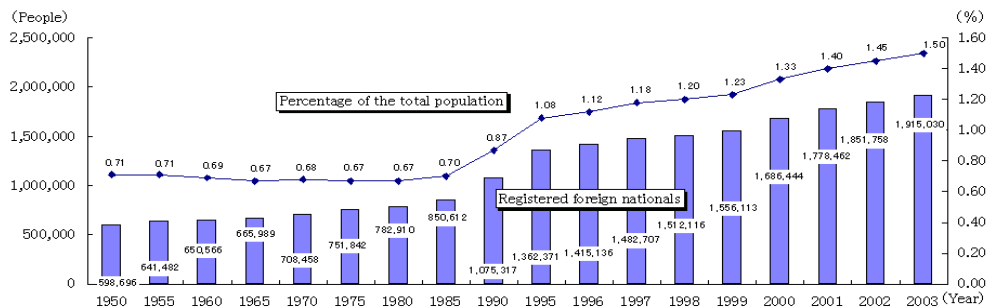


Chart 3 Changes in the number of registered foreign nationals and its percentage of the total population of Japan



(*) “Number of registered foreign nationals” as of December 31 each year.

(*) The “percentage of the total population of Japan” is calculated based on the population as of October 1 every year from the “National Census”(for 1950-1995 and 2000) and “Estimated Population”(for 1996-1999 and 2001-2003) of the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

While the Japanese Ministry's Basic Plan made references to "long-term residents" and "permanent residents" among foreign nationals staying in Japan, the only reference, albeit derogatory, it made on foreign brides was this:

"Since there are no restrictions on work for foreign nationals with the "Spouse or Child of Japanese National" status, **some foreign nationals have taken advantage of sham marriages to enter or stay in Japan.(underscoring supplied)**"²¹

Constable's study²² on the other hand, reported that:

"Between 1965 and 1970, the small number of Japanese international marriages were between Japanese women and foreign men, but after that, especially after the late 1980s, the number of marriages between Japanese men and foreign women increased dramatically (Piper 1997). According to the Japanese Welfare Ministry, there were 5,000 marriages to foreigners in Japan in 1970, 10,000 in 1983, and 20,000 in 1989, and almost 27,000 in 1993 (Sadamatsu 1996, cited in Piper 1997). Out of over 50,000 Filipino-Japanese couples overall in the late 1990s, all but 1 percent are said to involve Filipinas and Japanese men (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2000, Suzuki in this volume). In 1993, 75 percent of Japanese international marriages were between foreign women and Japanese men. Filipina women accounted for 32 percent, North or South Korean women 25 percent; Chinese women 23 percent; and Thai women 10 percent (Piper 1997, see also Nakamatsu 2002, Suzuki 2003a)."

But Howard French, a writer for New York Times, views it simply as: "Japan's national ideal has long revolved around a near-classless mono-ethnicity, but with its population shrinking, more people are marrying foreigners."²³ Of course, this so-called "near-classless" description can draw a debate. But the point here is that Japan shrinking population is a factor that causes more Japanese to break this "mono-ethnicity" and marry foreigners.

Hongkong, SAR

Hongkong, SAR's Immigration Department does not have statistics specific to foreign brides residing in the territory. The only information it has that is close to getting data on foreign brides is under the "Dependant" Category (please see Table 4A) and Table 4B on "Naturalization and Nationality" which are both found below.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 15

²² Constable, Nicole (ed.), in Introduction entitled "Cross-Border Marriages, Gendered Mobility, and Global Hypergamy" in book entitled "Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia", published by University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

²³ Howard French, in "For More Japanese, Love is a Multi-Ethnic Thing", *New York Times, New York and Regional News*, August 17, 2001.

Table 4A. Statistics on Employment / Investment, Dependant and Student Visas Issued ²⁴

	2005	2006 (Jan-Mar)	2006 (Apr-Jun)	2006 (Jul-Sep)	2006 (Oct-Dec)
Employment / Investment	21,119	4,801	5,287	6,664	5,206
Dependant	14,426	3,498	4,046	4,885	3,476
Student	3,178	204	1,239	1,598	1,005

²⁴excluding foreign domestic helpers, imported workers admitted under the Supplementary Labour Scheme, and persons admitted to take up employment or full-time tertiary study under schemes or arrangements catering for Mainland residents and their dependants.

Table 4B. Naturalisation and Nationality ²⁵

	2005	2006
Declaration of change of nationality cases received	49	64
Application for naturalisation as a Chinese national received	1 719	1 840
Application for renunciation of Chinese nationality received	74	91
Application for restoration of Chinese nationality received	6	16

In July 2002, the Chief Executive of Hongkong, SAR, announced Hongkong's "comprehensive population policy ... designed to fit Hong Kong's long-term social and economic development, will complement family requirements, and will address the interests of different sectors in our community."²⁶

Such population policy took into account the following factors:

- In 2001, Hong Kong's total fertility rate reached an extremely low level of 927 children per 1,000 women, well below the replacement level of 2,100 children per 1,000 women. At the same time, life expectancy at birth is projected to reach 82 for men and 88 for women in 2031, one of the longest in the world.
- Hong Kong's population is aging. A quarter of its population is expected to be aged 65 or above by 2031. More significantly, the size of the workforce will shrink as the prime working age population declines.
- The number emigrating from Hong Kong per year has declined from 66,200 in 1992 to just 10,500 in 2002. But a considerable proportion of the emigrants from Hong Kong was made up of the highly educated and the skilled.

²⁴ Immigration Department of Hongkong, SAR, 2007

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "Report of the Task Force on Population Policy: Summary of Recommendations", Hongkong Special Administrative Region Government, 2002, p. 1

- Another outflow is the growing number of Hong Kong residents living, working or retiring in the Mainland, particularly in the Pearl River Delta.

The Task Force on Population Policy took such factors seriously, saying that:

*“When fertility drops to a particularly low level below replacement and the mortality rate remains low, the pace of population aging inevitably quickens.... The Census & Statistics Department’s population projections projected more deaths than births each year from 2023 onwards. The population would then experience negative natural increase (i.e. more deaths than births) and de-population would arise if there were no net inward migration. **This scenario implies (a) an accelerated “greying” of Hong Kong; and (b) the onset in 2023 of a very painful process of de-population that could well last longer than half a century, resulting in a smaller and older population with significantly weaker economic potential. ...***

*One serious economic problem caused by an accelerated increase in the number of elderly people in the population is social security payments.... **As society spends more resources on caring for its elderly population, fewer resources can be devoted to productive investment or to the younger members of society. The result will be a prolonged period of slower economic growth, frustrated expectations and declining competitiveness against other economies with younger populations.***

*... The process of de-population implies certain significant, though not always obvious, losses of economic efficiency. It will also imply a drop in private and public investment in many markets. **A shrinking population will make it difficult to accumulate certain kinds of high-end human capital that require a critical mass to be functional.** This will be much to the detriment of our efforts to nurture a knowledge-based economy.”²⁷*

In view of the alarming data projected, the Task Force on Population Policy forwarded recommendations,²⁸ some of which affect migrants, immigrants, spouses and children. These are:

- To strictly enforce the allocation of the sub-quota for CoE (certificate of entitlement) children.
- To encourage the Mainland spouses to visit Hong Kong under the Two-Way Permit Scheme, as soon as they have applied for an OWP, so that they may familiarise themselves with Hong Kong’s way of life and the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15

living conditions of their Hong Kong families, thus helping them decide whether they wish to settle in Hong Kong.

- To consider granting the same level of tax deduction for all children irrespective of number.
- To align conditions of admission for Mainland professionals and talent with those coming from elsewhere as far as possible, and provide more flexibility and incentives to tertiary institutions to attract academics and students from the Mainland and overseas.
- On investment immigrants: To extend the existing immigration policy to cater for persons who will make substantial investment (HK\$6.5 million) in Hong Kong but do not themselves run a business i.e. capital investment entrants, and to apply this extended policy initially to foreign nationals, residents of Macao SAR and Taiwan.
- To adopt the principle of “seven-year” residence requirement for providing social benefits heavily subsidized by public funds. To consider tightening up the eligibility criterion for CSSA so that such benefits should, from a future date, be available only to residents who comply with the seven-year residence rule (except for children under the age of 18; current residents in Hong Kong will not be affected by this rule).
- On Foreign Domestic Helpers (FDH): To introduce a levy of HK\$400 per new contract or re-contract to be paid by the employers; to reduce allowable minimum wage for FDHs to HK\$400; and promote more employment opportunities for local domestic helpers (LDH).

Such recommendations by the TFPP are now in place. This explains why there is an increase in number of naturalized Chinese (Table 4B), dependents and investment immigrants (Table 4A). In an effort to solve Hong Kong’s de-population due to low birth rates & high longevity rates, the Hong Kong Government has applied leniency in the entry of family members of nationals from Mainland China, and encouraged entry of skilled and talented young students, professionals and investment immigrants to come and stay in Hong Kong.

C. Why do they marry foreign men?

Common reasons why respondents choose to marry their foreign husbands are the following: a) economic stability (58%); b) visa (16%); and 3) love (16%). Other reasons given were: curiosity to live in a foreign land (5%); and escape family problems (2.5%). (Please refer to Table 5 below)

Table 5. Factors why marry foreign man?

	Economic Stability and Work	Visa	Love	Curious/want to live in a foreign land	Escape family problems	Don't Know/ N.A.	Total
Taiwan	8	0	0	2	1	1	12
Hongkong	3	3	2	0	0	0	8
Japan	4	3	4	0	0	0	11
Korea	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Total	22	6	6	2	1	1	38
%	58	16	16	5	2.5	2.5	100

Some of the respondents' testimonies are as follows:

- Hong-Fong, Vietnamese (Taiwan): It is easier to get a constant job here, I guess it is for money. Living in Vietnam is kind of tough, and my neighbor who is also married to Taiwanese told me that.
- Jin, Vietnamese (Taiwan): I want to make money because my family in Vietnam is poor.
- Yu-Bi, Vietnamese (Taiwan): I always wanted to live in a foreign country, and any country would be fine with me.
- Yoly, Filipina (Hongkong): I met my husband, Joseph Wong, after I finished my first contract and was looking for an employer. At the time, I was staying in a boarding house owned and managed by Mr. Wong who was then separated from his former wife and awaiting the processing of his divorce papers. After a short courtship in 1998, I agreed to live with him while he signed my employment contract.
- Name withheld, Filipina (Hong Kong): I came to HK as a DH but worked in an investment company. I met the Chinese guy when she attended a party with friends. We were married for eight years and later divorced in 1999 after I got my right of abode. I relied on my husband mainly for financial support. From the start, the relationship was one sided with my husband showing love and affection and support for my children from a previous relationship.
- Naomi, Filipina (Japan): I went to Japan in 1982 to earn money because my father got sick. I met my husband in a snack bar in Japan. I was undocumented then. I went back to the Philippines in 1992. He followed and wooed me. In 1993, I married him in the Philippines and went back to Japan legally.
- Margie, Filipina (Japan): I was working in the Philippines in a marketing company when I met my husband who is an associate of my boss. He wooed me. I was afraid at first. But then he is soft-spoken and

- have mild manners, qualities which I like in a man. Later, he won my heart. For me, the heart comes first.
- Tania, Indonesian (Hong Kong): I was sold by my family in Borneo to an agency in Hong Kong.

