



**Intersections of the Migration Regime and the Care Regime:  
The South Korean Case**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>EPS</b>	Employment Permit System, Korea
<b>GCC</b>	Global Care Chain(s)
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>IPC</b>	Immigration Policy Committee of Korea
<b>ITS</b>	Industrial Trainee System, Korea
<b>KEIS</b>	Korea Employment Information Service
<b>KIHASA</b>	Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs
<b>KIS</b>	Korea Immigration Service
<b>KLI</b>	Korea Labour Institute
<b>LTCI</b>	Long-Term Care Insurance
<b>MOEL</b>	Ministry of Employment and Labour of Korea
<b>MOGAHA</b>	Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs
<b>MOGEF</b>	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of Korea
<b>MOHW</b>	Ministry of Health and Welfare of Korea
<b>MOJ</b>	Ministry of Justice of Korea
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>SMBA</b>	Small and Medium Business Administration of Korea
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise(s)
<b>TFR</b>	Total Fertility Rate
<b>UN</b>	The United Nations
<b>WVP</b>	Working Visit Programme, Korea



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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis investigates the intersections between the migration regime and the care regime in South Korea. The research is designed as an in-depth policy-oriented case study and adopts documentary analysis and expert interviews as research methods. From the mid-1990s Korea's transition to a migrant destination country within Asia became evident and the migration inflows have been gendered and ethnised as well as classed. In response, Korea has developed a highly instrumental and differential migration regime: circulatory, anti-settlement policies for non-professional labour migrants in general but supportive and integrative for co-ethnic migrants and marriage migrants. Care, on the other hand, has become a major social policy issue since the early 2000s, facing a care crisis represented by population ageing and the low fertility. While the state began to assume a greater responsibility for care, care demands for children and older people have been differently addressed, and the distribution of care responsibility between genders within home remains largely unchanged. Consequently, home-based (child)care and eldercare areas tend to leave greater room for migrant care workers to get involved in. The government has facilitated co-ethnic migrant workers to work for the care (service) sector through various policy renovations. The Korean government has also supported female marriage migrants to successfully act as wives, mothers and daughters-in-law, who assume indispensable roles to maintain and regenerate the family. This research has shown that the Korean productivist/social investment welfare state has been operating on the transnational level to help secure reproductive labour. The Korean case of the intersections between the migration and care regimes complements the existing knowledge of care-migration nexus not only by broadening the regional application of the migration-care intersection scholarship to East Asia and its welfare regimes, but also by extending the theoretical application to new routes/patterns of migration - co-ethnic migration and marriage migration.

**Key words: South Korea, Care, Migration, Gender, Regimes, Intersections**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Finding Connections: Migration and Care

This research is about the relationship between migration and care. Over the past couple of decades, researchers have documented a trend whereby migrants, predominantly females, from poor(er) countries are meeting the growing demand for various types of care work in rich(er) countries (Anderson, 2000, 2014; Cox, 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Hochschild, 2000b; Kilkey *et al.*, 2013; Lutz, 2002, 2008a; Parreñas, 2001; Yeates, 2006, 2009, 2011). In other words, we increasingly witness that care work is being arranged beyond the national boundaries through cross-border migration, i.e., the *trans*-nationalisation of care. This interesting connection of migration and care outsourcing has been analysed by a series of conceptual innovations as follows.

Parreñas (2001) constructed the concept of ‘the international division of social reproductive labour’ among women in different geographical locations, applying Glenn’s notion of the racial division of reproductive labour to an international context (Glenn, 1992). Drawing on the work of Parreñas (2001), Hochschild (2000b) coined the term ‘global care chains’ to refer to “a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring”. She typified how these chains might work: “An older daughter from a poor family in a third world country cares for her siblings (the first link in the chain) while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a nanny migrating to a first world country (the second link), who, in turn, cares for the child of a family in a rich country (the final link)” (Hochschild, 2000b: 357). These chains of care transfer constitute what she labels an invisible “human ecology of care” (Hochschild, 2000b: 357), in which care workers are not just networked geographically but interdependent in a hierarchy of power and resource, just as in any ecologies in the natural world. The concept of global care chain has proven to be an effective tool not only to link personal/household level of care activities to the transnational/global level (Williams, 2010), but also to analyse broader social relations

around care (and welfare) in the context of migration (and globalisation) by placing ‘care’ as a key dimension of reproductive labour (Yeates, 2012).

The original conceptualisation of global care chains acknowledged that care work involved in the care chains can be both paid or unpaid, and be both for childcare and eldercare (Hochschild, 2000a, 2000b). Despite its broad analytical potential, the concept of global care chains tended to be applied in a rather limited scope by privileging both a specific migration pattern (South to North) and certain types of care workers (less skilled paid care/domestic workers in private homes) (Kofman and Raghuram, 2012; Yeates, 2012). This issue of the limited scope has been addressed to some degree by subsequent research. For example, *skilled* care workers and new types of care occupations began to be analysed by the global care chain frame (Yeates, 2004a, 2009), and the analysis was extended to include the cases of *male* care workers, more recently (Kilkey, 2010b; Kilkey *et al.*, 2013).

