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Marriage Migration and Transnational Care in East and Southeast Asia Revisited through the Migration-Development Nexus Lens

DRAFT – NOT FOR CITATION[1]

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Introduction

Processes of economic globalisation are not only related to production but can be (and should be) extended to reproductive labour also, as evident from an increasing demand for domestic and care services carried out in private households around the globe. Such services are often performed as unpaid work primarily by female members of a household, but there has also been a marked shift (or revival) of such services being increasingly carried out by outsiders, i.e. non-household members, on a paid basis[3]. In addition, or as a result, the labour market for domestic work has become internationalised, alongside a corresponding surge in comparatively low-skilled and/or low-wage female migration from an increasingly diversified range of source countries, often involving travel over fairly long distances (such as in the case of Sri Lankan women working in Cyprus, Eritrean women in Lebanon, and Filipinas in Singapore).

Most attention in the academic literature and policy debate has in fact been on migrant women's performance of paid domestic work (REFS). In Asia, this has involved women from South and Southeast Asia working on temporary contracts in households primarily located in West Asia (Gulf states), Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia) and East Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan), predominantly on a

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[3] Kofman & Raghuram 2015, Kofman 2012, Milkman, Reese & Roth 2016

'live-in' basis. The politics and advocacy efforts in the lead-up to the ILO Convention No. 189 ('Decent Work for Domestic Workers') and its post-adoption activities have underpinned the attention placed on (migrant and non-migrant) women in paid domestic work. (REFS). This has been a hugely important endeavor. What should, however, not be forgotten are other forms of gendered migration which are also linked to care and domestic work. One such form is marriage migration.

The political and academic debates around ILO C189 is in some form also linked to the broader debate on the link between migration and development and the benefits that migration can have on accelerating development. Gendered forms of migration have, however, generally been marginalized, and marriage migration in particular. Yet, there are at least three reasons why marriage migration ought to be considered as part of this debate: *first*, marriage migration counters the myth of the temporary character of legal international migration in Asia; *secondly*, with the majority of foreign spouses being women from less highly developing countries in Southeast and Northeast Asia, this type of migration is inseparable from classic developmental concerns such as alleviation, welfare and social security. *Lastly*, many marriage migrants engage in various forms of labour— not only domestic and care work, but also some service and agricultural work and other forms of highly casualised and precarious labour that is in line with the general female migration trend around the world. When they engage in industrial and other forms of labour, the intersection of legal status, ethnicity and gender generates specific forms of precarity. This in turn has implications for development in economic and social terms. Women's marriage migration and the link to development challenges the mainstream development paradigm by considering aspects of social reproduction, family and social transformation connected to marriage migration, in tandem with social policies in origin and destination countries and their relevance to women's (often unpaid) care work duties in newly formed families at the destination and for families left behind at the origin.

In sum, what has been missing is a discussion of marriage migration linked to the ongoing debate on the relationship between international migration and development with the latter ('development') understood in a more inclusive sense. By 'inclusive' we do not only refer to social development beyond the macro- economic realm, but also in its application to a transnational context, in relation to structural and institutional challenges of social reproduction and "care crises" on the one hand, and individual coping strategies at the level of extended families on the other hand. The discussion that follows draws on the experience of marriage migration in the Southeast and East Asian context, with specific illustrative reference made to South Korea in the latter part of the paper.

Marriage Migration and Development

International migration's role in, and relationship to, development has been debated by policymakers and academics since the 1960s. This debate has gone through a number of phases, influenced by changes in the way of thinking about (and methodologies in assessing) the larger development paradigm.[4] Since the early 2000s, interest in the migration-development nexus has experienced a major revival, evidenced in the myriad activities of numerous international organizations, donor agencies, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Importantly, the final report by the Global Commission on International Migration (2005) devotes substantive space to migration in relation to development. In addition, both the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have published reports on international migration from a development angle, as have various international financial institutions including the World Bank, whose interest was first piqued by monetary remittances but has since broadened out.[5]

The specific topic of migration for the purpose of entering into marriage, forming a family, and assuming concomitant care responsibilities – in short, marriage migration – has not been central to the migration-development nexus debate. In fact, it has been absent. Instead, marriage migration has been subject to scholarly inquiry from a number of perspectives other than 'development' in the classic sense, ranging from cross-racial/inter-religious dynamics in the context of immigration and settlement migration, to the migration of spouses as part of family unification, with women studied in the role of "trailing wives," to marriage migration's link to labour migration, as well as to the feminization of migration in Asia. Feminist scholars who have focused on arranged marriages between individuals from the same country, mail-order brides, or so-called "fake" marriages have highlighted severe power imbalances between individuals joined in matrimony due to gender, class, or ethno-religious inequalities. Research on marriage migration has since moved beyond the mail-order bride discourse and, thus, beyond a simplistic victim-agency dualism.[6]

Scholars writing from a transnational perspective have mostly concerned themselves with transnationally split families, i.e. migrants leaving children behind when taking up employment abroad. As they are usually on time-limited contracts or undocumented, they cannot avail themselves of family unification policies, an option typically only available to skilled or professional migrants.

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[4] Faist 2008, Raghuram 2013.

[5] For a list of World Bank publications on Migration and Development, go to Migration & Remittances Team (http://go.worldbank.org/A8EKPX2IA0).

[6] M. Kim 2010, W.-S. Yang and Lu 2010.

Absentee parenting and its impact on children left behind have been subject to scholarly inquiry, in particular, in the context of domestic workers who take up paid care work whilst leaving their own children to the care of others.[7] Such dynamics are epitomized by the "care chain" concept[8]. Transnational caring practices of marriage migrants in the context of extended families spread geographically and the multi-directionality of transnational care strategies, however, have not been tackled in any detail.