But not all cross-border marriages are decided on the basis of economic upliftment or security. As we can see from this research's findings, about 16% marry for love. Nicole Constable noted in her study that:

*"Women do not simply marry up because of material logics. As mentioned earlier, other sorts of desires also come into play. Some women count love among the factors that motivate them to marry...."*²⁹

This insight is worth looking into. It is difficult to reduce foreign bride's motives to economic reasons or even desperation only. Such thinking could also strengthen the social prejudice already in place about them. Non-material reasons such as the desire for love and/or compatibility or even companionship are not necessarily conceived as separate from economic or material considerations.

Another aspect that is noteworthy to understand better is the view on foreign brides as innocent victims (who were coerced by economic and political structures) to a point of being fundamentally anti-im/migration, such that it is difficult to imagine a "good migration". Such a view obscures the fact that these foreign bride's decision to marry a foreign husband and consequent immigration is their expression of resistance to the old (poor situation in their homeland) and asserting or creating change for a new and brighter future (going abroad and marrying a foreigner).

Constable further described another aspect of cross-border marriage as "gendered-pattern of marital migration"³⁰ that is "hypergamous" (upward mobility for women).

"The Philippines is a popular place of origin of marriage migrants, as it is for labor migrants. Immigration figures from the Philippines clearly illustrate one facet of the gendered pattern of marriage migration. Of the over 175,000 Filipinos engaged or married to foreigners between 1989 and 1999, over 91 percent involved Filipino women. The geographic distribution of the foreign partners is not surprising when we consider the historical, colonial, and postcolonial ties between the Philippines and the United States and Japan. Approximately 40 percent (over 70,000) of the foreign partners are from the United States; 30 percent (over 53,000) from Japan; 8.8 percent from Australia; 4.2 percent

²⁹ Constable, Nicole. *Cross-Border Marriages, Gendered Mobility, and Global Hypergamy*, published by University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. p. 9.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 4

from Germany; 3.8 percent from Canada; and 1.9 percent from the United Kingdom (Commission on Filipinos Overseas 2000). The remaining 11 percent represent marriage partners or fiancés from other parts of the world, mainly Europe or Asia.”

This hypergamous gendered pattern of marital migration in the People’s Republic of China also explains the reason why the majority of foreign brides in Taiwan (62%), South Korea (66%) and Hong Kong originate from PROC. Says Constable in her study:³¹

“In the People’s Republic of China, we see other gendered patterns of marital migration, which are clearly linked to recent political and economic changes in the post-Mao period. Rural de-collectivization, labor surplus in the countryside, booming cities, and declining enforcement of the household registration (*hukou*) system have led to dramatic increases in the rate of rural-urban migration since the early 1980s. Domestic marriage migrations have also followed suit, with vast increases in the number of women who marry across greater geographic distances (Fan and Huang 1998, Gilmartin and Tan 2002). With China’s “opening up” to the outside, the number of women marrying foreign residents also began to increase. The first post-Mao marriages between Chinese and foreigners in the 1980s involved mainland Chinese women and overseas Chinese men in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere (Kang 1998, see also Clark 2001). The number of Chinese international marriages increased dramatically after the mid-1980s, with approximately 20,000 Chinese marrying abroad each year until 1990; over 30,000 per year in the early 1990s; 50,000 a year by 1998; and almost 80,000 in 2001 (China Statistical Yearbook 2002). The increased popularity and visibility of marriages between mainland Chinese women and men in Taiwan is attested to by a limit imposed in 1996 on the number of brides who can legally enter Taiwan (A. Huang 1996, cited in Scholes 1997:3). The quota for Chinese migrant partners in Taiwan is 3,600 per year, a fourth of the total applicants, thus propelling the market for brides from Vietnam and elsewhere (Wang and Chang 2002:111). Growing public and social concerns about the rapid increase in such international cross-border marriages are expressed in the Taiwan, Hong Kong, and U.S. overseas Chinese popular media (see Shih 1998 and 1999, Li 2001)....

... tens of thousands of Chosnjok women (ethnic Koreans from the People’s Republic of China) have emigrated to South Korea since the early 1990s as part of an officially sanctioned government effort to relieve the rural bride shortage (see also Abelman and Kim in this volume). Marriages between women in China and men in South Korea began in the 1990s. The annual rate increased

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 3.

each year until 1997, with 1,463 such marriages in 1993; 7,683 in 1995; and over 10,000 in 1996. In 1997, the number dropped to just over 7,000, and in 1998 decreased again to just over 6,000, the drop most likely attributable to the Asian financial crisis (Kang 1998; Caren Freeman, personal communication). The marriage of Chosnjok women into South Korea in turn created a shortage of Korean brides for Chosnjok men in China, who have looked to North Korea as a possible source of marriage partners. An estimated ten Chosnjok-Korean marriages per year are between Chosnjok men and Korean women, again illustrating the severely skewed gender imbalance of marriage migration.”

D. Process and mechanisms that foreign brides undergo

Looking into the marriage process, Table 6 below reveals that 37% of the respondents went thru marriage bureaus or matchmaking agencies or agents. About 34% met their spouses from work while 13% were introduced to their spouses by their family and friends.

Table 6. Marriage Process

	Marriage Bureau	Family/ Friend	Work	Don't know/ N.A.	Total
Taiwan	6	1	1	4	12
Hongkong	1	0	5	2	8
Japan	0	4	7	0	11
Korea	7	0	0	0	7
Total	14	5	13	6	38
%	37	13	34	16	100

On the issue of foreign brides, one cannot take away the role of marriage bureaus and matchmaking agencies. Since its proliferation in the '80s, women from poor countries are often lured to seek foreign husbands because of promises made by these.

Prof. Hsia, in her study entitled “Globalization and Resistance: The Case of Empowering Foreign Brides in Taiwan”, wrote:

“... Many Indonesian brokers became impatient with the slow pace of the Taiwan government and turned to matching Indonesian women with Hong Kong men; Taiwanese brokers began looking for women in Vietnam, Cambodia, and other countries.”³²

³² Hsiao-Chuan Hsia, “Globalization and Resistance: The Case of Empowering “Foreign Brides” in Taiwan, presented in Korea. Sept. 27, 2006. p.1.

Operating marriage bureaus and matchmaking agencies is a lucrative business. Huge profits is the key and sole factor for the cut-throat competition. And why is this so? Says Prof. Hsia:

*“If a man successfully marries a woman, he must pay the broker a sum between US\$ 10,000-\$15,000, only 10% of which goes to the bride’s family as a dowry. **Still, a dowry of this size is a considerable sum to families in Southeast Asian nations where wages are low. (underscoring supplied)**”³³*

But whether a foreign bride went through a marriage bureau or matchmaking agency or not, she and her husband still go through the process of fulfilling government requirements and pay the fees to procure the necessary documents. For instance, if a Vietnamese woman marries a Taiwanese man, documents and fees necessary for the marriage license and visa are the following:

Table 7A. Breakdown of Cost of Arranged Marriage³⁴ : Government fees

ITEM	FEES	
	US\$	NT\$
Marriage certificate (fee charged by Vietnamese govt.)	150	4,800
Passport (fee charged by Vietnamese govt.)	15	480
Proof of birth and single status of Taiwanese client (fee charged by Foreign Affairs Dept., TPHCM)	24	768
Translation of documents into Chinese	60	1,920
Documents issued by Foreign Affairs Dept., TPHCM	4	128
Health inspection	52	1,664
Interview & Visa Application (charged by TECO)	50	1,600
Sub-Total	355	11,360

Source:TECO in HCM, “Guoren yu yueji nuzi jiehun jiehun zhuyi shixiang” (Noices for Taiwan citizens on marriage with Vietnamese girls) (HCM:TECO, September 1998).

Add to this the other fees arranged and charged by the marriage bureau or matchmaking agency, as follows:

Table 7B: Breakdown of Cost of Arranged Marriage: Other Fees Charged by Marriage Bureaus³⁵

ITEM	FEES	
	US\$	NT\$
Money presented to bride’s family, banquet	2,500	80,000
Hotel accommodation	750	24,000
Return airfare to Vietnam	900	30,000
Bride’s one-way airfare to Taiwan	300	10,000
Miscellaneous	1,000	32,000
Sub-Total	5,450	176,000

Source:TECO in HCM, “Guoren yu yueji nuzi jiehun jiehun zhuyi shixiang” (Noices for Taiwan citizens on marriage with Vietnamese girls) (HCM:TECO, September 1998)

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Chang, Shu-Ming. “International Marriages: Cross-Border Business in Taiwan and Vietnam” published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants*, 2005, Taipei. p. 26.

³⁵ Ibid.

Governments of Japan, Korea and Hong Kong have similar charges, as well as marriage agencies operating in these countries. Likewise, counterpart agencies in countries where foreign brides come from like the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, and government offices of these countries charge similar fees for the processing of necessary documents: a) for the foreign bride to be married; and b) for the foreign bride to leave their countries.

E. How do foreign brides cope and adapt to their new situation and environment?

Looking back at the earlier demographic profile of respondents (Table I.1), additional data from respondents reveal that:

Table I.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N=38):

	Country of Origin				Age Group				FB Source of Income					Spouse' Work				
	I	P	T	V	A	B	C	n.a.	H	P	F	B	n.a.	U	P	F	B	n.a.
Taiwan	4	0	2	6	10	0	2	0	2	2	6	2	0	2	1	2	2	5
Hongkong	1	5	2	0	3	3	1	1	1	0	2	3	2	0	0	1	2	5
Japan	0	11	0	0	1	2	0	8	1	0	1	0	9	0	0	1	0	10
Korea	0	0	1	6	7	0	0	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	0
Total	5	16	5	12	21	5	3	9	10	2	10	5	11	2	1	7	8	20
%	13	42	13	32	55	13	8	24	26	5	26	13	30	5	3	18	21	53

Legend:

Country of Origin: I = Indonesia; P = Philippines; T = Thailand; V = Vietnam
 Age Group: A = 21-35 yrs old; B = 36-45; C = 46-55; n.a. = no answer/not available
 FB Source of Income: H = housewife; P = part time employed; F = full time employed;
 B = owns or manages business; n.a. = no answer/not available
 Spouse Work: U = unemployed; P = part time employed; F = full time employed;
 B = owns or manages business; n.a. = no answer/not available

• Foreign Bride’s occupation or source of income

About 26% of the foreign brides interviewed are housewives while the same number (26%) are employed fulltime. Only 5% do part time work, and 13% manage their own or family’s business.