While the global care chain theory has been substantially pushing its analytical boundary to include different care occupations in varying skill levels and different genders, attempts to expand its geographical application invited new challenges. European countries do share some of the social changes with the USA that Hochschild (2000b) attributed the growing demand for migrant care workers to: women’s rapid move into paid work, shrinking family care resources and a consequent difficulty balancing paid work and care responsibility as a new social risk (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). Nonetheless, Williams and Gavanas (2008: 14) observed that the situation in Europe “does not fit” the typical scenario the global care chain concept envisages; instead, they found significant national differences even within Europe in the way migrants are involved in care work. The role of state policies was not clearly identified in the original conceptualisation of global care chains, arguably because the concept was developed in the USA where collective provision of care is virtually absent (Kilkey *et al.*, 2010). However, it is essential to examine the national dimension on which ‘policies, regulations and discourses’ are formulated so as to capture variations in the mode of the migration-care relationship, and this is especially the case in the European context due to the considerable variability in welfare-care regimes (Kilkey *et al.*, 2010; Williams, 2010).

Recognition of the importance of institutional aspects in understanding the relationship between migration and care has led to the emergence of a new body of

research, to which this thesis aims to contribute, focusing on analysing the intersections of care (including gender, more broadly) and migration *regimes*. The term ‘regimes’ is typically used to refer to “a complex of legal and organizational features” which are “systematically interwoven” (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 2). By dominant patterns and logics of such features identified against certain agenda, countries may cluster (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 26; Lister *et al.*, 2007: 2; Williams and Gavanas, 2008: 15). Care regimes and (im)migration regimes are directly concerned with state policies related to care provision and entry, stay and settlement of (im)migrants, respectively. Besides the formal rules and regulations, however, social, political and cultural norms and practices are also often taken into consideration in the analysis of care and migration regimes. The analysis of intersecting regimes provides a ‘meso level link’ between the micro-level of individual/household and the macro level of transnational migration, enabling a more complete understanding of how the relationship between migration and care is constructed, mediated and experienced (Williams, 2010, 2012, 2014).

An early contribution to the intersection research is a study by Williams and Gavanas (2008) on the employment of home-based childcare in UK, Sweden and Spain, where they showed how the intersection of migration regimes with childcare regimes shaped the phenomenon of migrants in care work in different ways in different countries. They emphasised the importance of institution by arguing that “it is not simply the absence of childcare services for working mothers, but the *nature* of those services that stimulates particular sorts of demand by working mothers” (Williams and Gavanas, 2008: 25, emphasis in original). Comparative studies like this are rare, but empirical case studies have been added to the intersection research, for example studies on Italy (Scrinzi, 2008), Greece (Hantzaroula, 2008), Spain (León, 2010), Portugal (Wall and Nunes, 2010), Germany (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2010), Poland (Keryk, 2010), UK (Anderson, 2014; Kilkey, 2010a) and Austria (Bauer *et al.*, 2014) (refer to Chapter 2 for more detailed review).

While studies on regimes intersecting are increasing in volume and scope, at least three limitations remain unaddressed. First of all, not all welfare state (or care) regime types have been evenly explored. Instead, studies have been limited to Europe, and even here research has focused predominantly on the countries clustered in the ‘Southern European family welfare (care) regime’. Other regime types outside Europe or North America have been largely ignored. It is a very recent development that a small number

of studies, either case studies (Um, 2013) or comparative ones (Michel and Peng, 2012; Song, 2015), started to document the experiences of East Asian welfare states, yet in only limited scopes (refer to Chapter 2). Secondly, even the intersection research, as in the case of global care chain research, has been confined to labour migration routes (for paid care work), leaving family migration routes out of scope as a consequent (Zhou, 2013). This is a serious lacuna when considering that by its definition care should comprise both paid and unpaid work performed in both formal and informal settings. Thirdly, related to the second point, existing research has so far covered the limited range of care jobs and employment settings, mainly domestic work and childcare in private homes. Thus, cases of migrant workers for eldercare either in domiciliary or institutional care settings have remained largely under-researched except for a few recent additions e.g., Shutes and Walsh (2012). The next section will clarify in what ways the South Korean case can make a pivotal case in addressing these limitations.

## **1.2. The South Korean Case**

South Korea<sup>1</sup> (hereafter ‘Korea’) has experienced two parallel yet deeply connected shifts over the last few decades: the development of the welfare state and the transition to a migrant-receiving country. These are the result of a rapid economic and social transformation of Korea. Despite its long record of an independent nationhood tracing back to over several millennia, Korea as a constitutional nation state only began with the end of the Second World War when it was liberated in 1945 from the 35 years of Japanese colonisation. Yet it was not until the 1960s that Korea finally started to recover from the total devastation of the Korean War (1950-1953). However, ever since the 1960s, economic and social development has been staggering, often expressed as a ‘miracle’. To illustrate, the per capita GDP in 1960 as measured in current USD was a mere 155 USD (one of the world’s poorest) but it reached 25,976 USD in 2013 (ranked 30<sup>th</sup> richest in the world, while UK occupies 26<sup>th</sup> position in Purchasing Power Parity terms).<sup>2</sup> Along with the huge economic growth, there has been a marked increase in crucial indicators of social development. For example, life expectancy rose from 53 in

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<sup>1</sup> The official name of the country is The Republic of Korea.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

1960 to 81.37 in 2012 (comparable to Japan's 83.1, one of the longest in the world).<sup>3</sup> The Korean society underwent all of these dramatic economic and social changes within only about a half century; an experience, appropriately termed as 'compressed modernity' by Chang (1999).

Although challenged during the Asian economic crisis in 1997, characteristics of the 'developmental state', as a type of economic development and governance strategy, along with some social, cultural and political factors have been commonly attributed to Korea's exceptional economic and social development (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000: Chapter 10). Building upon this economic and social confidence as well as political democratisation, Korea has been quickly transformed into a welfare state<sup>4</sup> and the growth of the welfare state was strong especially since the mid-1990s. As a policy orientation, developmentalism has characterised the Korean welfare state regime emphasising productivist and social investment approaches (refer to Chapter 6). At the same time, the fast industrialisation has exerted a profound impact on family formations, gender relations and demographic composition (population ageing), which in turn have altered the way in which (social) care is demanded and supplied.

