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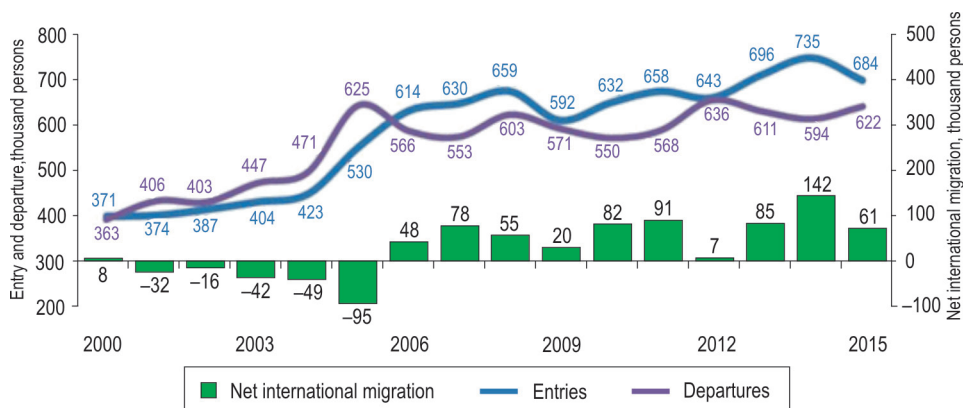
Support for multicultural families in South Korea

Introduction

As a result of an increasing entry of foreign migrant workers to South Korea (officially the Republic of Korea, hereafter Korea), and international marriages between women and ethnic Koreans from China (see: Statistics Korea, 2016), Korean society has become more multi-racial and multi-ethnic than ever. The current trend is a challenge for Korean society known for strong homogeneity and nationalism. In order to adapt to increasingly multicultural environments, South Koreans needed to develop a new concept of national identity and systems of social integration (In-Jin Yoon, Young-Ho Song & Young-Joon Bae, 2008, p. 325; Geon-soo Han, 2007; Hyun-sil Kim, 2010, offer: Sanghee Kim, 2015, p. 5; Andrew Eungi Kim, 2009).

Because of an increasing number of immigrants in Korea (see Graph 1; Statistics Korea, 2016, p. 3) and also an increasing number of international marriages, especially in the period from 2000 to 2005 (see: Statistics Korea, 2015), minorities of different racial, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds became more visible than ever and require societal attention and intervention (In-Jin Yoon, Young-Ho Song and Young-Joon Bae, 2008, p. 325).

Furthermore, as Park has written (Park et al., 2009, p. 1), the improved standard of living of Koreans discouraged them from engaging in physically demanding and low-paid jobs in manufacturing and personal service industries, creating labour shortage in so-called 3-D jobs (dirty, dangerous, demeaning). This prompted the admission of labour migrants from Asia's developing countries in the late 1980s. Female marriage mi-

Graph 1. International migration in period from 2000 to 2015

Source: Statistics Korea (2016), *International Migration Statistics in 2015*, p. 3.

grants joined labour migrants in increasing numbers in the early 1990s as Korean males in rural areas married foreign brides and when international marriage brokers began international matchmaking service in the early 2000s, the number of female marriage migrants grew rapidly from 9,684 in 2000 to 30,719 in 2005 and since then declined gradually to 25,142 in 2009 (Korea National Statistical Office, 2010). Thus, within a span of three decades, Korea has transformed from an immigrant-sending country to an immigrant-receiving one. In 2010, the number of foreigners in Korea reached 1.2 million, accounting for 2.4% of the national population, and the proportion of foreigners is expected to rise up to 5% in 2020, and 9.2% in 2050. All these statistics indicate that Korean society has entered the first phase of multi-ethnic and multicultural society and the current process seems irreversible (Park et al., 2009, p. 1). In the increasingly multi-ethnic/multi-racial society, people's values and social policies need to be multicultural enough to accommodate new members and achieve social integration and unity out of diversity (In-Jin Yoon, Young-Ho Song & Young-Joon Bae, 2008, p. 326).

The Korean government officially brought the marriage immigration issue on the table at the 74th government administration assembly meeting, and announced the Grand Plan in 2006. The vision of the 'Grand Plan' is "a social integration of foreign wives and an attainment of a multicultural society." There are seven major policies (Hye-Kyung Lee, 2008, p. 122):

- Regulation of international marriage agencies and protection of foreign wives before their entry to Korea.
- Support for victims of domestic violence.

