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“Spouses of French citizens”, a privileged standpoint for observing the transformation of norms

- 1 National statistics show that an increasing number of migrants are categorised as spouses of French citizens: INSEE notes that in 2010, 72% of all residence permits were granted for family reasons and, among these, 74% were for re-unification with a French spouse (INSEE, 2012: 142). The stereotype of women migrating to become "French wives" or that of women immigrating for "family reunification" (Tribalat, 2009) are gradually being dispelled, to leave room for a more diverse landscape of migratory circumstances - such as men re-uniting with a French wife, or women with an individual migration project (Algava and Bèque, 2008) - in which social relationships of

sex, gender, and class are profoundly reconfigured. The case of "spouses of French citizens" from "extra-ethnic"¹ marriages appears particularly interesting and constitutes a favourable standpoint for reflecting on the transformation of matrimonial and family norms among international migrants. Indeed, these men and women married to French nationals have to contend with the norms of their country of origin as well as those of the host country, which interact in a contradictory, even sometimes conflictual manner. Given that they owe their residence permit in France to their "extra-ethnic" marriage, matrimonial and family norms become an immediate focus in their relations with the host society, in their administrative procedures, and in their daily lives. Equally, matrimonial and family norms are also central in their relations with their country of origin, particularly in terms of their relationships with their parents, since becoming a "spouse of a French citizen" and settling down in France may conflict with parental expectations regarding marriage, cohabitation, and the perpetuation of their lineage. Thus, the two socio-cultural spaces contribute to the individual's overall experience (Sayad, 2006). The relationship they maintain with the norms and dominant values of their environment before emigrating and their appropriation of those conveyed in their new environment can give rise to multiple configurations of family relationships.

- 2 Here, we specifically address the case of "extra-ethnic" marriages between Chinese and French people. Although the 2012 national statistics cited above show that the numbers of Chinese women marrying French men and Chinese men marrying French women are stable,² little is known about the plurality of their social trajectories. All the more so since it is difficult to separate family motives from other migratory motives.³ Based on these observations, we seek, through a qualitative approach, to focus on the transformation of matrimonial and family norms within "extra-ethnic" couples in which one member is a Chinese spouse of French citizen, in other words, on the dissemination, reappropriation and competition of the norms firmly anchored in the daily life of migrants. The intention is to show that behind such an administrative category as "spouse of a French citizen", represented as self-evident, gender, generation, class, and ethnic relations interact intersectionally,⁴ and function as producers of matrimonial and family norms in contexts of international migration. In complement to studies into "fake marriages" to French people in order to apply for a residence permit (Speyer, 2012), the focus here will be on those residing legally, in other words, those who are not seeking regularization through marriage.⁵
- 3 Intersectionality looks at the issue of domination, but not only for the dominated: all social positions, including dominant ones, must be considered in their multiple dimensions (Fassin, 2015). Indeed, the position of privileged people is rarely analysed from the point of view of the interaction between hierarchies and power relations (Le Renard, 2014). This study thus justifiably includes migrants from the least vulnerable groups - compared to other categories of Chinese migrants in France - in different relationships of domination and inequality. By following the stages of the respondents' migration and marriage (from emigration to immigration, moving from the family of origin in China to that of the in-laws in France), three social scenes appear to be the most conducive standpoints to view the transformation of matrimonial and family norms among these Chinese men and women faced with highly contradictory norms. First I study the family of origin, in the presence of parents residing in China; then the prefecture and the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII), in the presence

of the administrative officials who receive them; and finally, the nuclear family founded in France, in the presence of the French in-laws. The analysis of these three scenes makes it possible to move on from the plurality of the processes of transforming norms in these spouses of French citizens to grasp their complexity and to deconstruct the dichotomy of the systems of cultural norms to see how "intersectionality flows from one context to another, from one country or continent to another" (Yuval-Davis, 2015). It also demonstrates how the transformation of matrimonial and family norms can take on multiple configurations depending on the social backgrounds, genders, ethnic origins and family types in which these male and female respondents were socialized in China and then in France.

- 4 Marriage and migration are means of social mobility for an individual, both upward and downward (Bozon and Héran, 2006). The link between the choice of spouse and the migration project prior to emigration is one of the essential elements to understanding the matrimonial and family norms in the society of origin with which the respondents are confronted. In the midst of a profound transformation of Chinese society (Sun, 2003) – ranging from economic boom to demographic imbalances between men and women (Attané, 2006) – as well as the transformation of matrimonial ethos⁶ in China (Sun, 2012; Wang, 2013), how do all those close to the respondents produce the social norms relating to an extra-ethnic matrimonial trajectory which comprises an international migration? And how does the migrant appropriate (or not) these norms? What consequences might the choice to marry a French citizen have on the intergenerational relations these Chinese migrants maintain with their family of origin?
- 5 Next, observing these migrants' interactions with administration – applying for a residence permit, signing the reception and integration contract (CAI)⁷ – exposes the norms that dictate what a "good spouse of a French citizen" should be. How do these administrative officials convey the matrimonial and family norms regarding the category of "spouses of French citizens" to the Chinese migrants studied in the general context of "integration as an injunction" (Lochak, 2006)? What are the reactions of these Chinese migrants to their "preparation for republican integration into the French society" (Slama, 2007) as "spouses"?
- 6 Finally, by focusing on intra-marital dynamics, we will study a series of negotiations within the couple related to the gendered transformation of matrimonial and family norms: economic contribution and (re)distribution, linguistic transmission to descendants, decisions on the child's first name(s) and family names, visits to be made to both sets of the parents.

Methodology and the two main profiles of "spouses of French citizens"

- 7 This study is based on field research, conducted from 2011 onwards, with approximately thirty Chinese migrants residing in the Paris region who are married to French nationals. I first made contact with the original subjects as they queued at the Paris Prefecture or at the OFII, and we kept in touch over time, developing a friendly proximity and a relationship of trust. I was thus able to conduct semi-directive individual interviews and participate in their social activities. During the latter, thanks

to a "snowball" effect, I met other spouses of French people, who then also became respondents.