In the meantime, Korea's integration into the global economic, social and political communities was also accelerated. Korea began to experience all aspects of the globalisation process and increased human mobility was not an exception. Korea has long maintained racial/ethnic and cultural homogeneity. Statistically speaking, Korea used to be virtually a zero immigrant country before 1990. The total number of immigrants, including the undocumented, was estimated at less than 50,000 (0.1 percent of the total population). The number, however, grew astonishingly 32-fold in the next 25 years. Within less than two decades, Korea has transited from a dominantly migrant-sending country to a dominantly migrant-receiving country (Castles, 2014; Castles and Miller, 2009). As of 2015 migrants make up around 3 percent of the total population in Korea. Compared to major immigrant destination countries in the West, the number is much lower but it is growing quickly and the economic and social implications of Korea's migration transition are as equally significant.

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<sup>3</sup> World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN/countries/KR?display=graph>

<sup>4</sup> The term welfare state is used to refer to 'a nation which has at least minimum level of institutionalised provisions for meeting the basic economic and social requirements of this citizens' (Bryson, 1992: 36).

Korea receives migrants mostly from nearby Asian countries including China. Especially those who have the same ethnic origin of Korea or, ‘co-ethnic migrants’ I refer to throughout this thesis, have formed the biggest flow to Korea. Ethnicity is often constructed out of such elements as “language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry or regionality” (Nagel, 1994: 152-3). In a similar vein, researchers of international migration in Korea have used the term ethnicity to highlight cultural distinctiveness, including language, of a certain migrant group in order to separate it from others (see M Kim, 2013; Y-J Lee et al., 2006). However, unlike a more legally defined notion of ‘nationality’, ethnicity can be a very arbitrary, situational and dynamic concept subject to constant redefinition and reconstruction (Nagel, 1994). The Korean (im)migration policies have utilised the idea of the same ethnicity or ‘co-ethnicity’ in order to differentiate migrants by verifying the *direct ancestral links* between migrants and their parents or grandparents (refer to Chapter 5). The current study in the main adopts this approach when it discusses the co-ethnic migration policies in Korea. However, it should be noted that the Korean government often extends the scope of ‘co-ethnicity’ to include migrants even without the proof of the direct ancestral ties (refer to Chapter 5 again). In this case, the boundary of ‘(co)-ethnicity’ is negotiated based on a broader notion of cultural proximity and shared ancestral roots and regionality regardless of migrants’ actual nationality status.

The immigration growth in Korea is primarily a consequence of changing demand for migrants due to Korea’s rapid economic expansion and its changing economic status in the region over decades. Migrants started to find jobs at first in typical industrial sectors such as manufacturing and construction but later in service sectors including care jobs as well. Labour migrants constitute the majority but family migrants, especially ‘marriage migrants’, are also significant. The salience of female marriage migration is one of the defining characteristics of Korea’s (im)migration regime. In this way, Korea has conformed to at least two features of the ‘age of migration’ (Castles and Miller, 2009: 10-2): the *proliferation of migration transition* and the *feminisation of migration* (emphasis in original).

Then, against this background, specifically how can the Korean experience contribute to expanding the current understanding of the relationship between migration and care, and the role of institutional factors? To begin with, the Korean case adds a new welfare/care regime type to the existing intersection research. Despite national



variations, researchers have found a certain degree of convergence in experiencing care crisis and care outsourcing across Europe (Bettio *et al.*, 2006; Williams, 2012). How far can this convergence be generalised by experiences of other welfare (care) regimes outside Europe (or western countries)? The Korean case can allow a unique chance to critically interrogate this question in several ways. Korea is identified along with Japan and Taiwan as the ‘productivist’ (Holliday, 2000) or ‘developmental’ welfare state regime (H-j Kwon, 2007a), adding to the conventional ‘three worlds of welfare capitalism’ articulated by Esping-Andersen (1990). This regime type has rarely been dealt with in the care-migration intersection scholarship. In addition, the Korean case can widen the analytical range of migrant care work research by integrating under-explored patterns of migration - co-ethnic migration and marriage migration.

### **1.3. The Research**

#### **1.3.1. Purpose and Questions**

As was indicated earlier, a central motive of the current research is to address the limited coverage of current migration-care policy (regime) intersection research. The purpose of the research is to enrich knowledge of the relationship between care (regimes) and migration (regimes) by analysing how the migration regime and the care regime are intersecting in Korea with regard to care provision. It adopts ‘care transnationalisation’, a form of care outsourcing as its analytical frame. Drawing on the existing intersection theories, hereby I can make an initial assumption that the Korean case will support the ‘care transnationalisation’ thesis in that Korea has suffered from worsening care deficit and the government has developed a specific migration regime to facilitate migrants to fill the gap; however the nature and types of care migration will differ from those of western countries, reflecting Korea's distinctive economic, social and cultural legacies. This study not only provides empirically rich data on migration (policies) and care (policies) in Korea, but it also offers a chance on the theoretical level to test out the care transnationalisation thesis with the Korean case.