- Support and orientation for newly-arrived foreign wives.
- Support for children of international marriages in schools.
- Providing social welfare to foreign wives.
- Raising social awareness of multicultural issues.
- Launching a comprehensive project.

All these policies focus especially on foreign wives, support for children from multicultural families and making efforts to raise awareness of Koreans about multicultural issues. Along with the increasing number of immigrants and multicultural families, the Korean government took action to focus on increasing the level of tolerance, acceptance and social understanding of racial and cultural diversity. Because of the fact that it is usually women who migrate to Korea in order to find a candidate for a husband and to improve their economic situation (and their families), immigration is feminized and therefore probably the Korean government in its policy focused mainly on helping women who are the most vulnerable to social exclusion and violence (see: Iglauer, 2015, www.thediplomat.com).

The next legislations and policies in Korea have been established based on the Grand Plan. In response to the increase of multicultural families in Korea (especially from 2000 to 2005), Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing¹ in the Republic of Korea (FATFR) was announced in 2007, and subsequently the Ministry of Government Legislation announced the Multicultural Families Support Act (MFSA) No. 8937 on March 21, 2008, and its amendment Act No. 9932 on January 18, 2010 (www.moleg.go.kr). The purpose of this Act is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the multicultural family members and the unity of society by helping the multicultural family members enjoy stable family living. The articles of this Act refer to many areas of help. The both FATFR and MFSA provide legal bases for the policies for social integration of marriage immigrant women in Korea, however, MFSA is extraordinary since the Act is specially aiming for social integration of multicultural families, which mainly focused on marriage immigrant women and their families (Ga Yeon Oh, 2015, p. 17).

In 2007, legislation of the Marriage Brokers Business Management Act was also announced to protect marriage migrants, regulate brokering businesses, enhance the transparency of their practices and prevent human rights abuses. The new law requires international marriage agen-

¹ FATFR defines 'foreigners in Korea' as those "who do not possess the nationality of the Republic of Korea" and "who legally stay in Korea for the purpose of residing in Korea."

cies or brokers to offer foreign brides legitimate information of potential husbands before they meet (Hye-Kyung Lee, 2008, p. 122).

Next, in 2008, the announcement of a four-year long “The First Basic Plan for Policies on Foreigners (2008–2012)” took place. In 2010, a two-year long “The First Master Plans for Supporting Multicultural Families (2010–2012)” was launched. “The Second Master Plans for Supporting Multicultural Families (2013–2017)” was put forward in 2012 and has a five-year perspective. And finally, also in 2012, “The Second Basic Plan for Policies on Foreigners (2013–2017)” was presented (see: Hye-Kyung Lee, 2008).

In 2010, Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MGEF) made a joint announcement with seven other governmental agencies, entitled “Cross-Governmental Policy to Promote Wholesome International Marriage.” According to the Policy, the Enforcement Decree of the Act on Regulation of Marriage Brokerage Agencies was revised to stipulate more specific restrictions on marriage brokerage agencies (Library of Congress, www.loc.gov, 18.08.2010).

All these acts ensure the integration of immigrants with the local community, and also contribute to the increase of tolerance and acceptance of immigrants, their different cultures and traditions. The other objective of the acts is to facilitate the adaptation of immigrants to the tradition and culture of the Korea, and also to protect foreign women against violence. All the objectives of social policy for immigrants are aimed at strengthening the Korean society as a whole, contributing to the growth of social tolerance towards cultural and racial diversity.