- 8 In parallel, I conducted around 20 participant observation sessions at the Paris Prefecture and the OFII⁸ and held more than 20 hours of interviews - individually and in groups - with seven officials of the Immigration and Integration Service (IIC) in five different 'départements'. The administrative officers were all women, born between 1957 and 1988. Apart from a head of the foreigners' office at the prefecture, all the others are clerks (five in category B and one in category C according to the French public service classification): administrative secretaries, administrative assistants, officers in charge of the reception and appraisal of all types of applications for residence permits - "private and family life", "students", "scientists and researchers", "employees", "self-employed", "refugees", etc. The fact that these staff members do not only process "private and family life" requests seems particularly pertinent, since the discourses they produce on spouses of French citizens reveal the reasoning behind their transmission of family norms to foreign spouses. The interviews took place at the prefecture, and therefore at their workplace.
- 9 Among the migrants studied, two main social profiles can be identified. First, those known as "migrants by marriage" (Constable, 2003), i.e. Chinese immigrants in France following a marriage in China, or those arriving with the intention of marrying a French citizen in France. The nine men and seven women - born between 1971 and 1986 - who fit this profile all earned a bachelor's degree in China before migrating. Some also have a master's degree. They all met their future spouses in a Chinese urban context or more broadly in Asia - in all cases outside France. As these subjects cross borders to get married, they often also make plans for personal mobility: pursuing their studies, building a professional career abroad, among other projects. The second profile includes Chinese migrants qualified in France - born between 1982 and 1990 - who married a French citizen. "Qualified Chinese migrants," refers to young graduates who have completed all or part of their higher education studies in France and have decided to settle down after completing their studies,⁹ for professional and/or family reasons (Wang, 2014). Since they were already living in France, they generally met their future spouse there.
- 10 Despite their different migration trajectories, these two groups nevertheless share certain social characteristics. Firstly, part of the first group and the entire second group are from the Chinese generation of only children.¹⁰ Secondly, although the respondents in the first group did not come to France for higher education, they studied to at least a bachelor's level in China and some of them enrolled in French universities once in the country. All of the respondents are qualified - either in China, France or both - and have a relatively high level of educational and cultural capital, although their qualifications may not be recognised in France.¹¹ Finally, none of these respondents come from rural areas in the strict sense of the term. That is, most of them were born in large cities,¹² often provincial capitals. As for the others, even if they were born in less urbanized regions, they also lived in urban China during their bachelor's or master's studies or their initial work experiences. For those from rural areas, their first experiences of geographical mobility within China (which in itself marks a social rise),¹³ before arriving in France, partly explain their propensity to move in the international arena. In order to provide a continuity to the case studies and to situate the respondent in his or her social trajectory from emigration to immigration, I focus on the most

revealing cases and return to them alternately for the three social scenes mentioned above, which correspond to each stage of the respondents' migratory journey.

The gendered views of Chinese parents on choosing a "French spouse"

- 11 In Chinese marital representations, a woman will leave her family of origin when she gets married and thus constitutes a "good lost" to her parents; whereas a married man acquires a good for his family (Xu, 2005; Zheng and Yang, 2003). The marriage is structured around an exchange between the two families, where the groom's family compensates the bride's for their loss. This exchange is conceived as a reimbursement not only of material goods following the departure of the bride from her family of origin - her parents lose workforce in daily life - but also of a symbolic loss: the bride is no longer considered as guaranteed assistance the day her parents will become dependent (Wang, 2015). These gendered matrimonial norms appear to determine the views of Chinese parents concerning their child's choice of spouse, when it comes to a foreigner. Thus, the acceptability of the extra-ethnic marriage for the parents depends on the gender of the child and the social background from which he or she comes. Xiang's case is significant in this respect.

Defying marriage norms: the case of Xiang, a "transplanted" son-in-law

- 12 Xiang was born in 1979 in Hangzhou,¹⁴ the youngest son of two children - a boy and a girl. After obtaining his bachelor's degree in French from Nanjing University in 1997, unlike his classmates who moved away to France, Africa or one of China's largest cities, Xiang decided to return home and take up a position as a French teacher at a high school.¹⁵ In 2001, it was at his workplace - at the middle school where he taught - that he met his future wife, Cécile, then a French teaching assistant. She was a young graduate in French literature and had been recruited on a one-year fixed-term contract. Her parents are both secondary school teachers, one in English and the other in geography, and live in the Paris region. The two young people fell in love and began to reflect on their future, eventually deciding to get married. Xiang recounts the scene when he broke the news to his parents, both retired.

It was late afternoon, my mother was washing vegetables, as usual, with my father next door, tinkering with his radio. I said, 'Cecile and I are getting married'. At first, they didn't understand who I was talking about. In fact, our relationship was better known at school than in the family [smiles]. In a year, I had only once taken Cécile to visit my parents, we had had dinner together. I introduced her as a 'girlfriend'. After they understood who I was talking about, my father threw his radio on the table and left for his room. My mother kept cooking dinner, not saying a word. I had no idea what to do. So I sat in the dining room and watched my mother. She turned her back on me, her head down. From time to time, she raised her hand to rub her face. I finally understood that she was weeping. I was shocked by their reactions. That night, like every other night, she took out the dishes and set the table, then went to her room to look for my father. I could hear them talking inside. After ten minutes, no one came out and I couldn't take it anymore. So I left. When I came home¹⁶ around midnight, the table was tidy. My mother left me a note: 'In the fridge, there is duck with chestnuts'. Just this sentence, nothing else, nothing.

- 13 This scene where he announces his decision to get married, giving rise to no exchange, is rich in emotion for Xiang. In the days that followed, his parents repeatedly asked him, amidst sighs and tears, if he was sure he wanted to marry a foreigner. Xiang's parents' use of the term "foreigner" to refer to Cecile is telling. It references a categorization of spouses based on nationality and highlights the reason for Xiang's parents' dissatisfaction with this marriage: they do not blame Cécile herself, there are simply concerned because she is a "foreigner" and because of the "extra-ethnic" nature of the marriage. Xiang explained that before this announcement, he was uncertain as to whether to hold the wedding in China or in France. However, "disappointed" by his parents' initial reactions, he quickly made up his mind to marry Cécile in France.
- 14 A few days later, when he announced that he was getting married and migrating to France, the tension escalated between Xiang and his parents, especially his father. Furious, his father yelled at him: "Not only are you not going to give us a pure blood baby, but you yourself are becoming a kind of "reverse rod lock"[daochamen/倒插门]¹⁷! Are you not ashamed? Going to France like that [by marriage] and being dependent on your wife?"

Box 1: "Reverse rod lock" or live-in son-in-law

As stated above, in traditional Chinese society, a marriage usually entails transferring the bride from her family of origin to that of her in-laws. When it is the groom who settles down with his in-laws, this type of marriage is literally called "ruzhu" (入赘). In everyday language, the term "daochamen" is frequently used. The child born to the couple usually takes the mother's surname to ensure family succession on the maternal side, and the husband may also change his surname. Reflecting the power relations between the two families in alliance, "the husband living with his in-laws" implies a relatively "weak" position of his family of origin and could cause his parents to lose face (Zhao, 1986; Guo, 2005). In ancient China, this phenomenon did not always have a pejorative connotation provided that the sons-in-law were in the process of social ascension at the time of marriage (Tang, 2005). The proverb "bangxiazhuoxu" (榜下捉婿) describes a commonplace scene: the day after the publication of the results of the imperial examinations, the local bourgeois families go to stand under the poster of the results to meet the listed candidates - often from the lower classes - with the intention of making them their sons-in-law who would settle in their homes. In the more contemporary context of Chinese society, husbands living under the same roof as their in-laws often receive moral judgments from those around them (Fei, 1998). This is primarily due to the fact that the husband's parents are supposed to be cared for on a daily basis by the newlyweds and so when the young couple live with the bride's parents, the husband's parents are seen to be "abandoned." The husband is also often perceived as "dependent" on his wife and his in-laws. Some "transplanted" husbands testify to their experiences with their in-laws using the metaphor of "mental castration" (jingshenyangge/精神阉割).