• Husband’s source of income

Data regarding husband’s source of income appeared sluggish. Less than half of the respondents indicated their husband’s work – with 18% whose husbands have full time employment, 21% whose spouses have their own business and 3% whose husbands work part time. Majority or 55% of respondents did not reveal their husband’s source of income.

Table 8. FAMILY PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS:

	# of Children				Age of Spouse					# Yrs. Married				
	0	1	2	3	A	B	C	D	n.a.	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	n.a.
Taiwan	1	3	7	1	1	2	1	2	6	2	7	1	1	1
Hongkong	3	1	4	0	0	0	1	1	6	0	2	0	0	6
Japan	1	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	11	2	1	6	1	1
Korea	4	3	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0
Total	9	12	16	1	5	5	2	3	23	10	11	7	2	8
%	23	32	42	3	13	13	5	8	61	26	30	18	5	21

Legend:

Age of Spouse: A = 21-35; B = 36-45; C = 46-55; D = 56-65; n.a. = no answer

Meanwhile, Table 8 above shows that most of the foreign wives interviewed have children: 32% have one child, 42% bore two children from their husbands, while only 1 respondent (3%) has 3 kids. This figure, however, does not include children born from previous marriage/s or relationship/s. About 24% have no children yet. But this figure does not indicate whether a previous pregnancy occurred but was only aborted, as in the cases of two foreign brides in Korea who were forced to abort their pregnancies because of impending divorce or problem with husband or in-laws.

Considering everything, how exactly do foreign brides cope and adapt to their new life and environment?

Just like in ordinary life, foreign brides or wives have their tales of woe and sorrow to tell. One of the major problems they face is socio-cultural differences (i.e. language, food, in-laws, religion). Those who struggle and survive, live through happily in the end. But what is more important now is that these women speak out. Let's hear some of their stories:

- *My husband owns a grocery store and the customers ...don't trust me (in) counting money or (they) think that I couldn't find the stuff (they want), preferring to look for things by themselves or by my husband. As I come here longer, and having children, this indeed improves my living condition. I learn Chinese from my husband because we talk everyday and get practice. And the society is quite open, at least it is better than 10 years ago.— (Hong-Fong, Taiwan)*
- *I hated Taiwan so much, crying is like everyday. And then I make myself going to school to know words, even though my classmates who were all old Taiwanese women very unfriendly to me, I still persuaded myself that I come here is for learning, shouldn't care their unfriendly attitude. Now the public attitude become much better, by the time my language ability also getting much better, I even can think with Chinese.— (Chin-Hwei, Taiwan)*

- Husband is eldest in the family. So he does not know housechores. She taught him; eventually knew how to cook rice, wash clothes, and put things in order. Husband permits her to work to give money to family in the Philippines so she learned to love him. - **Luz, Japan**
- I have problems with husband regarding communication. At first, I don't know how to speak Nihongo. But now I know. There's also the problem of money. At first, my husband can't understand why I send money to my family in Philippines. But now he understands. Regarding raising of our kids, no problem. - **(Margie, Japan)**
- At first, had to be patient w/ husband because she's thinking of her children and family. I wanted to divorce, but husband pleaded and apologized. He changed when I (smacked) him. I had to learn Nihongo for better understanding, win friends, better chance to get work; volunteered in church projects to help others and not get bored. - **(Jessica, Japan)**
- I have no problems w/ husband regarding food, language, etc. He's a quiet man. I had problems with paper requirements for marriage and for change of status (from undocumented to legal resident). It's good that FMC and LFS helped her in paper works. - **(Mely, Japan)**
- I know how to cook in the second day that I come to Taiwan, so there are not too many challenges for me. - **(Jin, Taiwan)**
- I had problems with own relatives working here in Hong Kong because they tried to create stories about her marriage. Her family in the Philippines also wanted to break their relationship before they got married. Even after son was born they made judgement about her and her son. They also sowed intrigues with her husband but he did not listen to their stories. - **(Yoly, HK)**
- I tried to get along with my husband's children and family and how to become a suitable wife. My stepdaughter accepted me and brings me along when she has some activities and introduces me as her father's wife.... Learning Cantonese has helped me to integrate with my husband's family and friends. - **(Marites, HK)**
- The way I adjusted the culture differences is returning to Thailand once in a while and my husband come to see me twice a week. My mother-in-law then called me to go back to Taiwan. At first, I could stayed in the room all day, watching TV or sleep, come out just for eating something, but I was so unhappy. My family would buy some Chinese books for me but it's hard to learn by myself, then going to Yun-Ho community college helps me learn faster, also I make friends there. That is how I get connected with the SPWA. - **(Ya Chin, Taiwan)**
- I have to adjust mind to accept behaviour of husband, because he's quite a rough man. He speaks very loud, eats very fast and has no religion. I must look for my way to release stress. His parents love me. - **(Helen, HK)**

- *I was wooed by husband at FMC office where they communicated with a dictionary. – (Luring, Japan)*

Others are less fortunate in their married life in a foreign environment. They either fight to the end and win their battles or succumb to pressures and just go home.

- *Vietnam is a tropical area, and at first I couldn't stand the weather here because it's hard to choose what to wear everyday, and also about the food, for example, I didn't like the taste of chicken with wine. What I hate the most is going to Chinese-learning school, it was nine years ago, the classmates and teacher was very mean to me, if I was late or sitting on "their" chair, they would stare at me unfriendly. They even said I come here just for money or selling my body, this makes me feel really bad, so I hated Taiwanese very much and wouldn't tell anybody what I was thinking. – Chin-Hwei, Taiwan*
- *My husband is a Mama's boy and relied on his mother for the family decision. Although we had a happy marriage, I could no longer stand her mother-in-law's meddling, so I decided to divorce him. – Thanyaluk, HK*
- *Husband is a drunk so she left him; did not do things together; had a child who's now taking up law; husband died in 1998 so she worked since then at a snack bar. – Clarita, Japan*
- *Usual problem is her sending money to her family in the Phil. My husband was drunk. He insulted me and my family, and sometimes physically hurt me, etc. I could not stand it anymore so I stabbed him with a chopstick. – Jessica, Japan*
- *I decided to divorce because I was afraid of my mother-in-law. But I did not have any information what would happen to my Korean life after divorce. Presently, I suffer from severe mental depression. – name withheld, Korea*
- *I reported my husband to the police due to domestic violence. After this, my husband confined me to the hospital and forced me to abort my baby. He also forced me to divorce him. I divorced him the next day of abortion. Then I went back to my home country. – name withheld, Korea*
- *I had difficulty adjusting to husband's family because she feels she's not accepted and that her in-laws take her son away from her. – Noemi, Japan*
- *My husband is a drunk. He insults me and my family when drunk. – Norma, Japan*

Language, food, in-law meddling and sending money back home are common problems foreign brides face. Here's how they took the challenge:

- *There are many things that makes (me) feel uncomfortable, for example, I sent my children back to Vietnam and my parents take care of them, but (my in-laws) didn't recognize that I was just doing the same thing as Taiwanese do, it's just my hometown is further. (When) I sometimes take money to my*

parents, just the same as children feedback to their parents, but what (my in-laws) said (is that I am) greedy of money. My husband would say that my going back to hometown in Vietnam is “running away.”— **(Chin Hwei, Taiwan)**

- At first, I eat instant noodles everyday, I was not used to the food here. About the language, there are no family members in my house, so I learn Chinese words from the TV. There was no knowing-words class when I came here, so watching TV is the way I deal the language problem.— **(Yu-Bi, Taiwan)**
- Food is the most thing I can't fit in Taiwan culture. I cook for myself sometimes.— **(Yu-Chin, Taiwan)**
- As I come here longer, and having children, this indeed improves my living condition. I learn Chinese from my husband because we talk everyday and get practice.— **(Hong-Fong, Taiwan)**
- I always stay at room, only when it is in dinner time that I come out to meet other people. Watching TV, drawing pictures or do some writing stuff is almost my daily life. Spending time with my daughters would help a lot.— **(Yu Chin, Taiwan)**
- At first, it was so boring to live here, I just watch TV, and often my husband takes me to the bigger town to hang around after his daily works get done.— **(Yu-Bi, Taiwan)**
- Learning Cantonese was necessary for her to adapt to her husband's family and culture. She was able to apply for her children's migration to HK without any hassle on her own when she got a job that earned enough to finance the processing of their documents.— **(name withheld, HK)**
- I had adjustment difficulties so she learned to speak the language and to cook Japanese food from TV program; cannot express how she feels so she resorts to “dabog” (make grudging sound of protest).— **(Mercedes, Japan)**
- Japanese culture and treatment of wives: expect wife to do the cleaning, cooking, raising of kids. I learned Nihongo and learned how to drive so as not to get bored.— **(Margie, Japan)**
- I am not used to living with a big family because I only lived with my brother in Thailand. For example, it is uncomfortable to wear too short pajama in the house, and washing clothes for the whole family also take me long to get used to it. Language and the food would be the hardest thing, I didn't know how to communicate with my mother-in-law and have to rely on my husband.— **(Ya-Chin, Taiwan)**

A few of the respondents who had bigger problems than the abovementioned resorted to more drastic and more difficult solutions:

- **Tania (HK):** Because she was sold by her own family to an agency and forced to marry a HK Chinese, had to renounce her Indonesian citizenship and totally adopted the Chinese nationality so she can apply for a local job in HK.

- **Clarita (Japan):** *When husband died, I had to work and earn. I had difficulties with customers so I learned how to cook that's why this became my main source of income.*
- **CCC (Korea):** *Husband is violent; often beats her, especially when she asked for divorce. She ran away together with her 3-year old daughter, put her child in a daycare center while she works in a factory.*

F. PERSPECTIVES:

Most researches about foreign brides have dealt on their situation, problems, mechanisms they underwent, and the co-relation of their existence to socio-economic and political issues surrounding their issue. But one of the aspects oftentimes neglected or left unprobed in the studies about foreign brides is about their perspectives – to see how they view and evaluate their new existence in a new environment, and to see what direction they want to go and how will they move on. Questions about retaining their original citizenship, about children learning their native language, what the role of government is regarding their situation, the role of organizations, do they want to belong to an organization in the community – these are aspects that are not yet well-researched, if not nil. Hence, this research included this important aspect.

I. On Citizenship

While most of the respondents would agree to seeking citizenship or permanent or long-term residency in their husband's homeland, they do so primarily for the sake of their children and the opportunity to work and earn, without immigration or labor impediments. They do so without prejudice to their point-of-view and patriotic sentiment about their homeland. As Margie and the other respondents in Japan called as their collective stance: "We are Filipinos. And we will always be Filipinos."

