

# Transnational Marriage Migration and the Geography of New Ethnicity in Korea\*

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## 한국의 초국적 결혼이주와 신민족성의 지리\*

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**Abstract** : The drastic growth of transnational marriage since the mid-1990s has been a new challenge to Korea. This article aims to provide a comprehension of new ethnicity by focusing on transnational marriage migration in Korea. A steep increase of foreign brides from China and Southeast countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines can be understood in terms of globalization from below. In this context, Korean trend is similar to Taiwan and Japanese ones. But, there are also some differences between them. The inflow of foreign brides has been gradually weakened since 2005 in Korea, as Taiwan has experienced since 2003. In the ratio of foreign brides among total marriage in Korea, rural area show in average two-fold higher than urban areas. However, most foreign brides have settled down in urban areas in aspect of absolute number. Korean Chinese wives most densely concentrate in urban area, followed by Chinese wives. Nevertheless, there are significant differences among foreign brides' residential areas with their nationalities. In this point, the geography of new ethnicity with foreign brides in Korea is likely to be a multi-dimensional space.

**Key Words** : transnational marriage, marriage migration, transnational migration, foreign bride, female migrants

**요약** : 1990년대 중반 이후 초국적 결혼의 급증은 한국 사회에 새로운 과제를 던져주고 있다. 이 같은 맥락에서 논문은 초국적 결혼이주에 의한 한국의 새로운 민족성의 지리적 차원을 검토한다. 중국과 베트남과 같은 동남아시아 국가들로부터 여성 결혼이주자의 급증은 밑으로부터의 지구화의 차원에서 이해될 수 있으며, 그런 점에서 한국의 추세는 대만이나 일본과 유사하다. 그러나 한국은 이들 국가와 몇 가지 점에서 차이를 나타낸다. 대만이 2003년 이후 결혼이주자가 감소한 것처럼, 한국 역시 2005년 이후 여성 결혼이주자가 감소하는 추세이다. 외국인 신부와 결혼하는 비율은 대체로 농촌이 도시보다 두 배 가량 높다. 따라서 농촌에 외국인 신부가 많다고 느낄 수 있지만, 실제로 절대 수에서는 도시에 거주하는 이주여성이 훨씬 많다. 특히, 조선족과 중국인 결혼이주 여성의 도시 지역 거주비율은 대단히 높다. 그러나 출신국적으로 보면 이들이 집중하는 지역에 상당한 차이가 있다. 이런 점에서 결혼이주여성에 의해 전개되고 있는 한국 사회의 신민족성 지리는 다면적이다.

**주요어** : 초국적 결혼, 결혼이주, 초국적 이주, 외국인 신부, 이주여성

### 1. Introduction

Today, multiculturalism is seen as a new way to include various cultural identities in Korea. It suggests the political integration and social equality between ethnic groups, but is still a disputable political and social issue. In this context, my study will explore the formation of multicultural space with a new ethnicity of foreign brides in Korea.

From the mid-1990s, migrant workers from

various Asian countries such as China, Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan have introduced new cultures into Korea. During the almost same period, a steep increase of transnational marriage between immigrant women and Korean men is observable in Korean society. A new ethnic group, comprising Korean husbands and Southeast Asian wives, has attracted significant attention. As of 2008, there are about 1 million foreigners in Korea. The number of foreign ers is roughly 1.5 percent of a

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total Korean population of around 47 million. It is certain that this change impacts on the current and future of Korean identity.

Korea was one of the few industrialized countries not to have experienced a tremendous inflow of international migrants, but the global movement of people has yet to affect Korea very much. Contemporary Korean society has undergone deep changes in response to the challenges of globalization. In rapidly globalizing Korea, international immigrants are, belatedly, becoming an issue. Especially, marriage migration presents growing challenges for Korea, opening up the prospect of even more profound social changes in the country that is traditionally thought of as a fairly homogeneous society, commonly noted for its cultural uniqueness.

The process of recent transnational marriage can be called individual globalization from below. Foreign brides provide an interesting case study for examining the extent to which individuals from outside can foster change within that society. However, the rapid increase of marriage immigrants is not a unique phenomena in Korea. In recent years, most of East and Southeast Asian countries, whether they are origin or destination, have experienced the large increase of marriage migration.

In this regard, this study overall aims to provide a comprehension of new ethnicity and multicultural space by focusing on transnational marriage migration in Korea. The article firstly discusses the theoretical meaning of marriage migration as an central phenomenon to the feminization of transnational migration. Secondly, it seeks to describe recent major trends and characteristics in the marriage migration in Korea, comparing to other Asian countries such as Taiwan and Japan. Thirdly, geographical features of new ethnicity and multicultural space are analyzed. In the analysis, the work examines the geographic distribution of foreign brides

since the 1990s and attempts to answer the following three questions; (1) Where do the foreign brides come from? (2) Where do they settle down? (3) Is there any difference among their nationalities? Finally, this article addresses some implications for policy issues in building 'multicultural Korea' with geography of new ethnicity in Korea.

## 2. Theoretical Perspectives

Feminization is an important feature of transnational migration as an increasing number of women is crossing borders for employment and marriage. Female migration has become prominent in terms of both absolute numbers and proportions of the migrant population (UN ESCAP, 2009). Among the most striking features of the burgeoning of migration in Asian countries is the fact that in many important flows, women outnumber man. Particularly, transnational marriage has contributed to the feminization of migration and been an important channel for female migration. No less significant flow has involved the migration of Asian women in order to marry men resident in other countries. Usually this movement results in moving from less developed to more developed, countries.

Nevertheless, many of the articles deal with instances in which women migrate to join their husbands overseas. DeLaet (1999) suggests that legal migration for family reunification has been the primary route for the transnational migration of women. Until relatively recently, migration studies have also tended to treat women's migration as primarily a consequence of male migration, and see women as merely accompanying of following husbands, fathers or other related men (Charsely and Shaw, 2006; Lee, 2005).

In all societies, marriage provides an important an important arena for the achievement and consolidation of upward social mobility, and for

enhancing a family's social capital in both the short and the long run. In this point, marriage is central to the materiality and intangibles of life strategies, and to the desire of women, men and their respective families for a better life. As regional and international economic disparities widen, and as the global discourse of development designates some culture as modern and others as backward, global hierarchies of place are mapped by flows of labour migrants seeking opportunities for themselves and their families on a world canvas. On the whole, marriage migration tends to parallel the flow of labour migration as the differential social evaluations of women and men combine with culturally embedded notions for 'hypergamy' to channel the direction of marriage (Patriwala and Uberoi, 2005). In addition, marriage migration brings about the change of community in the receiving countries.