My research has been organised and conducted to address the following three questions. I firstly ask an ontological question: “*What are the characteristics of the*

*migration flows to Korea and the drivers/motivations propelling the flows?”* This question requires the quantification of the migration growth in Korea and an analysis of socio-economic and policy factors from both sides of migration. The second question focuses on the national policy configurations: *“What are the features of the regimes of migration and care in Korea, and how are they [regimes] interconnected to facilitate migrants’ involvement in care in Korea?”* This question is interested not only in the contents of specific policies, but also in rationales prompting development and changes. It leads to the third question from a theoretical perspective: *“To what extent does the Korean case prove or disprove the ‘care transnationalisation’ thesis?”* This last question is seeking to find out in which way the Korean experience can give new insights to the existing research on the relationship between migration and care in welfare states, which will be the primary contribution of this research project.

### **1.3.2. Research Strategies**

To accomplish those aims the research employs the following two strategies. First, it adopts a broadened definition of care to capture the diversity of care work by migrants. Here I define the work of care as (social) reproductive labour (refer to Chapter 2 for further discussion). Adopting the concept of ‘social reproduction’ as an analytical lens to examine the activities of migrants yields a few but crucial benefits. First of all, it allows a wider perspective to appreciate different types and arrangements of care activities: paid and unpaid forms of care work in different settings, including the reproduction of human being itself (Lan, 2008). In addition, it gives an equal grounding on which *reproductive* roles against *productive* roles of migrants are evaluated. It is a much required and timely balance when reminded of the fact that a production system cannot operate without a reproduction system as Truong (1996) pointed out, and that migrants’ productive roles have thus far dominated migration research in Korea. For these reasons, the family migration routes were incorporated into the research. On top of that, the research examines not only typically researched areas of childcare and home-based settings but it also covers eldercare and institutional care settings.

Secondly, the research focuses on the analysis of migration and care ‘regimes’ in Korea. In doing so, the research draws on analytical indicators for the regime analysis developed by Williams (2012), as charted in Table 1.1. These indicators range from

laws and policies (formal institutions) to culture and norms (informal institutions) to policy histories. Such a comprehensive approach to care regime and migration regime seems to be in line with two strands of ‘new institutionalism’, namely ‘historical institutionalism’ and ‘sociological institutionalism’ (see Hall and Taylor, 1996). This research is concerned not only with the formal organisations, rules, and the historical legacies or ‘paths’ of care and migration policies in Korea, but also with, to a lesser extent, cultural and ideational aspects embedded in those policies (refer to Chapter 3 for related discussion). This (new) intuitionist approach I found particularly useful for appreciating the role of the state since it has played critical roles in the policy making in Korea. As a specific point, Williams (2012) placed ‘the employment regime’ in a separate category to highlight the importance and the previous neglect of it. This thesis, however, sticks to the division of the migration regime and the care regime as in the early intersection research because the regime regarding the employment of care workforce can also be discussed together when analysing the care regime and the migration regime, for example, within the indicators (d) and (h) in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1: Indicators for the analysis of care and migration regimes**

	Care regime	Migration regime
Analytical indicators	(a) The extent of care provision for children, older and disabled people	(h) Immigration policies: rules permitting country entrance and exit as well as special arrangements such as quotas for care/ domestic workers, bilateral arrangements, and rules in relation to skills, gender and family dependants.
	(b) The balance between formal and informal care or the balance among the state, the market and families	(i) Residency, settlement and naturalisation rules in combination with social, economic, political, legal and civil rights
	(c) Instruments of care provision (for example, direct payments, care allowances, cash benefits, tax credits) and the conditions attached	(j) National norms and practices governing relationships between majority and minority groups and anti-discriminatory laws against discrimination or for multiculturalism
	(d) The gendered and racialised basis of the care workforce, its hierarchies of skills and the relationship of these to workers’ remuneration	(k) The extent of mobilisation of migrant worker activity through advocacy groups and trade unions as well as international organisation both governmental and non-governmental
	(e) The histories of care policies and the relational practices of care/domestic work in the home	
	(f) ‘Care cultures’: dominant national and local cultural discourses on what constitutes appropriate care and who should provide	
	(g) Political negotiation and struggle at supranational, national and local policy-making levels involving, for example, public sector trades unions, disability and carers’ movements.	

*Source:* Adapted from Williams (2012: 371-2)

### **1.3.3. Organisation**

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. Here Chapter 1 has introduced the main phenomenon with which the research is concerned and discussed the development of the focal theory and its current limitations, clarifying the originality of this case study on Korea. Chapter 2 systematically reviews the existing literature to find out in what way two seemingly separate domains of research i.e., care and migration have been articulated with each other, producing a new research agenda on the intersection of the two. The chapter focuses on the theoretical development but it also reviews case studies on some European countries and other East Asian countries to which the Korean case should be compared or contrasted. Chapter 3 briefly summarises the theoretical frames of the research developed in the two previous chapters and outlines the research design and the data methods adopted for this study. It also discusses philosophical, ethical and technical issues involved while conducting the research. Chapter 4 examines Korea's transition to a migrant-receiving country by taking stock of the growth of migrants and analyses factors driving this transition. This chapter provides not only a statistical background for the following chapters but it also contextualises the migration growth in Korea in economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Chapters from 5 to 7 are the main empirical chapters devoted to the study of the Korean case. Chapter 5 analyses the (im)migration regime in Korea. The chapter, in the first half, patterns out the various routes of migration, and in the second half it examines government policies with regard to migrants' entry, residency and settlement by each route of migration. Chapter 6 first examines the development of the Korean welfare state and its regime characteristics. It progresses by assessing the 'care crisis' Korea has experienced and then analyses how Korea has attempted to address the crisis through a series of care reforms. Drawing on previous chapters, Chapter 7 examines how different groups of migrants are engaged in different modes of care work at the intersections of different regimes of care and migration. The focus is to reveal the roles of the government (policies) in this process. In the concluding chapter (Chapter 8), first I summarise the main findings and illuminate how these findings can contribute to the existing knowledge on the intersection between care and migration. Drawing on the findings and limitations, I conclude the chapter by highlighting the policy and research challenges that this work identifies.