This point-of-view is further validated by the research results which show (please see Table 9) that there are more foreign brides (61%) who indicated that even if they become citizens of their husband's country, they still consider themselves as citizens of their own homeland. About 13% of the respondents said "No", while 18% don't know or have mixed feelings about it. A few (8%) don't even care at all.

It is noteworthy to state here that difficulties and traumatic experiences in host countries may be a factor in the negative attitude towards citizenship of the host country. For instance, 6 out of 7 respondents in Korea did not want to be a citizen of or have permanent residency in Korea because of the hardships and domestic violence they went through from their husbands. A common remark of these

foreign brides, who hailed from Vietnam but have Korean husbands, is this: “I want to go back to Vietnam.”

Table 9. Still consider citizen of homeland even though already have ID or citizenship of husband?

	Yes	No	Don't Care	Don't Know/ N.A.	Total
Taiwan	0	3	3	6	12
Hongkong	8	0	0	0	8
Japan	9	1	0	1	11
Korea	6	1	0	0	7
Total	23	5	3	7	38
%	61	13	8	18	100

For many of the foreign brides interviewed, here are some of their responses:

- **Luring (Japan):** I still consider myself as Filipino. I will not apply for permanent residency because of many disadvantages: change name; pay taxes, etc.
- **Margie (Japan):** Don't like to become a Japanese citizen. Am still a Filipino.
- **Marites (HK):** 80% of me is still with my country or place or origin. I miss my family back home so I make it a point to go home every year, sometimes spending two months vacation.
- **Yoly (HK):** Even if I have another status here in Hong Kong. I still consider myself as citizen of my own country because I prefer my own culture.
- **Jessica (Japan):** Permanent resident, ok with me. But Japanese citizen, NO. I and my husband would like to retire in the Philippines where cost of living is lesser than Japan; in Philippines, treatment of elderly people is better.
- **Thanyaluk (HK):** I need to have because I can earn more money if I still living in Hongkong. And of course I still need own citizen in our country also. Because I don't know future perhaps I will go back Thailand and will not come back if my debt is finished.
- **Yu-Bi (Taiwan):** I got the ID card already, but I never think of this question. In fact, I don't have any feeling. After I come to Taiwan for 3 years, I got ID card. I think what is more important is to have good life.
- **Jin (Taiwan):** For me, I don't care about the identity. What's important to me is to have a good family which includes husband and kids. ID card doesn't mean too much to me because we still own the same welfare as the Taiwanese people, for example, we also have health insurance, there is no big difference though.
- **Helen (HK):** I rarely go home to the Philippines because of the miserable conditions, I'd rather live here and raise my children here.
- **Tania (HK):** (I) don't go back to Indonesia at all.

2. On Children's Education on Foreign Bride's Native Language

Table 10. Wish Children To Know/Learn Native Language?

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ N.A.	Total
Taiwan	8	0	4	12
Hongkong	6	0	2	8
Japan	9	2	0	11
Korea	2	5	0	7
Total	25	7	6	38
%	66	18	16	100

Majority of the respondents (66%) wanted their children to also know their native language. The perception of foreign brides is that learning the native language of the mother would also help the child communicate with and understand better the mother's family background and culture.

Respondent Ya-Chin (Taiwan) rationalizes this perception. She says, "There is an advantage that I can chat with my son for telling secret things outside, others wouldn't know what we were saying. When I go back to Thailand, I would buy my son some toys or books, in order to let him learn more about Thai."

3. Are foreign husbands, good husbands?

Table 11. Are Foreign Husbands, Good Husbands?

	Yes	No	Don't Know/N.A.	TOTAL
Taiwan	9	2	1	12
Hongkong	3	4	1	8
Japan	8	1	2	11
Korea	0	7	0	7
Total	20	14	4	38
%	53	37	10	100

Despite the difficulties, huge adjustments and problems faced by the respondents in dealing with their new lives and environment, in the final analysis, majority of the respondents (53%) still think that foreign husbands are good husbands. About 37% think otherwise while 10% don't know how to reply. Of particular interest is the batch of respondent foreign brides in Japan who collectively view that in marriage, "love should come first than financial security."

Of the 53% who think that foreign husbands are good husbands, this does not mean that their marriage is intact. For instance, XXX, a Filipina married to a HK

Chinese says that her “husband was devoted and generous to her and her children in the Philippines” but she had to divorce him because she really has not really learned to love him after all those years of marriage.

Corollarily, even for the 37% who think that foreign husbands are not good husbands, this does not also mean that their marriage is on the rocks or worse, have led to divorce. Says Ana, a Filipina married to a Japanese, “I don’t want my children to grow without a father.”

For most of the respondents, happy or not with their husbands, have these views about marriage:

- *I perform my duties as a wife so husband won’t complain. – Ana, Fil. (Jpn)*
- *Marriage is in the heart. – Naomi, Fil. (Jpn)*
- *I did what the other Japanese wives do because “that is what I need to do” (in order to keep my marriage). – Myrna, Fil. (Jpn)*
- *(Foreign brides/wives) must be ready to adapt. – Marites, Fil. (HK)*
- *We should marry for love. – Thanyaluk, Thai (HK)*
- *I had to learn the language in order to get a job. My husband agreed at first. But when the baby came, he did not permit me anymore. This caused many quarrels and beatings for me. **I had to endure for the sake of the child.** — BBB, Viet. (Korea)*

4. On the Role of Government

All foreign bride respondents in Japan, who are all Filipinos, have a united view on the Philippine government – they all think that the Philippine government is inutile, provide no services and only think of taking money from them in the form of taxes and contributions. The only information that the Philippine government provides is where to remit the money that they will send back home. On the other hand, they also expect the Japanese government to provide adequate information, orientation and services like language training, cooking lessons, etc.

Respondents in Korea are all Vietnamese. They all view that the Korean government’s policies on foreign wives are unjust, unfair and inadequate. Thus, they think that the laws should be pro-migrant and not one-sided or in favor only of the Korean husband. They also think that the Korean government should provide services to foreign brides such as shelter for victims of domestic violence, free legal assistance, etc.

Respondents in Taiwan have mixed nationalities (i.e. Vietnamese, Indonesian, Filipino). For most of them, common concerns are: 1) the opportunity for employment; 2)

free services (language, information, child support, etc.); and 3) lower excessive government charges or fees on ID card.

Respondents in Hong Kong, SAR, also have mixed nationalities (i.e. Thai, Indonesian, Filipino). Some have expressed either their praise or complaints on the Hong Kong government with regards their situation as foreign brides. But a common concern is about protection for them and their children.

5. On the Importance of organization

When asked if it is helpful for foreign brides to belong to an organization, majority (74%) of the foreign brides interviewed resoundingly agreed. Only 23% disagreed. (Please refer to Table 12A)

Table 12A. Is it helpful for FB's to have org.?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
Taiwan	3+6 who have time constraints hence can't go out	3	0	12
Hong Kong	5	2	1	8
Japan	11	0	0	11
Korea	3	4	0	7
Total	28	9	1	38
%	74	23	3	100

This data is further validated in Table 12B below. About 61% of the respondents revealed that they are actively involved in self-help organizations and associations of foreign wives in their communities. An additional 8% are aware of such organizations and support these even if they are not members.

Table 12B. What Group or Association?

	Name of Org. or Assoc.	None but supportive	None/Don't Know	Total
Taiwan	SPWA (3); knows TASAT (6)	0	3	12
Hong Kong	Tineg Overseas Workers Association (1); Thai Regional Alliance in Hong Kong (1); Abra Tinguian Ilocano Society (1)	3	2	8
Japan	FICAP, KAFIN, FMC, LFS, PSJ -- 11	0	0	11
Korea	0	0	7	7
Total	23	3	12	38
%	61	8	31	100

Here are some of their views why they join organizations:

- **Chin-Hwei (Taiwan):** *Before I join the SPWA, my friends call me to complain about things, I try to help them by myself. I can ask my husband and then telling them how to do. Later, I can feel that only me that is too weak to help people, and going to school indeed let me know more friends. My goal is to help new immigrants, and groups which have the same character would be fine to me.*
- **Ya-Chin (Taiwan):** *I spend most of my time doing the administration of Southern Pacific Immigrants Association, and some other things as an translator. I started this from Dr. Hsia's class of community college in Yun-Ho, and this actually makes me learn more. We planned to empower more new immigrants to be a docentship, in order that they can help more immigrants in the future. For example, we go to the Toa-Yun jail to visit the foreign prisoners, they don't know Chinese and we try to help them.*
- **Luring (Japan):** *Yes, it's a big help for support system, especially when sick.*
- **Clarita (Japan):** *Yes, it's a big help in communication.*
- **Naomi (Japan):** *It's a productive way of getting out of the house, getting out of in-laws' eyes.*
- **Luz (Japan):** *Yes. Good feeling when we are able to help.*
- **Mercedes (Japan):** *When I had a child, (I) realized the value of organization – I learned about how to get child recognition.*

On the other hand, respondents who do not belong to any self-help group explain the reasons why they do so:

- **Jin (Taiwan):** *We are not encouraged to go outside from the "home." People here expect us to stay home and do the housework, if we spend time outside, they would blame on us. We can't and don't participate in any groups. I like to dance but there are no people invite us. It seems that we actually don't have our own time, kids are stick to us. It is very different between local brides and foreign brides because the local female are independent from housework and can decide what they want to do, but for us, it is impossible and required in a different way.*
- **Yu-Bi (Taiwan):** *I don't participate in any group because we are running out of time doing works and the family thing. I have to spend all of my time with my kids and husband, no matter day or night.*
- **Yu-Chin (Taiwan):** *I like drawing and painting, but I have to share in the family business, (where I give my time).*
- **Name withheld (HK):** *Before yes. Now, no time.*

II. ISSUES AND CONCERNS ABOUT FOREIGN BRIDES

A. Bride and Prejudice

While socio-cultural difficulties are the most pronounced problems foreign brides hurdle, especially in the early years of marriage, they also suffer in silence against social prejudice as a result of the effects of institutionalized racism, discrimination and sexism which are already embedded in society's fabric and more pronounced in immigration laws and regulations. Prejudiced references like "the inferior other"³⁶ exacerbate the already difficult situation foreign brides are in.

Prof. Hsiao-Chuan Hsia, Associate Professor of the Graduate Institute for Social Transformation Studies of the Shih Hsin University in Taiwan and consultant of TransAsia Sisters Association (TASAT), discussed this prejudice in her paper:³⁷

"Foreign brides have been commonly constructed by the governmental agencies, the media and general public as "social problems" and often linked to labels such as "fake marriage, real prostitution" and "deteriorating quality of the future generation". ...

The most recent is the "new Taiwan's Children" ... discourse. As the number of immigrant women's children increases, many media cover stories of the claimed propensity of immigrant's children to "delayed development" ... However, none of these claims are supported by reliable data ... These claims are based on the assumption that the immigrant women are from poor developing countries and therefore lack education and ability to educate their own children, which clearly has racist and classist tones behind. ... The media and government construction have strong impacts on the public perception of the immigrant women. A national survey released in November of 2003 reveals that 60% of the interviewed think that government should restrict the number of immigrant women and 20% think we do not need to give "foreign brides" and "Mainland brides" equal treatment."