- 15 Despite his parents' opposition, Xiang was determined in his choice. His resignation from the school, he said, he triggered a "controversy":

Some teased me by saying: 'What a romantic man you are', some tried to convince me to stay because they believed that 'a man shouldn't follow his wife like that'. The school principal

told me: 'It is your choice to leave, but nevertheless, don't forget to come home from time to time to see your parents. They're counting on you'.

- 16 The "controversy" that Xiang describes was in fact a debate sparked among his colleagues on social norms and power relations within the couple. In addition, the discourse of the school principal highlights the family norms governing a "duty to return" for any Chinese immigrant man (Wang, 2015 and 2017), whatever the motive for leaving: studies, work, or marriage in this case. The day Xiang left for France, his sister came home¹⁸ to defuse the tension between Xiang and his father. To no avail. Before leaving for France, his father's last words to Xiang were: "You have betrayed us, you will be betrayed!" In the following sections, his experiences in France (meeting his in-laws and looking for work, among other things) will be analysed to show how generations and the kinship system participate in the negotiation of family norms within an extra-ethnic marriage.
- 17 Xiang's case demonstrates that parents are wary of their sons marrying a French woman because they categorize her as a "foreigner". Yet when it comes to a Chinese woman marrying a Frenchman, parental views on an extra-ethnic marriage seem to focus more on the husband's social characteristics - age, profession, personality, interest in the Chinese world, etc. Let us now introduce the case of Wendi and Jean-Claude.

Chinese women "married to French men" as viewed by their entourage

- 18 This couple met at the Alliance Française in Guangzhou. Jean-Claude was a French teacher in his sixties and Wendi was his twenty-five-year-old student. She was learning the language in order to study for a master's in marketing at a business school in Lyon. Wendi perceives Jean-Claude's advanced age as a positive because it makes him experienced, calm, and tender. This constitutes a fundamental pillar of their relationship.¹⁹ However, Wendi's parents, who are small shopkeepers, perceive it differently. Wendi explains:

Laoniuchinencao (老牛吃嫩草) [literally translated as 'an old buffalo eating tender grass']²⁰ was their first word to characterize our relationship. When I told them that we would like to get married, my father snapped, red-faced: 'He's older than me! It's unacceptable that this should happen to my daughter! You are neither stupid, nor crippled, nor divorced, you should strive to find a handsome boy, rich or not, who cares, but someone of your own age! Beware, he may be one of those dishonest Westerners already married in France?!'

- 19 It took Wendi two years to get her parents to accept Jean-Claude's advanced age, by creating several opportunities for family gatherings. Over time, Wendi's parents relinquished their initial suspicions and began to appreciate Jean-Claude. Wendi confided:

One day, my father said, laughing: 'In fact, Jean-Claude is a simple, sincere, and curious character'. At that moment, I knew that he had accepted my partner.

- 20 Even though Wendi's case might seem atypical, in that it concerns a woman marrying a much older person, her parents' views of a foreign spouse and their daughter becoming the wife of Frenchman can be transposed to other cases. In interviews with other Chinese women married to Frenchmen, they describe a recurrent discourse by their parents, referring to matrimonial norms that only concern women: "Jiachuqu de nü'er, pochuqu de shui" ("a girl married by her parents is like water being poured onto the

ground"). This reasoning where they do not expect their daughter to return to care for them, nor to perpetuate their lineage, makes the parents more flexible and less decisive in choosing their child's spouse.

- 21 Thus, although the parents' initial reaction to an extra-ethnic marriage may seem to be one of opposition, the rejection of the foreign spouse is not based on the simple fact that he is foreign. However, they remain vigilant about the social profile of the foreigner in question. In conjunction with the media coverage of the image of Western men socially downgraded in their country of origin coming to China to find a wife,²¹ the parents of the respondents we met made it clear, more or less implicitly, to their daughter that this spouse in question should be "tested" before committing to marriage. More specifically in the case of Frenchmen, the cliché of "romanticism" (Yang, 2007) is a recurrent source of mistrust for Chinese parents: "Are you sure he won't cheat on you?", "I hope he's not already married!", "We heard about the Chinese prostitutes in Belleville,²² hopefully, he doesn't live in the neighbourhood?" These remarks all demonstrate the parents' suspicions of their future French son-in-law, which is based on an analysis of the latter's social characteristics, rather than on a rejection of the extra-ethnic marriage in itself that will establish a geographical distance between their daughter and themselves. This is clearly different from the case of a man involved in an extra-ethnic marriage, such as Xiang. As such, Chinese women who become "wives of French men" and Chinese men who are "husbands of French women", from the very beginning of their emigration, are exposed differently to parental expectations and social norms, both in terms of the duty to return - to take care of their parents - and that of perpetuating the lineage.
- 22 For those who immigrated because of their marriage, most had never previously come to France. A few of them had visited France in the context of university exchanges or tourist trips, for a short period of time of less than three months. Thus, when they arrive in France, the administrative officials - at the prefecture and the OFII - who handle their applications, represent their first institutional contacts. While for those already residing in France before meeting their partner, changing their status - from "employee," "scientist," "trader," or "student" to "spouse of French citizen" - also marks a change in their relationship with the host society. Administrative logic emphasises the family sphere to the detriment of other activities - professional and/or academic - in the life of the migrant which leads to a greater confrontation between the different systems of family norms.

Family and matrimonial norms transmitted by the French administration and their gendered (re)appropriation by the migrants studied

- 23 Let us start by examining Tan's first experiences at the Prefecture. She is now forty-two years old and first arrived in Paris in 2010. At that time, as an expatriate account executive, she had just transferred in her international company from Singapore to Germany. It was in Singapore that she met her then colleague, Pierre, who was on a delegation mission to Asia. This Frenchman is ten years younger than Tan and soon became her husband. Once the couple decided to marry, Pierre resigned from the company so that Tan could apply for a geographic transfer within the firm. A few

months after her arrival in Europe on a "salaried" residence permit, Tan and Pierre celebrated their wedding in Paris. Tan then applied for a residence permit under the "family and private life" category:

I don't speak French. At home, we speak English all the time. The lady in front of us [at the prefecture] said as she read my file: 'You took your husband's name, that's good!' Given that I didn't understand anything, I thought there was something missing, then I heard Pierre translating into English. I was smiling at the lady who started speaking in English: 'It's good! It's integration!'

- 24 From the outset, this scene highlights a principle of the national reception policy for newcomers, one that promotes integration above all (Chevron, 2009). This clerk congratulates Tan for having changed her surname, associating this with her desire as a foreign wife to integrate. In a context where women are not legally required to take their husbands' name (Valetas, 2002), the administrative officers I met interpret a change in family name as an indicator that "demonstrates a certain degree of sincerity and commitment to the marriage". But such a means of assessment is rarely used for men married to French women applying for a residence permit.