Most of previous studies have recognized a recent influx of foreign brides to Korea as a process of changing from monocultural society to multicultural one under globalization or transnational migration (Choi, 2007; Lee and Kim, 2007; Seoul, 2006). They have mainly focused on human rights and assimilation matters of female

immigrants, impacts of a massive influx on Korean society, world regional uneven development and international division of labor and Korean population matters as factors of marriage immigration.

However, previous studies mostly were lack of spatial perspectives (Kim, 2007; Moon, 2006; Lee, 2005; Lee *et al*, 2006; Yang, 2006). They have paid little attention to spatial dimension of transnational marriage within the country. In fact, the degree of assimilation, growing multi-ethnicity, and division of labor are contingent to where foreign brides settle down.

The first issue is that new ethnic spaces are being made as a process of globalization from below. International migrants are not only products of global changes but also powerful forces for further change, as they can develop their practice and representation in global contexts. Foreign brides are human agents in this kind of "globalization from below." Consequently, the geographic distribution of foreign brides depicts the spatial aspects of 'globalization from below.'

The multicultural space which foreign brides create is on the margin of two nation-states. However, the space is a forefront of "globalization

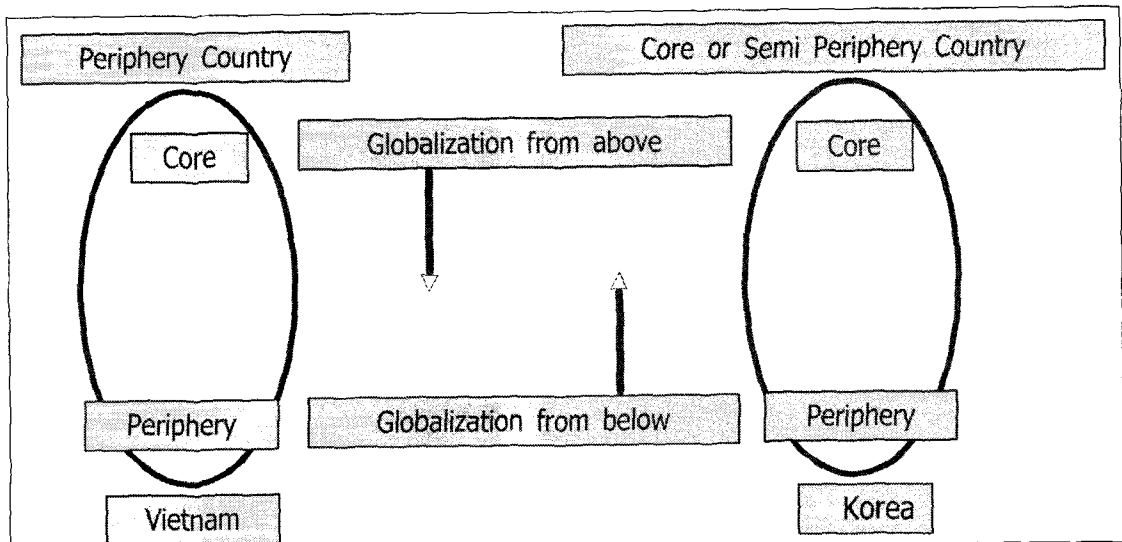


Figure 1. Theoretical concept of 'globalization from below' by transnational marriage migration

from below.” Paradoxically, the periphery - rural area where the ratio of foreign brides in marriage is high - an important place in the forefront of “globalization (from below).” This is an opposite forefront of “globalization from above” in virtue of transnational companies and financial capital. TNCs and financial capital make top-down globalization and core regions - large cities - network, while foreign brides make bottom-up globalization and periphery regions - rural areas - network.

The second issue is the differentiation of ethnic spaces in Korea. Previous studies regarded the new ethnic spaces as one homogeneous space, although they used a term of multiculturalism. The new ethnic spaces have been treated in a lump as if they are all homogeneous under the name of multicultural society (Kim, 2007; Yoon, 2008). However, I figure out multicultural society as the formation of different ethnic spaces by female marriage immigrants - for instance, Vietnamese-centered region, Filipinos-centered region.

This differentiation of ethnic spaces would be results from the interaction of Korean men as marriage partners and foreign brides as migrants in terms of needs and conditions. For example, many Korean people have recognized that Vietnam has the Confucian culture similar to Korea. Some Koreans think Vietnamese brides will be able to adapt to conservative rural life in Korea because of that. This is certainly one of reasons why many Vietnamese brides have settled down in rural areas.

### **3. Trend of Transnational Marriage in East Asia and Korea**

Transnational migration has become an integral and inevitable feature of globalization. At the same time, it has become a structural and permanent element of societies and economies in

Asia (UN ESCAP, 2009). The movement of people across borders in search of better economic opportunities of safety is a long-standing characteristic of society in the region. However, more countries are now significantly affected by transnational migration than at any time in history. Transnational migration including cross-border marriage is being propelled in the region by push and pull factors with the persistent disparities between countries.

During the last few decades, transnational migration in Asia has grown significantly in size, diversity and complexity (Hugo, 2003). Transnational migration in the Asian context has long been referred to as a migration for permanent settlement to the West, particularly to the traditional immigration countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States of America. While Asians still continue to be the major source of those countries, the cross-border movements of people within Asia have risen with startling rapidity in recent years and the direction and nature of the movement have undergone some important shifts. A large number of migrant workers employed in the newly industrialized and industrializing countries and areas have been drawn from countries in Southeast Asia (United Nations, 2003).

The trends and patterns of contemporary transnational migration system in Asia show a marked complexity (Davin, 2007). The number of transnational migrants in Asia nearly doubled between 1960 and 2005, growing from an estimated 28 million in 1960 to more than 53 million in 2005. However, transnational migrants accounted for less than 2 percent of the total population in Asia. The various subregions of Asia have been characterized by specific migratory movement. Traditionally, South is identified as a subregion of origin of migration, East Asia as a subregion of destination and Southeast Asia as a subregion of both origin and destination.

Transnational migration patterns have different characteristics in the various subregions of Asia. East and Southeast Asia have experienced growing marriage migration as well as labour migration over the past two decades. Disparities in the level of economic development among countries in the subregion, coupled with regional economic interdependence, have stimulated the mobility of people across border. Cambodian, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Vietnam have been increasingly involved as suppliers of relatively cheap labour and foreign brides.

Transnational migration for the purpose of marriage is a growing phenomenon in Asia, which is contributing to the increasing transnational migration of women. Korea, Japan and Taiwan have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of transnational marriages involving foreign brides. In Taiwan, the number of foreign brides now exceeds the number of migrant workers.