Three themes within the gendered migration debate allow us to link marriage migration to the migration-development nexus debate: *first*, migrant women (including marriage migrants) face complex forms of precarity beyond the workplace, which has been the dominant focus of the mainstream scholarly debate, with implications for our understanding of development in its transnational and multidirectional form; *second*, changing family patterns and dynamics connected to marriage migration are set within the transnational sphere of social relations and form a crucial aspect of migrant precarity, which has conceptual and operational implications; and *third*, women and marriage migrants are often relegated to the realm of care and reproductive labour in its paid and unpaid forms, with implications for social policy regimes. Reproductive labour refers to labour that creates or aids in creating labour power. It includes biological reproduction, as well as nurturing individuals throughout their life cycles through education, child rearing, and nursing. It also includes the social reproduction of units deemed essential to the maintenance of society, such as family life and labour associated with families such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry work, as well as kinship ties. In this sense, it includes not only the biological (re-) production of citizens but also the ways society regenerates itself.

A structural analysis of marriage migration often reveals a receiving state's attempt to solve a *national* reproductive crisis, generated by demographic shifts and economic downturns, via *transnational* means (albeit with little consideration of the broader implications) by utilizing migrant women to provide paid and unpaid forms of reproductive labour.[9] Meanwhile, the sending state solves its socio-economic problems by 'exporting' (female) workers, thereby outsourcing income generation necessary for the financing, amongst other, of care at home (mostly via remittances). As a result, care becomes subject to complex transnational arrangements of a multidirectional and multi-sited nature. Such arrangements, in turn, are linked with, and contribute to, the deepening of migrants' precarious status in social and legal terms since such arrangements are often a response to insufficient institutional and regulatory

[7] Parreñas 2003, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997.

[8] Yeates 2012.

[9] Lan 2008; M. Kim 2010; H.-K. Lee 2008.

frameworks or lack of other support mechanisms that could or should be provided by the state.

Marriage Migration, Precarity and the Crisis of Care

Among the various critiques of the dominant narrative on the link between migration and development,[10] a key concern is that certain types of migrants and certain forms of migration have been left out of the narrative altogether.[11] These include gendered forms of migration[12] as well as marriage migration.[13] Generally speaking, researchers have paid plenty of attention to the economic costs and benefits of migration while neglecting social aspects.[14] Empirical and methodological shortcomings in policy-driven literature on the migration-development nexus are also evident, with a lamentable lack of intergenerational and longitudinal perspectives, as well as detailed ethnographic accounts that would complement macro-level, more structurally driven analyses.[15] Probing marriage migration in the Asian context offers an important entry point into interrogating and reinvigorating the mainstream migration-development nexus debate.

With the majority of foreign spouses being women from so-called developing countries in Southeast and Northeast Asia,[16] this migration is inseparable from classic development concerns, such as poverty, welfare, and social security. Like other labour migrants, marriage migrants are very much involved in sending remittances to their birth families and prefer to do so via their own income generating activities. Yet marriage migrants' outmigration raises important issues beyond such classic concerns, such as for example social reproduction and the provision of care in a transnational context. In this sense, marriage migration brings to the fore issues that the mainstream debate on development tends to side-line or neglect altogether, despite their relevance. In addition, many marriage migrants engage in non-industrial forms of labour often performed in the informal economy. Such precarious forms of labour are specific to women workers. They include domestic and care work, some service and agricultural work, and other forms of non-regular labour which reflect the general trend of

[10] De Haas 2007; Faist 2008; Hujo and Piper 2010.
[11] Raghuram 2009.
[12] Dannecker 2009.
[13] Piper 2009.
[14] An exception is the literature on social remittances which is by tendency more gendered and sophisticated in both conceptual and empirical terms. See Rahel Kunz (2011) or Luin Goldring (2004).Yet this rarely enters into mainstream policy debates on migration and development.
[15] Asis, Piper, and Raghuram 2010.
[16] The number of men from South Asia who marry Japanese women, for instance, is rather small in comparison.

feminized migration.[17] Such gendered forms of precarious labour signify a specific pathway or feature of development that, as we would argue, requires more attention.

Since the macro level forces that drive migration are in part the product of unequal material development between the origin and destination countries, the migration-development nexus debate benefits from being linked to precarity, especially from a gender perspective. By introducing the concept of precarity into the migration and development discussion, issues of inequality and injustice can be brought to the fore. By highlighting marriage migrants' unequal position within the international division of labour and the global crisis of care[18] against the backdrop of a constraining regulatory framework, we can broaden the understanding of precarity not only beyond the sphere of work but also in spatial terms – that is, by including the country of origin (thus, pre-migration or return) perspective.

In the existing literature, the concept of precarity has been applied to changing work conditions for both migrant and non-migrant workers. As non-citizens, migrant workers are regarded as a precarious group in relation to their work environment in the sense that they are heavily represented in low paid sectors, often performing non-standardized work.[19] They are also viewed as insecure, especially when on temporary visas. This impacts their ability to seek recourse when they experience violations of their labour rights or other forms of abuse. Migrant status has, thus, been identified as an important marker for precarity in certain sectors of the labour market and in sub-standard, unregulated forms of work.[20] Yet how ethnicity, class, and gender intersect to shape individual experiences and personal forms of precarity and what this means in terms of socio-economic development remain largely unaddressed in the existing literature.

By introducing marriage migration into this discussion, we open up the debate to include the important issues of social reproduction and care. In East Asia, national and local governments in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have devised policies to assist single male citizens to meet women from Southeast Asia and China to address socio-demographic problems that have led to the inability of many men to find spouses.[21] Yet these policies are designed with certain

[17] Oishi 2005; Yeates 2012; Vosko 2000.
[18] The demand for migrant women care providers signifies a crisis of care in destination countries in institutional as well as budgetary terms (since this work tends to be low paid); in turn by leaving in fairly large numbers, migrant women leave a care gap behind in their origin communities and birth households. .
[19] Vosko 2010.
[20] Goldring et al. 2009.
[21] See, for instance, Lee H.-K. 2008; Piper 2003.

restrictions in Japan and South Korea based on concerns about ethnic composition of their respective societies and socio-cultural homogeneity.[22] Meanwhile, governmental authorities in Taiwan and Hong Kong have maintained "population quality" by creating barriers to a projected inflow of brides from mainland China.[23] What such restrictions signify is the involvement of an element of deliberate management.