The family name is a sign of attachment, deciding to change it is definitely meaningful. Of course, there are always exceptions. I can say that we are obliged to check: if the person in front of you has been in France for eight years and they can't speak a single word of French, you start wondering how that can be, and to have doubts about the marriage. (Mrs. Bouchart)

The name change, yes, speaking French too, we look at all that. It's our job! But in my thirty years of experience as a clerk, what I love is the joint bank account, that's the best. (Mrs. Durand)

Some people make no effort at all, it's amazing! A year ago, they were 'asylum seekers'; then a few months later, they became 'sick'; it didn't work, then they tried 'spouse of a French citizen'; after everything had failed, they came back with a baby in their arms [requesting the right to remain as a 'parent of a French child'], that's insane! (Mrs. Cutto)

- 25 First of all, these discourses highlight a logic centred on a constant suspicion of "fake marriage" - and more generally of "cheating applicants" - in their professional practices (Spire, 2008). To sort "real" requests from "fake" ones, they have developed a series of verification indicators, including the change of surname, mastery of the French language and the joint bank account. At the same time, in contrast to migrants of other ethnic origins, all the clerks met presented Chinese migrants - whatever their reason for applying - as "generally good applicants", "obedient", "not lying, or very rarely" and "tending to nod to everything", even if in reality there are "real communication and comprehension issues because of language and cultural barriers".
- 26 There is great heterogeneity in the different populations applying for residency and attending civic training at the OFII - in terms of ethnic origin and associated representations. This means that Chinese respondents married to French nationals are not the administration's primary targets for the transmission of family and matrimonial norms, particularly on the issues of gender equality and women's freedom. However, they still have to attend these training sessions. Tan highlights this phenomenon:

The trainer [at OFII] repeated at least ten times that women are free to do whatever they want - they can work, dress as they want, keep their maiden name, blah, blah, blah. Some things seem obvious to me, we don't live in imperial China! It shocks me to be told about women's rights at the workplace. Before arriving [in France], I thought that all French women were like De Beauvoir, debating, having lovers, being free! But I discovered another France when I arrived...

- 27 This interview excerpt first of all shows that, in civic education, discourses promoting women's autonomy and equality between men and women are recurrent. This is in line with the results of other studies, which show that administrative officials participate in "stigmatizing CAI signatories (reception and integration contracts) who are suspected of not respecting the standards of French society" (Gourdeau, 2014). Tan subsequently confirms that in the room, the majority were women from the North Africa, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa. Some participants were veiled. These populations are the more likely targets of the content of civic education than Tan, who says she is "shocked" to hear certain remarks that seem "obvious" to her. As such, we can question the relevance of the term "integration", based on the hiatus between the emphasis on difference and the injunction to indifference, without distinguishing between the extremely heterogeneous social pathways of migrants not only in terms of ethnic origin, but also of other social factors such as class and gender.
- 28 The case of spouses of French nationals who qualified in France – and are therefore exempt from language and civic training – is significant in studying the effect of these two social relations (class and gender) when systems of family and matrimonial norms are encountered in administrative settings. Let us look at the case of Yangtian.
- 29 Born in Shenzhen in 1988, Yangtian came to France at the age of sixteen. After attending a preparatory school, he studied at École Polytechnique and met his future wife, Élodie, there. After completing his studies, he became a trainee in a company and married Élodie, Yangtian thus required a change of status from "student" to "spouse of a French citizen":
- The first time we went to the prefecture to change my status from 'student' to 'spouse of a French citizen', I brought my diploma and pay slips for the internships to support my case. I asked the lady if she wanted to see these documents. She didn't even glance at me, continuing to staple the file, she said, 'who cares? On the other hand, I want all the evidence of your cohabitation, of your union'. It was the first time I had the impression that my existence only made sense in relation to my wife, and that in the eyes of the administration, who I was, what I did, whether I was a Polytechnician or not, didn't matter. It's a pretty strange experience.*
- 30 This feeling of one's administrative existence being exclusively linked to the status of "spouse" is widely shared by applicants for residence permits for family and private life motives. Regardless of their social status, the only role assigned to them is that of husband or wife. This in turn has consequences on the dynamics and power relationships within the couple. This especially concerns Chinese men married to French women because they are constantly being assigned the role of the French citizens' husband, and have to spend time doing administrative procedures. As such some respondents, particularly those who do not work, share an impression of becoming "househusbands." Let us evoke the case of Bing.
- 31 Bing is thirty years old and met his future wife, Eve, a rock singer, when he was working as a bartender in Beijing. Bing describes their meeting as love at first sight: they quickly got married and Bing moved to France.
- Marriage has been a good for me, and I have rediscovered how it feels to belong to a family. My mother died of cancer ten years ago, so my father suffered from depression and started drinking a lot. The day I graduated from university,²³ my father said to me, 'Son, you're grown up now. Bear this in mind for the rest of your days: follow your heart'. Working at the bar, deciding to get married and then coming to France are things I like. But I underestimated the difficulties ahead.*

- 32 Bing's first months in France were entirely devoted to administrative procedures and learning French. Meanwhile, aware of his dependence on his wife in the economic,²⁴ administrative, and linguistic senses, Bing contributed to the married life in his own way by taking up most of the domestic chores. At the same time, he only ever went out in connection with obtaining a residence permit. He sometimes feels "dispirited" by the French lessons, and at the same time, "overwhelmed" by the abundance of discourse on women's autonomy in civic education:

I felt like a useless man. A useful man for me is a guy in the outside world, making enough money to sustain the whole family. But I only looked after the inside [of the house], as if I had become a cleaner, a cook. I was always waiting, waiting for Eve to come home. It was horrible because I became anxious and jealous. Getting out of the house was worse, both for civic education and French classes. Since there were often more women than men, I had the impression that we talked more about women's subjects, at least, subjects related to family and domestic tasks: how to find a job as a 'home helper', where to give birth, how to register in a crèche, etc. I'm a man, I have a degree, home-helping is not for me! [...] Over time, I finally accepted my role of househusband.

- 33 The administrative procedures took Bing into a relatively feminine environment. The men he met there, often of non-Chinese origin and less qualified than him, accept work in sectors that are undervalued and have long been feminized, particularly house cleaning.²⁵ Bing was thus confronted with an abundance of information related to family life, domestic tasks, and access to low-skilled employment. Thus, Bing, for whom the male roles are outside the home and female roles within the private sphere of the family (a representation of the division of labour within the couple that has long been prevalent in Chinese society (Zhang, 1998)), initially felt "feminized" within his married life. As the couple settled in, Bing appropriated certain family norms such as the sharing of domestic tasks between husband and wife. We will return to this transformation later on.
- 34 Unlike their male peers, in administrative settings, Chinese women married to French men receive an unending series of remarks related to their plans for starting a family. Xiaowen, 33, a business school graduate and communications manager at Peugeot, tells of feeling "judged" at the counter of the immigration office:

She [the clerk] studied my file and then told me: 'It's good to study, but having children is also important, before it's too late.' I was surprised and first thought it was a joke. But then she continued 'You have chosen 'family and private life' [as a type of residence permit], it's not a 'scientific' or 'talent' type of permit. They're not the same things!'

