

The History And Context Of Chinese~Western Intercultural Marriage In Modern And Contemporary China (From 1840 To The 21st Century)



Picture 1.8 The lovestruck Qian Xiuling and her Belgian Man, 1933

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Abstract

Intimate relationships between two people from different cultures generate a degree of excitement and intrigue within the couple due to that very difference, however this also brings its own challenges. Intercultural marriage adds an extra set of dynamics to relationships. Although the Chinese culture is very different from Western culture, individuals from both nevertheless meet and fall in love with each other. The existence of intercultural marriages and intimacy between Chinese and Westerners is evident and expanding in societies throughout both China and the Western world. This thesis aims to present a true picture of Chinese-Western Intercultural Marriage (CWIM) with a focus on the Chinese perspective.

By employing a three-dimensional, multi-level theoretical framework based on an integration of theories of migration, sociology and gender and adopting a qualitative research paradigm, the main body of this study combines three theoretical approaches in order to explore CWIM fully using a panoramic view. The first part of the study is conducted from a macro-level perspective. It provides a historical review of intercultural marriage and transnational marital systems in Chinese history from the modern to the contemporary era through a discussion of the different characteristics of CWIM. The context and background of Chinese intercultural marriages in modern and contemporary China are also reviewed and analysed, such as the related regulations, laws, governmental roles, and so on.

The second section is conducted from a middle-level perspective. On the basis of the study's fieldwork, the demographic characteristics of the respondents are first

disclosed, and different patterns are identified as occurring in CWIM. The approaches to and motivations of CWIM are examined, and a framework of CWIM Push-Pull Forces and a model of Resource Exchanging Layers are established to explain how and why Chinese people have married Westerners. The exchanges and Push-Pull force components operating in Chinese-Western intercultural marriages are also discussed.

The third section offers a micro-level examination of the research, and it moves on to discuss the family relations in Chinese-Western intercultural marriage, particularly with the entrance of a member of a different culture into the Chinese familial matrix. This part of the study focuses on cultural conflicts, origins and coping strategies in Chinese-Western intercultural marriage with an emphasis on the experiences of Chinese spouses. Five areas of marital conflicts are revealed and each area is analysed from a cultural perspective. The positive functions of conflicts in CWIMs are then explored. The six coping strategies and their frequencies of usage by Chinese spouses are further examined.

The final chapter will summarise the points examined previously and will unravel the factors underlying CWIM by recapitulating the symbolic significance, social functions and gender hegemony represented in Chinese-Western intercultural marriage. In this way this study will provide more than an anecdotal description of Chinese-Western Intercultural marriage, but will present a profound analysis of the forces underpinning this cross-cultural phenomenon.

Key Words: Chinese-Western Intercultural marriage, History, Cultures, Motivation, Exchange, Marital Choice, Conflicts.

List of Abbreviations

CCP - Chinese Communist Party

CCW - Chinese Civil War

CH - Chinese Husband

CPC - Communist Party of China

CHWW - Chinese husbands & Western wives

CW - Chinese Wife

CWIM - Chinese-Western Intercultural Marriage

CWWH - Chinese wives & Western husbands

DIL - Daughter in Law

EU - European Union

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FS - Foreign Spouses

IC - Intensity of Conflict

KMT - Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)

LS - Local spouses

MIL - Mother in Law

MM - Marital Migrants

PRC - People's Republic of China

ROC - Republic of China

TP - Third Parties Records

USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VC - Violence of Conflict

CWWH - Marriage of Chinese Wife and Western Husband

CHWW - Marriage of Chinese Husband and Western Wife

WPA - Western Physique Attraction