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Militarization and Marriage in the Cold War Context

In 1949, after losing the war to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on the Chinese mainland, the Kuomintang (KMT) retreated to Taiwan, together with the government of the Republic of China (ROC). At this time, the KMT still controlled several islands along the mainland's southeast coast, including Kinmen. Later in October of the same year, the KMT's army defeated CCP troops in a ground battle in Kinmen – a significant victory that allowed the KMT to secure control of Kinmen and Taiwan. Kinmen immediately entered a state of '*ad hoc* militarization', as historian Michael Szonyi (2008: 26) terms it, followed by the establishment of military rule, *Zhandi Zhengwu* (War Zone Administration), in 1956. This system endured until 1992 when martial law on Kinmen was lifted, five years after martial law ended on the Taiwanese mainland.

Szonyi's monograph on Kinmen, *Cold War Island* (2008), compellingly depicts local civilian experiences of wars and military rule from a broader perspective of the global Cold War, revealing the mutual constitution of local, regional and global histories. His work contributes to emerging scholarship in Cold War historiography that shifts the focus from the superpowers of the US and the Soviet Union to 'peripheral' countries, and from the study of high politics and diplomacy to the study of the social and cultural dimensions of the Cold War (Kwon 2010; Masuda 2015; Zheng et al. 2010). The framework of bipolar politics that Szonyi highlights illuminates how Kinmen was constructed as 'a beacon of freedom' and a metaphor of 'the commitment of the US-led Cold War alliance to resist Communism' (2008: 4). It also provides comparative understandings of how both the ROC and the People's Republic of China (PRC) sought to define themselves in opposition to the other, though often in practice they mirrored each other.[1] This chapter builds on this broad historical and comparative horizon to explore what happened to marriage when Kinmen civilians had to live with massive numbers of

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troops for an indeterminate period in the 'hot war' between the ROC and the PRC in the Cold War context.[2] But based on an anthropological approach to kinship, my discussion complements Szonyi's work through foregrounding how kinship practices sustained local families and animated marital change in these extraordinary circumstances.

The framework of bipolar politics that Szonyi uses to explicate KMT governance on Kinmen in the Cold War era, which was intended to oppose the CCP in China, is also evident in the two regimes' policies concerning Confucian traditions. In contrast to the CCP's radical measures of destroying Confucian and patrilineal heritages, the KMT sought to build a modern nation-state grounded on these heritages. Such opposing attitudes towards Confucian legacies between the two sides can be traced back to the period prior to 1945, and the KMT continued its pre-war policies relating to gender and the family in the Cold War era.[3] Unlike socialist policy in China, where women were asked to work equally with their male counterparts with the support of state-sponsored childcare (Stockman et al. 1995: 191; Zuo 2016: 35–36), the KMT expected women to be mothers focusing on rearing their children. In Kinmen, while young women were ordered to undertake militia training and service, they were spared this after marrying so as not to interfere with the important duties of childbearing and childrearing for the national interest. Given the KMT's emphasis on women's domesticity and its Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement launched in 1967, in competition with the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in China, the Confucian vision of a patriarchal family-based social order was retained, unchallenged, across Taiwan.

The KMT's attitudes towards Confucian traditions allowed Kinmen civilians to keep their ancestral heritage and rituals manifesting patrilineal values. However, the KMT's military measures – shaped by its goal to retake the Chinese mainland – engendered problems and stimuli which unsettled this patriarchal order. The large number of troops retreating from China to Kinmen after 1949 aroused local anxiety over women's sexuality because civilians were forced to share their houses with soldiers. Unfortunately, there were cases of soldiers raping local women and, in response to this, in 1951 the first military brothel was established in Kinmen. Notably, sex workers in the military brothels were employed from Taiwan, rather than recruited locally (Chen 2006). Szonyi highlights the linkage between military prostitution and marriages between soldiers and civilian women because 'they comprised the two major *legitimate* modes of sexual relations between soldiers and civilians' (2008: 159; my italics). I emphasize the adjective 'legitimate' because some marriages between soldiers and civilian women were 'illegitimate' according to a special law regulating soldiers' marriages in the 1950s. The first section that follows examines how the KMT's aim of recovering the Chinese mainland engendered unequal access to marriage and family life among the servicemen from China, and tensions between soldiers and

Kinmen civilians. Stories of veterans are provided to illustrate how they pursued their intimate desires through unconventional ways of establishing a marriage or intimate relationships.

The second section scrutinizes relations between militarization and marital change among Kinmen civilians between the 1950s and early 1980s. During this period, local residents suffered loss of life, physical and mental injury, and considerable damage to family property due to continued shelling from the PRC. The agricultural modernization promoted by the military government could not overcome the basic ecological constraints of the island. But, as mentioned in this book's Introduction, the remarkable number of soldiers deployed on Kinmen created economic incentives for ordinary residents. They set up various small businesses catering to the needs of the troops, locally called *a-ping-ko sing-lí* in Hokkien (lit. business with soldiers, hereafter '*a-ping-ko* business'). Local women of various ages were the entrepreneurs or main labour force in these novel businesses. Together with the military government's measures to restructure the local economy (e.g. through the sorghum distillery), local average living standards gradually improved, and women's and men's heterosexual experiences and marital options diversified.

Szonyi also examines how the dominant presence of mass troops impacted on the local marriage market (2008: 158–66), and how the geopoliticization of Kinmen was gendered through women's potential roles as entrepreneurs, prostitutes (referring to women from Taiwan), wives and mothers, and soldiers (see Chapter 10 of his book). My discussion differs in my sources of data and my theoretical approach. While Szonyi mostly relied on local men's generalized remarks about the past and other indirect material to describe marital change under militarization, my analysis is built on the biographical stories of local women and men that I collected myself. I take an approach inspired by new kinship studies to explore how kinship practices constituted reproductive and transformative power to sustain local extended families but also to animate changes to the patriarchy-prescribed gendered destinies in the circumstances of militarization. Through the intimate stories of soldiers and civilians in the Cold War context, this chapter demonstrates how marital change in this period embodied the intricate entanglement between the personal and the political, in which individual intimate desires were contested and negotiated in relation to national and familial futures.