Precarity and crisis

The inclusion of precarity into our analytical framework leads us to reframe the debate in terms of 'crisis' – or rather, as multiple forms of crises underpinning the multi-directionality of precarious migratory movements and transnational strategies used to supply and receive care through paid and unpaid reproductive labour.[24] Our framework, thus, pays attention to migration triggered, motivated, and justified by the socio-economic and political crises from all three actors' viewpoints – the country of origin, the country of destination, and those of individual migrants.

Marriage migrants are part and parcel of this phenomenon of multiple crises. Unlike many temporary contract migrants who enter countries of destination as workers but are legally barred from forming new families (in Singapore and Malaysia, for instance), marriage migrants enter as spouses and form new families.[25] Although upon entering motherhood, they can acquire more rights, as for example is the case in South Korea, they are still exposed to other forms of vulnerability. By including precarity in the analysis of marriage migration, we suggest reproduction and care are characterized by an element of crisis.

Migrant women are exposed to a combination of legal, social and financial precarity. Being often relegated to low-wage and insecure types of work at the intersection of productive and reproductive labour performed in the private and public sphere, migrant women in addition often lack citizenship and are subjected to the vagaries that a precarious visa and residential status entails.

Migrant women, thus, leave and enter precarious situations in both a temporal and a spatial sense. Limited family unification policies are available in Asian destination countries. What this means in practice is that aging parents cannot join their daughter-migrant, complicating her care responsibilities towards both her birth and newly formed families. To care for the former from a distance, the migratory daughter may need to send remittances. But if she accepts paid work,

[22] Jones and Shen 2008.
[23] Friedman 2015; So 2003.
[24] Spitzer and Piper 2014.
[25] We use "new" in the sense of marriage migrants moving away from their own families back home. This is hence about family formation.

this leaves care gaps in her new family, which may include elderly parents-in-law as well as children. This means marriage migrants are often caught in a multi-layered web of care deficits at both ends of the migratory spectrum. In short, their caring practices are related to their socioeconomic precarity.

Care has emerged as a transnational phenomenon in the context of gendered migration and restrictive migration policies.[26] "Family care" is an increasingly complex issue in a transnational setting. On the one hand, origin countries generally lack support programs to help family members cope with the absence of migrants and the gap in (unpaid) reproductive labour their absence creates, especially when the migrant is a woman. On the other hand, working class migrant women who marry men abroad find little support to raise their own children, a situation exacerbated by separation or divorce from their citizen-spouse.

The lived reality of marriage migrants suggests ongoing cross-border relations. Scholars of transnationalism mostly consider transnational families in the context of broader conceptual issues such as global care chains, the global division of labour, or the commodification of intimacy and affect.[27] But on a real life level, as the preceding discussion makes clear, a transnational family can include non-migrating family members who remain in the country of origin and new family members in the country of destination, with both families requiring the migrant's attention.[28]

In sum, our approach complements the global care chain literature by highlighting the role of state legislation and policy-making in areas of social reproduction and migration (or the lack thereof). Scholars of marriage migration in Asia have noted that certain Asian governments (particularly in East Asia) may seek to attract foreign women to solve demographic problems. But by going beyond this to treat marriage migration as a vector for social change, we are able to study interconnected political and social changes in origin and destination countries.[29] For example, market liberalization in communist countries such as Vietnam and China has led to reduced public support for women's reproductive labour[30] whilst the creation of welfare regimes in East Asia has been concurrent with neoliberal development, particularly after the 1997 Asian financial crisis in Taiwan and South Korea.[31]

[26] Sun 2013.
[27] Kofman and Raghuram 2009; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Constable 2009; Sassen 2002.
[28] Levitt and Sorenson 2004.
[29] Belanger and Wang 2012.
[30] Locke, Nguyen and Nguyen 2012; Dong and An 2012.
[31] Suh and Kwon 2014; Kwon 2007.

By taking a transnational perspective, marriage migration researchers can link social change at both ends of the migration trajectory. Common to the experiences of women in both origin and destination countries is an imbalance of economic and social development from a gender point of view. In the developed economies of East Asia, social policies implemented in a neoliberal environment have been directed at market restructuring and flexible labour formation, creating contradictions and "bad deals" for women.[32] Women are pressured to serve dual roles—to participate in the labour market and carry out unpaid reproductive labour at home—without adequate social support. Against this backdrop, we stress the need for a transnational perspective on and a coordinated approach towards marriage migration and its symbolic and evocative positioning.

Trends in Marriage Migration in Southeast and East Asia

The vast majority of marriage migrants from Southeast and East Asia are women. They head primarily to Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. The number of foreign wives by their country of origin in Japan is presented in Table 1. The rapid increase in the number of marriages between Japanese men and foreign women since the late 1980s coincided with a diversification of the nationalities of foreign spouses. For example, in 1965, Korean women comprised approximately eighty percent of foreign brides in Japan. However, a large portion of these foreign brides were in fact Korean residents of Japan who had retained Korean citizenship.[33] Until the mid-1980s, this trend continued, at which time percentage of foreign wives from China and the Philippines increased. By 2012, almost eighty percent of foreign wives came from China (41.7%), the Philippines (20.5%), and Korea (17.5%).

Table 1. Countries of origin of foreign wives marrying Japanese husbands, 1965-2013

Country of Origin	1965-74	1975-84	1985-91	1992-95	1996-00	2001-05	2006-10	2011-13
South Korea[a]	9,809	24,913	40,199	19,977	26,120	28,655	23,982	8,836
China	2,058	10,118	18,594	19,090	37,624	58,487	59,170	21,523
Philippines	---	---	---	25,352	32,724	41,223	39,624	10,925
Thailand	---	---	---	7262	9308	8,098	6,810	3,116
U.S.A.	602	1,991	1,655	931	1,040	850	1,025	565
U. K.	---	---	---	360	400	366	312	143
Brazil	---	---	---	2,439	2,146	1,493	1,383	660

[32] Suh and Kwon 2014; Peng 2011.
[33] Liaw, Ochiai, and Ishikawa 2010.

Peru	---	---	---	590	697	665	554	245
Other	1,756	9,433	34,910	3,517	6,762	11,996	13,250	5,649
Total	14,225	46,455	95,358	79,518	116,821	151,833	146,110	51,662

Source: Vital Statistics of Japan (2013: Table 9.18)

[a] Korean residents in Japan entered there mostly during the colonial period and did not naturalize yet.