- 35 Indeed, although the feeling of being judged by administrative staff is not specific to migrants, it becomes even more telling for them because it takes place in a more pronounced context of otherness. The discourse of this front desk official gives the impression that a wife's role is simply to "procreate", and that the personal aspirations of this spouse, such as studying or working, interfere with her ability to fulfil the role of wife and mother. In a context of decreasing fertility in France (Daguet, 2011), this clerk interprets in her own way the natalist policy that "assigns the role of stay-at-home-mother" to the woman (Moreau, 2005) and considers that giving birth to children legitimizes the presence of foreign wives in France. As such, while it is important to consider the specific migratory trajectory of each immigrant, this rule also applies to immigration clerks, since their personal representations influence their professional practices and the institutional discourses they produce are inseparable from those they make in their personal capacity.

- 36 When studying interactions between clerks and spouses of French nationals, an approach that combines the social relationships of gender, class, and ethnic origin seems fruitful. It lifts the veil on the complexity and diversity of migration profiles behind the seemingly self-evident administrative category of "spouse of French citizen". From an ethnic point of view, this study first shows that the Chinese are not, a priori, a target population for civic training. It then demonstrates that within the group of Chinese "spouses of French citizens", gender relations are represented differently among men and women. For the latter, reproductive functions can be emphasized over personal aspirations. Whereas the men, are confronted with family norms that promote gender equality, both inside and outside the home. This process of adopting new standards (for example, feeling useful by contributing to domestic tasks) can be described by some Chinese men, particularly those who are not qualified in France, as "feminization". Their dependency on their French spouses is primarily of an administrative nature, but it can extend to linguistic and economic matters. This places them in a more "dominated" position with respect to their partner.
- 37 Thus, there is a feminization of the status of "spouse of a French citizen," regardless of the gender of the applicant for this type of residence permit. Men tend to be assigned the role of "househusband" and feel categorized as such. While women are primarily regarded as "procreators": whether their migration motive is strongly associated with marital life (their husband) and/or a professional project (their job), they come under heavy pressure to have children.
- 38 Moreover, the transmission of matrimonial norms by immigration officials is not always direct or explicit. It is done through allusions and references to models of life, behaviour, and expectations thought to correspond to a certain idea of what a "wife of a French man" or a "husband of a French woman" should be.
- 39 Over time, the respondents I met gradually discovered the family norms internalized by their partner and in-laws that differ depending on the French spouse in question. The process these respondents undergo of appropriating (or not appropriating) these norms runs alongside their growing knowledge of the composition of the French social space.

Adjusting family norms during the settling phase: discovering the French in-laws and international conjugal dynamics

- 40 Not all respondents met their in-laws face-to-face before the wedding. Some men "preferred" to establish a relationship with their in-laws after marriage, especially those who immigrated on this motive. Chi testifies to this:
- I'd rather meet my in-laws in France. This prevents people [from China] from saying that I rely on my in-laws to immigrate. It shows my determination to marry a French woman even if her parents are poor!*
- 41 His discourse partly refers to the representations of the 'transplanted' son-in-law described above. Unlike the men, all the women insisted on meeting their French in-laws before deciding to marry,²⁶ at least through online communication services. The term "zhigen zhidi" ("to know the root, to know the core") is used several times by these women to justify the need for a meeting ahead of the wedding. However, due to

time constraints and/or geographical distance, getting acquainted with the in-laws usually takes place in the wake of the marriage.

Extra-ethnic marriages: encounters of two social trajectories in the transnational space

- 42 During French family gatherings, the Chinese spouses learn about the lifestyle of their in-laws and, more generally, the family norms and tastes of a particular social environment.²⁷ Bing's description of his first meeting with his in-laws is telling in this regard. His mother-in-law is a singing teacher at a municipal conservatory and his father-in-law is a speech therapist, they live in the southern suburbs of Paris:

I felt very stressed out, I feared they wouldn't like me. Being unemployed and learning French, I didn't have the profile of a successful man [laughter]. Eve was standing beside me, trying to reassure me by saying, 'don't worry, everything will be fine.' At the door, holding a bottle of rice alcohol [as a gift], I thought to myself, 'In any case, I can't pull out now, whether they like me or not, the wedding has already taken place.' So we walked across their well-kept garden, then arrived in front of a big house, and my stress overwhelmed me again, I was stunned by the beauty of the place, it was like I was in a movie.

- 43 Once in the house, Bing's eyes were drawn to the many artistic artefacts: musical instruments, paintings, photos, calligraphy. "A good family, but very nice," is how Bing describes his in-laws:

I could never have imagined such a gap between our two families' backgrounds. If Eve were Chinese, she would never marry me. [...] Since I went to my in-laws', I have the impression that I have discovered another way of being married, for example, they cook and clean up together. Indeed, just because you clean the table at home, no longer means you're not a man!

- 44 Bing's marriage is clearly an upward social mobility in his view. His in-laws were activists of the 1968 revolts, part of a circle of Parisian intellectuals with strong views on social relations of sex and gender. Bing is from a working class background in China and immigrated to France with no qualifications. He began the process of adjusting his family standards as he experienced social ascension. In his new milieu, he observed a form of gender equality within the couple of the previous generation through their shared domestic tasks, and undertook to internalize these family norms, different from those he learnt before leaving China where the husband is mainly active outside the home and the wife is in charge of domestic tasks. In a way, his observations of his in-laws served as an example of gender equality for his own relationship with Eve. As mentioned above, when Bing was preparing his administrative procedures and learning French, he was indeed the one who essentially took responsibility for the domestic tasks.
- 45 Social mobility via extra-ethnic marriage, and more precisely an intersection of the class effect with the gender effect, can also generate intergenerational conflicts (between the respondent and their in-laws) during the process of adjusting family norms. This is the case, for example, for Tan. Her parents are dentists who partly trained in Germany, and Tan considers herself part of a "new generation" of Chinese woman: independent, with an open mind for equality between men and women. Her mother-in-law, a French woman of Algerian origin, is a retired real estate agent, and her father-in-law left the family when his son was still a child. Tan says:

I knew nothing about the history between France and Algeria, otherwise I would know them [her mother-in-law and her husband Pierre] better. Especially their characters, my mother-in-law is a brave and emancipated person. She had to fight all her life to make a place for herself, in her family of origin in Algeria, in her beautiful French family, as well as in her professional environment. Her efforts have left a lasting impression on Pierre from an early age. That's why he's proud of his mother. I admire her for those things too. That is all great. But when she interferes in our relationship, I can't stand her!

- 46 The first disagreements between Tan and her mother-in-law date back to her decision as to whether to change her family name after the wedding. Pierre's mother was in favour of the name change, saying that "the same name will unite you even more". Reluctant to change it at first, Tan eventually accepted, which subsequently had a positive impact on her administrative procedures at the prefecture (see above). Tan's words reflect how her opinions changed, as well as the tensions between the different matrimonial norms:

In China, even for my parents' generation, this is not systematic. My mother, for example, did not take my father's name. What made me accept in fact was the unpronounceable side of my Chinese name for the French. But when I was about to do it, I thought to myself, 'You are conforming to the practices of yore, as they say in Mandarin, jiaji suiji, jiagou suigou' [by marrying a rooster you become a chicken, by marrying a dog you become a bitch]. Much later, I understood that for my mother-in-law, taking her husband's name means that the wife obeys her husband, symbolically!