State Control of Soldiers' Sexuality and Marriage

With the declassification of certain government archives in recent years, we now can trace the KMT's logic and measures to control soldiers' sexuality and marriage, especially those soldiers coming from the Chinese mainland after 1945 (hereafter 'mainland soldiers'). It is estimated that the number of mainland sol-

diers who moved to Taiwan between 1945 and 1953 amounted to approximately 600,000 in total (Lin 2009: 333–36). Though native Taiwanese men were conscripted into the army after 1949, mainland soldiers were professional servicemen and constituted the main force in various military attacks on China in the 1950s and 1960s (Cheng 2018). The KMT's policies regarding military brothels and soldiers' marriages specifically targeted these mainland soldiers whose military morale was essential to the KMT's anti-communist struggle. In what follows, I initially draw on studies based on archival sources to summarize how the KMT's measures to regulate soldiers' intimate lives were closely linked to its war preparation. I then move on to the life stories of mainland soldiers, demonstrating how they built intimate relationships despite the constraints to their normal pathways to marriage and family life. I did not interview any retired mainland soldiers in person and therefore my discussion relies on ethnographic studies and a collection of the life histories of these veterans made by Han-Yu (2012), a Kinmen-based female writer.

Regulating Soldiers' Sexuality

Military brothels first appeared on Kinmen, at sites on the Taiwanese mainland, and on Penghu, between 1949 and 1953, before the legal regulation of military brothels was formally enacted in 1954 (see Figure 2.1 for a photograph of a military brothel in Kinmen). According to military archives and former officials' recollections, military brothels were set up to ease soldiers' (especially mainland soldiers) feelings of loneliness and sexual need, and prevent further cases of raping civilian women (Chen 2006: 11–14; Yao 2019: 19–24). The archives suggest that some high-ranking officials were concerned about the damage to military morale as a whole caused by soldiers' mental instability and by sexual needs that might result in their deserting the army, suicide, masturbation and crimes of rape. On the other hand, the establishment of military brothels was linked to the legal restrictions on many soldiers' marriages, and thus their normal access to sexual life.

The first version of a law governing soldiers' marriages was promulgated in 1952, followed by various modifications, before its repeal in 2005. The 1952 version was the most restrictive, and mainland soldiers who constituted the central part of the army at the time were naturally its targets. This law forbade active ranking officers and certain servicemen under the age of twenty-eight, or those involved in battles or an emergent mission, to marry. All the enlisted soldiers who were not ranked – most of whom were mainland soldiers – were forbidden to marry during their terms of service. As the KMT expected mainland soldiers to stay on active service till the age of forty or even fifty because of the on-going war with the CCP in order to retake the Chinese mainland, this meant that many mainland soldiers could not marry before retirement. However, numerous cases

Figure 2.1. A disused building of a former military brothel in Anqian, Kinmen, 2018. © Hsiao-Chiao Chiu.

of transgression by ranking and non-ranking servicemen by 1958 resulted in the liberalization of the law the following year.

Reviewing the relevant archives on the military's internal debates about cases of infraction of the restrictions, Fan (2006) summarizes the authorities' concerns about military morale, military finance, and the goal of recovering the Chinese mainland. As mainland soldiers were encouraged to devote themselves to the struggle for the return to the homeland, having a family in Taiwan was deemed harmful to the revolution and to military morale in general. The authorities were also concerned about the additional financial burden generated by looking after soldiers' dependents, which was essential to sustain military morale, and with the possibility of soldiers marrying spies sent by the CCP. But when transgressions occurred, military superiors in charge tended to tolerate them because they were afraid that punishment might trigger soldiers' depression or resentment and harm military morale. They also tried to explain transgressions in terms of soldiers' homesickness and sexual needs, easily provoked by the sub-tropical weather of Taiwan.

The archives reveal that military leaders believed that many soldiers' troubles were related to the denial or suppression of their normal access to sexual and family life. But they determined to prioritize military concerns while reducing these difficulties to soldiers' sexual needs aroused by homesickness, loneliness and the

hot weather. Military brothels were proposed as the solution, and justified by the long history of military prostitution tracing back to ancient China and the existence of similar systems around the world, especially the Japanese system of military prostitution during the Second World War (Chen 2006: 12; Yao 2019: 23–24). The military leadership emphasized the function of military brothels to raise military morale and to prevent servicemen from forcing unwanted sex on female civilians. These justifications reflected the KMT's attempts to establish its legitimacy in Taiwan while preserving its goal of recovering the Chinese mainland. Especially on the anti-communist frontline of Kinmen, it was deemed crucial to maintain friendly and peaceful relationships between the army and civilians in the joint effort of fighting the communist enemy a few miles away.

Chen Changching, a local writer who was a member of staff in a military brothel on Kinmen in the 1960s and 1970s, argues that military brothels worked to prevent trouble over intimate matters between the troops and civilians (2006: 143). However, though civilians might have believed that military prostitution was a necessary precaution against soldiers' rape of civilian women, this did not mean a full curb on sexual violence. Jia-Lin, my informant who was born in the mid-1960s when military brothels had existed for years, recalled:

> Why was there 831 [a colloquial term for the military brothel initially used by soldiers and then commonly used by civilians (Chen 2006: 131–32)]? There were a lot of soldiers staying in or around civilian houses. We dried our laundry in the courtyard and women's underwear was very often stolen. Very often! Then, 831 appeared… When I was in my third or fourth grade at primary school, an incident happened. A girl who was about two years my junior was raped by a soldier in a bomb shelter. I was just a child at that time and we were all horrified. Several men in our village took sticks and tried to find that soldier. They seemed to catch the soldier, but that girl's family left the village and moved to Taiwan afterwards… This incident was not the only one. There were many children who were taken to the shelters and raped. That's why 831 appeared.