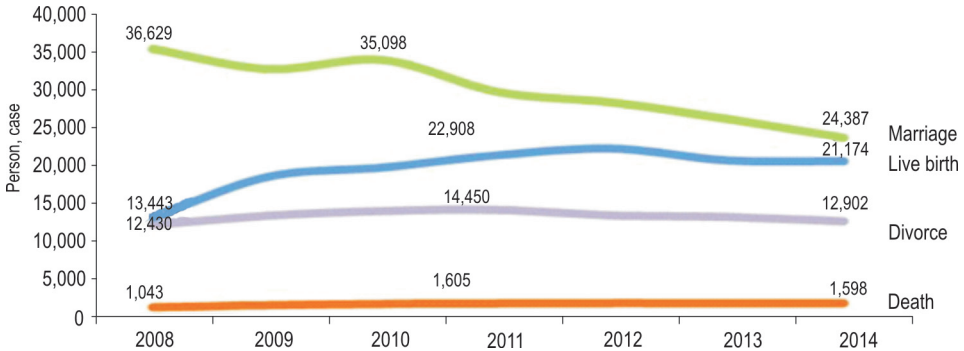
Multicultural marriages in Korea

Since the mid-1990s, multicultural marriages between Korean males and foreign females have increased. In the early 2000s, multicultural marriages accounted for 10% of the total marriages. From 2005 the number of international marriages has been decreasing, except for one small increase in 2010. According to the data from Statistics Korea (2015), in 2005 there were 42,000 marriages with a foreign spouse, in 2010 – 34,000, in 2014 – 24,387 and in 2015 – 21,000 (7% of total marriages). Through these years the number of immigrants’ marriages has decreased by a half (see: Statistics Korea, 2014, 2015).

Graph 2 shows Vital Statistics of Immigrants from Statistics Korea (2014, www.kostat.go.kr) in the period from 2008 to 2014, and a clear

decreasing trend of international marriages, an increasing number of live births of children by immigrant women and a stable trend of divorces by immigrants were observed.

Graph 2. Vital Statistics of Immigrants from 2008 to 2014



Source: Statistics Korea, Vital Statistics of Immigrants in 2014, p. 2, <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/8/3/index.board> – accessed 27.02.2017.

According to available statistics from Korean Statistical Information Service (www.kosis.kr) mostly immigrant women enter into marriage with Korean men. In 2015 there were 14,677 immigrant women marrying Korean men and only 6,597 immigrant men who got married with Korean women (see Table 1)

Table 1. Multicultural marriages by citizenship (cases)

| Gender | Citizenship | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 |
|--------|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Male | Total | 22,462 | 24,387 | 26,948 |
| | Korean (native) | 15,026 | 16,406 | 18,459 |
| | Foreigner | 6,597 | 7,164 | 7,656 |
| | Korean (new citizens) | 839 | 817 | 833 |
| Female | Total | 22,462 | 24,387 | 26,948 |
| | Korean (native) | 5,231 | 5,953 | 6,345 |
| | Foreigner | 14,677 | 16,152 | 18,307 |
| | Korean (new citizens) | 2,554 | 2,282 | 2,296 |

Source: Korean Statistical Information Service, available online at: http://kosis.kr/eng/statisticsList/statisticsList_01List.jsp?vwcd=MT_ETITLE&parentId=A#SubCont – (accessed 1.03.2017).

Andrew Eungi Kim (2009: 9) stated that rapid urbanization has largely drained the countryside of young women due to their search for better

educational and job opportunities. Many men in the countryside, on the other hand, stayed behind to carry on family farming. These men have had great difficulty in finding marriageable partners who were willing to give up the comfort of urban life to marry farmers or fishermen. Unable to find brides in Korea, many of them looked for future wives outside the country. In 2005, 35.9% of rural men married foreign brides from such countries as China (ethnic Koreans), Vietnam, the Philippines, and even Uzbekistan. As Table 2 shows, most foreign brides are Asians with more than three-fourths coming from China and Vietnam in recent years, which attests to an increase in cross-border hypergamy.

Table 2. Origins of foreign wives in South Korea

| Year | Total | Japan | USA | China | Philippines | Vietnam | Thailand | Russia | Mon-golia | Others |
|------|--------|-------|-----|--------|-------------|---------|----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| 2001 | 10,006 | 976 | 265 | 7,001 | 510 | 134 | 185 | 157 | 118 | 660 |
| 2002 | 11,017 | 959 | 267 | 7,041 | 850 | 476 | 330 | 241 | 195 | 658 |
| 2003 | 19,214 | 1,242 | 323 | 13,373 | 944 | 1,408 | 346 | 297 | 318 | 968 |
| 2004 | 25,597 | 1,224 | 344 | 18,527 | 964 | 2,463 | 326 | 318 | 504 | 925 |
| 2005 | 31,180 | 1,255 | 285 | 20,635 | 997 | 5,822 | 270 | 236 | 561 | 1,119 |
| 2006 | 30,208 | 1,484 | 334 | 14,608 | 1,157 | 10,131 | 273 | 206 | 593 | 1,422 |

Source: National Statistics Office 2007, followed: Andrew Eungi Kim (2009, p. 9).