Problems and difficulties in relation to husbands and in-laws can thus be attributed to these social prejudices. Notes Prof. Hsia:

"This unfriendly environment has penetrated into the relationships among those involved in the transnational marriages. For instance, at the earlier stage of the

³⁶ Hsia, Hsiao-Chuan, "Proactive Approaches to Preventing Violence against Immigrant Women in Taiwan", published in *International Workshop for Asian NGOs on Female Immigrants, 2005, Taipei*, p. 80

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81

marriage, the families and groom often worry that the bride will run away or steal money. Taiwan's immigration rules used to state that foreign brides must leave Taiwan after their first six months of residence in Taiwan.... (and when the foreign bride decides to go back to her homeland), ... her husband and his family and friends concluded (sic), "You see, it's just like what they say in the papers! She just came to Taiwan for money." (Hsia 2003)³⁸

Even the foreign bride's intention to help her family back home is not just unwelcome for most husbands but also a source of conflict in their relationship, as well as with the in-laws. Oftentimes, the "underdevelopment" of the foreign bride's country of origin, is interpreted (or rather misinterpreted) as a typical or stereotype "characteristic of the foreign bride" – that is, they just marry their foreign husbands "for the money." Worse, it is seen as an added "burden to the agricultural and working class families of their husbands, which are not wealthy to begin with."³⁹

Fr. Eliseo Napiere, Director of Center for Migrants' Concerns in Taiwan, noted in his paper entitled "Taiwan New Immigrants: Foreign Spouses" that:

"... Since 1999, when the immigration law was first enacted, marriage migration has not been the focus of the government at all. For example, the immigration laws and regulations themselves have forbidden foreign spouses with residence permits from working. Since 2003, foreign spouses with residence permits were allowed to work after the amendment of the Employment Law. In addition, abused foreign spouses with residence permits were allowed to access free vocational training and employment arrangements sponsored by the government. However, once abused foreign spouses applied for restraining orders, they face deportation and the loss of custody of their children. These basic human rights of foreign spouses are addressed in the amendment proposed by the Immigration League instead of the one by the government. Thus, the rights to welfare, custody of children and employment in Taiwan-New immigrant marriages should be properly analyzed and discussed."⁴⁰

Discrimination in the field of labor employment is also a problem. Fr. Napiere opined in his paper, thus:

"... Foreign brides tend to work in unpaid jobs at home, such as child care, home making, elderly care, etc. Due to the status of migrant women, they tend to employ in the informal sector. As the statistics shown (sic), 82,219 out of

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 81

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.82

⁴⁰ Fr. Eliseo Napiere, Director of Center for Migrants' Concerns in Taiwan, in his paper entitled "Taiwan New Immigrants: Foreign Spouses" which was presented in "The Catholic Church in Asia Care for the Migrants in Taiwan" Conference in Taipei, Taiwan on March 16-19, 2007. p. 5

101,615 new immigrants with residence permit are eligible for work, but only 28,496 new immigrants (are) employed. Most new immigrants complain that residence permit is never equal to ID card. Research results have shown that foreign spouses employed the same job as the national did but paid differently and they were subject to racial discrimination when they go to work with residence permit (Lin, 2005). The recruitment of foreign brides primarily from Vietnam, but also from other Southeast Asian nations, is poorly controlled and, as a consequence, has become a major conduit for the trafficking of girls and women into the Taiwan sex trade, as well as for forced labor (Tier 2, TIP Report)."⁴¹

B. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

AAA (not her real name), a 20-year old unemployed Vietnamese, applied thru a marriage bureau to have a foreign husband. She wanted to back-out because she did not like her would-be husband. But since the would-be husband already paid US\$10,000 to the broker, she had no choice but to marry. Narrates AAA, *"We got married in 2003. When my visa was approved, my husband would rape me every night. Many times, he would beat and maltreat me. I tried to contact the broker to send me back home. But all I got was verbal abuse and blackmail."*

CCC, a 28-year old Vietnamese, says, *"My husband is violent... often beats me, especially when I ask for divorce. So I ran away from him together with my 3-year old daughter."*

EEE (a Vietnamese), was 22 years old when she married her Korean husband. They met through a marriage broker. She shared, *"I reported my husband to the police because he beats me everyday. He's very violent. I was pregnant at that time. When my husband knew that I reported him to the police, he confined me at home and forced me to abort our child. He was successful in the abortion. The next day, I filed for divorce."*

Jessica, 38 years old Filipina, is married to a Japanese, who does not like her sending money to her family. Says Jessica, *"He's a drunkard. He would insult me and my family. He would often hurt me physically... so (one time), I (fought back) and stabbed him with a chopstick. He was stunned. After that incident, he did not hurt me anymore."*

Like AAA, CCC, EEE and Jessica, many foreign wives unfortunately have to deal with violence often, if not everyday, in their married lives. They each have their own way in resolving this problem: AAA suffered in silence and had to endure the beatings, CCC ran away with her 3-year old daughter, EEE filed for divorce, and Jessica fought back.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 5-6.

A news article in Seoul Times headlined, "Seven out of 10 mixed marriages have problems of domestic violence and emotional abuse of migrant wives."⁴² Said news was taken as Jasmine, a 26-year-old woman from the Philippines, cried and complained to the Domestic Violence Hotline that her husband had taken the 100,000 won (C\$122) she earned by doing side jobs, beat her and then threw her out of the house.

How many more would suffer like AAA or CCC or EEE or Jessica or Jasmine did? How many more would be trapped in a cycle of poverty and abuse? Worse, how many more would die like Gene Bongcodin and 30 other foreign brides in Australia did?

The Philippine Women Centre (PWC), B.C., a women's advocacy NGO based in Vancouver, Canada, made a research in November 2000 about Filipino "mail-order brides" (MOBs). While said research is about Filipino MOBs in Canada, the points made nevertheless are relevant to this research, thus:

"Filipino mail-order brides are vulnerable to all forms of violence, including physical, emotional, economic and social abuse. This vulnerability stems from a subordinated position as commodified women, from a developing country, who have been purchased and brought to Canada to help in the domestic upkeep of their husband's household. Their vulnerability deepens on arrival in Canada, as the women remain isolated from their community, fearful of reprisals from the husband and lacking important support networks. In fact, the experiences of Filipino mail-order brides with violence are only beginning to surface.

Additionally, violence against women should not be narrowly viewed as a result of unequal relations of power between the two sexes. Instead, a more systemic view of the forces shaping the women's vulnerability to violence must be taken.
....⁴³

And what are these forces? Adds PWC's study:

"The failure of existing prevention programs to address the specific situation of Filipino mailorder brides must be pointed out. Despite the existence of such programs, even in rural areas of Canada, Filipino mail-order brides still experience myriad forms of violence. Moreover, they are not reporting the abuse nor accessing support services.... women's fear of retaliation is exacerbated by their experience with the very systems that are supposed to help protect and support them....

⁴² Seoul Times, "Imported Seoul-mates find life a tough go in Korea", April 21 2005.

⁴³ Philippine Women Centre, B.C., "Canada: The New Frontier for Filipino Mail-Order Brides", published by Status of Women Canada's Policy Research Fund. November 2000. p. 66.

Moreover, the level of awareness of police officers and other service providers on the issue of violence varies. A police officer, for example, may view domestic violence as a private issue supporting the belief that men have the right to control women... stereotypical and racist attitudes and assumptions of passivity and submissiveness of Filipino women underlie the difficulty service providers, police officers and other agencies are having in reaching out to this extremely vulnerable group of women.”⁴⁴

This “stereotyping, racist attitudes and assumptions of passivity and submissiveness of Filipino women” (or foreign brides, in general), is further confirmed and elaborated by another research made by Nicki Saroca in Australia.

“Violence is both discursively constructed and an objective condition of many women’s lives. The language, meanings and categories we use to describe practices such as murder are integral to the socially constituted identity of the event (Smith, 1990 p 90)... culturalist discourse locates the key to violence within the traits and ‘culture’ of Filipino women – their presumed ‘mail order bride-ness’. Reading media discourse against the interviews reinserts the voices of Filipino women into accounts of violence, thus revealing absences and silences – gaps ... As Robinson argues, the term ‘mail order bride’ defines Filipino women as commodities and they are then seen to undermine the notion of romantic love as the ‘norm’ of Australian marriage (1996 pp 54,56). It constitutes and reflects the ‘illegitimacy’ of the women and their motives for marriage... The advertisement stresses the submissiveness and sexual availability of Filipino women.”⁴⁵

Saroca’s interview of a service provider who helps victims of violence elaborates:

“...some Filipinas came here as mail order brides – although I don’t have anything against mail order brides – there are many that are not. And I don’t know why being a mail bride has anything to do with being abused. I believe that many men who order a bride are selfish. They do it not because they really love the woman but because they want somebody to look after them and as their company and all that, but not wanting to be a responsible proper husband. I believe that these men think that just because the Filipino women came from a poor country that they will put up with anything. Many of these men think that by coming to Australia, the poor women owe them for the rest of their lives because they have been rescued. When some of these Filipino women are not prepared to put up with abuse then these men are really shocked. And I think

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 67

⁴⁵ Saroca, Nicki. “Violence Against Women in Australia: Theorizing the Relationship Between Discursive and Non-Discursive”, paper presented in “Expanding Our Horizons” Conference, Sydney, 2002.

they believed that they have the right to abuse them because they feel they have to be grateful for being able to come to Australia. And many of these Filipinas think so too that they have to put up with the abuse because of this particular reason that they owe these men (July, 1999)”⁴⁶

Crenshaw further argues that “the actual violence many women experience as well as responses to it is not only shaped by gender but also by other dimensions of their identity such as ‘race’ and class, as is the representation of that violence and its effects (1991, pp. 1242,1245).⁴⁷

According to Cunneen and Stubbs, although the violence Filipino women experience can be understood at one level as male violence against women, masculine fantasies of Filipino women are a fundamental factor in the abuse (1997 p 119). The violence is contextualised as domination that has been mediated by representations of ‘race’ and gender: men attempt to live out the masculine fantasy and their Filipina partners refuse to comply (Cunneen & Stubbs, 1997 pp 113-114). Cunneen and Stubbs establish that Filipino women in Australia are almost six times more likely to be victims of homicide than other Australian women (1997 p 31).⁴⁸

Lastly, PWC noted an important point in its study:

“Mail-order brides often find their husband is a stranger on coming to Canada. It is ironic that the women’s history and status are revealed from the time they submit their application and pictures to an agency, yet the history and status of the husband remains unknown until the woman arrives in Canada. Alarming, some stories revealed serial sponsorship, some women being the third or fourth mail-order bride. Histories of serial sponsors must be monitored to ensure the protection and safety of the women.”⁴⁹

C. LAWS AND POLICIES GOVERNING FOREIGN BRIDES: Racist, Discriminatory, Oppressive and Repressive Stipulations and Undertones

In this era of neo-liberal globalization, the issue of the continued rise of international migrants and immigrants have topped the policy agenda of governments and states. On the one hand, governments of sending countries view that by having a so-called “liberal approach” to this continued rise, they will be able to manage

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁴⁷ Crenshaw, K. (1991). ‘Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color’. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, July: 1241-1299.