Transnational marriage is seen as a solution by some communities confronting depopulation due to low fertility rates and outmigration. In Korea and Japan, local governments in some of the affected communities actively participate in the search for overseas brides. The majority of foreign brides come from China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

For instance, Japan as one of the lowest birth rates in the developed world must import labour

in order to its economy. Many migrants who initially come to work in Japan are putting down roots there. Marriage to Japanese national is a form of settlement. The number of transnational marriages in Japan has increased dramatically in recent years. In 2000, one in 22 (4.5 percent) of all marriages involved a non-Japanese. In absolute numbers, this represents a 500 percent increase over 20 years. These figure may actually underestimate the extent of the increase because persons with dual nationality, others who married abroad, and those in de-facto relationships are not included. They need to be combined with data on Foreign nationals entering Japan for the first time with spouse visas. In the year 2000, 33,167 people first entered Japan with a visa for spouse or children of Japan nationals (Burgess, 2004).

However, the rate of cross-border marriages in Japan is lower than in Korea and Taiwan. Until now, Taiwan the first runner in the net inflow in cross-border marriage, followed by Korea, Japan (see Figure 1). In case that Mainland Chinese brides are included, Taiwan reached a rate of 31.9% in cross-border marriage. In 2003, the proportion of foreign spouses in all marriages of Taiwanese was one third. The main source of foreign spouses were from China where the ethno linguistic linkage is obviously important. Nevertheless it is apparent that the majority of the Southeast Asians are of different ethno linguistic background to their Taiwanese partner. Particularly, of all Southeast Asian spouses, 99.8% percent were to Vietnam (Tsay, 2004; Hsia, 2007). However, the rate of cross-border marriages in Taiwan dropped down since 2004. Now, it may have been surpassed by Korea.

The increase of transnational marriages is closely related to Taiwanese economic policy. Transnational marriages have already increased rapidly since the mid-1990s. In 1994, the Taiwan

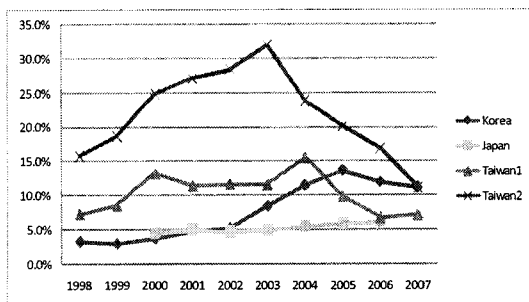


Figure 2. Rate of cross-border marriages (Kojima, 2008)<sup>1)</sup>

government began promoting its “Turn South” policy to encourage Taiwanese investment in Southeast Asia to counterbalance growing capital outflows to Mainland China. This is also marked as the beginning of the trend of Taiwanese men arranging marriage with women from Southeast. The 20,000 marriages to foreign brides recorded in 1999 grew to 41,000 in 2000, 60,000 in 2001. Total population of ‘foreign brides’ in Taiwan in 2003 numbered around 287,500. Taiwan’s mass capital investment in Vietnam began in the early 1990s. Such mass investment inevitably brings social influences to hosting countries, and cross-border marriage is one such impact (Wang and Chang, 2002). However, a recent stricter immigration interview system has resulted in

declining transnational marriages. The Taiwan government introduced a tighter interview system. In addition, recent Taiwan’s weak economy and a comparative improvement in the economy of the home countries of most potential spouses are seen as factors of declining in recent years.

The rate of transnational marriage in Korea has also slow down since 2006. However, its gradient is not steep like Taiwan. As a result, recently Korea has become almost a first runner in the rate of transnational marriage. There are two main trends on the change of international immigration in Korea since the 1990s.

Firstly, the number of transnational marriage has rapidly and massively increased since the

Table 1. transnational marriage in Korea, 1990~2008

| Year    | Total          | transnational Marriages |      | Foreign Wives |     | Foreign Husbands |     |
|---------|----------------|-------------------------|------|---------------|-----|------------------|-----|
|         | Marriage Cases | Cases                   | %    | Cases         | %   | Cases            | %   |
| 1990    | 399,312        | 4,710                   | 1.2  | 619           | 0.2 | 4,091            | 1.0 |
| 1991    | 416,872        | 5,012                   | 1.2  | 663           | 0.2 | 4,349            | 1.0 |
| 1992    | 419,774        | 5,534                   | 1.3  | 2,057         | 0.5 | 3,477            | 0.8 |
| 1993    | 402,593        | 6,545                   | 1.6  | 3,109         | 0.8 | 3,436            | 0.9 |
| 1994    | 393,121        | 6,616                   | 1.7  | 3,072         | 0.8 | 3,544            | 0.9 |
| 1995    | 398,484        | 13,494                  | 3.4  | 10,356        | 2.6 | 3,129            | 0.8 |
| 1996    | 434,911        | 15,946                  | 3.7  | 12,647        | 2.9 | 3,299            | 0.8 |
| 1997    | 388,591        | 12,448                  | 3.2  | 9,266         | 2.4 | 3,182            | 0.8 |
| 1998    | 375,616        | 12,188                  | 3.2  | 8,054         | 2.1 | 4,134            | 1.1 |
| 1999    | 362,673        | 10,570                  | 2.9  | 5,775         | 1.6 | 4,795            | 1.3 |
| 2000    | 334,030        | 12,319                  | 3.7  | 7,304         | 2.2 | 5,015            | 1.5 |
| 2001    | 320,063        | 15,234                  | 4.8  | 10,006        | 3.1 | 5,228            | 1.6 |
| 2002    | 306,573        | 15,913                  | 5.2  | 11,017        | 3.6 | 4,896            | 1.6 |
| 2003    | 304,932        | 25,658                  | 8.4  | 19,214        | 6.3 | 6,444            | 2.1 |
| 2004    | 310,944        | 35,447                  | 11.4 | 25,594        | 8.2 | 9,853            | 3.2 |
| 2005    | 316,375        | 43,121                  | 13.6 | 31,180        | 9.9 | 11,941           | 9.1 |
| 2006    | 332,752        | 39,690                  | 11.9 | 30,208        | 9.1 | 9,482            | 2.8 |
| 2007    | 343,559        | 37,560                  | 10.9 | 28,580        | 8.3 | 8980             | 2.6 |
| 2008    | 327,715        | 36,204                  | 11.1 | 28,163        | 2.6 | 8041             | 2.5 |
| '90-'08 | 6,888,890      | 354,209                 | 5.1  | 246,893       | 3.6 | 107,316          | 1.6 |