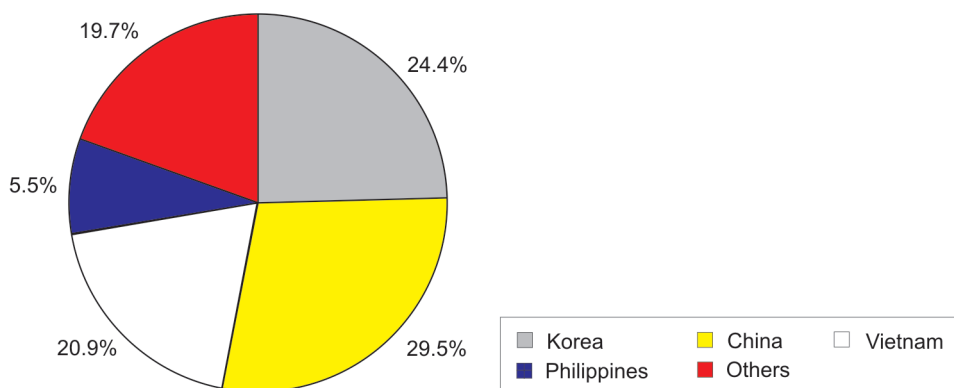
According to the newest data from Statistics Korea, in 2014 there were 29.5% Chinese women, 24.4% Korean women, 20.9% Vietnam women, 5.5% from the Philippines and 19.7% from other countries who were married to Korean male (see Graph 3). It indicates that over the years, Chinese and Vietnamese women consistently immigrate to Korea to find a husband and establish a family.

Additionally, Korea has one of the world's lowest birth rates, that is, a meager 1.3 children per woman (see: the Ministry of Health and Welfare, KOSIS, www.kosis.kr). Korea's population is estimated to continue decreasing over the next few decades, due to a social environment in which women more often choose to work, instead of getting married and rearing the next generation. In this manner, migrant wives have been instrumental in providing children for many young Korean males who find themselves without a partner (June Lee, 2014, www.thekorea-book.blogspot.com).

The issue of bride migration in Korea is complicated further by the growing number of bi-ethnic/bi-racial children from "international marriages." Among the offspring of inter-racial and inter-ethnic unions,

the most numerous are offspring of Korean individuals and persons of other Asian heritage. They are called “Kosians,” which is a portmanteau term combining words “Korean” and “Asian.” According to various estimates, their number reportedly stood at around 50,000 at the end of 2006. Nearly a third of all the children born in 2020 are expected to be Kosians and their accumulated total will have soared to 1.67 million or 3.3 per cent of the population by that year (Joong Ang Daily, 2006, after Andrew Eungi Kim, 2009: 11).

Graph 3. Share of marriages by nationality of females in 2014



Source: Statistics Korea, Vital Statistics of Immigrants in 2014, p. 3, <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/8/3/index.board> (accessed: 10.11.2016).

Through analyzing available data, statistics, articles, books on immigrant and multicultural families and the law, it can be stated that Korean government constantly tries to adapt to the multicultural contemporary social reality.

Support for Multicultural Families – strategy of the policy offered by MOGEF²

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (hereafter MOGEF) in Korea offers support for multicultural families in early adaption and stable settlement of family.

² All the information about Support of Multicultural Families in this part of the chapter are contained on the website of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family: www.mogef.go.kr.

The main objective of the family policy is to support promotion of a sound international marriage and to ensure Korean society's receptivity of multiple cultures. The policy is aimed at supporting installation and operation of Multicultural Family Support Center (hereafter MFSC): operation of various programmes, such as education concerning the Korean language, family education, support for childcare, for stable family life and early adaptation to Korean society, and promotion of social integration. According to the information from the website side, in 2016 there were 217 working Multicultural Family Support Centers in Korea.

The next objective is formation of the bilingual family environment in a multicultural family – promoting the atmosphere to speak both Korean and the mother tongue naturally in the daily life of the multicultural family.

Another one is support for the business to help language development of the children in multicultural families – implementation of language education including promotion on the development of vocabulary, verbal language, enhancement in the communication skill, and language training on reading and speaking.

MOGEF also offers an interpretation and translation service by marriage immigrants – recruiting and educating marriage immigrants as translation and interpretation experts so that they will provide a translation/interpretation service to other marriage immigrants in the process of counseling, hospitalization or being attended to in a public office. Service languages: Vietnamese, Chinese, English, Taglog, Mongolian, Thai, Khmer, Indonesian, Russian, Japanese, Nepali, and Korean.