⁴⁸ Cunneen, C., & Stubbs, J., *Gender, ‘race’ and international relations: Violence against Filipino women in Australia*. Sydney: Institute of Criminology. 1997.

⁴⁹ Philippine Women Centre, B.C., “Canada: The New Frontier for Filipino Mail-Order Brides”, published by Status of Women Canada’s Policy Research Fund. November 2000. p. 67..

international migration in a “win-win situation”. Their point of view is such that this curbs unemployment, increases dollar reserves that helps solve the country’s deficit problems, and helps dissipate social unrest.

On the other hand, governments of receiving countries view that such an approach, as has been predominantly practiced through labour importation even on a short-term basis, would help address the crisis of overproduction in the form of cheap labor, and other social problems such as ageing and diminishing population.

Hence, governments and states, engineered laws and policies, forged bilateral and multi-lateral agreements, and used the state machinery and resources in dealing with the issue. In most cases, laws, policies and agreements between sending and receiving countries, the application of the laws and policies of receiving (host) countries remain dominant and the foreign bride is governed by the host country’s laws and regulations.

In Taiwan, the law governing foreign brides is the Nationality Law of 1990. Amendments were later made, as the number of foreign brides increased in Taiwan. Prof. Hsia again contributed an analysis on these changes:

“Prior to changes in the Nationality Law in 1990, foreigners cannot be naturalized as Taiwanese citizens unless they are women married to Taiwanese men. Foreign women are seen as “naturalizable” because of their ability to continue Taiwanese “blood”. Over the years, the government has added “proof of economic abilities” as new requirements for these women to become naturalized. Thus, immigrant women who have not been able to fulfill the additional requirement are unable to access social services and welfare benefits.”⁵⁰

It is clear in the abovementioned law that basis of the Taiwanese government for opening to immigration of foreign brides is the former’s ability to continue Taiwanese “blood” or racial descent or what Elson (2000) calls “reproductive economy”⁵¹. But it also brings to the foreign bride’s shoulders the burden of “proof of economic abilities” in order to regulate access to social services and benefits. Other aspects in the stipulations of the said law is further analyzed by Prof. Hsia, as follows:

“Moreover, the welfare system in Taiwan is based on household units and identification cards (proof of citizenship) are the necessary criteria. Consequently, immigrant women who have not obtained Taiwanese citizenship are often illegible

⁵⁰ Hsia, Hsiao-Chuan. “Proactive Approaches to Preventing Violence against Immigrant Women in Taiwan”, published in *International Workshop for Asian NGOs on Female Immigrants, 2005, Taipei*. p. 84

⁵¹ Young, Prof. Dr. Brigitte, 2002: *Financial Crisis and the Human Security Dimension in Asia*”, University of Sheffield, p.4. Also in Elson, Diane, 1994: “Micro, Meso, Macro: Gender and Economic Analysis in the Context of Policy Reform,” in Isabella Bakker (ed.), *The Strategic Silence. Gender and Economic Policy*, London: Zed Books, 33-45.

*for social services and welfare benefits.... Battered immigrant women without Taiwanese citizenship would be deported if they get divorced and can hardly return to Taiwan to visit their children, whose custody almost always are ordered to fathers by courts. Consequently, many battered immigrant women decide to endure domestic violence for the sake of the children. **The husband's power over immigrant women is thus sanctioned by the state. In other words, Taiwan government does not grant foreign women citizenship in their own rights, but mediate their rights through their status of wife. Once their status as wife of a Taiwanese man is lifted, they are no longer eligible for applying or citizenship.***⁵² (underscoring supplied)

This erstwhile state-sanctioned "husband power over the wife" is also reflected in South Korea's Emigration and Immigration Control Law, where a similar clause stipulates that "only husbands can be guarantors for wives." If the wives run away, they become "unregistered" as "husbands withdraw the guarantee."⁵³

South Korea's own Nationality Law grants (in Article 6) naturalization to foreigners who have Korean spouses on the following conditions or requirements: Item 1) if they are married to a Korean national and have registered address for more than two years in a row; and Item 2) if they are married to a Korean national for three years and have registered address of more than a year in Korea after marriage.

Through pressure and efforts of NGO's and people's organizations over the years, the Ministry of Justice recognized in January 2004 the following:⁵⁴

- Those who do not meet Item 1 and 2, but cannot lead a normal married life for reasons such as spouse's death or disappearance while having an address in Korea after marriage, meet the remaining period of Item 1 and 2;
- Those who do not meet Item 1 and 2, but raise or will to raise teenagers born in a marriage with spouse, meet the remaining period of Item 1 and 2.

The said Revised Nationality Law of 2004 also puts difficult requirements on foreign brides who are economically abandoned and verbally abused. Furthermore, the said law forces foreign brides to give up their national identity and acquire citizenship through naturalization in order to stay in Korea. No other alternative is given to them. This again reflects what Prof. Hsia called as "state-sanctioned husband's power" over the immigrant wife.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Kim Min Jeong, "Migrant Women in Korea through International Matchmaking", published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants, 2005, Taipei*. p. 70.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 69

Other existing Korean laws governing foreign brides are: 1) National Basic Livelihood Security Law (Public Assistance); 2) Mother and Fatherless Child Welfare Law, and 3) Emigration and Immigration Control Law.

In the **National Basic Livelihood Security Law**, spouses of Korean nationals are not given the benefits given to its citizens. Moreover, in the **Mother and Fatherless Child Welfare Law**, Article 4 defines mother simply as “those who raise children.” But the law remains mum about the following:

1. Re Article 4 (Definition): a) Women who are separated or divorced from their husbands, and b) Women whose husbands have lost their ability to work due to physical or mental disability
2. Re Article 12 (Benefits):
 - Under the law, beneficiaries can claim the following benefits: 1) living expenses; 2) aid for child education; 3) training and living expenses during job training; 4) childcare expenses; and 5) other expenses set by executive order.
 - But if beneficiaries are already entitled to receive benefits under the National Basic Livelihood Security Law, application of benefits is obscured.

Japan’s Basic Plan for Immigration Control (1st to 3rd Edition) is the mother-of-all plan for all immigration issues and concerns. It provides the framework and basis for (as well as amendments of) practically all laws and regulations on the matter – The Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act; the Alien Registration Law, the Ministerial Ordinance to Provide for Criteria Pursuant to Article 7, Paragraph 1 (2) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, Law for Partial Amendment of Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (Law No. 73 of June 2, 2004) enacted at the 159th Diet Session, and the Law of Extradition.

The Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd Edition)⁵⁵ views immigration issues and similar concerns seriously in the light of its ageing population and population decline. It lays down its basis as follows:

“According to the estimate (a median estimate) by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Japan’s population is predicted to peak at 127.74 million in 2006 before entering a long-term decline hitting some 100.6 million in 2050. The nation’s productive population, which already peaked at 87.17 million in 1995 and turned down, is predicted to decline to 53.89 million in 2050. If Japan were to accept foreign nationals simply to make up for

⁵⁵ Ministry of Justice, Japan, “Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd Edition)” 2006.

the decline and to maintain a productive population at that peak, the nation would have to accept some 650,000 foreign nationals annually. It is, however, not appropriate to simply supplement the decline by accepting foreign nationals alone.

*Measures responding to the population-declining society amid the falling birthrate and ageing population should be considered along with **birthrate-boosting measures, improvements in labor force participation ratios for women and elderly people, and other measures in various fields.** However, the time has also come for the immigration control administration to consider what the acceptance of foreign workers should be in a population-declining age.” (underscoring supplied)*

While the Basic Plan made specific mention of “promoting the acceptance of foreign workers in professional or technical fields” and “nursing-care workers”, it did not mention foreign brides specifically. Nevertheless, it cannot be discounted in the plan since it is “accepting foreign nationals” in order to address the problem of ageing population and population decline.

Japanese laws again have similar features with Taiwanese, Korean and Hongkong laws in the sense that they all have similar views on immigrant women – that they could help in continuing the “blood” line and racial descent.

D. COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN, COMMERCIALIZATION OF MARRIAGE

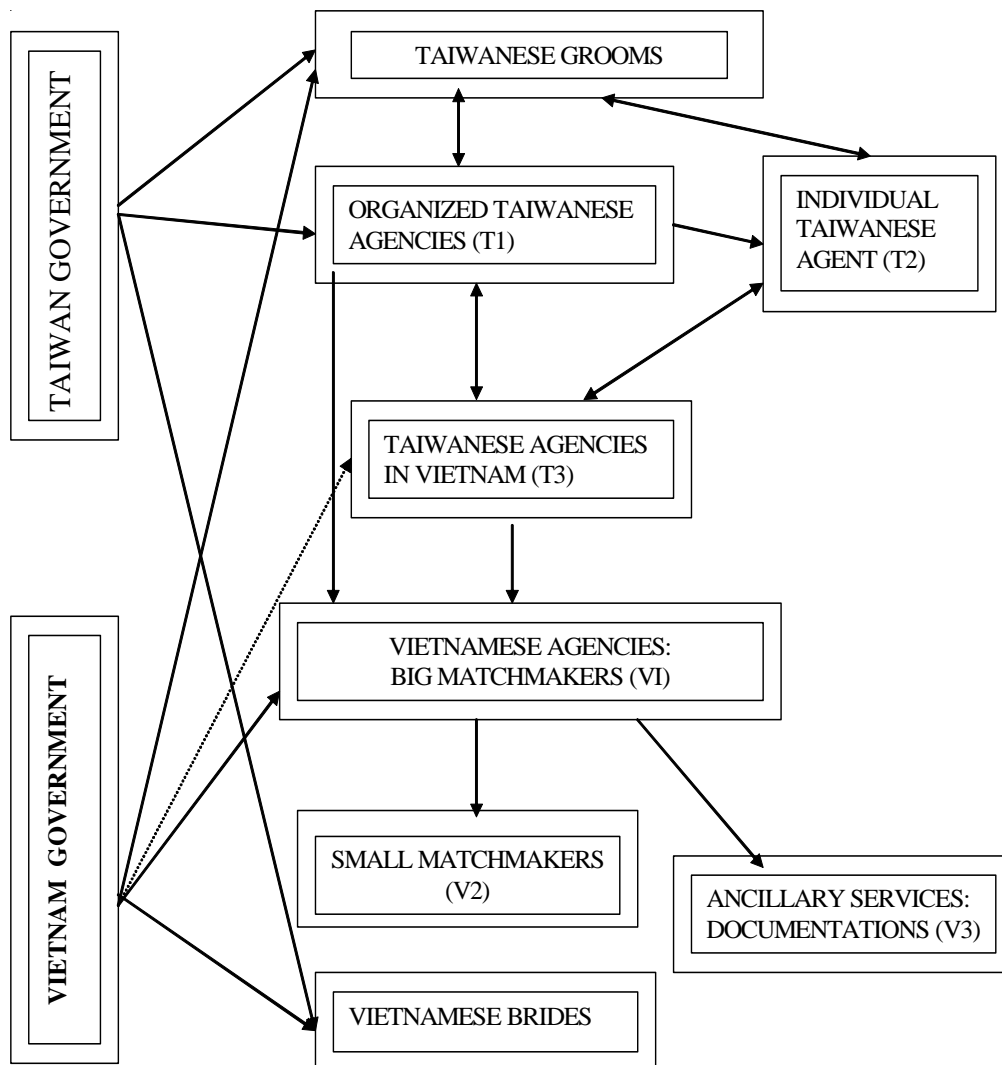
The corporate world took interest in the commercialization of women and marriage. As marriage bureaus and matchmaking agencies, they act as “intermediaries” in cross-border marriages. Chang, Shu-Ming, in her related study on the matter wrote:

“In their role as intermediaries ..., agencies have increasingly dominated the cross-border marriage market in the past decade. With the prospect of high earning from arranged marriage activities, the number of agents has grown, creating vast industry.”⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Chang, Shu-Ming, *International Marriages: Cross-Border Marriage Business in Taiwan and Vietnam*, 20-29, published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants*, 2005, Taipei.

Chang's study from fieldwork observations further elaborated cross-border international industrial organization (please see Figure 1 below), encompassing the collusion of governments and their agencies in the whole gamut of the industry's operations, as follows:

Figure 1: Industrial Organization of Cross-Border Marriages⁵⁷



⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 21.

Institutionalized profit-orientation in cross-border marriages by the involvement of marriage bureaus and matchmaking agencies has subjected foreign brides as commodities to be bought and sold in the international market. Such “commodification process” has only exacerbated the degradation of the status and treatment of women immigrants, specifically the foreign brides. Moreover, it has heightened wanton prejudices against them.

III. ON THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

“I used to attend the Chinese class for a while but interrupted. There I met some friends, including some members of TASAT, I always hope them can come to visit my food bar more often.” – Fong-Er Chang, Vietnamese (Taiwan)

“... going to Yun-Ho community college helps me learn faster, also I make friends there. That is how I get connected with the SPWA.” – Ya-Chin Chou, Thai (Taiwan)

“I had problems w/ paper requirements for my marriage and for change of status (from undocumented to legal resident). It’s good that FMC and LFS helped me in the paper works.” – Mely, Filipina (Japan)

“FICAP ... is an organization to gather wives of Japanese and serves as a support system.” – Margie, Filipina (Japan)

Like Fong-Er, Ya-Chin, Mely and Margie – they all recognize the value of being members of or being in contact with organizations and institutions, especially those that assist them. This brings to fore the role of organizations and institutions and their role in the whole gamut of solving and resolving problems and issues that foreign brides and women immigrants face.

Said Prof. Hsia who is also a consultant of TransAsia Sisters Association (TASAT) and Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants (AHLIM)

–
“Inspired by Paulo Freire’s (1970) “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” and Augusto Boal’s (1979) “Theater of the Oppressed”, I have worked collectively with the communities to empower these immigrant women. Through trials and errors in the past 10 years, we have helped the immigrant women turn themselves from being isolated in the household and silent in the public to vocal in the public and actively organizing themselves ... Last year, these immigrant women in collaboration with local women have officially founded a national organization, TransAsia Sisters Association, Taiwan, ... (or) TASAT.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Hsia, Hsiao-Chuan, “Proactive Approaches to Preventing Violence against Immigrant Women in Taiwan”, published in *International Workshop for Asian NGOs on Female Immigrants*, 2005, Taipei. p. 83.

Empowering immigrant women through organizing have proven to be the most effective approach to preventing violence, to face difficulties in the lives of foreign brides. Self-help groups and organizations such as TASAT (Taiwan) and FICAP and KAFIN (Japan) have not only established a support system for their member foreign brides but also served the interests of immigrant women as a whole in the fight for their rights and welfare. The testimonies of respondents, be they members of groups or not, have attested to the importance of these.

Moreover, proactive approaches such as language education to foreign brides and other services like shelter and legal support, whether they come from the initiatives of foreign bride associations themselves or given by support service institutions are also relevant, especially in the light that government services have been found to be sorely lacking or inadequate.

IV. SUMMARY

This research has provided some basic information about foreign brides – who they are, where they go to, the reasons why they become so, and the processes they undergo in order to become a foreign bride:

- The number of foreign brides rose in the '80s and is still increasing. They come from countries where there is abject poverty, unemployment and underemployment, low wages, high inflation rate, etc. These are countries where there is also a massive outmigration of people, looking for job opportunities abroad. In Asia, these countries are: Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, and China.
- Foreign brides go to more affluent countries, countries promising them a better life and stable future – like Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea. But what they don't realize is that these are also the countries which are promoting cross-border marriages and encouraging naturalization of foreign brides in order to continue the "bloodline" and ensure a long line of productive force that will serve the needs and interests of neoliberal globalization. Foreign brides can provide the answer to aging population and low birth rates, factors which affect the country's economic productivity and stability. To a certain extent, foreign brides serve as **"providers of last resort in societies which do not have social safety nets in place."**⁵⁹ (underscoring supplied)
- But not all foreign brides marry for upward economic mobility (hypergamy) or for opportunities to work and stay abroad. Some really marry for love. Whatever their principal reason is for marrying foreign husbands, the desire to have a better life (economically or financially) is shared as a

⁵⁹ Lim, Joseph, 2000. "The Effects of the East Asian Crisis on the Employment of Women and Men: The Philippine Case". *World Development*, Vol. 28, 7.

common purpose. But this universal desire, as anyone from any race or creed would have, is somewhat met with social prejudices (i.e. “the inferior other”, “pariah”, etc.) which make their lives more difficult under new conditions and environment. Such prejudices obscure the fact that there is a natural tendency for people from poor countries to be attracted to go to more affluent countries, on the one hand, and the need of more affluent countries with a crisis of its own, to attract people, especially women, from poor countries as cheap and docile labor and “safety net” to its ageing population and de-population problems, on the other hand. Such prejudices hedge the class contradictions existing between rich and poor countries and the role of neoliberal globalization in their lives.

- The state and marriage bureaus or matchmaking agencies are partners in cross-border marriages. Both play some roles in the commodification of women and commercialization of marriage. The state, on the one hand, serves as the policy-making and regulatory body in cross-border marriages, in GO (government organization) parlance. The state does its functions for a fee. The marriage bureaus and matchmaking agencies, on the other hand, act as “intermediaries”, facilitators and operators of the trade. They do so because of the gargantuan profits they make out of the trade.
- As neoliberal globalization dominates the world today, the role of the state is very significant: issues such as world trade in a free-market economy, population management and human trafficking are discussed and agreed upon bilaterally or multi-laterally in global and supra-national bodies such as the GATT-WTO are authored by the states. Laws, policies and regulations and even amendments of these emanate from the state. Hence, policy solutions (i.e. labor import vis-a-vis labor export, immigration vis-à-vis emigration, naturalization vis-à-vis temporary residency) to address the crisis in both sending and receiving countries are not just administered by the state but are authored by them. Prof. Dr. Brigitte Young (2002) asserts:

“States define and guarantee , through international treaties with constitutional effects, the global rights of capital ... Its common feature ... is to convert the state into an agency for adjusting national economic practices and policies to the perceived exigencies of the global economy. In other words, there is a shift in power away from those agencies most closely tied to domestic social forces and toward those associated with the transnational process of global capitalism (Cox 1997; Panitch 1997).”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Young, Prof. Dr. Brigitte, 2002: *Financial Crisis and the Human Security Dimension in Asia*, University of Sheffield, p.17.

Moreover, states can also be passive. This passivity can be seen in their inaction or toleration of an "... off-shore economy ... (to) facilitate the global human trade market."⁶¹ Such can be seen in the tolerance to operations of matchmaking and dating service agencies, and marriage bureaus, in the absence of or inadequacy of support services and welfare benefits that it should provide immigrant women, in dilly-dallying policy changes in favor of immigrant women, etc.

The research also delved into the adjustments and challenges that foreign brides experience, how they overcome problems, and what their views and perspectives are about their new existence and condition.

- Results of FGDs show that foreign brides have a strong sense of patriotism and sense of responsibility to their homeland and family back home. Such patriotism and sense of responsibility is shown in their strong identification to their motherland, continued communication and support to their families back home, and the desire for their children to learn their native language. Again, such patriotism and sense of responsibility is met with prejudice, usually starting from the husband, husband's family and local community.
- Foreign brides also have a strong sense of family values and partnership. In order to keep the marriage, especially when they already have children, they try to adjust and cope with their new situation, try to learn the language, and try to earn some income, if conditions permit. Since most of them are expected to perform the traditional roles of women, they sacrifice a lot, even to a fault – when they don't do anything against domestic violence. Yet, prejudices again prevail in how they are treated – by their husband, their husband's family, the community, and the state.
- State policies vary per country. Some have regulations for control of entry, for protection of their rights and welfare benefits, while others lag behind, especially in terms of rights and benefits. But the common denominator again is prejudice as expressed in racist, discriminatory, xenophobic, and anti-migrant laws, policies and regulations. From the assumption of marriage to its dissolution (divorce or separation), foreign brides face state-sanctioned "husband power over the immigrant wife." While it may look like gender or even cultural bias, the problem is much-deeper – it's systemic, class-based. Referring to foreign brides as "the inferior other" alludes their position as "the superior one".
- Immigrant women, especially foreign brides, are vulnerable to domestic violence committed against, is a daily occurrence. This comes in different forms – verbal and physical abuse, and even death. Such vulnerability stems from the assumption that they are commodified women coming from an "inferior" country, sold and bought by men from a "superior

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 18

one". Worse, laws protecting immigrant women from domestic violence and support mechanism for them are sorely lacking. The developing presence of organizations and support service non-government organizations (NGOs) and institutions in some countries have not only helped ease the burden from the victims but also started an advocacy network.

In sum, immigrant women, especially foreign brides hurdle socio-economic, political and cultural problems that are imbedded in societies they came from and went into. These issues are the following: 1) state-sanctioned social prejudices; 2) domestic violence; 3) racist and discriminatory laws, policies and regulations; and 4) commodification of women and commercialization of marriage.