The distribution of foreign spouses in Taiwan by source country is presented in Table 2. Until 2003, the share of foreign wives from Mainland China was about sixty percent. Due to changes to Taiwan's immigration policy in 2004,[34] the proportion of foreign wives from Mainland China dropped to forty percent. However, their numbers returned to the 2003 level within the following three years. In 2010, their share reached about seventy percent.

Table 2. Countries of origin of foreign wives marrying Taiwanese husbands, 1993-2013[a]

Country of Origin	1982-85	1986-90	1991-95	1996-00	2001-05	2006-10	2011-14
China[b]	---	---	---	51,467	109,640	32,293	---
Japan	13	3	1	1	34	23	52
South Korea	280	366	131	109	18	14	23
Malaysia	---	2	21	66	46	52	61
Indonesia	---	12	29	10,018	5,878	5,679	2,381
Thailand	---	0	31	223	399	483	195
Vietnam	---	18	48	3,331	12,745	42,482	15,940
Cambodia	---	---	1	520	1,604	1,927	162
Myanmar	---	---	2	688	439	696	221
Philippines	4	38	74	830	1,235	1,359	1,070
Others	7	14	16	38	41	41	52
Unspecified	29	20	48	38	116	74	43

Source: Department of Household Registration Affairs, MOI.

[a] This data is drawn from acquirement of citizenship by home country

[b] Data for China is available from 1998 to 2008.

In South Korea, a similar pattern is evident. As shown in Table 3, in the early 1990s, the leading groups of foreign wives who married Korean men were Chinese (approximately sixty percent), most of whom were ethnic Koreans living in China, and Japanese (about thirty percent). Although there were some fluctuations in this trend, the proportion of Chinese and Japanese foreign spouses gradually decreased until recently, while the proportion of Vietnamese spouses has increased rapidly since the early 2000s. By 2013, approximately one

[34] Bélanger, Lee, and Wang 2010.

in three foreign wives in South Korea was Vietnamese. As the countries of origin have diversified since the early 2000s, the number of foreign wives from the Philippines, Cambodia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and other countries is also gradually increasing. The rapid decline in fertility and large-scale rural-to-urban migrations in East Asia, a trend starting in the 1960s in Japan and subsequently spreading to South Korea and Taiwan, has created difficulties for rural men (often farmers and the oldest son, tasked with the duty of caring for elderly parents) to find spouses. This was acknowledged as a serious social problem in the region as early as the 1980s, prompting some local governments and civil organizations to initiate "Matching Drive for Rural Bachelors" campaigns.[35]

Table 3. Countries of origin of foreign wives marrying South Korean husbands, 1993-2013

Country of Origin	1993-95	1996-00	2001-05	2006-10	2011-13
China	12,344	27,245	66,418	63,240	20,643
Japan	2,799	5,926	3,927	5,746	3,651
Vietnam	---	77	10,293	41,892	19,992
Philippines	---	1,174	4,195	8,020	5,980
Cambodia	---	1	252	4,913	2,221
Mongolia	---	64	1697	2,572	676
Thailand	---	240	1,444	2,362	968
Uzbekistan	---	43	1,156	1,839	958
U.S.A.	645	2,941	1,477	1,895	1,670
Laos	---	5	13	96	270
Taiwan	---	22	300	671	578
Malaysia	---	11	70	91	88
Indonesia	---	104	384	411	307
Nepal	---	2	93	792	652
Kazakhstan	---	28	177	115	83
Canada	---	310	303	620	531
Australia	---	74	185	308	257
New Zealand	---	0	36	89	82
Kyrgyzstan	---	19	209	361	391
Russia	---	70	1237	723	309
Other	758	3,626	1,090	1,068	902
Total	16,546	41,982	94,956	137,824	61,209

Source: Vital Statistics of Korea

National and local governments have influenced marriage migration and migrants' lives by implementing policies on marriage migration, including those

[35] Abelmann and Kim 2004.

related to the practice of marriage brokerage. Such policy intervention takes place not only in migrant receiving countries such as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea but also in migrant origin countries such as the Philippines and Vietnam.

Japan has encountered a significant shortage of low-skilled labour, including household work. Yet the Japanese government has been reluctant to issue employment visas to low-skilled workers other than trainees or entertainers.[36] Consequently, potential labour migrants from North or Southeast Asia opt for cross-border marriage as an entry strategy. The only other pathway available for the entry of women from poorer neighboring countries into Japan is the infamous "entertainer" visa, resulting in rising numbers of international marriages, especially between Filipino and Thai women and Japanese men.[37] During the early 1970s, the number of international marriages in Japan averaged fewer than five thousand cases per year and comprised less than one percent of all marriages (see Figure 1). As in other East Asian countries, international marriages in Japan were mostly between Japanese women and foreign men. The number of international marriages between Japanese men and foreign wives surpassed those between Japanese women and foreign grooms in the mid-1970s, and the overall number of international marriages began to rise during the late 1970s, eventually leveling off after 2000. Since then, the number of international marriages has been steadily declining, and as of 2012, roughly 2.5 percent of all registered marriages were between Japanese citizens and foreigners.