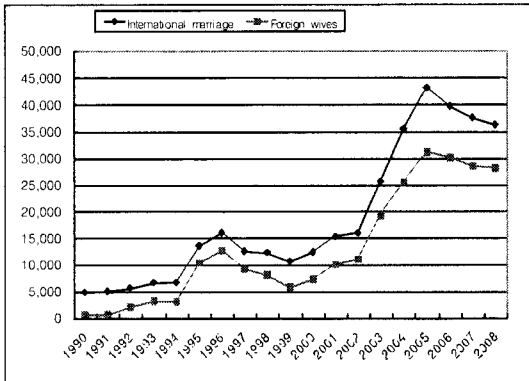
Source: KOSIS, 2008.

mid-1990s. Secondly, at the same time, feminization of transnational migration has become outstanding. Figure 2 shows that the number of transnational marriage in Korea has increased since 1995. In 2006, at least one in nine (11.9 percent) of all marriage involved a non-Korean. In absolute numbers, this represents an increase of nearly 850 percent from the number 16 years ago. The percentage of foreign brides increased tenfold during the period (see Table 1).

Figure 1 also shows the number of foreign

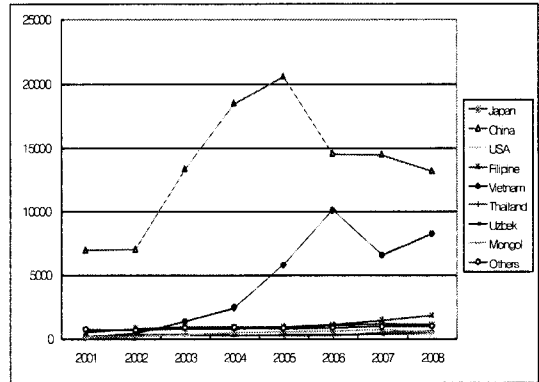
wives has been massively increasing since 1995. Cases of foreign men married to Korean women are much more than ones of foreign women married to Korean men in the early 1990s. However, one in four of transnational marriage is a case of foreign bride married to Korean man in 2006. The changing pattern of transnational marriage is nearly same to that of increasing foreign brides.

The trends suggest that a number of immigrants have infiltrated the fabric of society, and Korea is at a critical point in the transition



Source: KOSIS, 2008.

Figure 3. Trends of transnational marriages since 1990



Source: KOSIS, 2008.

Figure 4. Foreign brides' nationalities in Korea, 2001~2008

Table 2. Nationality of foreign brides, 2000~2008

|              | 2000  | 2001  | 2002   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   |
|--------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total number | 6,945 | 9,684 | 10,698 | 18,751 | 25,105 | 30,719 | 29,665 | 28,580 | 28,163 |
| Chinese      | 51.3  | 72.0  | 65.6   | 71.2   | 73.6   | 67.0   | 49.1   | 50.7   | 46.9   |
| Vietnamese   | 1.1   | 1.4   | 4.4    | 7.5    | 9.8    | 19.0   | 34.1   | 23.1   | 29.4   |
| Filipino     | 16.9  | 5.2   | 7.8    | 4.9    | 3.8    | 3.2    | 3.8    | 5.2    | 6.6    |
| Mongolian    | 0.9   | 1.2   | 1.8    | 1.7    | 2.0    | 1.8    | 2.0    | 2.6    | 1.8    |
| Cambodian    | -     | -     | -      | 0.1    | 0.3    | 0.5    | 1.3    | 6.3    | 2.3    |
| Thai         | 3.5   | 1.9   | 3.1    | 1.8    | 1.3    | 0.9    | 0.9    | 1.8    | 2.2    |
| Uzbekistan   | 0.6   | 0.7   | 1.7    | 1.7    | 1.0    | 1.1    | 1.1    | 1.2    | 1.7    |
| Japanese     | 11.8  | 7.2   | 6.4    | 4.5    | 3.2    | 2.9    | 3.5    | 4.2    | 4.1    |
| American     | 3.3   | 2.7   | 2.5    | 1.7    | 1.4    | 0.9    | 1.1    | 1.3    | 1.2    |
| Others       | 10.5  | 7.7   | 6.6    | 4.8    | 3.6    | 2.8    | 3.1    | 3.4    | 3.6    |

Source: KOSIS, 2008.

to multiculturalism. Korea is approaching a point where foreign immigrants are beginning to have a permanent and visible influence on Korean society. This is a momentous change for Korean, long used to and even proud of the belief that it is a homogeneous nation.

Where do foreign brides in Korea come from? American and Japanese brides had the highest percentage of nationalities until the early 1990s. Approximately, 70 percent of foreign women married to Korean men were from USA and Japan. However, the rates of foreign brides' nationality have abruptly changed with increasing transnational marriage since the mid-1990s. Foreign brides from developing countries in East Asia have increased rapidly. In particular, the percentage of Chinese brides has increased highly, from 10~15% to 50~70%. In 2004, 7 in 10 female marriage immigrants were Chinese women. More recently, Vietnamese brides has been increasing rapidly, while the percentage of Filipino women married to Korean men is decreasing gradually (see Figure 4 and Table 2). Chinese and Vietnamese brides make up over 70 percent of foreign brides.

Actually, this pattern of foreign brides' nationalities is so similar to Taiwan. It means

that China and Vietnam are the largest sources of foreign brides among East and Southeast countries. It can be explained in terms of economic and cultural factors. In the world system, Korea and Taiwan are more developed countries, while China and Vietnam less developed countries. Some scholars argue that commodification of transnational marriage is an important factor. Particularly, the cost of Vietnamese brides is said to be relatively low in transnational marriage market in Southeast Asia.

However, these economic factors do not sufficiently explain the reason why Vietnam is one of the largest sources of foreign brides form Southeast Asia. Cultural factors are effective as much as economic ones. Vietnam has various common cultural traits with Korea and Taiwan in terms of rice-food culture and confucianism. Moreover, Korean chinese does not have linguistic barrier with Korean people, as Taiwanese do not with Mainland Chinese.

