Family research with *real-world institutionalism*

My previous work in this approach includes:


“The Neo-Confucian Right and Family Politics in South Korea” *(Economy and Society, 1997)*

*South Korea under Compressed Modernity: Familial Political Economy in Transition* *(Routledge, 2010a)*

# Family as social institution, mechanism, arena, organization, corporate actor, and ideology *(Chang, 2010a)*
Since the early 2000s, for instance, South Korean men’s marriage with foreign women, mostly from less affluent Asian countries, has suddenly increased. This trend became significant initially between Korean Chinese women (Chaoxianzu) and poor urban men, and Han Chinese women were soon introduced to similar South Korean men. From around 2005, many local governments and rural communities began to approach Southeast Asian women – in particular, Vietnamese women – as brides for rapidly increasing “forced” bachelors in rural areas.

The South Korean government, at the urge of civilian experts and activists, formally adopted “the multicultural family support” policy and began various public programs for assisting foreign brides and their Korean families. All of a sudden, multiculturalism became a keyword not only in social policy but also in culture and politics.

Rapid marriage transnationalization and the accompanying multiculturalism drive are certainly a new component of globalized life in South Korea, but the country’s persistent structural inequalities involving laborers (now including foreign workers in increasing numbers), rural families, and women have had quite interesting manifestations in this process. These material problems have been (multi)culturally reframed in both the specific terms of the multicultural family support policy and the broad outlines of civilian multiculturalism. Multiculturalizing South Korea has yet failed to meaningfully address or redress various structural inequalities that foreign brides as laboring, rural, and women citizens share with foreign guest workers, foreign brides’ Korean families, and native women.
International marriage migrants to S. Korea: cumulative number (blue) and growth rate % (red)
The Country Origin of Foreign Brides
(blue: China, red: Vietnam, green: Philippines, bright blue: Cambodia)
# Life Cycle Distribution of Rural Households

## 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1986</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One generation formative</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two generation expanding</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three generation</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two generation shrinking</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One generation shrinking</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissolved</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Includes *eup* (rural towns) and *myeon* (townships).

## 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Farming and fishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion completed</td>
<td>35.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrinking</td>
<td>37.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrinkage completed</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissolved</td>
<td>11.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Backgrounds

• **Social reproduction crisis in rural areas (and urban peripheries):** economic underdevelopment, social security discrepancies, farm family lifecycle meltdown ("forced bachelorhood")

• **Asianization of Asia:** Asia as new unit of industrialization, social reproduction, cultural economy, etc. (Chang, 2014a)

• **Asianization of social reproduction:** Asian markets for marriage, care labor, sexual service (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore vs Southeast Asia)

• **Familial liberalism, familial globalization** (Chang, 2014b)

• **Simulative reflexivity as mode of modernization and development:** transnational marriages in Taiwan, multiculturalism in the West
Research

• (Re)interpretation of findings in earlier studies
• Analysis of contents of media coverages and special programs
• Field visits and interviews:
  - Multicultural family support centers (Jecheon, etc.)
  - Special schools for multicultural children (Jecheon)
  - CSR (corporate social responsibility) offices for multicultural support (Samsung Corporate Citizenship, Inc., etc.)
  - Multiculturalism social enterprises (Eumsung, etc.)
  - National coordination agency for multicultural support
  - Public multiculturalism advocacy groups and events
  - Public multiculturalism research units (KIHASA, KWDI, etc.)
The Peripatetic Process and Simulative Adaptation

- Acceptance of foreign laborers as “industrial technical trainees” under industrial labor shortage (early 1990s)

- Korean diaspora, compatriotic globalization, transnational marriages: Chaosenzu (Korean Chinese) from economic circulation to marriage migration (from early 2000s)

- Relay marriage immigration of Han Chinese women (from early-to-mid 2000s)

- Campaign marriage for South Korean rural bachelors with Southeast Asian (Vietnamese) women (from mid 2000s)

- Policy declaration for multiculturalization (2006)
Foreign brides vs. foreign workers

• (Inward) Asianization of labor in economic production and social reproduction

• Circulatory utilization of foreign labor without legal entitlement and social protection under disguised labor market flexibilization

• Cultural versus material nature of reproduction labor: cultural citizenship or (neoliberal) reproductive citizenship of foreign brides

• Foreign brides as disguised economic migrants and reproduction-contingent legal citizenship

• Multicultural family support policy, not multicultural individual support policy
Foreign brides vs. (rural) family-in-law

• Condensed Lewisian industrialization and its rural consequences: Family as multisectoral socioeconomic institution

• Farm family reproduction crisis and forced bachelorhood

• Patriarchal moral economy of peasant: women’s role in negotiating cultural aristocratization, smallholder material reality, and urban-biased welfare system

• Downward vs. upward social reproduction labor: second & third shift

• Material contradictions of rural marriage immigration as disguised economic migration: Transnational poverty hierarchy
Foreign brides vs. ordinary native South Koreans

- “Multicultural” families, “multicultural” children vs. Korean families, Korean children
- Foreign brides under domestic traditional Koreanization vs. public ethnic differentiation (or exoticization)
- Foreign brides as gender subject (women) vs ethno-cultural subject
- Gender (women) under historical reinvention vs. cosmopolitan reconstruction of patriarchal moral economy
Conclusion and Implications

• Foreign brides as laboring/rural/gender subject vs. disguised economic migrant vs. multicultural citizen

• Transnationalization/cosmopolit(an)ization of proletarian, rural, and gender components of social structure and struggle: Instance of emancipatory catastrophism? (Beck, 2015)

• Marriage transnationalization as South Korea’s social globalization: “cloakroom” (cf. Bauman, 2000) multicultural community?, “theatre” (cf. Geertz, 1980) multiculturalism?

• Asianization of social reproduction: East Asia-Southeast Asia nexus

• Asia as unit and theory of social analysis: Asia’s Asianization, South Korea’s (internal) Asianization (cf. Beck and Grande 2010, Chang 2010b, “methodological cosmopolitanism”)
대국 전통 쌀국수・만두 맞 체험 행사

일시: 11.11, 금순 12:00
장소: 주민센터 3층 상담실
다문화 가족음악학교 개교식

일시: 2011년 1월 9일 오후 2시
장소: 강서 정수원 문화예술타
주최: 문화체육관광부
주관: 강서구 정수원문화재단
사진=경남농협 제공
LG 이노텍 임직원과 함께하는 ‘회망 멘토링’ 다문화가정 자녀의 부모님 나라 방문
Korea-Vietnam/Philippines Family Video Reunion
다문화 어린이 합창대회
다문화라는 말 이전 없애자
FREE MOUTH PAPER
photographed by 나란나그네
Respect Vietnamese women.