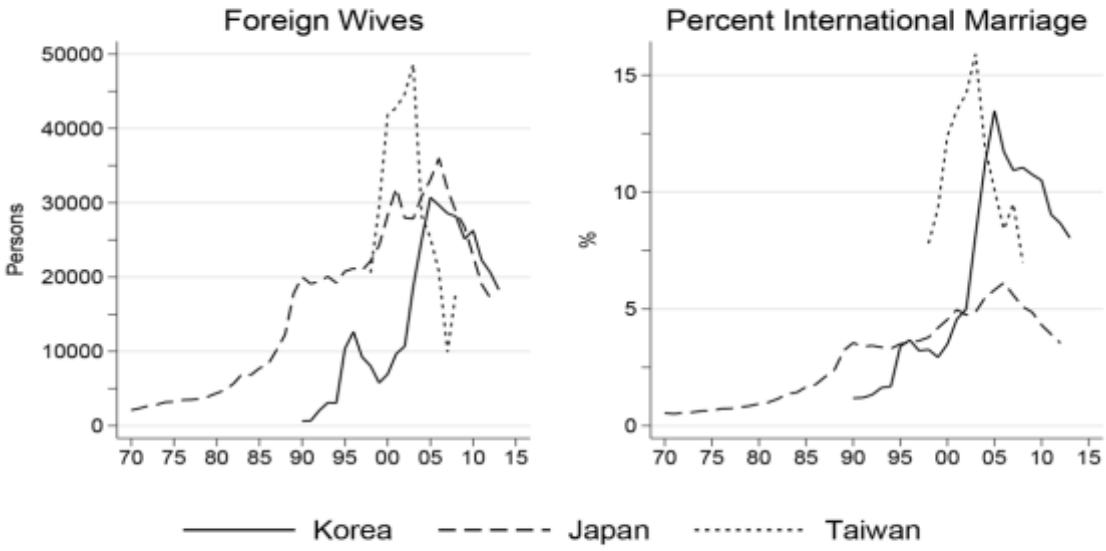
Although the first wave of foreign wives in Taiwan, particularly from Southeast Asia, began in the 1970s, they did not arrive in significant numbers until the late 1980s (see Figure 1). This coincided with a significant increase in Taiwanese foreign investment in Southeast Asian countries.[38] Cross-border marriage continued to increase during the 1990s, reaching a peak in 2003, when roughly 50,000 cases (seventeen percent of all registered marriages) were international marriages. The share of international marriages declined from 28.4% of all marriages in 2003 to 12.8% in 2010, a trend attributable to a series of government-imposed legal restrictions and penalties on cross-border marriages implemented in 2004.[39] More specifically, the Taiwanese government instituted a variety of legal restrictions and penalties to limit cross-border marriages and to inhibit marriage fraud.[40] In addition, the number of Taiwanese unmarried men has diminished as a result of the arrival of substantial numbers of foreign wives

[36] Lu and Yang 2010.
[37] Piper 2003.
[38] C.-L. Yang, Huang, and Tsai 2009.
[39] Jones 2012.
[40] Seol et al. 2009.

over previous decades. Hence, assuming the demand for foreign wives will not rise in the short term, it is unlikely that the number will increase.[41]

International marriages by South Korean men have had two peak periods (see Figure 1). The first, in the early 1990s, was associated with the "Korean Wind" phenomenon among ethnic Koreans in China and matchmaking efforts to link Korean farmers with ethnic Korean women living in China. The latter were actively arranged by local governments, assemblies, and agricultural organizations in South Korea. The second peak in 2005 can be attributed to the burgeoning commercialization of international marriage agencies in South Korea. In 1999, the licensure requirement for Korean matchmaker agencies was eliminated. This regulatory change not only increased the number of matchmaking agencies and, as a result, the number of international marriages, but also diversified the foreign brides' countries of origin.[42]

Figure 1. Share of foreign wives as percentage of marriages in South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, 1970-2015.



***Source*:** Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (1970-2012) for Japan; Ministry of Interior, Department of Statistics (2006) for Taiwan; and Korean Statistical Information System (KOSIS) for South Korea.

[41] C.-L. Yang, Huang, and Tsai 2009.
[42] Lee 2008.

The migration policies of source countries have similarly affected the pattern of marriage migration in the East Asian region. Marriage migration policies in the Philippines and Vietnam share many similarities. Commercial matchmaking agencies are illegal in both countries, but these regulations are easily flouted.[43] The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) in the Philippines provides mandatory pre-departure counselling to potential brides before they are issued a passport with a spouse visa. In Vietnam, the Vietnam Women's Union, on behalf of the Vietnamese government, imposes limits on the age difference between potential brides and foreign husbands, sets health requirements for the foreign spouse, and requires a basic level of shared language.[44] These practices directly affect the number of arrivals in South Korea or Taiwan, as both countries require reviews for marriage visas to be conducted in the origin countries.[45]

Cambodia is another example where the government has drastically revised its marriage migration polices.[46] Although 1,804 Cambodian women were married to South Korean men in 2007, the third largest group of foreign wives in South Korea that year (followed by Chinese and Vietnamese), because of concerns about sexual exploitation, involuntary servitude, human trafficking, and even the death of brides, the Cambodian government banned marriages with foreign men who are above the age of 50 in 2008 and again in 2010.[47]

In general, the governments of sending countries are increasingly prohibiting the involvement of private agencies in arranging marriages involving one foreigner. Among receiving countries, the Taiwanese government has banned all private matchmaking agencies but has allowed government agencies. In contrast, the South Korean government permits matchmaking agencies that are banned in source countries, a fundamental conflict obviously likely to cause confusion in marriage migration.

The Case of The Republic of Korea

Over the past several decades, South Korea (hereafter "Korea") has experienced tremendous change in virtually all aspects of the country's family structure: decline to lowest-low fertility, fewer and later marriages, and a skyrocketing divorce rate. Accompanying these changes is large-scale international marriage migration from developing countries in Asia, such as China, the Philippines, and