The composition of foreign brides' nationalities in Japan is a little different from Korea and Taiwan. In Japan, Chinese is the largest group in foreign spouses, followed by Philippine and Korean. Vietnamese is not a main source in Japanese transnational marriages. In Korea,

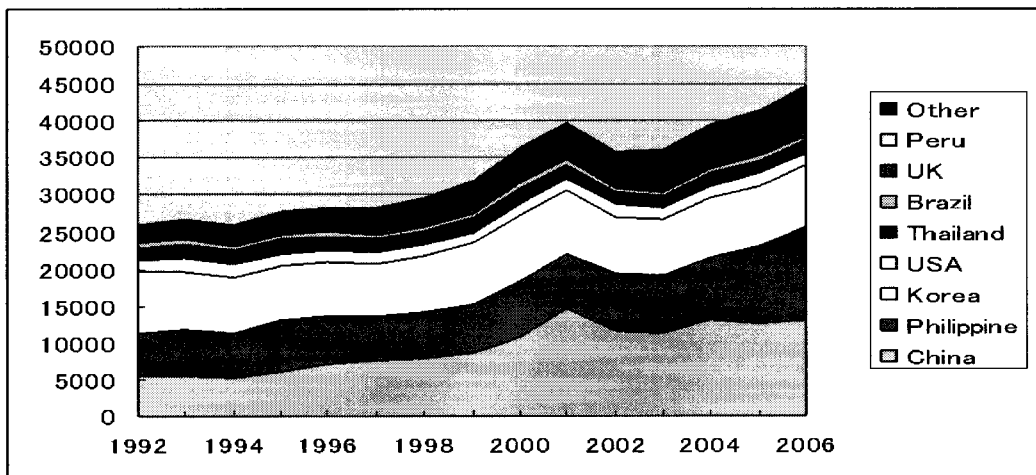


Figure 5. Nationality composition of foreign spouse in Japan (Ishikawa, 2008)



Philippines also was a second largest group during the early increasing period of transnational marriage. But, the inflow of brides from Philippine has been stagnant since 2003, while the inflow of brides from Vietnam has significantly increased since 2003. On the contrary, the dominant position of Philippine still continues relatively in Japan. This difference between Korea and Japan may relate to the formation of ethnic or transnational migrant community in both countries. As mentioned above, in receiving countries, migrants who come from the same country of origin often form ethnic communities. Many kinds of economic, political and religious relations grow in these communities. This formation of ethnic community makes up forces pulling new ethnic migrants. Migrants will not only interact with members of the host society, but also with family, relatives and colleagues in their home countries. In this way, networks come into play (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007).

#### 4. Geography of New Ethnicity by Foreign Brides in Korea.

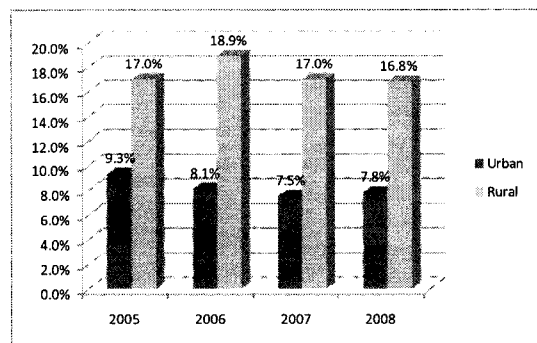
Where do Foreign brides settle down? This is the important subject in the formation of new ethnicity and multicultural society. The rate of foreign brides in total marriages is the highest in Jeonman, Jeonbuk, Chungbuk and Chungnam, which are typical rural areas. In fact, this pattern is the reason why social problems related to foreign brides is recognized in rural areas. However, in the absolute number, Seoul metro-city and Geonggi-do are regions where foreign brides has been settling down at the largest in Korea. In 2005, nearly one in two foreign brides resided in the regions (see Table 4).

This residential pattern is closely similar to regional weight in total marriages. However, social problems related to foreign brides are

relatively invisible, because they are the most populous regions in Korea. In both regions, the rates of foreign brides in marriage are near or below the average ratio of whole country. Regions where social problems related to foreign brides take place more seriously are rural areas. Rural areas have averagely twofold rate of foreign brides in total marriages over urban areas. This is because many Korean men working in agricultural sector are marrying to foreign brides from other countries in East Asia in recent years.

Relative concentration of foreign brides in rural areas is more apparent in mapping the rate of transnational marriage by city and county. The rate of transnational marriage in cities and counties based on agricultural industry are over 25%. In 2007, among 7,930 marriage of Korean men working in agriculture /forestry/fishery, as many as 3,172 involved foreign brides (40.0%).

Foreign brides' residential areas tend to be different according to their nationalities. Most of female immigrants from advanced countries such as Japan and USA reside in Seoul. A proportion of Chinese residing in Seoul and Gyeonggi is also high. On the other hand, foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries settle down in rural areas at a high rate: especially, Vietnamese and Filipinos.



Source: KOSIS, 2008.

Figure 6. Rate of transnational marriage in urban and rural areas

Table 3. Rate of foreign brides in total marriages by region

|               | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|
| Whole Country | 10.1 | 9.1  | 8.4  | 8.7  |
| Seoul         | 10.7 | 8.3  | 7.9  | 7.7  |
| Busan         | 7.4  | 7.3  | 6.7  | 7.6  |
| Daegu         | 7.7  | 7.7  | 6.3  | 6.7  |
| Incheon       | 12.2 | 9.1  | 8.4  | 9.0  |
| Gwangju       | 6.4  | 7.6  | 6.7  | 7.7  |
| Daejun        | 8.6  | 7.2  | 6.6  | 7.9  |
| Ulsan         | 8.1  | 8.3  | 8.0  | 7.3  |
| Gyeonggi      | 10.1 | 8.4  | 7.9  | 8.3  |
| Gangwon       | 9.1  | 9.1  | 9.0  | 9.5  |
| Chungbuk      | 11.0 | 10.3 | 9.4  | 10.3 |
| Chungnam      | 11.4 | 11.0 | 10.7 | 11.4 |
| Jeonbuk       | 13.6 | 12.9 | 12.1 | 13.4 |
| Jeonnam       | 13.3 | 15.1 | 13.9 | 13.8 |
| Gyeongbuk     | 10.2 | 11.7 | 10.3 | 9.7  |
| Gyeongnam     | 8.8  | 10.8 | 9.3  | 8.5  |
| Jeju          | 6.8  | 7.7  | 8.3  | 10.4 |

Source: KOSIS, 2008.