Next goals are formation of sound international marriage culture, fostering sound culture in an international marriage through a strict control over marriage brokers business and implementation of prior orientation at the departing countries to assist earlier adaptation to Korean life (6 places in 4 countries) – Vietnam (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Can Tho), the Philippines, Mongolia, Cambodia.

The policy on multicultural families is aimed at carrying out the instruction and inspection of the international marriage brokers to improve unsound practice in the international marriage, and also at building the awareness of new international marriage brokers as well as increasing the awareness of the existing brokers.

There is also operation of Danuri Helpline for Migrants Women and Multicultural Families – the aims of this helpline is to provide them with various information and a counseling or interpretation service. The helpline is available in 13 languages (Korean, English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Filipino (Tagalog), Mongolian, Russian, Japanese, Thai, Laotian, Uzbek, and Nepali) for 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

The support covers fostering and training of professional teachers to teach understanding of multiple cultures. The goal is to provide education about the Understanding of Multiple Cultures to general citizens by fostering professional teachers and establishing database for the teachers. In 2015, 56,310 persons were educated.

The MOGEF also offers support for the female immigrant victims of violence. The objectives of the policy is:

- To protect the female immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, or sex trafficking (both women and their children).
- To provide protection for their human rights.
- To support self-reliance through medical and legal assistance, treatment-recovery programme, provision of dwelling and vocational training, etc.

“Seoul’s Plan for the Happiness of All” – characteristics of the support programme for multicultural families³

While describing the policy of supporting multicultural families in Korea it is worth presenting “Seoul’s Plan for the Happiness of All”, which was established by Seoul Metropolitan Government. In the situation when the number of immigrants is continuously increasing, it eliminates blind spots in the welfare system, and enables the immigrants’ independence as proactive agents of their communities. This is a comprehensive plan which implements customized policies, including the teaching of Korean, professional occupational training, and support for children’s education to improve self-sufficiency of multicultural families living in Seoul.

“Seoul’s Plan for the Happiness of All” (hereafter Seoul’s Plan) is aiming at making a happy environment for multicultural families. This plan has for major goals:

- strengthening capabilities of marriage immigrants,
- supporting the education of children of multicultural families,
- reinforcing healthy multicultural family relations,
- and fostering a sound multicultural society.

³ All the information about “Seoul’s Plan for the Happiness of All” in this part of the chapter are contained on the website of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, available online at: <http://english.seoul.go.kr/policy-information/international-exchange/multicultural-family-support-project> (accessed 2017, March 3).

Seoul's Plan has seven core tasks, as follows:

- Strengthening the support for the stable settlement and financial independence of marriage immigrants.
- Supporting customized education for children of multicultural families and students who return to Korea.
- Helping multicultural families avoid various types of crises, and protecting their rights.
- Reinforcing healthy family relations of multicultural families.
- Enhancing the provision of information closely related to everyday life.
- Improving social perception of multicultural families.
- Preparing and arranging the system for the support of multicultural families. Specific programmes: Agency focusing on the employment and entrepreneurship of female marriage immigrants, parents' community, establishment of safety network for multicultural families in crisis (emergency rescue and comprehensive counseling), etc.

Seoul's Plan also includes strengthening capability for the settlement and financial independence of marriage immigrants. It offers advanced Korean language classes to improve Korean language skills. It aims at strengthening the education of marriage immigrants by providing support for job training that can lead directly to real employment opportunities. It operates an agency specializing in providing training in employment and entrepreneurship to marriage immigrants, and supports the "Happiness of All" parents' community and meetings of multicultural families.

Seoul's Plan also provides expanding educational support for children of multicultural families and foreigners, by focusing on:

- Operating visiting home school programmes to help children of multicultural families adjust to school life and improve their basic learning ability.
- Pre-elementary school: Korean language education, Elementary school: basic subject proficiency (Korean, English, math, etc.)
- Operating a "Special Korean language class" at elementary schools located in areas with high density of multicultural families and foreigners
- Providing children of multicultural families with access to books.
- Publishing collections of (educational) fairytales (10 languages).
- Supporting publication of books on multiculturalism in Korea to improve awareness of cultural diversity.