Jia-Lin's recollection suggests that military prostitution could not fully avert the miseries of rape. Civilian worries about the threat to women's security and the social order caused by the soldiers remained unrelieved. Though the military leaders recognized the complexities of soldiers' mental and sexual problems, they were inclined to treat these problems as merely men's 'biologically rooted sexual needs', which Sor (2000: 61) pinpoints as the same logic as the Japanese excuse for military prostitution, in order not to question the military mobilization itself. Military leaders could not attribute the origin of these problems to the state of war and the emergency, to which they themselves contributed. Under the KMT's ban-

ner of fighting for the recapture of the homeland, the ways in which soldiers' and civilians' personal concerns and traumas were dealt with were highly militarized.

Mainland Soldiers' Intimate Lives

As mentioned above, there were numerous transgressions of the 1952 law restricting soldiers' marriages. When the military attempted to figure out the approximate number of illegitimate marriages by servicemen of different types and ranks, they used the criteria of working conditions and income to make the calculation. It turned out that soldiers with inferior working conditions and the lowest incomes were estimated to constitute the lowest percentage of illegitimate marriages (Fan 2006). This calculation made sense because, although the law was liberalized to allow non-ranking soldiers to marry in 1959, marriage remained a luxurious dream for many low-ranking soldiers. Several ethnographic studies have shown that a large number of non-ranking mainland soldiers experienced lifelong bachelorhood, unstable intimate relationships, or a significant age gap with their wives from China whom they married after visits to China became possible in the late 1980s (Chao 2004a, 2008; Hu 1999; Li 1998; Wu 2001).

In the 1950s and 1960s, mainland soldiers' own perceptions and experiences of their masculinity may have differed from state and civilian ideas about them. Mainland soldiers were expected by the state to be patriotic warriors, but were probably viewed as dangerous outsiders by civilians. However, especially for low-ranking soldiers, personal experiences suggest that their masculinity was fragile when judged by traditional social-moral standards. The following text from a military document in 1962 highlights how mainland soldiers experienced matters differently from their Taiwanese counterparts, and reveals these soldiers' visions of a desired future to have been in line with the traditional patrilineal values:

> The *volunteer* soldiers who followed the army from the [Chinese] mainland to Taiwan have been far away from home and serving in the army for a long time. They were not allowed to resign without a sensible reason, nor to get married. This actually deprived them of the rights they were entitled to. On the contrary, the Taiwanese soldiers can enjoy warmth from their families and can leave the army after completing their fixed terms of service. It is understandable that this sharp contrast might generate emotional bitterness [among the mainland soldiers]. Rumours circulated [within the army] and complaints aroused. When a military superior encouraged soldiers by saying: 'You all have a bright future ahead', the old soldiers responded: 'There is no future if we are not going to have male heirs'. (Fan 2006: 13; my translation and italics)

I emphasize the adjective 'volunteer' used to describe the soldiers from China as a whole in the above text because it is highly problematic. Nowadays we can see from the oral histories of many mainland veterans that, rather than joining the army voluntarily, they were seized by the KMT's army on its retreat to Taiwan in 1949 (Chao 2004a; Han-Yu 2012). Chao (2004a) argues that these 'snatched' soldiers at the bottom of the military hierarchy were forced into conditions of sexual and emotional deprivation, first by the armed forces coercing them into exile and into long-term military service, and then by the legal proscription of their marriages. Though the law was relaxed in 1959, marriage and building a family were still unaffordable dreams to many rootless and impoverished soldiers, even after they retired. Many mainland veterans, as a result, developed various kinds of intimate and affective relationships with women, which deviated from dominant moral lines (Chao 2004a; Wu 2001). For instance, Mr Jiang, a mainland veteran in Chao's (2004a) study, called four women with whom he had previously had close relationships *laopo* (wife), though these women were already married to other mainland veterans who also knew Jiang. These women usually came to stay with Jiang at weekends, doing domestic chores such as laundry, shopping, cooking and dining together that were normal for a married couple. No matter how his behaviour might have been judged according to mainstream norms, Jiang himself emphasized that he always focused on one relationship at a time and did not try to damage these women's marriages. Instead, one way that he showed his genuine love for these women was to have studio photos taken of themselves in wedding attire (Chao 2004a: 17–18).

Kinmen was a key military site where many mainland veterans stayed for short-term or long-term periods during their terms of service. Han-Yu's (2012) published collection of the life histories of twenty-two mainland veterans provides rich information about these men's military experiences and intimate relationships with local women. Most veterans married local women in the 1960s and 1970s when they were more than thirty-five years old – much older than men's average age of marrying at the time – and this points to the constraints posed by the law restricting soldiers' marriages and by their socioeconomic status. The ways in which these veterans met their wives varied. For example, one veteran met his wife during a militia training exercise for local young women; another man married his colleague in the local bus agency where he worked after leaving the army. The marriage of a veteran named Zhao Guo-An was rather special: he accepted a woman's request to marry her deaf and dumb younger sister who was junior to him by eleven years. He also agreed on an uxorilocal marriage, with his wife's surname added to his full name, so that his widowed mother-in-law could receive government subsidies for soldiers' dependents (Han-Yu 2012: 220–21).

The story of Ke Bing-Yan in Han-Yu's collection illustrates an unconventional way of building a family. Ke decided to join the KMT army after being 'snatched' in Guangdong in 1949 because he had been upset by his girlfriend's earlier participation in the CCP. From the age of twenty-one, Ke served in the army for thirty-seven years and constantly shifted between the bases on Kinmen, Matsu and Taiwan. He was once in love with a woman on Kinmen but he did not dare to ask for her hand because he had no money. Some years later, he and another woman together adopted a girl whose mother was a Kinmen native (Ke's relationships with these two women were not explained). This adopted girl was taken by her adoptive mother to Taiwan for some years. After Ke retired and settled down on Kinmen, he brought his adopted daughter back to live with him. As a single parent, he devoted himself to raising his daughter, who at the time of the interview had a good career and in 2010 married a man in Taiwan. During the interview, Ke told Han-Yu that his only wish was to become a grandfather (Han-Yu 2012: 48–61).