Table 4. Residential areas of foreign brides

|               | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Whole Country | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Seoul         | 25.1  | 21.1  | 21.3  | 19.9  |
| Busan         | 4.6   | 5.0   | 5.1   | 5.5   |
| Daegu         | 3.3   | 3.7   | 3.3   | 3.3   |
| Incheon       | 6.6   | 5.4   | 5.4   | 5.9   |
| Gwangju       | 1.6   | 2.2   | 2.1   | 2.3   |
| Daejun        | 2.6   | 2.3   | 2.3   | 2.7   |
| Ulsan         | 1.8   | 2.1   | 2.2   | 2.1   |
| Gyeonggi      | 24.2  | 22.2  | 22.8  | 23.2  |
| Gangwon       | 2.5   | 2.7   | 2.9   | 2.9   |
| Chungbuk      | 3.0   | 3.3   | 3.3   | 5.5   |
| Chungnam      | 4.5   | 5.0   | 5.2   | 5.5   |
| Jeonbuk       | 4.6   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 5.0   |
| Jeonnam       | 4.4   | 5.4   | 5.4   | 5.2   |
| Gyeongbuk     | 4.9   | 6.4   | 6.1   | 5.5   |
| Gyeongnam     | 5.4   | 7.7   | 7.1   | 6.2   |
| Jeju          | 0.8   | 0.9   | 1.0   | 1.3   |

Source: KOSIS, 2008.

Table 5. Occupations of Korean men married to foreign women, 2004~2005 (%)

|          | Office workers | Service sector | Agricultural Sector | Skilled workers | Unskilled Workers | Unemployed | Others |
|----------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|--------|
| China    | 23.2           | 28.8           | 4.8                 | 16.7            | 5.8               | 5.1        | 9.1    |
| Mongol   | 23.0           | 25.0           | 9.5                 | 19.1            | 6.4               | 2.6        | 11.3   |
| Filipino | 19.2           | 20.0           | 20.0                | 16.9            | 5.7               | 4.0        | 10.9   |
| Thai     | 21.8           | 21.4           | 11.7                | 20.9            | 5.7               | 3.2        | 12.9   |
| Vietnam  | 18.8           | 20.5           | 24.6                | 16.9            | 6.7               | 2.7        | 7.6    |
| Cambodia | 27.6           | 17.8           | 17.7                | 16.2            | 6.0               | 2.3        | 11.6   |
| Uzbek    | 26.2           | 24.9           | 9.4                 | 13.3            | 3.3               | 2.2        | 15.4   |
| Russia   | 26.3           | 32.2           | 2.8                 | 11.5            | 4.1               | 5.7        | 13.9   |

Source: KOSIS, 2008.

China and Vietnam are the largest origin countries of female marriage immigrants in Korea. But, there is a big difference between their settlement patterns. Chinese immigrants are more urban-oriented, while Vietnamese more rural-oriented. It is an interesting phenomenon that the ratios of Japanese in Busan and Jeju, Chinese in Incheon and Russian in Busan are a

little high. Chinese women concentrate in urban areas more rather than Japanese ones. In particular, the rate of Korean Chinese (Joseon-jok) in settling down in urban areas is over 80%. Most of them do not come from urban areas in China.

Figure 7a to 7f are maps on the rate of female immigrants<sup>2)</sup> through transnational marriage

Table 6. Rate of foreign bride's nationality by region, 2008 (%)

|               | Japan | China | USA | Philippine | Vietnam | Thailand | Mongol | Cambodia | Uzbek | Others |
|---------------|-------|-------|-----|------------|---------|----------|--------|----------|-------|--------|
| Whole Country | 3.2   | 47.5  | 1.1 | 6.7        | 29.8    | 2.3      | 1.9    | 2.4      | 1.8   | 3.5    |
| Seoul         | 5.4   | 53.7  | 2.8 | 4.4        | 21.0    | 3.0      | 1.7    | 0.9      | 1.5   | 5.7    |
| Busan         | 4.3   | 41.9  | 0.6 | 6.1        | 35.9    | 1.0      | 1.2    | 2.3      | 1.7   | 5.0    |
| Daegu         | 2.5   | 47.8  | 0.5 | 3.1        | 33.6    | 3.5      | 0.9    | 1.6      | 3.4   | 3.1    |
| Incheon       | 2.5   | 57.4  | 0.7 | 5.4        | 21.4    | 4.2      | 1.8    | 1.0      | 1.9   | 3.7    |
| Gwangju       | 2.5   | 44.8  | 0.5 | 8.8        | 29.9    | 2.5      | 3.1    | 3.7      | 2.2   | 2.2    |
| Daejun        | 1.9   | 40.9  | 0.9 | 6.6        | 40.3    | 1.1      | 0.8    | 2.5      | 1.6   | 3.4    |
| Ulsan         | 2.1   | 41.4  | 0.4 | 7.2        | 40.0    | 1.1      | 1.8    | 3.7      | 1.1   | 1.4    |
| Gyeonggi      | 3.0   | 55.2  | 1.2 | 5.2        | 23.2    | 2.6      | 2.2    | 1.5      | 1.8   | 4.1    |
| Gangwon       | 2.7   | 39.0  | 0.7 | 11.5       | 30.3    | 3.3      | 1.8    | 6.8      | 2.1   | 1.7    |
| Chungbuk      | 2.1   | 43.1  | 0.4 | 7.9        | 36.3    | 1.7      | 3.3    | 1.6      | 1.4   | 2.2    |
| Chungnam      | 1.7   | 40.1  | 0.3 | 10.5       | 37.9    | 1.9      | 1.3    | 3.0      | 1.3   | 1.8    |
| Jeonbuk       | 1.9   | 46.7  | 0.4 | 9.9        | 30.7    | 1.4      | 1.1    | 4.2      | 1.9   | 1.7    |
| Jeonnam       | 2.3   | 37.6  | 0.1 | 10.2       | 37.8    | 1.3      | 2.3    | 4.8      | 2.1   | 1.5    |
| Gyeongbuk     | 1.6   | 37.3  | 0.1 | 6.5        | 43.9    | 1.4      | 1.7    | 3.9      | 2.0   | 1.6    |
| Gyeongnam     | 3.0   | 34.4  | 0.3 | 7.2        | 44.1    | 0.9      | 2.7    | 3.3      | 1.7   | 2.5    |
| Jeju          | 3.6   | 29.1  | 0.0 | 20.4       | 33.9    | 1.1      | 1.7    | 5.6      | 1.7   | 2.8    |

Source: KOSIS, 2008.