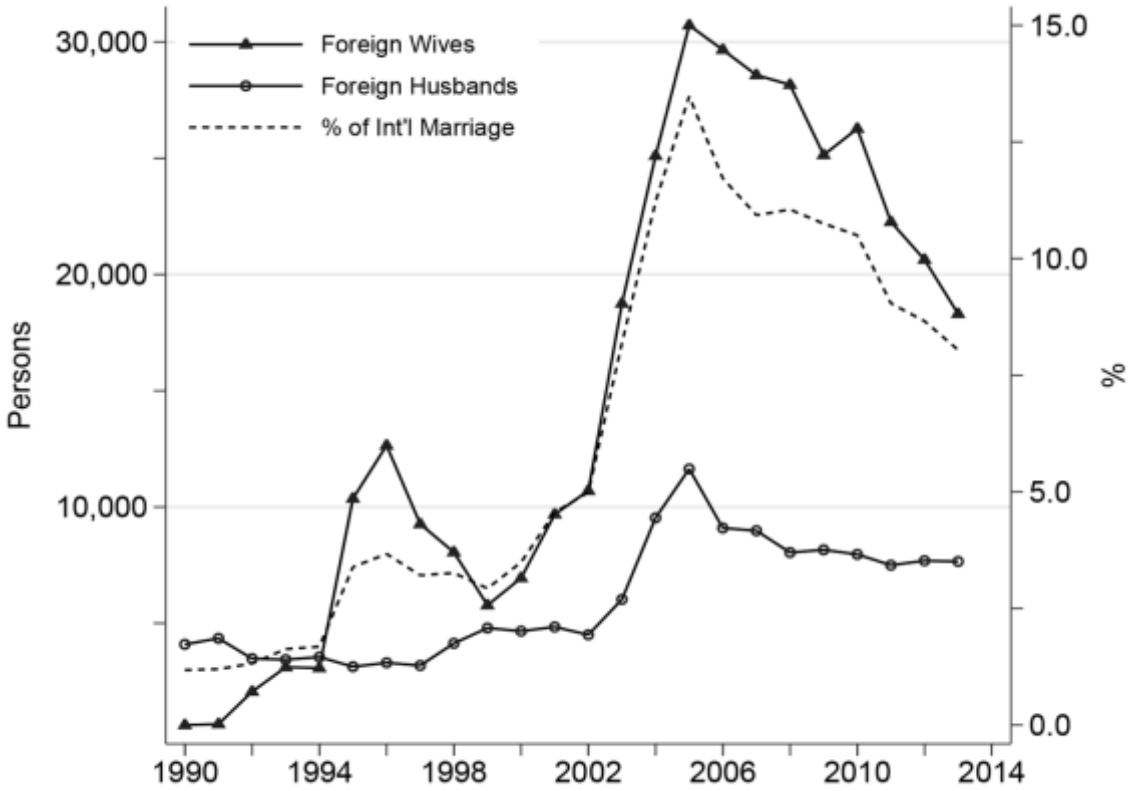
[43] Hanh 2013, J. Kim, Yang, and Torneo 2014.
[44] OECD 2012.
[45] Wi 2009.
[46] For more information, see materials produced by Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy (KOCUN), a Korean NGO (http://www.kocun.org/v1/).
[47] J. Kim, Yang, and Torneo 2014.

Vietnam, which has brought about many heated societal debates. Though the proportion has slightly decreased since its peak in 2005, roughly 10% of all annual marriages – and a third of all marriages in rural areas – since the late 1990s have involved foreign nationals, most of whom are women from Southeast Asian countries.[48]

Until 1991, the number of international marriages between Korean women and foreign grooms significantly exceeded the number of marriages between Korean men and foreign brides (see Figure 2); the former was roughly seven times larger than the latter. However, the number of Korean men's international marriages roughly doubled between 1991 and 1992 (from 663 to 2,057), as the Korean government reestablished diplomatic relations with China in 1992.[49] Beginning in 1995, the number of foreign brides surpassed that of foreign grooms. Largely owing to an abrupt decrease of foreign wives, the number of international marriages plummeted between 1998 and 1999 when the financial crisis hit Korea. Since the early 2000s, cross-border marriages rebounded, began to increase, and reached their peak in 2005 when the number of foreign brides reached 30,719 while foreign grooms numbered 11,637. In 2005, the proportion of international marriages was 13.5% of all registered marriages in Korea. Beginning in 2006, though, the number of foreign wives decreased significantly while the number of foreign husbands remain more or less the same. In 2013, the number of foreign wives were 18,307, which is similar to the number observed in 2003, and the proportion of all marriages that featured at least one international partner was 8.04%.

Figure 2. Trends in international marriages in South Korea, 1990-2013

[48] G. Jones and Shen 2008, J. Kim, Yang, and Torneo 2014
[49] H.-K. Lee 2008



Source: Korean Statistical Information System (KOSIS).

In the early 1990s, the leading groups of brides who married Korean men were Chinese (about 60%), most of whom were ethnic Koreans living in China, and Japanese (about 30%). Though there were some fluctuations in this trend, the proportion of Chinese and Japanese foreign brides gradually decreased until recently, while the proportion of Vietnamese women has increased rapidly since the early 2000s. By 2013, approximately one in three foreign wives were Vietnamese, a number that rivals those of Chinese women. As mentioned previously, the number of foreign wives from the Philippines, Cambodia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and other countries has gradually increased since the early 2000s.

In the case of foreign husbands who married Korean women in the early 1990s, Japanese grooms led (about 50%) and Americans followed (roughly 35%). The proportions of both these countries gradually declined, however, while the number of Chinese husbands (mostly ethnic Koreans living in China) has increased rapidly since the early 2000s. As a result, the three leading groups of foreign husbands were from Japan, China, and the U.S., each of which consisted of approximately 20% of all international marriages between Korean women and foreign men.

The sample characteristics that were used for the analysis of poverty and employment status are presented in Table 4. The results indicate that marriage migrant women in the 2012 National Survey of Multicultural Families sample is, on average, 35.3 years old, which is about two years older than the 2009 wave. Reflecting the diversification of migrant women's origin countries since the late 2000s,[50] the proportions of Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese brides declined significantly while the fraction of Filipino and other brides increased over the two waves. However, it appears that the human capital composition of marriage migrants somewhat improved between the two years: while about 43% of the respondents completed high school education in both samples, the share of middle school education decreased by seven percentage points and the proportion of women with more than a college education increased by seven percentage points. In addition, the proportion of women who had working experiences in their origin country increased from 74% to 79%. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting these statistics because the definition of multicultural families was extended in 2011. That is, in the 2009 wave of the NSMF, multicultural families included marriage migrants, those who obtained citizenship through naturalization, and those who obtained citizenship through birth. Since 2011, multicultural families include all marriage migrants and those who obtained citizenship through naturalization, including a naturalized single person, children of marriage migrants who divorced a Korean citizen, etc. Given the much broader definition of multicultural families, the 2012 wave of the NSMF may include people who lived longer and, hence, are more assimilated to Korean society than the previous wave.