- 47 Indeed, the question of the choice of the first and last names reflects, on a scale of small groups, the distribution of power in the family (Coulmont, 2011). In reaction to the norms imposed by her mother-in-law regarding the name change, Tan refers to the norms she had previously internalized, not only in China, but particularly in her home environment - from her doctor parents already exposed to Western thinking - that challenge male domination within the couple. Eventually, her decision to change her name was made more for a "practical" reason (phonetics) than based on values, or to conform to the new norms transmitted by Pierre's mother. Later, after the young couple's child was born, tensions between Tan and her mother-in-law ran high over the choice of the child's first name and the transmission of her family name. Tan struggled to have her say.
- 48 The day Tan gave birth, her mother-in-law visited her at the clinic.²⁸ In the presence of the young parents, looking at the baby, she said: "Little 'Imad',²⁹ do you like it as a first name?" In his permanent position of mediator between his mother and his wife, Pierre declared he had no opinion on the matter. As for Tan, she immediately assumed a tone that was both critical and ironic: "Imad, it doesn't sound good, it sounds like 'ni ma de' in Mandarin, which is an insult like 'fucking your mam'". Furious, her mother-in-law snapped: "Who cares about the pronunciation in Mandarin, no one here in France is going to call him in Chinese". Tan, vexed, replied: "What do you mean?! I will be the first to talk to him in Mandarin! For our relatives in China too, it is convenient to have a first name that can be transcribed [in Mandarin]".

Box 2: The historical system of surnames and first names in China and its use in France today

In ancient China, there is a system of informal, formal, and sometimes ritual surnames and first names to designate the same person (Qian, 1982).³⁰ Nowadays, giving the child a "short nickname" (xiaoming) to be used in the family remains a common practice in the countryside. This short nickname differs from the "large

name" (daming), which is officially registered on the identity document. Both these first names are by nature "composed", based on Chinese characters according to the parents' wishes. As for the choice of the child's surname, in both China and France, the practice of only passing on the father's name has been abolished (Casper et al., 2006). Children may be named after the mother, or the father, or both, although the choice of the father's name remains by far the most common (Li, 1989). Specifically in the case of "daochamen", where there is a live-in son-in-law, the child born to the young couple often bears the mother's family name. Sometimes, the man in question is even asked to take his wife's last name. In this study, the twenty-two children from the couples I met were all born in France. Each has two names: a "short nickname" composed of Chinese characters most often featuring the family name of their Chinese parent and another "large name", in which both French and Chinese family names appear when the father is Chinese, or very often only the French family name when the mother is Chinese (except in one case where the names of the French father and the Chinese mother both feature).

- 49 After a long period of negotiation, mediated by Pierre, Tan "withdrew" from choosing her son's "large name":

I mean, there was nothing I could do about it. Pierre doesn't say anything, he listens to his mother. Faced with my mother-in-law's authority, I comforted myself by convincing myself that it would be the same thing in China. If I had married a Chinese man, the child would have his last name, and my in-laws would also be involved in the choice of the first name. But here at least I gave him his 'short nickname', in Mandarin, Cheng Linpeng. So my son does bear my family name.

- 50 After that, Tan only ever called her child by this short nickname. She also insisted on recording it in the child's passport as his "middle name".

- 51 Tan repeatedly states that she has the impression of "doing it the old-fashioned way" when it comes to equality between men and women. This is closely linked to her social mobility through her marriage. Moving from a family of dentists in an urban Chinese environment to a French, middle-class, single-parent family of Algerian origin, Tan is forced to face very different family norms, not only ethnically or culturally speaking, but also from the point of view of social class. Drawing a comparison with Bing's case, it is noticeable that there is a plurality of French family models. Everything depends on the backgrounds of the two partners.

- 52 In addition to the class effect, gender plays a significant role in the transmission of the family name. For Chinese men, being an immigrant in their wife's country seems to decrease their desire to monopolize the perpetuation of their lineage. This is the case of Xiang, who describes below how his daughter was named Lea Tong-Morin and Tong Molan:

Cécile proposed the name Lea, because she likes it. It is easy to pronounce in Mandarin and close to Lei, '蕾', meaning flower bud. For her last name, my parents wanted her to bear my name only, Tong [ironic tone]! But we live in France, and she's mixed race. It is visible in her features and we should reflect this in her last name: Tong-Morin, it makes sense. Then, her family nickname is Tong Molan, Molan is inspired by the pronunciation of the French name Morin, but we chose the two characters '墨' and '兰', Indian ink and orchid. Again, my parents had sent suggestions, but it is none of their business. Above all, it's useless: the short nickname is used in the family, and we don't live with them at all. [...] As for Cécile's parents, they didn't interfere [in choosing the child's name].

- 53 In Xiang's case, the naming of the child took place only between his wife and him, even though Xiang's parents tried to intervene. By rejecting the family norms that his parents sought to pass on to him - such as that the child should bear the father's family name only and the paternal grandparents should give their grandchild the short nickname - Xiang affirmed his rupture with his native environment.³¹
- 54 When comparing the three previous cases, we can see that gender, class, and ethnic origin all produce matrimonial and family norms in a context of international migration. Depending on the respondents' background and environment of arrival, they can find themselves at the crossroads of different systems of internalized and to-be-internalized family and marital norms. Thus, the processes individuals undertake of transforming family norms mark the different stages of their socialization in the transnational space. Here the social relationships that are negotiated between spouses, between generations, between social scenes, and between countries are under permanent reconstruction.

A life cycle approach to the transformation of family norms: thinking kinship in the transnational space

- 55 It is worth examining this transformation of family norms using a life cycle approach. As the child grows up, these spouses of French people encounter different parenting practices and continue to adjust their references to family norms. The case of Xiang is illustrative in this respect. Having previously severed all links with his milieu of origin, Xiang, in response to a remark by his daughter, re-established ties with his parents.
- 56 Xiang had passed few family memories and little knowledge about China on to Lea. Until the age of three, Lea had only been to China once. One day, when she came home from school, she told Xiang: "Today we learned the word 'orphan'. Dad, it looks like you're an orphan..." Shocked by his daughter's comment, Xiang began to question his relationship to China and his genealogy:
- Until Léa said that, I had never questioned myself about my roots, for myself. It was my choice to have little contact with my parents and to educate my daughter in a French environment.*
- 57 Beyond the conflicts with his parents over his marriage before migrating, Xiang's adoption of a "French" lifestyle is also linked to his trajectory after he immigrated. Once his administrative situation was regularized, Xiang took a training course at the School of Photography of Paris in order to obtain a diploma recognized in France, and has been working since then as a freelance photographer for French magazines. In her naïve way, Lea pointed to her father's "uprooting" (Bourdieu and Sayad, 1964). Realizing the potential influence of this rupture with his parents on his daughter's development, Xiang decided to re-establish contact with them:
- Lea's remark gave me a lot to think about. For days, something my father had said was brewing in my mind, the day I left for France, he said to me: 'You betrayed us, you will be betrayed!' Now I'm starting to understand why he said that to me.*
- 58 The evolution of Xiang's parenting practices reflects the dynamic and ongoing nature of the transformation of family norms, as well as the impact of generations and the kinship system on the life of an extra-ethnic couple. A foreign spouse whose behaviour is seen as "deviant" by the ascending generation - such as not adhering to dominant family norms in his or her native milieu in China - can later begin to question this

behaviour himself or herself when assigned the role of a "foreign parent", when he or she in turn engages in parenting practices in a transnational context. During Xiang's rapprochement with his family of origin, a transformation in the conjugal relationships between Xiang and his wife could also be observed. This is reflected in various aspects: in choosing their holiday destinations³² or in their eating practices at home. Xiang now likes the family to eat Chinese food at least twice a week. This proposal - accepted by Cécile - subsequently led to a re-division of domestic tasks within the couple: it used to be Cécile who cooked, and now Xiang is in charge of the Chinese meals. Ethno-food relations thus altered the division of domestic labour between the sexes. As such, segmented family norms such as intergenerational transmission of tastes and values and the distribution of intra-marital domestic tasks influence and transform one another.