It is important that these issues are addressed. It is more important that the roots of poverty in countries where foreign brides or immigrant women came from are also addressed.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Laws and Policies governing foreign brides should have the following framework:
 - Must uphold and promote comprehensive human rights of immigrant women. This comprehensive view on human rights not only pertains to civil and political rights but also the right to livelihood, education, health care and housing, etc.
 - Must work towards elimination of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and exploitation of immigrant women, particularly foreign brides
 - Must work towards equal treatment and improve the quality of life of immigrant women, especially foreign brides, and not commercialize them.
2. Support services (i.e. information, health, education, cultural orientation, etc.) and benefits, if ever given by governments, should be adequate, relevant, accessible, proactive, pro-migrant and pro-women.
3. Foreign bride or women immigrant organization and non-government service institutions for foreign brides should likewise be supported by the government without any strings attached.
4. For governments of countries where foreign brides originate, they must address the root causes of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment – which cause their women to look for opportunities abroad like marrying a foreign husband.

5. Policy recommendations:

General:

- Criminalize any form of domestic violence.
- Repeal laws that propagate and exacerbate women's oppression and subjugation (i.e. state-sanctioned husband's power over the foreign wife)
- Promote laws that protect the rights of women immigrants (i.e. foreign brides) – right to stay, right to work, right to separate or divorce husband without any impingement on custodial rights on children, right to stay and right to work.
- Repeal laws and policies that allow matchmaking agencies or marriage bureaus to operate.
- Provide welfare benefits (i.e. living expenses, child support, access to welfare facilities, etc.) to foreign wives or immigrant women, who are divorced or separated, or whose husbands have died or been disabled.

Particulars:

South Korea:⁶²

- For spouses of Korean nationals to be granted permanent residency status within a short period of time rather than the current five years after they came to Korea;
- Women who belong to categories in Clause 1 Article 4 (i.e. divorced or separated from husband, disabled husband) of the Mother and Fatherless Child Welfare Law should be granted living expenses, aid for child education and training expenses, and entry into welfare facilities;
- Repeal of unreasonable clauses, such as under the Emigration and Immigration Control Law that only husbands can be guarantors for wives, and if wives run away, they remain unregistered as husbands withdraw the guarantee;
- Repeal of the clause in Article 6 (Requirements of simple Naturalization) of the Nationality Law, requiring foreign wives to stay married under the same roof with Korean husband for 2 years.
- Measures that would entitle foreign wives who are divorced from their Korean husbands, to be able to partake in the responsibility as the child/ren grow up.

⁶² Kim Min Jeong, "Migrant Women in Korea through International Matchmaking", 60-74, published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants, 2005, Taipei*.

- Flexibility in the Revised Nationality Law requiring foreign nationals to prove that they are economically and verbally abused.
- Grant migrant women the freedom to separate from their husbands for a certain period regardless of the Emigration and Immigration Control Law. Foreign wives who are abused (even verbally and emotionally) or become victims of domestic violence usually have no choice but to endure in silence for fear of their husband's withdrawal of guarantee on them.
- Regulation of matchmaking companies (pending in the National Assembly in 2005)

Taiwan:⁶³

- To repeal the clause in the Nationality Law requiring spouses of Taiwanese men to provide "proof of economic abilities" before they can be naturalized.
- To reverse the welfare system in Taiwan which does not allow immigrant women who have not obtained Taiwanese citizenship eligible for social services and welfare benefits.
- To reverse the twin-clause in the Nationality Law that: a) deports battered immigrant women without Taiwanese citizenship who are divorced, and b) automatically grants custody of children to fathers, in divorce cases. This causes many battered immigrant women to endure domestic violence for the sake of the children.

6. Advocacy Work

- a) For governments receiving foreign brides:
- To implement mandatory training programs for police officers, other law enforcement officials and those in the legal system, emphasizing gender sensitivity and awareness of personal and systemic racism programs. The particular situation immigrant women, especially foreign brides, must be addressed. Support for these programs should be given by concerned departments and ministries responsible for the status of women.
 - Provide support for the development of public legal education programs for foreign brides addressing their basic legal information needs.
 - Provide support for community-based research into the interaction of foreign brides with the legal system, particularly the family law

⁶³ Hsia, Hsiao-Chuan, "Proactive Approaches to Preventing Violence against Immigrant Women in Taiwan", published in *International Workshop for Asian NGOs on Female Immigrants, 2005, Taipei*. p.84

system. For example, are they left in a better economic position after their divorce? Is their contribution to the marriage being recognized?

b) For organizations and service institutions:

- The need to organize the ranks of immigrant women in the host country.
- The need to organize and strengthen families of immigrant women back home that will serve as an advocacy group and support network for the immigrant women.
- Organize gatherings to broaden national network and deepen understanding on the situation of immigrant women and foreign brides.
- Provide services to needy foreign brides and their children, especially the victims of domestic violence. Such services include: language education, temporary shelter, legal and para-legal services & training, counseling, health services & training, etc.
- Conduct community-based research on the following concerns:
 1. plight of children of cross-border marriages;
 2. matchmaking agencies, marriage bureaus and dating services
 3. violence against immigrant women and foreign brides
 3. divorce or separation, custodial rights, right to stay and to have gainful employment
 5. human rights, welfare and benefits
 6. appropriate community-based services and their delivery
 7. policy advocacy

REFERENCES:

- Napiere, Fr. Eliseo "Taiwan New Immigrants Foreign Spouses", reported in the conference "The Catholic Church in Asia Cares for the Migrants in Taiwan" held March 16-19, 2007 in Wencui Center, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Chang, Shu-Ming, *International Marriages: Cross-Border Marriage Business in Taiwan and Vietnam, 20-29*, published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants, 2005*, Taipei.
- Constable, Nicole (ed.), "Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia", published by University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- ILO Factsheet "Migration by Region: Asia and the Pacific", 2005.
- Hairiah, *The Problems of the Brokers on Migrants and Marital Immigrants in Taiwan, 30-34*, published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants, 2005*, Taipei.
- Kim Min Jeong, "Migrant Women in Korea through International Matchmaking", 60-74, published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants, 2005*, Taipei.
- Kim Min Jeong, "Migrant Women through marriage in Korea", a comprehensive report for the Human Rights Solidarity for Migration & Women in Korea (2006).
- "Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action", a report of the Global Commission on International Migration, 2005.
- Hugo, Graemo. 2005. *Migration in the Asia-Pacific region: A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration*. Global Commission on International Migration, p.8-20.
- Ministry of Justice, Japan, "Basic Plan for Immigration Control (3rd Edition)" 2006.
- Immigration Department, Hongkong, SAR, 2006.
- Report of Task Force on Population Policy, Hongkong Special Administrative Region Government, 2006.
- Human Rights Watch. September 2004.
- International Organization for Migration. 2005. *World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration*, Geneva: IOM, p.103.
- Hsiao-Chuan Hsia, "Globalization and Resistance: The Case of Empowering "Foreign Brides" in Taiwan, presented in Korea. Sept. 27, 2006.
- Chang, Shu-Ming. "International Marriages: Cross-Border Business in Taiwan and Vietnam" published in *International Workshop of NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants, 2005*, Taipei. p. 26.
- Hsia, Hsiao-Chuan, "Proactive Approaches to Preventing Violence against Immigrant Women in Taiwan", published in *International Workshop for Asian NGOs on Female Immigrants, 2005*, Taipei. pp. 77-89
- Marcella Ballara in "The Feminization of Migration" published by MediaSol (Le Portail de L'Economie Sociale et Solidaire) of Les Penelopes, February 4 2002.
- "Impact of Globalization on Women Migrants" prepared by Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants, Asia Pacific Forum of Women in Law and Development (APWLD) and Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS), published by Asia Pacific Resource Network (APRN). 2004.
- Philippine Women Centre, B.C., "Canada: The New Frontier for Filipino Mail-Order Brides", supported by Status of Women Canada's Policy Research Fund. November 2000. p. 66-83.
- Cunneen, C.; & Stubbs, J., *Gender, 'race' and international relations: Violence against Filipino women in Australia*. Sydney: Institute of Criminology. 1997.
- Saroca, Nicki. "Violence Against Women in Australia: Theorizing the Relationship Between Discursive and Non-Discursive", paper presented in "Expanding Our Horizons" Conference, Sydney, 2002.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color'. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, July: 1241-1299.
- "Report of the Task Force on Population Policy: Summary of Recommendations", Hongkong Special Administrative Region Government. 2002. pp. 1-16.
- Seoul Times, "Imported Seoul-mates find life a tough go in Korea", April 21 2005.

- G. W., and K. Ramdas (eds). 2004. *(Un)tying the Knot: Ideal and Reality in Asian Marriage*. Singapore: Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Cited in: "Transnational Migration, Marriage and Trafficking at the China-Vietnam Border," p. 4 by Duong, L. B., D. Bélanger, and K. T. Hong. 2005. Paper prepared for the Seminar on Female Deficit in Asia: Trends and Perspectives, Singapore, 5-7 December 2005. Paris: Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography. SWOP.
- Tsay, C.-L. 2004. "Marriage Migration of Women from China and South-East Asia to Taiwan." Pp. 173-191 in: *(Un)tying the Knot: Ideal and Reality in Asian Marriage*, edited by G.W. Jones and K. Ramdas. 2004. Singapore: Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Cited in: "Recent Trends in International Migration in the Asia Pacific" (ESID/SIIM/13), p. 12, by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNFPA, International Organization for Migration, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. 2005. Regional Seminar on the Social Implications of International Migration, 24-26 August 2005, Bangkok. Bangkok: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNFPA, International Organization for Migration, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. SWOP.
- Wang, H., and S. Chang. 2002. "The Commodification of International Marriages: Cross-border Marriage Business in Taiwan and Viet Nam." *International Migration* 40(6): 93-114. SWOP.
- Lee, H.-K. 2003. "Gender, Migration and Civil Activism in South Korea." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 12(1-2): 127-154. Cited in: "Recent Trends in International Migration in Asia and the Pacific," p. 34, by M. M. B. Asis. 2005. *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 20(3): 15-38. SWOP.
- Lim, Joseph. 2000. "The Effects of the East Asian Crisis on the Employment of Women and Men: The Philippine Case". *World Development*, Vol. 28, 7, 1285-1306.
- Elson, Diane, 1994: "Micro, Meso, Macro: Gender and Economic Analysis in the Context of Policy Reform," in Isabella Bakker (ed.), *The Strategic Silence. Gender and Economic Policy*, London: Zed Books, 33-45.
- Young, Prof. Dr. Brigitte, 2002: *Financial Crisis and the Human Security Dimension in Asia* given at the conference of the Political Economy Research Centre "Towards a New Political Economy of Development", University of Sheffield, p.4.



Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)

No. 2 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR

Tel. (852) 2723-7536 Fax. (852) 2735-4559

E-mail: apmm@hknet.com

Website: <http://www.apmigrants.org>