These stories about mainland soldiers' intimate lives show that, despite the KMT's protection of a patriarchal family-based social order, its goal of retaking the Chinese mainland led to the denial of, or various obstacles to many soldiers' normal pathways to marriage. Rather than attaining socially recognized manhood through marriage and childbirth, the KMT emphasized the status of soldiers as patriotic and tough warriors, ready to sacrifice their lives for the greater Chinese nation-state. But, from the archives and soldiers' personal stories, we see how the traditional values of marriage and continuing the family line became particularly desirable for many mainland soldiers who were rootless and lonely in Taiwan. Some soldiers got married despite this being a transgression of the law, and their superiors understood their situations and tended to dismiss their transgressions. Marriage seemed to be both a means and an end that soldiers pursued in order to rebuild their manhood and personal lives, which had been damaged and exploited by the dreadful conditions of war. Even in cases where they remained officially unmarried, mainland soldiers in the lower social strata tried to perform the roles of husband or father through unconventional ways of building intimate relationships with others.

Changing Marital Patterns in Militarized Kinmen

We now shift to the other side of stories about Kinmen civilian intimate experiences. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the emphasis on sex segregation and women's fidelity remained strong on Kinmen in the early twentieth century despite some modernization brought about by the remittance economy. The increasing number of soldiers in Kinmen after 1946 heightened islanders' worries about women's security and young widows' efforts to protect their sexual virtue. Many

women whose husbands were dead or abroad tried to sustain their families by making textiles or through agricultural work, but life was too difficult for some women without other support. Remarriage to a soldier became a solution for these lone women but they could suffer moral blame from their communities as well as mental trauma through their lifetime.

Though there was barely any paid employment for women in the early 1950s, local women of different ages started to earn money by washing and repairing military uniforms at home, and making snacks to sell on the street. Many women became entrepreneurs of *a-ping-ko* business, which grew and diversified rapidly across the island. More and more shops, such as snack bars, souvenir shops and pool halls, appeared and employed young women in their late teens to early twenties whose youthful faces and bodies could attract more soldier-clients (Chou 2009: 66–75). As their work involved intensive contact with soldiers, the number of young women who married soldiers originally from China or from Taiwan increased.[4]

Lin Ma-Teng, an expert on local history mentioned in the previous chapter, made the link between militarization, a changing local economy and marriage during my interview with him in 2018. He stated that local residents were under constant pressure to feed the family, especially throughout the 1950s when the CCP launched two intensive artillery attacks on Kinmen. For a young woman, marrying a soldier might therefore have been better than marrying a local farmer. He listed three types of local women's marriages to soldiers: (1) a married woman who had received no news from her husband abroad or had been widowed might prefer to marry an army chef because at least daily meals were guaranteed; (2) a young, fashionable woman would be easily attracted by a young soldier driving a military car, even if he was on duty; (3) a prudent woman could wisely choose a ranking officer who might become a general in the future.

Rather than representing all cases at the time, Lin's categorization points to the emergence of alternative imaginaries of intimate relationships, marital lives and futures among local women evoked by the comings and goings of soldiers with various characteristics. It also points to local women's growing autonomy in deciding their own life and marriage thanks to their newfound economic power largely building on *a-ping-ko* business. But this does not mean that conventional ideas about sex-segregation and parental authority over children's marriages had no part in these women's individual circumstances. Based on my collection of life stories of women born in the 1950s and 1960s, I describe below how local women's heterosexual experiences and marital options diversified along with expanding opportunities to study, to work outside the home, and to meet men from different backgrounds. I discuss their economic power and autonomy in relation to their familial bonds. Lastly, I turn to local men's marital experiences, unpacking how militarization generated different effects for local men and women.

Diversification of Women's Heterosexual Experiences and Marriage

From imperial times to the early 1950s, investment in daughters' education had been viewed by most parents as a waste of money and pointless in Kinmen. As the KMT gradually settled its governance in Taiwan and Kinmen, policies of improving levels of education were promoted. In the 1960s, mandatory education was extended from six to nine years and some programmes guaranteed a certain number of Kinmen students' university admission and funding for their studies in Taiwan (Li 2009). With the gradual improvement of local living standards, families that were relatively affluent sent their daughters to the only senior high school where female and male students from different neighbourhoods could meet. Some of my young informants said that their parents met each other at the senior high school and got married a few years after graduation. On the other hand, I heard numerous stories about women who went to Taiwan to work after graduating from junior high school, and married men they met in the factories or at gatherings of friends in Taiwan. Though women's increasing mobility in the outside world, beyond the reach of the watching eyes they constantly sensed in Kinmen, was entwined with sending their remittances back home, they gained opportunities to develop romantic relationships and marry the men of their choice. But there were also cases in which women were more reserved about their interaction with men, as illustrated in the story of Yu-Fen.

Yu-Fen, a retired teacher at a local school, was born into a prestigious family in the early 1950s. When recalling her life history to me, Yu-Fen emphasized repeatedly that she was very careful about her proper behaviour and distance from men because of her family teaching. One of the several examples she provided was that she never talked to a male classmate who lived close to her home during her years at primary school. Though her father, like many of his coevals at the time, deemed further education after senior high school unhelpful for a girl, she gained the emotional and financial support from her mother and eldest brother to carry on her studies in Taiwan. Yu-Fen said that her mother told her, 'You should continue your education as far as you can. Don't be illiterate like me'. This story instantiates the transformative capacities of kinship as kin ties, like the mother-daughter ties and the ties between siblings in this case, could support the transgression of dominant patriarchal rules of prioritizing sons' education and upward mobility.

Without any hesitation, Yu-Fen headed home directly after completing her undergraduate studies because her parents wanted her back and her eldest brother informed her of a suitable teaching job. Her return brought about a meeting with her future husband, a man from Taiwan who was also a teacher in a local school. Her husband seemed to fall in love with her at their first encounter, and tried to

create chances to meet her. Yu-Fen, who might have been shy of recalling the details about their courtship during an interview, quickly concluded by saying smilingly: 'My husband was the first man I knew. He was *si-pi-lai-lian* (impudent and brazen-faced); since we met, he has always been *si-pi-lai-lian* and waiting for me'. Finally, after seven years, Yu-Fen agreed to marry this man. Her father, who had always wanted her to marry a local man, agreed because this son-in-law stayed in Kinmen after the marriage.