The objective of Seoul's Plan is to support the social integration of multicultural families, which provides the improvement of the perception of multicultural families and acceptance of foreign cultures;

to expand the number of perception improvement programmes, hold expo-style events for perception improvement, etc.; to establish a safety network for multicultural families in crisis and to operate programs for the improvement of multicultural family relations; to expand access for multicultural families to online and offline information; to publish newsletter/magazine on general life information, operate Hanultari homepage, and develop smartphone apps. Seoul's plan for the happiness of all provides the basis for the participation of multicultural families in community activities not as mere beneficiaries of the support policy but as fully functioning members of society, so that a multicultural society can be based on a peaceful win-win coexistence with various cultures.

Conclusion

The South Korean government provides various policies and services to aid the multicultural families and migrant women. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is the main ministry that is in charge of multicultural affairs. On its website, under the section where it provides information on the policies, there is an entire category labelled "multicultural family support." Their stated policy vision is to build a mature global nation embracing advanced multicultural society, and their goal is to improve the life quality of multicultural families, as well as to provide stable policies and to strengthen the support for children in multicultural families.

The Korean government is very active in promoting a multicultural society and very supportive of aiding multicultural families and migrant women. Looking at the implementation of numerous legal acts and action plans for immigrants and multicultural families in Korea, it can be stated that the government tries to help immigrants in many ways to adapt to Korean society and help Korean society to understand multiculturalism. The government tries to make Korean society more tolerant and open towards immigrant, towards different cultures and traditions. All the actions have the objective of providing the basis for multicultural society.

The decreasing number of marriages by native Koreans and a very low births rate (see: Statistics Korea, 2015; KOSIS, www.kosis.kr) induce the Korean government to create a new social policy. Due to the fact that the number of immigrants is growing (Statistics Korea, 2016), the

Korean government sees hope of improving the rate of marriages and birth of children by giving the immigrants the opportunity to receive Visas to stay, even citizenship, as well as favourable conditions and opportunities for adaptation to Korean society, traditions, culture and language thanks to the functioning of Multicultural Family Support Centers.

International marriages (as another type of family formation) have been also recognized as a way to reduce negative factors, such as gender imbalance, the highly educated women's, marriage avoidance phenomenon, the exclusion of men from rural areas, and the low income class in the marriage market in South Korean society (Han & Sul, 2006; Kim, 2009; after: Jinkyung & Yookyung, 2012, pp. 69–70).

It is worth mentioning that multicultural families face social exclusion, barriers in communication because of the different language (not only with the local community but also with their own husband or wife). Many immigrant females are victims of domestic and sexual violence (Iglauer, 2015, www.thediplomat.com) therefore the implemented legal acts are very important to prevent violence towards immigrant wives.

All the aspects connected with immigration and multicultural marriages in Korea generally correspond to the five general trends in international migration identified by Castles and Miller (2003, pp. 7–9, after: Andrew Eungi Kim, 2009, pp. 12–13):

- the globalization of migration – more countries are affected by migration and migrants come from more diverse areas;
- the acceleration of migration – international migration of people is growing across the globe;
- the differentiation of migration – most countries have a range of types of immigration, including labour migration, refugees and permanent settlement;
- the feminization of migration – women are playing a greater role in most types of migration, in both labour and marriage migration;
- the growing politicization of migration – international migration is having a greater impact on domestic politics and national security policies of states as well as bilateral relationships among them. The growing multi-ethnic character of Korea is consistent with broad trends of migration. The growth in the number of migrant workers and foreign brides in Korea indicates the acceleration of migration. The influx of foreigners into Korea began with migrant workers, but expanded to include foreign brides, illustrating the differentiation of migration. In addition to the sizable number of female migrant workers, the growing number of foreign brides is emblematic of the

feminization of migration and the Korean government's monitoring of labour-and-bride-sending countries is indicative of the growing politicization of migration.

In summary, marriage migration to South Korea has challenged the "homogeneous" and "patriarchal" Korean society. The Grand Plan, The Multicultural Families Support Act, Marriage Brokers Business Management Act, The First Basic Plan for Policies on Foreigners, The Second Master Plans for Supporting Multicultural Families (2013–2017) and The Second Basic Plan for Policies on Foreigners (2013–2017) are the stepping stone towards Korea becoming a successful multicultural society.

Taking into consideration these achievements, we can conclude that a significant progress in family policy has been made during the last 10 years in Korea. Nevertheless, family policy should continue to develop and be carefully designed and implemented to integrate society and to help understanding of multiculturalism (Meejung Chin et al., 2014: 305).

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