The transnational space formed by extra-ethnic couples: transformation of social norms and hierarchies, and social mobility

- 59 The category of "spouses of French nationals", despite the administrative meaning and legal status it entails, encompasses a wide diversity of social trajectories. Focusing on a population of Chinese people - qualified either in China, in France, or in both countries - for whom a marriage certificate was not an integral part in gaining their residence permit, I examined the gendered transformation of family and matrimonial norms, focusing on three social scenes along the international migration trajectory of the subjects: leaving their family of origin in the presence of their parents in China, administrative procedures in the presence of French administrative officials, and settling in as a couple in the presence of French in-laws. I have shown the extent to which the link between these Chinese migrants and the world in which they had been socialized plays a role in their perception of their host society and the future plans they make (Sayad, 1999). Living almost simultaneously in several universes after their international migration, they constantly redefine their degree of belonging to the social spaces of departure and arrival. By paying careful attention to temporality - in migration, life cycle, socialization and social mobility - I have tried to highlight the "presence of the past" (Waldinger, 2006) within transnational family networks by analysing the process of transforming matrimonial and family norms at the individual level.
- 60 I have shown how these Chinese male and female migrants themselves denaturalise gender norms when they observe from a distance the society from which they come and the society to which they immigrate. At each stage of both migration and marriage - from emigration to immigration, moving from the family of origin in China to the in-laws in France - my analyses of how the respondents adapt to matrimonial and family norms show that these migrants are located at the intersection of different social norm systems, which are far from being rigid "cultural" orders (Chinese, French), but are instead produced in an intersectional way by the social relations of gender, class, generation, and ethnicity. These spouses of French nationals are constantly working to adjust the arrangements to conform to two separate frames of reference.

- 61 Matrimonial and family norms are thus negotiated, appropriated and re-appropriated within the couple, but also through generational and kinship ties. As such, we note "the need to situate transnational links and relationships within the migrants' life trajectory" (Boccagni, 2012). This also echoes what Darmon (2010) calls "indigenous theories of the malleability of the habitus", i.e., the conceptions that individuals have of the possibility of individual transformation. In this sense, by mobilizing an intersectional approach, this research makes a contribution to studies on the socialization and social mobility of the individual, in a context of a transnational circulation of norms that goes beyond a defined national space, in other words, through the case of extra-ethnic marriages in the context of international migration.

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NOTES

1. This is one type of mixed couple in which both spouses not only have different nationalities, but also belong to different ethnic groups. In other words, in this study, couples formed by a Frenchman of Chinese origin and a Chinese woman are eliminated. The use of this term "extra-ethnic" was inspired by the work of Santelli and Collet (2003). More broadly on mixed marriages, where the term "mixed" may refer to plural levels of a conjugal configuration (in terms of nationality, race, ethnic origin and social origin, among others), see the work of Singly (2004) and Bozon and Héran (2006).
2. Between 2004 and 2013, according to data provided by INSEE ("Civil status" in metropolitan France, table of "Mixed marriages and marriages between foreigners by nationality of the spouse"), the number of Chinese men who married French women each year remained stable at around sixty and the number of Chinese women marrying French men varied between 700 and 800 each year.
3. On the limitations of the statistical approach to migration flows, see Borrel (2004), among others.
4. Intersectionality deals with the plurality of the logics of domination. Studies on postcolonial immigration that favour an intersectional approach combine various categories that are structured by domination such as gender, class, and race (Collins, 2000; Dorlin, 2005), and mobilise concepts such as "cosynthesis", "interconnectivity", "multidimensionality" and "multiplicative identity" to describe inequality and relationships of domination (Poirer, 2005). My work on Chinese migrants and their descendants from the Paris region, a migration without a postcolonial dimension, has shown that, in addition to gender, class, and race, factors such as age, migration generation, regional origin and the historicized context preceding the individual's emigration also contribute to the construction of social relations of domination (Wang, 2014 and 2017).
5. My research is therefore distinct from works studying women in precarious situations, who mobilise their physical and sexual resources in their intimate relationship with their French husband in order to obtain legal administrative status in France.
6. Here I borrow Rault's (2007) definition of "matrimonial ethos" using a terminology inspired by Weber: "a matrimonial ethos is the system of mental dispositions relating to marriage, an internalized normative order that plays a role in guiding the activities of individuals."
7. The prefecture issues residence permits on presentation of an OFII medical certificate and after the CAI (*Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*, Reception and integration contract) has been signed. The purpose of this contract is to promote the integration into French society of foreigners admitted for the first time to reside in France and who wish to settle down permanently. Mandatory since 2007, it is concluded between the alien citizen and the French

State, represented by the 'préfet'. The State is obliged to provide a number of services, including training, and the foreigner commits to participating. These courses are composed of civic training, information sessions on life in France, and French language lessons. The categories of migrants concerned are spouses of French nationals, persons arriving in France under the family reunification scheme, workers with permanent contracts, refugees and all foreign nationals obtaining their first residence permit. For more details, see: <http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F17048.xhtml>

8. Throughout her years of residence in France, the author herself is regularly required to carry out administrative procedures to obtain and renew her residence permit.

9. In an interview conducted in November 2014 with Mr Ma, the Minister-Counsellor in the Education Department of the Chinese Embassy in France, he noted that among the 150,000 skilled Chinese migrants residing in France, a large majority lived in the Île-de-France region. On the general history of the Chinese diaspora, see, among others, Ma Mung and Guillon (1992) and Ma Mung (2000).

10. This policy was implemented in 1976 in mainland China.

11. Such as, for example, a medical degree obtained in China.

12. One of the characteristics of a large Chinese city is that it has several million inhabitants.

13. In China, the place of birth - urban/rural, which determines the status of the identity document account (户口/hukou) - is an indicator of an individual's social status. The hukou is a system of population registration and control established during the Maoist era to serve the socialist development project. It has created a lasting division between urban and rural areas, and results in a system of statutes that infringes the Chinese Constitution, which stipulates that all citizens are equal before the law. Not all rural people living in cities can be granted the status of urban citizens: students may, for the duration of their studies. As such, their geographical mobility within China also reflects their actual social climbing.