Yu-Fen's story suggests that her prudence about sex-segregation was cultivated by her upbringing in a high-status family. But cautious attitudes towards sexual boundaries were actually common among local households. Besides cases of rape, unhappy stories about young women deceived by soldiers who hid their married status or abandoned the women who followed them to Taiwan came to light from time to time. Locally tight social networks also intensified the circulation of these stories as gossip beyond these women's natal communities. Their personal reputations and marital prospects were thus seriously damaged. As such, many parents believed that it was better to follow the customary approach to marry their daughters to local grooms whose backgrounds could be known in detail in advance. Many women who were economically competent accepted their parents' arrangement out of filial piety but also out of a reluctance to marry far away from home. For the families relying on *a-ping-ko* business, as illustrated in the two stories below, some focused their relationships with soldiers on business only, while others were more open to closer relationships with soldiers, including marriage.

Mei-Hua, born in the mid-1950s, was the second daughter of six children in her family. Her elder sister sacrificed her own education to look after her ill mother and earn money by washing military uniforms. Their father then invested in a pool table to expand their *a-ping-ko* business and his eldest daughter was the primary manager. This business enabled Mei-Hua and her younger siblings to continue their education. Mei-Hua originally planned to further her studies in Taiwan after junior high school, but she missed the school registration because of a ferry delay from Kinmen to Taiwan. After she finally arrived in Taiwan, she decided to stay and work in a factory in Taipei and send remittances back home – which was common for female teenagers across rural areas in Taiwan (Kung 1983; Yin 1981). Two or three years later, she was called back to take over the *a-ping-ko* business because her elder sister was getting married. She ran the business excellently, but her parents started to worry about her marriage prospects when she was approaching the age of thirty. Despite this, her parents warned her repeatedly to keep a proper distance from soldier-clients; Mei-Hua did not fancy a romance with a soldier either.

When Mei-Hua attended a regular militia training session for unmarried women, she met a girl junior to her who offered to introduce her uncle to Mei-

Hua. This girl's uncle visited her home some days later but Mei-Hua was absent. Her mother asked this man jokingly to help her harvesting sorghum; he agreed and appeared next day. When they were working on the farm, Mei-Hua's father came to inform them that another man had just visited and had expressed his wish to marry Mei-Hua. Her mother then told the young man she was with on the farm, 'You go to select an auspicious date and then visit our home for the formal proposal of marriage'. Mei-Hua was surprised by this sudden decision without her consent or her meeting the man beforehand, but she accepted this marriage because her mother said, 'As I gave birth to you, I could decide your marriage'.

The following story about Wan-Zhen shows a family's rather friendly relationships with soldiers. Before Wan-Zhen's birth in the early 1960s, her family's economic situation had been improved by the income her mother and two elder sisters earned through washing and repairing military uniforms, and selling hot food to soldiers. These two elder sisters then married soldiers who were frequent clients of their family business. I met and had a conversation with one of these two men in Kinmen in 2018 when Wan-Zhen invited me to join their family lunch. This man, a Taiwanese native and former professional serviceman, told me that when he was stationed in Wan-Zhen's village, he visited their food stall often and became acquainted with his future mother-in-law before his future wife. He said, 'my mother-in-law was extremely nice and always took care of me as if she was a living Bodhisattva'. Wan-Zhen's female relative sitting next to us added, 'Their mother was very kind to all the soldiers, and always asked them "*youmeiyou e dao*" (lit. "Are you hungry?", a common expression for care about others)'.

Wan-Zhen started to help the family business, from her time at primary school until her graduation from senior high school. She spent most nights during her childhood and teenage years ironing uniforms while reading her textbooks. Wan-Zhen originally wanted to further her studies in Taiwan after junior high school because going to Taiwan had always been her dream. But for unforeseen reasons, she continued her studies in the local senior high school. Her second attempt to go to Taiwan after graduation was objected to by her family, especially her elder sisters who felt unjustly treated because they had sacrificed their education to earn money for the family. Wan-Zhen therefore took an examination for administrative posts in military-associated institutions in Kinmen. She passed the exam and got a job in a military agency, where she met her Taiwanese husband who was undertaking his mandatory military service in Kinmen in the early 1980s. Wan-Zhen told me that her parents accepted their three daughters' decisions to marry soldiers from outside, but expressed some concern about their eldest daughter's marriage to a mainland soldier who was senior to her by more than ten years. But, as their parents had known about their daughters' courtships with these soldiers beforehand and had carefully observed these men in their frequent interactions, they were relieved to go along with their daughters' choices.

Kinship and Women's Increasing Power and Autonomy

The ways in which the marriages of the three women described above were decided varied according to the differences in their family conditions. We can see the gradual reconfiguration of generational and gender hierarchies as women gained more power in deciding their own marriages owing to their economic competence and contributions to their natal families. Mei-Hua explained that she agreed to marry an unknown man from a poor family because she trusted her mother who judged her husband to be honest and diligent. Similarly, some women told me that their trust in their fathers' choice of mate for them lay in their feelings of being cared for by their fathers who allowed their daughters to go to school despite their poverty. This suggests that an arranged marriage was not simply a marker of parental authority but involved emotional bonds and trust between generations.

The arrangements of these women's marital residence also varied according to their husbands' situations given that patrilocal residence was an almost unchallenged norm at that time (and remains powerful today). Yu-Fen and Wan-Zhen stayed in Kinmen, living close to or in their natal home, because their husbands had local jobs and their families also accepted this residential decision. By contrast, Mei-Hua, who married a Kinmen native, had no choice but to take patrilocal joint residence. Mei-Hua and many of my elderly female informants who married local men in Kinmen appeared to live their lives in compliance with the patriarchal norms and local moral standards. They took care of all the household chores, including looking after parents-in-law and preparing food offerings for the frequent rituals of worshipping gods and ancestors. They contributed to the maintenance of their marital families' social networks in their unpaid labour, helping with the preparations for other people's weddings, funerals and other tasks. They felt great and continuous pressure to give birth to a son in order to continue their husbands' agnatic lines (see also Chiu 2017).