#### **1.3.4. Terminology and Scope**

‘Migrant /migration’ will be used interchangeably with ‘immigrant/immigration’, given that the current research is only concerned with in-migration to Korea. The first sets of words are preferred so that I may avoid negative connotations often associated with ‘immigrant’ and ‘immigration’, problematisation and marginalisation for example. Immigrant and immigration is to be used only in the context in-migration should be clearly indicated to distinguish it from out-migration, or where Korean policy documentation adopts specific English expressions. It should also be noted here that the process of care transnationalisation may involve ‘internal migration’ as the global care chain concept illustrates; however, the current research focuses on international (or cross-border) migration only.

Another set of words to be used interchangeably to a large extent is care and social care. Care (work) cannot be isolated from relational and social contexts, thus intrinsically rendering it ‘social’. The expression ‘social care’ is to be used to indicate more clearly a collective provision of care arranged by the government. In addition, social care is often used in distinction from ‘medical care’ especially when discussing eldercare as in the case of the UK, although the boundary between the two are not always clear (Twigg, 1999: 345).

The research deals with the Korean experiences and draws much on Korean literature. So, language issues involved in the translation process are unavoidable. Certain words are so specific to the Korean context that either there are no English alternatives or they may lose the original meaning when translated. In this case, those words will be only phonetically anglicised and italicised. If particular Korean terms do find proper English translation, yet they should be understood in the Korea-specific context, these words appear enclosed in single quotation marks.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CARE, MIGRATION AND THEIR INTERSECTIONS**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This research is situated at the interface of migration research and social policy research. Migration, international migration in particular, is a complex dynamic which can profoundly affect not only the lives of concerned people but also every dimension of societies involved. So, it is no wonder that migration becomes a topic of a wide range of academic disciplines, often as a theme of multi- or inter-disciplinary research (Castles and Miller, 2009). Due to its multi-faceted nature and transformative impacts, cross-border migration finds an immediate relevance to many public policy areas as well on both the national and transnational/global levels; some such areas include citizenship, human rights, labour markets, development and security (Castles, 2010; Castles and Davidson, 2000; Cohen and Kennedy, 2000).

Despite this wide relevance, migration (policy) is often considered “an orphan that does not comfortably fit anywhere in an integrated manner” either as a research topic or policy area (Hujo and Piper, 2007: 20). The ambivalent positioning of migration cannot be more true in the case of social policy or, more broadly, welfare state research. Sainsbury (2012), for example, argues that conventional social policy research, including comparative studies, tended to treat migration and migrants as rather marginal issues in the context of the post-War welfare states. The primary reason for this neglect originates from the focus on ‘class’ (and social relations around it) in understanding the welfare state and social citizenship; other social divides such as gender, ethnicity/race, disability or age were consequently overlooked in the welfare state research (Craig, 2004; Lister, 1997; Wilkinson and Craig, 2012). In addition, privileging the nation state as an analytical unit does not allow much room for incorporating transnational or global dimensions into social policy research even in international ‘comparative’ studies (Mahon and Robinson, 2011). Some existing studies of the relationship between migration and welfare states hardly seem to be free from state-centric preoccupations:

for example, increasing migrants and ethnic diversity are often viewed as threats, at least challenges, to the welfare state by potentially weakening public support for the welfare state (van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007).

Efforts have been made from various directions to challenge this orthodoxy. While some have attempted to empirically test how far the prevailing hypothesis that ‘migration erodes welfare states’ can be confirmed (Banting *et al.*, 2006), others, from an opposing direction, have tried to analyse how welfare states can affect migrants especially in terms of their social inclusion/exclusion (MacAuslan and Sabates-Wheeler, 2011; Sainsbury, 2012). Still others, mainly feminist researchers, have been trying to recognise the interaction between welfare states and gendered/racialised migration (Anderson and Shutes, 2014; Kilkey and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2010; Kofman, 2012; Lister *et al.*, 2007; Lutz, 2008b; Williams, 2010; Yeates, 2012): they have highlighted that migrants, as active agents of globalisation, are also an integral element of the welfare state and its ongoing process of transformation. Specifically, they bring ‘care’ to the centre of illuminating the complex and multi-level relationships between migration/migrants and welfare states (and their policies).

This literature review chapter, in essence, traces how the concept of ‘care’ has evolved into a critical analytical tool to analyse not only the welfare state itself, but also the relationship between migration and the welfare state. The chapter firstly (Section 2.2) interrogates how care has been conceptualised and broadened over time. The next section discusses how the concept has critically contributed to the analysis of the welfare state in explaining its variations and transformation. The chapter proceeds by examining some key characteristics of contemporary cross-border migration and mechanisms through which care becomes transnationalised. As the main focus of the current research project, Section 2.5 investigates a very specific area of migration-care research, the intersection between migration regimes and care regimes, and lastly the chapter provides an East Asian context in which the Korean case of migration-care nexus is situated in terms of migration patterns, migration regimes and care regimes. Then a short summary of the chapter follows as a conclusion.



