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Marital Power Relations and Family Life in Transnational Marriages—A Study of Asian-French Couples Residing in France*

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Abstract

In-depth interview data are used to analyze family life and marital power relationships among Asian-French couples residing in France. All informants met their spouses/partners through personal networks or chance encounters at schools, workplaces, or social gatherings—none met through marriage agencies. All agreed that their conjugal relationships made them feel at home and a sense of belonging. In addition to social and economic resources, some of the individuals reported feeling empowered by their cultural capital or children. Some foreign spouses expressed a willingness to terminate their relationships if they could achieve financial independence, retain legal residency in France, or felt that their children

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could handle the trauma of divorce. The informants' narratives indicate that conjugal relationships may have been established and sustained due to mutual dependence. No significant value conflicts in terms of religious beliefs or traditional social norms were observed. Most of the foreign spouses appeared to enjoy a mixture of cultural values in their daily routines.

Key Words: transnational marriage, marital relationship, Asian-French couples