Table 7. Rate of foreign bride's residential area by nationality, 2008 (%)

|               | Japan | China | USA  | Philippine | Vietnam | Thailand | Mongol | Cambodia | Uzbek | Others |
|---------------|-------|-------|------|------------|---------|----------|--------|----------|-------|--------|
| Whole Country | 100   | 100   | 100  | 100        | 100     | 100      | 100    | 100      | 100   | 100    |
| Seoul         | 33.9  | 22.5  | 52.2 | 13.1       | 13.9    | 26.0     | 17.5   | 7.9      | 16.3  | 32.1   |
| Busan         | 7.5   | 4.9   | 3.0  | 5.0        | 6.6     | 2.5      | 3.6    | 5.5      | 5.3   | 7.8    |
| Daegu         | 2.6   | 3.3   | 1.7  | 1.6        | 3.7     | 5.1      | 1.5    | 2.3      | 6.3   | 3.0    |
| Incheon       | 4.7   | 7.1   | 3.7  | 4.8        | 4.2     | 10.8     | 5.6    | 2.6      | 6.3   | 6.2    |
| Gwangju       | 1.8   | 2.2   | 1.0  | 3.1        | 2.3     | 2.5      | 3.8    | 3.6      | 2.8   | 1.4    |
| Daejun        | 1.6   | 2.3   | 2.4  | 2.7        | 3.6     | 1.3      | 1.2    | 2.9      | 2.4   | 2.6    |
| Ulsan         | 1.4   | 1.8   | 0.7  | 2.2        | 2.8     | 1.0      | 1.9    | 3.2      | 1.2   | 0.8    |
| Gyeonggi      | 21.8  | 27.0  | 25.6 | 18.3       | 18.1    | 26.5     | 27.6   | 14.3     | 24.0  | 27.0   |
| Gangwon       | 2.5   | 2.4   | 2.0  | 5.0        | 3.0     | 4.3      | 2.9    | 8.3      | 3.5   | 1.4    |
| Chungbuk      | 2.3   | 3.2   | 1.3  | 4.2        | 4.3     | 2.7      | 6.1    | 2.4      | 2.8   | 2.2    |
| Chungnam      | 3.0   | 4.6   | 1.7  | 8.7        | 6.9     | 4.6      | 3.8    | 6.8      | 4.1   | 2.9    |
| Jeonbuk       | 3.0   | 4.9   | 2.0  | 7.5        | 5.1     | 3.2      | 2.9    | 9.0      | 5.5   | 2.5    |
| Jeonnam       | 3.9   | 4.1   | 0.3  | 8.0        | 6.6     | 3.0      | 6.3    | 10.5     | 6.3   | 2.2    |
| Gyeongbuk     | 2.7   | 4.3   | 0.7  | 5.4        | 8.1     | 3.3      | 5.0    | 9.1      | 6.1   | 2.5    |
| Gyeongnam     | 5.9   | 4.5   | 1.7  | 6.7        | 9.2     | 2.5      | 9.0    | 8.6      | 5.9   | 4.4    |
| Jeju          | 1.5   | 0.8   | 0.0  | 3.9        | 1.5     | 0.6      | 1.2    | 3.0      | 1.2   | 1.0    |

by city and county.<sup>3)</sup> In detail, Figure 6a shows that female marriage migrants concentrate on the Seoul Metropolitan Area, which is the most

urban area. Korean Chinese has the highest rate of concentrating on the Seoul Metropolitan Area except Seoul Metro City (Figure 7c). Their