## 2.2. Care: the Concept

Care is a complex, often contested, concept. The complexity originates from the multi-faceted nature of care as a human activity itself and from the different levels at which the concept is elaborated. One particularly influential approach is to see care as *labour*, women's labour most frequently. Standing on the tradition of feminist scholarship, care has been conceptualised in a way which reveals women's roles as mothers, wives and daughters (Daly, 2002; Daly and Lewis, 2000; Rummery and Fine, 2012). What they are doing can be articulated as both physical and emotional labour, which, like productive paid-work, must be arranged with costs and responsibility (Bowden, 1997; Daly and Lewis, 2000; Glucksmann, 2005; Hooyman and Gonyea, 1995; Ungerson, 2000). However, what exactly consists of care labour is not something easily agreed upon. Care labour can take various forms in different spatial and temporal contexts. So, it is no surprise that successive researchers have "delimited" the concept rather than "confined" it (Rummery and Fine, 2012: 323). Tronto (1993: 103), for example, extended the concept of care to encompass "everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair our 'world', and the world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web".

In a similar vein, care is often defined as *reproductive labour* (Kofman, 2012; Yeates, 2012). Social reproduction refers to "the array of activities and relationships involved in maintaining people both on a daily basis and intergenerationally", and those activities include not only essential household works such as shopping, cooking, cleaning or maintaining the house but also relational types of work such as socializing children, providing care and emotional support for adults, and maintaining kin and community ties (Glenn, 1992: 1). Here boundaries between care and other activities are not made totally clear; however, the social reproduction perspective does provide a delineation of what may contribute to social reproduction among different activities both in and outside of homes (Kofman, 2012). Although the 'everything counts' approach in the conceptualisation of care may be overstretched even to a point of losing its core meaning (Daly and Lewis, 2000)<sup>5</sup>, this broad approach has helped a variety of

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<sup>5</sup> For this reason, some researchers prefer narrower definitions of care. For example, care can be defined as help or services provided for those who have no or limited abilities to perform such activities themselves typically the young, aged, ill and disabled (Daly, 2002). This definition seems intuitive, but it

types of care clearly acknowledged as equally important labour as productive, typically paid, labour (refer back to Chapter 1).

This conceptualisation of care as social reproduction emphasises physical reproduction as well as socialisation processes (Kofman, 2012). In relation to the former it includes the production and reproduction through the life-course of people as physical beings, incorporating on the one hand, family building through relationship formation and procreation, and on the other hand, the ongoing care required in the maintenance of people on a daily basis. It thus entails taking account of how families are formed, procreate and care over time (Kilkey, 2013). Moreover, these reproductive processes happen in the context of time (daily and generationally) and space (notably, family, institutions and states) (Peterson, 2003). Thus, social reproduction is inevitably configured by given social and cultural characteristics (Bjeren, 1997). The configuration of social reproduction is not limited to the private or local levels, but it can extend to the national, regional and even global level, in which, therefore, varied patterns of cross-border migration become highly relevant (Kofman, 2012). It is also the case for the Korean experience to be examined here (see Chapter 7).

Apparently, conceptualising care as labour can be seen as an attempt to value care itself, but, in a deeper sense, it is an endeavour to make fully appreciated *women's* care activities, which have been largely unpaid, undervalued, and under-politicised (Daly and Lewis, 1998; Lutz, 2008a; Yeates, 2011). This may be one of the reasons why earlier research purposefully focused on informal and unpaid care and the conditions under which women perform such activities (Finch and Groves, 1983; Ungerson, 1987). By doing so, the concept has been utilised to draw attention both to the material and ideological elements configuring care work and to women's (disadvantaged) positions and (often hidden or often exploited) experiences as main carers in the process of care provision (Daly, 2002).

Over time, however, the earlier labouristic and individual/family approach to care has been challenged and complemented (Alsop *et al.*, 2008; Williams, 2001). Williams (2001) identified a series of changes in the meaning and scope of care, or 'paradigms of care'. In charting the changes, Williams (2001) pointed out that the early (1970s)

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is rather restrictive to fully capture the multifaceted nature of care. Apparently, the definition cannot capture the dimension in which people outsource care labour for themselves or their families even they themselves are able to perform it.

paradigm framing care mainly as the unpaid labour performed by women within the domestic sphere shifted through the 1980s to an 'ethical or moral paradigm', which emphasises women's different and superior capacity to care (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Graham, 1983). At the same time, a more sociological approach, conceiving care in terms of social obligations which are shaped in turn by normative structures governing people's caring activities (e.g., Finch, 1989), further challenged so-called 'the exploitation paradigm' of care.

In addition, the conceptualisation of care has been complemented by the emphasis on the relational nature of care. Thomas (1993), for instance, emphasised that care is highly relational and contextual, so any analysis of care should consider not just the form/nature of the labour itself, but the nature of the relationship (such as inter-personal and economic) and physical care settings as well. Researchers began to pay growing attention to the wider social relations and contexts around which care (labour) is defined and organised (Lloyd, 2000; Rummery and Fine, 2012). They have been particularly keen on documenting how care roles (responsibilities) are socially divided along with the axes of class, gender and race in the combination of individual/family practices with institutional settings. Among early contributions, Graham showed that care can be delivered through a paid service outside of kin relationships, and the racial relation (hierarchy), as well as gender and class, can influence the process of giving and receiving care (Graham, 1991, 1993). It has long been observed that poor and working class women (largely to be replaced by migrant domestic workers later on) performed reproductive labour not only in their own home but also for middle and upper class families (Glenn, 1999).