Table 4. Summary statistics by year for the variables used to analyze employment and poverty status: National survey of multicultural families (NSMF) 2009 and 2012

	2009		2012	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Age	33.16	9.72	35.26	10.34
Country of Origin				
Korean-Chinese	0.35		0.17	
China	0.13		0.17	
Vietnam	0.27		0.18	
Philippines	0.09		0.13	
Other	0.15		0.36	
Highest Grade Completed				
Less than Elementary	0.09		0.09	

[50] Bélanger 2010, G. Jones and Shen 2008

Middle School	0.27		0.20	
High School	0.43		0.43	
More than College	0.21		0.28	
Worked in Origin Country	0.74		0.79	
Years of Residence in Korea				
Less than 1 Year	0.08		0.02	
1-2 Years	0.25		0.15	
3-5 Years	0.21		0.18	
6-7 Years	0.11		0.18	
8-9 Years	0.12		0.16	
More than 10 Years	0.22		0.31	
Language Proficiency				
Low	0.22		0.19	
Average	0.40		0.34	
High	0.38		0.47	
Living in Metropolitan Area	0.36		0.63	
Husband's Education				
Less than Elementary	0.07		0.08	
Middle School	0.18		0.14	
High School	0.53		0.54	
More than College	0.22		0.24	
Size of Social Support Network	1.83	0.96	1.60	0.93
Number of Children	0.90	0.90	1.15	0.96
Number of Children Under Age 5	0.59	0.69	0.63	0.74
Monthly Household Income				
Less than 500K Won	0.06		0.02	
500K – 1M Won	0.19		0.06	
1M – 2M Won	0.45		0.30	
2M – 3M Won	0.21		0.34	
3M – 4M Won	0.06		0.16	
More than 4M Won	0.04		0.11	
N	53,239		11,399	

Note: Sample means are unweighted.

Consistent with a previous report,[51] the proportion of marriage migrant women who live in a metropolitan area increased 27% between the two waves. Also, monthly household income shows a significant improvement over the periods: the proportion of marriage migrants with less than 1 million KRW declined from 25% to 8%, while the share of those having more than 3 million KRW increased from 10% to 27%. However, the educational attainment of a migrant's husband

[51] Jeon et al. 2013

barely changed during the periods. Furthermore, the size of one's social support network appeared to decrease over the same period: marriage migrants reported, on average, 1.83 persons who can help them in 2009, but it fell to 1.60 in 2012. This trend may indicate that marriage migrant women are increasingly marginalized in Korean society over time.

The results of logistic regressions predicting employment status and poverty status are presented in Table 5. First, compared with Korean-Chinese, the odds ratio of being employed was not statistically different for Chinese wives. Filipino wives, on the other hand, are more likely to be employed than Korean-Chinese wives, though the odds ratio reached statistical significance only in 2012, when they were 29.2% more likely to have a job. This may be partly related to the fact that Filipino wives, on average, have a higher level of education and tend to speak English more fluently than other ethnic groups in Korea. However, Vietnamese wives were 16.2% *less* likely to be employed than Korean-Chinese in 2009. Interestingly, the odds ratio for Vietnamese wives became positive in 2012, and indicates that they are 29.2% *more* likely to be employed than Korean-Chinese.

Table 5. Odds ratios from a logistic regression analysis of the employment and poverty status among female marriage migrants in Korea: National survey of multicultural families (NSMF) 2009 and 2012

	Employment		Poverty	
	2009	2012	2009	2012
Country of Origin (Ref = Korean-Chinese)				
China	0.999	0.977	0.948	1.216
	(0.039)	(0.072)	(0.039)	(0.154)
Vietnam	0.838***	1.416***	1.484***	1.641***
	(0.034)	(0.123)	(0.061)	(0.243)
Philippines	1.068	1.292***	1.869***	2.049***
	(0.057)	(0.117)	(0.088)	(0.310)
Other	0.531***	0.742***	1.056	1.549***
	(0.021)	(0.052)	(0.043)	(0.191)
Years of Residence in Korea (Ref = Less than 1 Year)				
1-2 Years	2.435***	2.041***	1.367***	0.830
	(0.119)	(0.418)	(0.070)	(0.229)
3-5 Years	5.125***	5.415***	1.483***	0.923
	(0.269)	(1.112)	(0.081)	(0.259)
6-7 Years	6.903***	8.495***	1.582***	0.707
	(0.413)	(1.769)	(0.096)	(0.204)
8-9 Years	7.714***	7.673***	1.578***	0.877
	(0.474)	(1.614)	(0.096)	(0.256)

More than 10 Years	5.982***	7.083***	1.565***	0.766
	(0.338)	(1.496)	(0.089)	(0.224)
Language Proficiency (Ref = Low)				
Average	1.551***	1.129*	1.002	0.880
	(0.048)	(0.072)	(0.031)	(0.090)
High	1.967***	1.332***	0.861***	0.835*
	(0.072)	(0.089)	(0.031)	(0.091)
Living in Metropolitan Area	1.056**	0.705***	0.935***	0.693***
	(0.025)	(0.032)	(0.022)	(0.050)
Highest Grade Completed (Ref = Less than Elementary)				
Middle School	1.087*	0.763***	0.915**	0.681***
	(0.050)	(0.065)	(0.036)	(0.079)
High School	1.106**	0.693***	0.779***	0.656***
	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.031)	(0.073)
More than College	1.377***	0.667***	0.620***	0.508***
	(0.072)	(0.061)	(0.030)	(0.069)
Worked in Origin Country	1.677***	1.026	0.929***	1.032
	(0.044)	(0.054)	(0.024)	(0.092)
Husband's Education (Ref = Less than Elementary)				
Middle School	0.900*	0.724***	0.778***	0.825
	(0.049)	(0.070)	(0.033)	(0.099)
High School	0.774***	0.610***	0.580***	0.483***
	(0.039)	(0.053)	(0.023)	(0.053)
More than College	0.693***	0.397***	0.440***	0.439***
	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.020)	(0.060)
Social Support	1.031**	1.033	0.841***	0.931*
	(0.012)	(0.024)	(0.010)	(0.036)
Number of Children	0.807***	0.927**	1.017	0.950
	(0.016)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.050)
Number of Children Under Age 5	0.538***	0.515***	1.098***	1.222***
	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.027)	(0.089)
Participated in Government Work Training Program	1.252***	1.318***	1.203***	1.169
	(0.046)	(0.103)	(0.041)	(0.150)
Age	1.196***	1.157***	0.983**	0.897***
	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.008)	(0.019)
Age^2	0.998***	0.998***	1.001***	1.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Household Income (Ref = Less than 500K Won)				
500K – 1M Won	1.435***	3.365***		
	(0.077)	(0.629)		
1M – 2M Won	1.268***	3.554***		
	(0.064)	(0.621)		