Compared to Mei-Hua, marriage seemed to create alternative futures for Yu-Fen and Wan-Zhen as they were to some extent relieved of the pressure and burden of living in a patrilocal joint household. However, this kind of future might not have been expected by the women themselves. For example, Wan-Zhen told me that she was frustrated when her dream of going to Taiwan was shattered again because of her husband's difficulty in finding a job in Taiwan and his subsequent success in securing a stable job in Kinmen. To save money from renting a residence and to look after her own parents, Wan-Zhen became the only one of four siblings who stayed behind and she headed an exceptional uxorilocal household. While she was relieved from the duty of caring for her widowed mother-in-law, she bore the burden of attending to all the household chores and ancestor worship (on her brother's behalf) in her natal home. This case encourages us not to think of

marriage as necessarily the springboard to a desired future but as being enfolded within a story of creating one's own life and future, which might involve agentive power of both the individual and the family (Carsten 2021). It is through this point that I re-examine these women's stories to explore how gender hierarchy in traditional patriarchal families was gradually reconfigured.

Elsewhere, I have drawn on Alfred Gell's (1988) interpretation of kinship as a fundamental technology of reproduction to explore how kinship practices allowed ordinary families in Kinmen to sustain and gain upward mobility in the period of military rule (Chiu 2018b). Kinship practices involved the cultivation of next generations with certain dispositions and abilities, which not only socialized them into a given social world but also laid the foundation for them to create their own lives. As we have seen, Yu-Fen and Mei-Hua adhered to their family teachings of sex segregation to protect their own and their familial reputations. Mei-Hua and Wan-Zhen learned from their mothers and elder sisters how to turn their skills of doing household chores, such as cooking and repairing clothing, to be a business catering to soldiers' daily needs. These skills and the money they earned supported their younger siblings' (especially brothers') education and their natal families' upward mobility. These women gained self-confidence through these work experiences and quickly drew on these experiences to augment income for their marital families. Mei-Hua was a full-time homemaker after marrying but, to help augment the family income, she suggested making money by selling watermelons, planted by her husband, to soldiers stationed nearby. Wan-Zhen continued her full-time job in the same workplace but used her excellent cooking skills, which she had learned from her mother when helping in the family business, to make snacks for her husband to sell to soldiers when he was not working. These women's economic contribution to their marital families earned them recognition of their authority over family matters from their husbands and children.

These women's stories also invite us to consider how transgressions or changes may arise from the positive or negative effects of the ties and interactions between kin (Carsten 2013, 2019; Das 2007; Lambek 2011). Yu-Fen's, Mei-Hua's and Wan-Zhen's siblings played different roles in constituting their life trajectories. In Yu-Fen's case, her eldest brother's emotional and financial support enabled her to pursue undergraduate studies in Taiwan, in opposition to her father's wishes. Her brother also encouraged her to continue working as a school teacher rather than marrying quickly and becoming a homemaker. As such, Yu-Fen viewed her returning to Kinmen after graduation as reciprocation of her brother's support to her. Both Mei-Hua and Wan-Zhen continued their education beyond junior high school thanks to their elder sisters' sacrifice of their own education to earn money for the family. Though Mei-Hua and Wan-Zhen also worked to support their younger siblings' education, they faced their elder sisters' complaints about being unfairly treated. While Mei-Hua might have given up her further studies

in Taiwan voluntarily, Wan-Zhen explicitly articulated her ethical and emotional struggles between her own desire to study in Taiwan and her elder sisters' feelings of bitterness and envy.

The above cases illustrate how familial bonds and personal ethical striving (Das 2007) were intertwined and drove people to make less transgressive decisions or compromises on their routes of creating their own life beyond the patriarchal prescriptions of gendered destiny. But I also heard other stories about women who were confident and determined in pursuing their own desires despite objections from their families. Jia-Lin, whom we met earlier, described the story of her aunt (born in the mid-1950s) as being extraordinary. Her aunt had started to work in *a-ping-ko* business in her early teens and, by her late teens, she was already the owner of a snack bar. Jia-Lin and her aunt have only a ten-year age gap between them, and were very close to each other. They shared a dream of going to Taiwan and of self-transformation into a modern image of womanhood. For example, they witnessed the changes in a female neighbour who became fashionable and lost her local accent after some years of working in Taiwan. They painted colourful pictures about lives in urban Taiwan where they could find various new and interesting things that were absent in Kinmen. But Jia-Lin's aunt actually rejected the opportunity to go to Taiwan by marrying one of several soldiers pursuing her. With savings accumulated from her hard work in Kinmen, Jia-Lin's aunt ultimately made her own way to Taiwan regardless of her parents' strong disapproval. Here we see that, rather than a springboard to a desired future, marriage was enfolded within a woman's self-creation of her desired life and her future.

Local Men's Experiences of Marriage under Militarization

Militarization engendered different experiences of marriage for local women and men. While many women gained opportunities to meet marital partners of different origins through their newfound economic agency, local men were forced to compete with soldiers on the local marriage market. As Szonyi (2008: 161–63) notes, given that the number of men (including local males and soldiers from elsewhere) far exceeded the number of local women, there was a notable rise in bridewealth that local men were requested to pay. The term *san-ba* (lit. three eights) – including NTD 8,000 in cash, 800 *jin* (roughly one pound) of pork, and 8 ounces of gold – was coined to describe the new standard of bridewealth (Chou 2009: 112). Though most of my senior interlocutors said that *san-ba* was exaggerated, they all agreed that it was not easy for a local man without any inherited properties and a stable income to find a bride, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. A report in the local newspaper *Zhengqi Zhonghua Ribao* issued by the military on 13 March 1962 described two local men marrying each other's younger sister so as to avoid paying *san-ba*. The scarcity of local brides also resulted in local

men 'marrying down'. An elderly villager told me that his older brother who was a school teacher was unable to find a compatible partner to be his wife in the early 1960s except for an illiterate woman.