The social divisions of care are further complicated when bringing racial relations and historical institutional dimensions into perspective: for example, in the 1950s and 1960s, the UK recruited health and care workers from its then colonies in order to meet a labour shortage in welfare facilities which otherwise native married women could have been expected to fill (Wilkinson and Craig, 2012; Williams, 1989, 2010). Complex social dynamics behind the division of care labour reject any naive assumptions that one type of social relation is dominant over others or that people belonging to the same gender/class/race automatically share the same interests. In addition, a continuing growth of care-related international migration and consequent changes in family care

practices have made race/ethnicity ever more relevant in the division of care labour, the discussion of which will be resumed later on.

An increasing emphasis on social contexts as well as recognition of relational features of care has prompted an emergence of a body of literature which specifically looks at how care (and its costs) is socially constructed and shared, and what is the role of the 'state' in this process. The next section will discuss how the concept of care has evolved into a key conceptual tool to analyse the form and nature of contemporary welfare states: how they vary and how they change.

### **2.3. Care and the Welfare State**

The concept of care has proven to be a useful tool to analyse the welfare state. Utilising the concept of care in welfare state analysis has been central in attempts to overcome the limitations of the original welfare state research, especially by constructing a more gender-sensitive analytical framework (Kilkey, 2000). As highlighted earlier, so-called mainstream welfare state research, represented by the work of Esping-Andersen (1990), explained the development of welfare states mainly in relation to class relations and (paid) workers' political mobilisation, so it has been accused of not only being gender-blind but also neglecting the significance of welfare (care) provision from private domains (notably, families), and the situation of care givers (Lewis, 1992, 1997; Lister *et al.*, 2007; Orloff, 1993). Bringing 'care' to the centre of analysis of welfare states has contributed to remedying this neglect by highlighting the gendered nature of the welfare state and its social policies. Daly and Lewis (2000: 296), for example, argue that "it [the concept of care] provides an over-arching frame of reference" for an alternative welfare state analysis, and "it enables a more comprehensive and sociologically more complex understanding of why and how social policies are gendered."

However, the usefulness of the concept of care has not been limited to *gendering* the welfare state, but also in enhancing a general understanding of the welfare state (Daly and Lewis, 2000; Orloff, 2009). Care is an indispensable resource for human well-being, so it constitutes an important "good for social policy" of welfare states (Daly, 2002). But, at the same time, care is a very unique social policy good in that care is arranged across the domains of family, state and market, across the different types of

personal/social relations, and across the economic, political and cultural dimensions, which the conventional welfare state analysis (focusing on the state provision and monetary relations) may not be able to fully address (Daly, 2002). The concept of care, as reviewed above, is capable of analysing both private and public domains; both informal and formal forms and relations of care (Daly, 2012). Such a comprehensive approach to care allows a wide framework through which researchers can analyse how the provision of care is shaped in a certain way in a specific welfare state (Knijn and Kremer, 1997). One of such systematic approaches is the ‘care regime’ research.

### **2.3.1. Care Regimes**

As an alternative to conventional welfare state regime research, the *care regime* approach is claimed to provide a useful analytical platform that helps researchers compare and contrast welfare states’ social policy arrangements vis-à-vis care-related rights and responsibilities (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Lister *et al.*, 2007). Care regime can be informed not only by the forms of institutional arrangements through which care responsibility is to be distributed among the state, the market and the family (Lister *et al.*, 2007), but also by social/political discourses and norms regarding care provision, namely ‘care culture’ (Williams, 2012). Not surprisingly, care regime typologies due to different focuses and scopes are showing rather different pictures from what the mainstream welfare state regime studies portray. While three variations are conventionally identified for welfare *state* regime types (Esping-Andersen, 1990), a fewer number of clusters have been claimed as ‘distinct’ in the care regime approach.

Anttonen and Sipilä (1996), for example, identified only two types of social (care) services regimes. Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden and Finland) were classified as a ‘Scandinavian model’ because of extensive public care services for both children and for older people and higher levels of women’s labour market participation. These countries are what Daly (2002) calls ‘caring states’ where care is an integral part of social citizenship and the state is the primary provider of not only monetary security but also the high-quality care for both children and adults (Ploug, 2012). The primary contribution of Anttonen and Sipilä (1996) is that they challenged the mainstream regime typologies (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999) by distinguishing a ‘family care

model' of southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy) from the rest of continental Europe on the ground that these countries have a 'very limited' supply of social care services.

The findings of Anttonen and Sipilä (1996) have been largely supported by subsequent studies. In a more sophisticated cross-national comparative research, for example, Bettio and Plantenga (2004) suggest similar groupings of care regimes. Here again, Nordic countries form a distinctive cluster featuring widely available public care services. Southern European (or Mediterranean) countries are also identified as a distinct group in which care is privatised predominantly by the family. Regarding the rest of Europe, care regime models are inconclusive. However, it is indicated that different groupings can be possible according not just to the volume of social care services, but also to the differences in approaching eldercare and childcare (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Bettio and Plantenga, 2004). This is the point where conventional welfare state typologies are found incompatible with care regime typologies. For example, the UK and Ireland are both 'liberal' states but put a strong distinction between caring for children (largely privatised/marketised) and for older people (more collectivised). In Germany, care is not privatised to the family but voluntary (quasi-statutory) sector through public funding plays a vital role in providing care for older people and children, whereas the same 'conservative' welfare state of France predominantly relies on unpaid family care and tends to collectivise only childcare while voluntary sector plays a minimal role.