14. This city is located south of Shanghai.

15. This is a lifetime position. In China, secondary school teachers are government officials.

16. In general, it was relatively common in China, at least until the early 2000s, for a young, qualified and unmarried person to live with his or her parents when they reside in the same city. Since, on the one hand, cohabitation before marriage was long considered deviant and, on the other hand, leaving one's family - in both the material and symbolic senses - occurred upon marriage rather than by getting engaged, or finding a job (Pan and Zeng, 2000).

17. The Mandarin name for the husband who settles after the marriage with his wife's parents and lives there. In English, the term is "a live-in son-in-law".

18. She lives in Shanghai.

19. This reflects Bozon and Héran's (2006) writing on older men, young women consider their age to be one of the elements contributing to male social density, and can therefore be desired as such.

20. This pejorative expression refers in Mandarin to a relationship where the age gap between a girl and her spouse is over thirty years.

21. See the reports online: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4e780db10102vfk4.html and <http://www.douban.com/group/topic/29526474/>

22. The issue of Chinese prostitution in Belleville is widely publicized in China.

23. In international trade.

24. Deprived of any income, Bing lived off his wife's resources, who benefited from the French 'intermittent du spectacle' status.

25. See for example the work of Lillo and Rygiel (2007) and Merckling (2010).

26. This is in line with the results of research carried out in other fields. See, for example, Freeman (2011) and Tseng (2015).

27. The respondents in this study are actors in a transnational space in the sense that they create and maintain social relations between multiple places that link their societies of origin and the host society (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994), in this case through family practices.

28. Tan gave birth in a private clinic, located in the south of the 17th arrondissement in Paris.

29. Tan was unaware that "Imad" is a first name of North African origin. It is therefore interesting to note the symbolic dimension of the first name, as well as the mother-in-law's desire to recover her origins by transmitting the child's second degree ancestry in the family name.

30. In other words, the same individual may have several names, used at different times depending on their age, status at the time of the facts presented, and depending on the work read, and the date the work was written.

31. Renahy's (2010) research on the prospects of children from the rural working classes in Burgundy also shows a transformation in the means of accessing married life, which break away from the former working class world.

32. The couple used to spend their holidays either with Cécile's parents or exploring a foreign country – apart from China. They then decided to spend more time in China. Xiang says that this decision to go to China is "something new for our [his] couple, for me [him] too".

ABSTRACTS

Based on a qualitative survey carried out among Chinese women and men spouses of French, their family and in-laws members, and prefectural administrative officers, this article aims to analyze the gendered transformation of family and matrimonial norms in an international migration context, through an approach in terms of intersectionality. In this study, all Chinese migrants are qualified – in China, in France, or in both countries – and they are not involved in the issue of regularization through the act of marriage. By focusing on three social scenes during the migration of these spouses of French where they are faced with different systems of family and matrimonial norms in the most conflictual way – departure from their family of origin in China, administrative experiences in the prefecture and the French agency in charge of immigration and integration (OFII), and installation of the couple in France –, the article shows that behind this administrative category "Spouse of French", represented as a granted category, there is a diversity of social trajectories and Chinese migrant men and women interviewed denaturalize themselves gender norms. Gender relations, social classes, generation effects and ethnic relations operate in an intersectional way as producers of family and marriage norms in international migrations' context, and participate in socialization processus of those international migrants. For this reason, the study of extra-ethnic couples makes it possible to analyze a transnational space in which social norms and social hierarchies are transformed at the intersection of social mobility and geographical mobility.

En s'appuyant sur une enquête qualitative menée auprès de Chinois-es conjoint·es de Français-es, des membres de leur famille et belle-famille et d'agents administratifs préfectoraux, cet article se propose d'analyser la transformation genrée des normes familiales et matrimoniales dans un contexte de migrations internationales, à travers une approche en termes d'intersectionnalité. Il s'agit d'une population d'origine chinoise qualifiée – soit en Chine, soit en France, soit dans les deux pays – pour laquelle ne se présente pas l'enjeu de la régularisation par l'acte de mariage. En

privilégiant trois scènes sociales, au cours de leur migration, où ces conjoint·es de Françaises sont confronté·es à différents systèmes de normes matrimoniales et familiales de la manière la plus conflictuelle – départ de la famille d’origine en Chine, expériences administratives à la préfecture et à l’OFII, et installation du couple en France –, l’article vise à montrer que derrière cette catégorie administrative « conjoint·es de Françaises » présentée comme une catégorie allant de soi, il existe une diversité de trajectoires sociales et les migrants chinois hommes et femmes enquêtés dénaturalisent eux-mêmes les normes de genre. Les rapports sociaux de genre, de classe, de génération et d’ethnicité, fonctionnent de manière intersectionnelle, comme producteurs de normes matrimoniales et familiales en contexte de migrations internationales, et participent aux processus de socialisation de ces migrants internationaux. À ce titre, l’étude des couples extra-ethniques permet d’analyser un espace transnational dans lequel des normes et des hiérarchies sociales se transforment au croisement de la mobilité sociale et de la mobilité géographique.

Basado en una encuesta cualitativa sobre cónyuges chinos de franceses, miembros de sus familias y familias políticas y funcionarios administrativos de las prefecturas, este artículo se propone analizar la transformación de género de las normas familiares y matrimoniales en un contexto de migraciones internacionales, a través de un enfoque en términos de interseccionalidad. Se trata de una población de origen china, cualificada – ya sea en China, en Francia, o en ambos países – para la cual la regularización por matrimonio no es sistemáticamente necesaria. Al enfocarse en tres escenarios sociales, durante su migración, en las que los cónyuges de franceses se enfrentan a varios sistemas de normas matrimoniales y de familia de la manera más conflictual – separación de la familia de origen en China, experiencias administrativas en prefectura y ante la Oficina Francesa de Inmigración y de Integración (OFII), e instalación de la pareja en Francia –, el artículo muestra que detrás de esta categoría administrativa «cónyuges de franceses», hay una diversidad de orígenes sociales y que las mujeres y hombres migrantes chinos encuestados desnaturalizan las normas de género. Las relaciones sociales de género, clase, generación y etnicidad, funcionan de manera interseccional, como productores de normas matrimoniales y familiares en contextos de migraciones internacionales, y participan en los procesos de socialización de esos migrantes internacionales. Por tanto, el estudio de las parejas no étnicas permite analizar un espacio transnacional en el que las normas sociales y las jerarquías se transforman en la encrucijada de la movilidad social y la movilidad geográfica.

INDEX

Mots-clés: conjoints de Français, migrants chinois qualifiés, normes matrimoniales et familiales, mariage, couples extra-ethniques, agents administratifs préfectoraux, intersectionnalité, socialization

Keywords: French spouses, qualified Chinese migrants, marital and family norms, marriage, mixed couples, prefectural administrative officers, intersectionality, socialization

Palabras claves: cónyuges franceses, emigrantes chinos cualificados, normas matrimoniales y familiares, matrimonio, parejas no étnicas, oficiales administrativos de la prefectura, interseccionalidad, socialización

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