But as suggested in my previous discussion of women's divergent marital experiences, many women married local men whom they had met at school, the workplace or through parental arrangement. In Mei-Hua's case, her mother decided on her marriage to a man from a poor family who was the only one of three sons who stayed behind to look after his widowed mother. I also heard several stories of arranged marriages in which, although the groom was impecunious, the bride's parents evaluated him as a good mate in terms of whether he was upright, honest and diligent. Moreover, like their female counterparts, local men's marital options began to diversify along with the growing number of men studying or working in Taiwan. However, the enduring military conflict with China sometimes had unexpected effects on individual men's life plans, as illustrated in Guo-Hong's story.

Guo-Hong, born in the early 1950s, was the fourth of seven sons in his family. While studying on an evening programme at a university in Taipei in the early 1970s, he worked in the daytime for a company where he met his future wife, Chun-Yue, from a rural area in northern Taiwan. In my interview with Chun-Yue, she said that people in those days were shy and reserved, and Guo-Hong initiated the first step by giving her a *zhitiao* (lit. a piece of paper on which he wrote sweet words to Chun-Yue). Gradually, they developed a romantic relationship. Chun-Yue became hesitant about this relationship because her mother said that Kinmen was too far away and too dangerous, but she was eventually moved by Guo-Hong's persistence. Before Guo-Hong's graduation, they visited Chun-Yue's mother together to ask for her permission for their marriage, as Chun-Yue recalled:

> He promised my mother that he would not return to Kinmen, and it was not necessary because some of his brothers remained there. He said he would find a job in Taiwan. My sister-in-law told my mother that my marital life would be easier because I would not live with my parents-in-law. Otherwise, my mother… If my father was still alive, he would have definitely opposed this marriage. My father only agreed my elder sister's marriage to a man living nearby.

Guo-Hong and Chun-Yue got married and lived in Taipei. Guo-Hong graduated the following June, and Chun-Yue gave birth to their first son two months later. However, in September of the same year, Guo-Hong announced suddenly that he had to return to Kinmen because he had found a job there and he was anxious about the possibility of being drafted into the army.

Under the system of military rule in Kinmen, Guo-Hong had become a member of the militia when he was sixteen years old. Given that he was supposed to continue militia training until the age of fifty-five, he was recognized as a 'trained class B militiaman' and was exempted from the compulsory military service which applied in general to male citizens of Taiwan. As native men of Kinmen might leave for Taiwan for a certain period and be absent from regular militia training, they were subject to *linshi zhaoji* (temporary mobilization) as long as they were within the age for militia service. If they were in Taiwan to study, they could apply for deferral of their military service. The problem emerged when Guo-Hong graduated and intended to reside in Taiwan, as he explained:

> If there were enough soldiers, there was no need to draft us. But it was hard to say whether the draft notice would come or not… After graduation, I continued working in Taipei, just as I promised my wife. But, as it happened, the schools in Kinmen were in desperate need of teachers because many teachers (from China) who previously served in the army were going to retire, and very few Taiwanese people were willing to come to Kinmen. Also, I became anxious about the draft because several men of my generation in Kinmen got their draft letters. Anyway, I applied for the teaching post and I got the job. I was told to come back immediately to confirm my acceptance of that job.

Chun-Yue was totally shocked when she suddenly heard this news from her husband, as she recalled:

> He was afraid to tell me what had happened… At that time, I had just given birth to my son and was staying in my natal home so that my mother could look after us. My husband stayed alone in Taipei for work and came to see us every Saturday. But, one day, it was a Wednesday, he came suddenly. I asked whether he had taken leave from work. He shook his head and kept quiet. He was afraid… Next day, he finally told me the truth. I cried and my mother also cried terribly. We continued weeping for one or two weeks… Because we Hakka women followed our husbands no matter what their fortunes were, I had no other choice but to accept what had happened.

Despite her reluctance, Chun-Yue followed her husband to Kinmen in the mid-1970s and lived with her parents-in-law. Because I had known Chun-Yue and Guo-Hong for several years, since 2013, I was able to observe this couple's interaction and heard about the tensions and arguments between them from other villagers. Chun-Yue very often said, 'I came to Kinmen because my husband cheated me', as if Guo-Hong's concealment in their early marital life was a weapon she used

to blame her husband whenever something went wrong between them. Guo-Hong admitted his concealment when recalling the story to me, but, from his standpoint back then, it was the best option he had – given that he and his newly established family might have encountered more difficulties if he had been conscripted into the army. His story sheds light on the unanticipated effects of the KMT's military mobilization on the lives of ordinary citizens. This intricate entanglement between the personal and the political was actually expressed in various ways in the lives of Kinmen islanders during the period of military rule.

Conclusion

Compared to the period prior to 1949 when Kinmen islanders travelled abroad and brought back with them Western ideas about gender equality and marriage, the general social atmosphere in Kinmen in the Cold War era was much more conservative. There were no revolutionary voices articulating new social imaginaries which differed from the vision of a patriarchal family-based social order promoted by the state. However, the KMT's protection of this patriarchal order was highly militarized, which generated the paradoxical effects of obstructing many soldiers' access to marriage while also encouraging civilian women's devotion to childrearing in the national interest. As this chapter has demonstrated, this extraordinary situation, structured by the KMT's goal of retaking the Chinese mainland, perhaps made the normative life courses of marriage and childbirth particularly desirable for mainland soldiers who had no roots and connections in Taiwan. Many ranking and non-ranking servicemen transgressed the law to get married, or developed unconventional intimate relationships with others, which allowed them to perform the roles of husband or father.