2M – 3M Won	1.308***	6.239***		
	(0.070)	(1.093)		
3M – 4M Won	1.313***	8.978***		
	(0.088)	(1.615)		
4M+ Won	1.302***	9.777***		
	(0.101)	(1.806)		
Constant	0.006***	0.007***	0.335***	0.929
	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.054)	(0.489)
N	45,430	11,399	53,239	11,399
Log-likelihood	-23,932	-6,717	-26,142	-3,030
Nagelkerke R^2	0.343	0.249	0.084	0.126

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Poverty status was measured with household income level, and household income could not be used for models of poverty status.

*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

As suggested in the past,[52] assimilation factors – language proficiency and years of residence in Korea – were significantly associated with the odds of employment in the two waves of the NSMF. For instance, those living 1-2 years in Korea are 2.4 and 2.0 times more likely to be employed in 2009 and 2012, respectively, than individuals living less than a year. The number of years that have elapsed since migration seem to be correlated with the odds of employment in a curvilinear fashion. That is, the odds of employment increases until 6-7 years in 2009 and 8-9 years in 2012, and it decreases thereafter. As expected, the ability to speak Korean was significantly and positively associated with the odds of employment: marriage migrant women who can speak Korean fluently were about 1.9 and 1.3 times more likely to get employed in 2009 and 2012, respectively, than those with low level of speaking ability.

Regarding human capital factors, the 2009 NSMF marriage migrants who have working experiences in their country of origin are 67.7% more likely to work in Korea than those without such experiences. Though the effect of working experiences in origin country was also positive in the 2012 sample, it was not statistically significant. Consistent with past literature that addressed the determinants of women's labour force participation,[53] higher educational attainment was positively and significantly associated with the likelihood of employment, net of all other relevant factors. The results suggest that, in the 2009 sample, foreign wives with more than a college education are 37.7% more likely to work than those having less than an elementary school education. On the other hand, results suggest that higher levels of the husband's educational attainment decrease the odds of employment among marriage migrant women. For example, if a husband has completed a college education, migrant wives are

[52] Blume et al. 2007, H. Kim, Lee, and Choi 2014
[53] Ferber 1982, Heckman and Willis 1977

30.7% less likely to work than wives whose husband has less than an elementary education. Higher husband education levels might be associated with higher household income, which in turn could discourage the wife from working outside the home.

Consistent with existing literature,[54] a larger social support network is associated with a greater likelihood of employment. Other things being equal, for every additional person who can help the marriage migrant woman, her odds of employment increases by 3.1%. Often times, information about jobs is obtained through social networks, and those with larger networks might therefore have a greater access to job opportunities.[55] As found in past research,[56] the number of children reduces the likelihood of foreign wives' transition to work: net of all other factors, one additional child is associated with a 19.3% and 7.3% decrease in 2009 and 2012, respectively, in the odds of work. The dampening effect of young children on a wife's transition to work is even more pronounced, as one additional child under age five reduces the mother's odds of employment by 46.2% and 48.5% in 2009 and 2012, respectively.

Perhaps most importantly, participation in any work training programs provided by the government is positively and significantly associated with the odds of employment. The results indicate that participating in such programs elevates the odds of work by 25.2% and 31.8% in 2009 and 2012, respectively, all else being equal. This result has important implications for policies that aim to help reduce social marginalization, as well as poverty, among multicultural families.

The results for poverty status indicate that, relative to Korean-Chinese wives, Vietnamese and Filipino wives are substantially more likely to live in poverty, whereas Chinese wives are not more likely: Vietnamese and Filipino wives are 1.5 times and 2.0 times, respectively, more likely to live in poverty than Korean-Chinese. On the other hand, language skills are negatively associated with the likelihood of living in poverty. For instance, a high level of spoken Korean decreases the odds of living in poverty by roughly 14% compared with low proficiency. As expected, living in metropolitan area was negatively associated with poverty status. This may be related to the fact that the average income of farmers, who are most likely to live in rural areas, is significantly lower that skilled workers or labourers in metropolitan areas. Interestingly, the size of one's social support network was also negatively related with the odds of living in poverty: one additional person who can help migrant woman decreases the odds of poverty by 6.9% in 2012.

[54] H. Kim, Lee, and Choi 2014
[55] Centola 2015
[56] Stolzenberg and Waite 1984

Somewhat unexpectedly, participating in government work training program was positively associated with the odds of poverty: it increased the odds by approximately 20% over those who did not participate. It seems to be related to the fact that poor individuals are more likely to participate in such training programs, rather than ”onboarding” training that comes when one attains a job. In other words, it might be due to selection bias; this is not an unusual observation.[57]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When we consider gendered migration, social reproduction, and precarity together, an obvious choice of study is marriage migration. It is neither tied to a temporary contract nor solely of the productive kind, and it is highly gendered. Many marriage migrants engage in both unpaid and paid reproductive labour, often simultaneously. In this regard, a discussion of development that includes marriage migration should be considered part of the ongoing debate on care and development and be included within the rubric of *social* development.[58] In addition, not only is marriage an important aspect of women's migration,[59] but marriage migration also epitomizes a crucial aspect of societal transformation,[60] as forms of gender and cross-generational relations change within nuclear and across extended families (i.e., transnationally split) leading to complexities in the delivery of care.

The case of female marriage migrants also demonstrates how development itself requires a transnational perspective in the sense that marriage migrants' precarious situation in socio-economic and legal terms requires tackling "here" and "there", that is in the country of origin as well as destination.

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[57] Heckman and Hotz 1989
[58] Razavi 2012; UNRISD 2010.
[59] Oishi 2005; Palriwala and Uberoi 2005.
[60] Castles, Ozkul and Arias Cubas 2015.

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