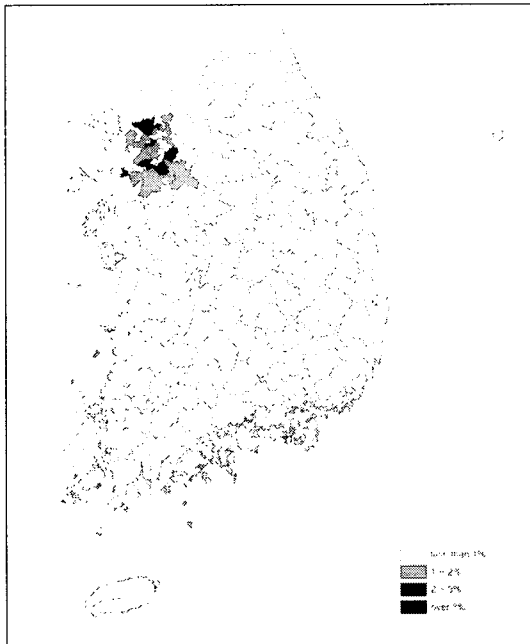


Figure 7a. All nationalities

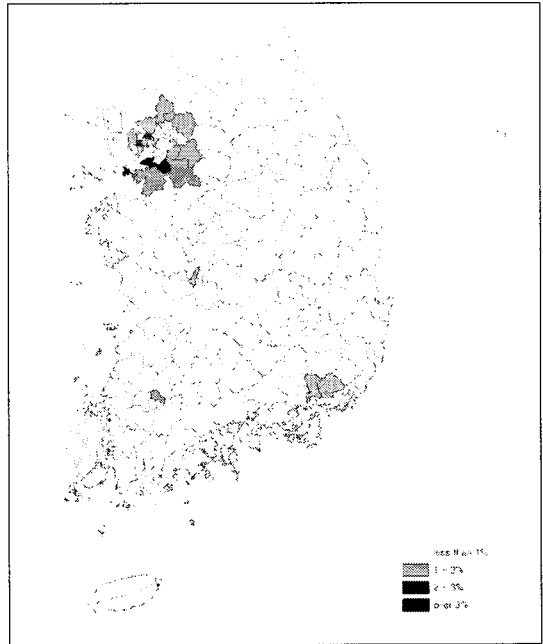


Figure 7b. Chinese

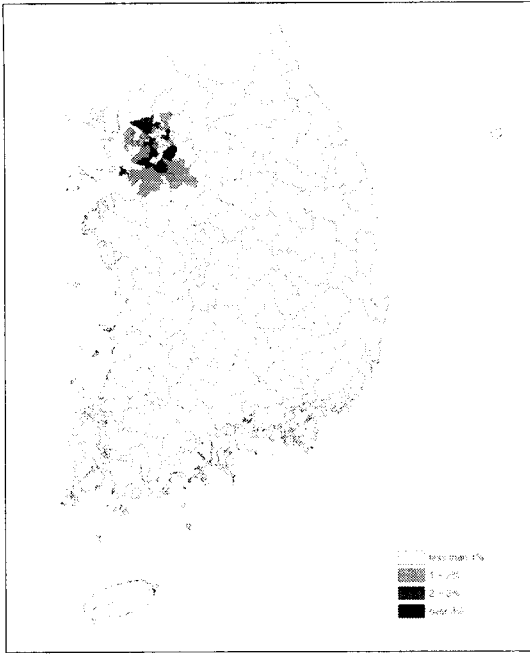


Figure 7c. Korean Chinese

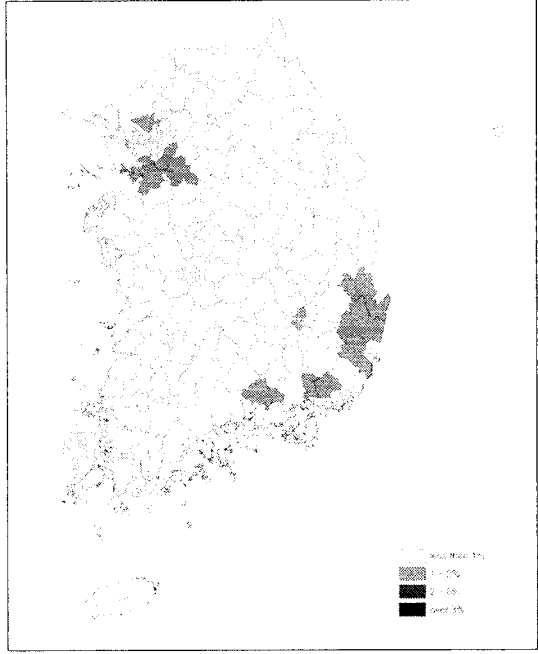


Figure 7d. Vietnamese

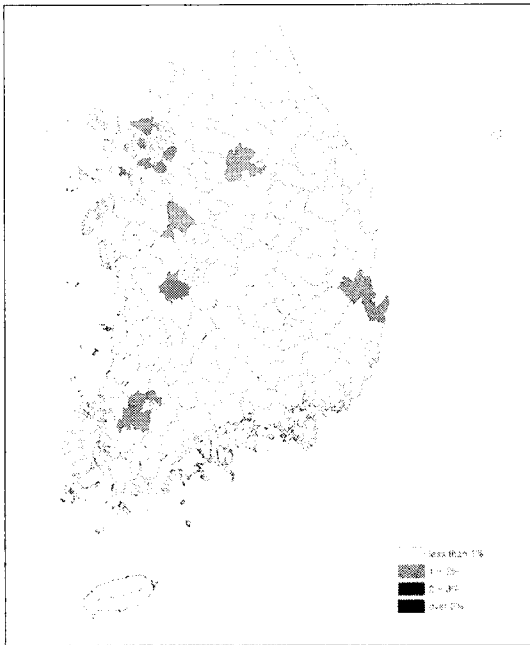


Figure 7e. Philippine



Figure 7f. Japanese

concentration in the Seoul Metropolitan Area is extreme. Chinese also show very high concentration on the Seoul Metropolitan Area (Figure 7b).

They have trend to disperse more widely than Korean Chinese. But, other regions which most of them settle down are also metropolitan areas.

Table 8. Foreign brides' settling down, 2008 (%)

|            | Urban Area | Rural Area |
|------------|------------|------------|
| Chinese    | 86.2       | 13.8       |
| Japanese   | 86.8       | 13.2       |
| Philippine | 76.3       | 23.7       |
| Vietnamese | 74.0       | 26.0       |
| Thais      | 86.8       | 13.2       |
| Mongolian  | 80.2       | 19.8       |
| Cambodia   | 64.3       | 35.7       |
| Uzbekistan | 87.0       | 13.0       |
| USA        | 95.3       | 4.7        |
| Others     | 91.7       | 8.3        |
| Total      | 81.6       | 18.4       |

Comparing to Korean Chinese and Chinese women, Vietnamese women concentrate in the South of Seoul Metropolitan Area and Southeast coastal area such as Ulsan, Pohang, Kimhae and Changwon. We need to remark that these regions are the largest industrial district in Korea. This residential pattern of Vietnamese wives gives us an important implication with the fact that over 50 percent of their spouses is working in non-agricultural sector. The rate of Korean spouses who are working in agricultural sector is higher in case of Vietnamese wives than other national wives. Nevertheless, the rate is less than 25 percent (see Table 5).

Philippines and Japanese women tend to distribute in more regions than Korean Chinese, Chinese and Vietnamese women. Particularly, Philippine brides settle down most widely in various region among foreign brides in Korea. However, their residential areas also concentrate on urban areas, especially metropolitan areas. Table 8 shows how much foreign brides settle down in urban area.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

Transnational marriages have occurred throughout

history around the world, but a dramatic rise in the number of transnational marriages has occurred since the mid-1990s in Korea. However, this is not a phenomenon only in Korea, but we can see similar phenomena throughout the world. Particularly, East and Southeast countries have an experience of significant increase in transnational marriage under globalization.

In the process, more developed countries such as Korea, Japan and Taiwan are receiving foreign brides from less developed economies such as China and Southeast countries. While globalization by capital and transnational companies is processes from above, globalization by transnational marriage migration is individual processes from below. In addition, regions where foreign brides settle down can be seen as spatial forefront of globalization from below.

Korean trend of foreign brides' influx is similar to Taiwan and Japanese ones in various aspects, because transnational marriage migration has occurred under globalization in East and Southeast Asia. However, they have also some different trends and patterns. Taiwan was a first runner in receiving foreign brides until 2003. But, the inflow of Taiwan foreign brides has rapidly dropped down since 2003. Korea has an experience of decreasing foreign brides after 2005. However, the decreasing rate in Korea is lower than in Taiwan. Consequently, the inflow scale and rate of foreign brides in both countries are almost similar now. On the contrary, the inflow of foreign brides in Japan tends to go up slowly and continuously.

Foreign bride's residential place in host society has an important implication as a forefront of globalization from below. Some have recognized rural area as the forefront. But, it is absolutely not an exact recognition. Because, marriages are scarce in rural area, the rate of foreign brides is counted relatively high. In reality, most of foreign brides has concentrates

on urban area, especially metropolitan area. In case of Korea, Seoul Metropolitan Area has become a largest agglomerate of foreign brides. Social problems around foreign brides can be uncovered easily in rural areas, because their rate is high. However, the more social problems can be potential in urban areas, because their absolute figure is so many. They are not seen on the streets. That is, the forefront of globalization by transnational marriage migration can be said to form in socially and economically exclusive space, whether it is rural or urban area. In this context, our recognition and policy issues for building 'multicultural Korea' need to be reconsidered.

This article has some limits in studying geography of new ethnicity and formation of multicultural space. We need to study deeply on foreign bride's residential place before immigration, motivation of marriage immigration, socio-economic status such as household income, education attainment and occupation in home country, and socio-economic activities after immigration and so on.

## 주

- 1) While Taiwan<sup>1</sup> means only the rate of foreign spouses in cross-border marriages, Taiwan<sup>2</sup> the rate including Mainland Chinese spouses.
- 2) The rate include foreign wives with Korean nationality as well as foreign brides without Korean nationality. In general, marriage migrant means only foreign brides without Korean nationality in Korean official statistics.
- 3) The denominator is total female marriage immigrants with a certain nationality, and the fractional number is female marriage immigrants with the nationality in each city or county.

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