Despite the concerns of the state and of Kinmen residents about the sexual boundary between soldiers and civilian women, contact was inevitable because of war mobilization and women's earnings derived from catering to soldiers' daily necessities. The stories of women described in this chapter have shown how both the positive and negative effects generated from the intimate sphere of kinship had played a significant part in shaping their life trajectories, which also involved challenges to the gender and generational hierarchies. Kinship, as a technology of reproduction, laid the foundation for women to draw on skills acquired in the family to improve their family income by, for example, cooking, washing and repairing military uniforms. Familial ties and local patriarchal ordering created pressure for young women to sacrifice their own education and earn money for the family. But these women, with their newfound economic agency, were sometimes able to gain power in deciding their own marriage or establish their authority in their marital families. During the Cold War era, for local families with several children, it was often the case that elder siblings, usually sisters, worked hard to

allow their younger siblings to pursue higher education. These highly educated siblings, especially men, attained upward mobility and marked the continuous growth of their patrilineal family. But there were feelings of unfairness and envy among elder siblings who had made sacrifices and this sometimes engendered emotional and ethical struggles for younger siblings.

As more and more local girls and boys pursued education in local high schools or went to Taiwan for study and work, their heterosexual experiences were enriched by increasing opportunities to interact with the other sex beyond their familiar neighbourhoods, and their marital options diversified. But, as demonstrated in this chapter, women's newfound economic power did not necessarily lead to the rejection of parental intervention in their life and marriage, or to resistance to the patriarchal ordering of local social and family lives. Besides the KMT's moral inculcation of women's devotion to the domestic domain for the national interest, the local kinship system was effective in reproducing these gendered dispositions. Nevertheless, rather than being merely obedient, women's contribution to the preservation of the patrilineal family and values involved ethical struggles between their own desires and their care for others. Moreover, women's economic capacities and skill in managing the household and social networks earned them respect and power within and beyond their intimate circles (Chiu 2017, 2018b).

The historical and ethnographic material presented in this chapter highlights the lack of attention to the military aspects of Taiwan in the Cold War era in anthropological research. A theoretical preoccupation with the lineage paradigm or the model of corporate family has encouraged researchers to focus on the impacts of modernization on the structure and organization of the Chinese (extended) family (e.g. Cohen 1976; Gallin 1984; Pasternak 1972). This has ignored the ways in which the lives of a significant proportion of the Han Chinese population (including soldiers and civilians) in Taiwan were deeply affected by militarization. It has also placed undue emphasis on the Chinese family as a corporate unit in which individual emotions and desires had no means of expression. This chapter has shown how the life trajectories of mainland soldiers and Kinmen civilians were intricately entangled with the Cold War geopolitics, and how individuals articulated their desires and emotions regarding the constraints or unjust treatment they experienced.

Drawing on examples of the intimate experiences of mainland soldiers and Kinmen civilians in the Cold War era, I have demonstrated how the context of military mobilization engendered unequal access to marriage and alternative imaginings of the future. These individuals were not merely passive recipients of state policies but active agents trying to exercise control over their own lives. For soldiers in the lowest ranks of the military and male civilians without disposable wealth, the normative life course of marriage and childbirth may have been luxurious dreams or required greater efforts to achieve. Militarization created a

constant threat of sexual violence for female civilians but also broadened their imaginings of intimate futures. The reproductive as well as transformative capacities of kinship practices equipped local women and men with the resources and opportunities needed to improve the lives of their families but also to pursue their own desires, albeit involving the sacrifice of some of their kin. The intertwining of familial bonds and personal ethical struggles contributed to compromise or compliance with the conservative expectations of gendered roles. But the increasing power of women to provide for the family gradually reconfigured local generational and gender hierarchies, leading to transforming intergenerational relations, which are discussed in the following chapter.

Notes

1. For example, land reform on Kinmen in the 1950s was aimed at drawing attention to the contrast in governance between the ROC and the PRC. An agency called Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, funded by the US, published numerous pamphlets with photos showing Kinmen farmers holding giant sweet potatoes as evidence of its achievements. However, these photos resemble those released by the PRC as evidence of the triumphs of the Great Leap Forward (Szonyi 2008: 126–34).
2. Besides the ground battle in late 1949, Kinmen experienced two periods of intensive artillery attacks from the PRC in 1954–1955 and in 1958, known as the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises, which caused significant casualties and loss of property for many local families. After the 1958 Crisis ended in stalemate, both the ROC and the PRC settled upon a routine of bombarding each other every other day with shells containing propaganda leaflets until 1979.
3. After confirming its governance of China in the late 1920s, the KMT exploited the state-building possibilities of *xiao jiating* (lit. small family, meaning Western conjugal family ideals) discourse proposed by the reformers of the New Culture Movement, but differed in its emphasis and direction. Glosser points out that '[w]hereas New Culture radicals had envisioned a state strengthened by the cumulative effects of individual freedom and productivity, the Nationalists made the state both the primary beneficiary and the central agent of reform' (2003: 81). In an attempt to distinguish its campaigns from those of the CCP (founded in 1921), the KMT proposed new laws and policies focusing on educating women and supporting party-affiliated women's organizations on the one hand, but with limited space for issues of gender equality and building women's consciousness and autonomy on the other (Hsu 2005). The image of women that the KMT sought to construct was illustrated in its New Life Movement launched in 1934, in which women were regarded as crucial actors in the implementation of the KMT's desired changes within families (Croll 1978; Diamond 1975). Neo-Confucian teachings of self-cultivation and maintaining family order were applied to mothers, who were to bear primary responsibility for cultivating their children with proper dispositions and assuring family order for the sake of the state. After the Japanese invasion of the Chinese mainland in 1937, the KMT began mobilizing women for the war effort by asking them to assist in upholding the morale of the nation in its greatest trial through focusing on care of the household and children.
4. The exact number of local women marrying soldiers from outside is unknown because, as Szonyi (2008) notes, the phenomenon was never distinguished as a category in

compiling statistics. Szonyi therefore cites the evaluation of one local man to suggest this phenomenon's significance: '[after 1949] [m]any women were married to soldiers; in total over one thousand. My own estimate would be that it was about one in five of the female population' (2008: 159). But this estimate is still approximate as it does not specify the period taken into account.