It is somewhat surprising to see that even one of the most elaborated care regime studies tends to deliver a very tentative conclusion regarding care regime typologies. Bettio and Plantenga (2004: 101) explain why they are reluctant to claim that their findings are "highly robust": they admit that analytical rigidity was "severely hampered by differences in institutional and legal frameworks, conceptual difficulties, and lack of comparable data". Despite the limited analytical rigidity resulting from especially data-related difficulties, contributions of care regime research to analysing welfare states are clear. Firstly, it successfully reveals alternative patterning of care provision taking informal care input as well formal care provision, and social services as well as cash benefits into account. In essence, care regime studies have proven that care policies do not vary correspondingly to the models of conventional categorisation of the liberal, the conservative and the social-democratic welfare states (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). Secondly,

it shows how different care strategies affect the social relations around work and care, and generate far-reaching consequences on family lives, gender equality, participation and even fertility (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004). Thirdly, it highlights the fact that different patterns of care provision reflect different ideologies and normative frameworks (Daly and Lewis, 2000). The care ideologies and norms are imbued in the formation of welfare institutions, which in turn set a specific path for future policy developments to follow (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). To illustrate, Sweden retains the strongest ideological commitment to state provision of care, which is compatible with a dual breadwinner model and it recognises claiming state care assistance as social ‘right’; on the other hand, in the UK, care ideology of ‘family care first’ is strong and a female part-time worker/carer model has been favoured, so consequently the state provision of care tends to be residual (Rummery and Fine, 2012).

In a form of regime research, the concept of care has been utilised to examine the national differences cross-sectionally. However, care is an inherently dynamic concept, which makes it also useful to historically trace changes and transformation of welfare states (Daly and Lewis, 1998, 2000). The next subsection discusses how the recent transformation of welfare states can be analysed through the perspective of care.

### **2.3.2. Care and Welfare State Transformations**

Care is one of the most significant and contentious policy elements in explaining how welfare states are transforming (Brennan *et al.*, 2012; Rummery and Fine, 2012). Today, the environment around care (policies) in Europe and elsewhere is very fluid and dynamic: while the care policy area is under influence of the context of welfare state retrenchment, factors like women’s increasing rate of participation in the labour force, changing family forms, shifting values/norms of care and the demographic pressure from an aging population are together making care “one of few growth areas” (Daly, 2012: 630). Given that these societal changes are widely shared across most industrialised countries, then can we find any convergence in the way different welfare states transform responding to these challenges? As discussed above, so far the care regime typology seems to build a bi-polarised spectrum: the Nordic ‘caring state’ (Daly, 2002) regime at one end, and the Mediterranean family care model at the other end, and

the rest of countries in Europe exist in-between by the degree of care socialisation (formalisation). So, it is tempting to assume that welfare states may evolve from familial care regimes into, ultimately, more or less formalised and collectivised care regimes.

Indeed, the tendency towards the socialisation of care, especially childcare, has been indicated: countries (e.g., Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and Spain) previously had limited public childcare have taken steps to increase supply (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004; Daly, 2012). However, as Pfau-Effinger (2005) argues, it is not a linear path of evolution from the informal to formal care: informal (family) care is itself modernising and still assuming a significant role especially as a means of achieving 'home-work reconciliation'. It is more important to recognise how the roles of different providers of care i.e., family, state, market and voluntary sector are shifting in the mixed economy of welfare (care) (Daly and Lewis, 2000). Thus, directions of change are various and often contradictory even within the same country. To illustrate, as mentioned above, childcare in many countries is becoming increasingly commodified/de-familialised through care services (both public and private), but eldercare is de-commodified/re-familialised by a shift from public (residential) care to informal family care almost simultaneously (Lyon and Glucksmann, 2008).

Nevertheless, one compelling trend can be identified: the market is taking on more and more significant roles while the state is retreating from the role of a direct care provider, often as an element of purposeful neoliberal welfare reformations. The emergence of a care market and the introduction of direct payments and cash allowances for care are particularly important developments in this regard (Daly, 2012; Simonazzi, 2009). The growing influence of market provision might be termed as 'marketisation', but the marketisation of care has been differently interpreted into policies in different countries. Brennan *et al.* (2012: 387) contend that "resting on different institutional bases, and influenced by local histories and practices, the argument for and processes of marketisation have developed different speeds, depending on the political contexts and the problems that marketisation was expected to solve. Marketisation is therefore path-dependent": for example, in Sweden, marketisation was introduced to extend choice by overcoming a public monopoly, but in the UK, markets have been brought in to fill up the lack of public service. Moreover, marketisation is accommodated by different rationales for childcare and eldercare: while



the market is regarded an effective way to expand the supply of care (and education) to children as a social investment, cost-effectiveness and a wider consumer choice are key logics of eldercare (Brennan *et al.*, 2012: 388).

Essentially, analysis of welfare state transformations through the lens of care regime is about the changing degree to which responsibility of care provision is shared among the family (and within family members), the state, the market and the third sector. Care regime keeps transforming by changing the distribution of care resource. The recent development of care ‘markets’ and the introduction of some kind of cash-for-care schemes across Europe have added a new dimension of care rebalancing. In some cases, they are highly regulated and used only for formal care providers (France and the Netherlands) and in other cases (Austria, Germany, Italy) they are used to purchase care from migrant workers or family members (Rummery and Fine, 2012: 334). Related to the deficit of formal care provision and a grey economy of low-waged labour, ‘care outsourcing’ via migrant care workers is most prominent in southern Europe (Daly, 2012). Growing migrants’ involvement into care provision adds the *transnational dimension* to the social division of care, which I turn to examine in the next section.

## **2.4. Migration and Transnationalisation of Care**

As discussed above, care analysis has contributed to the understanding of welfare states: how they are structured and how they evolve. Such inquiries have traditionally been characterised by ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002), which privileges the nation state as an analytical entity, and tends to focus on the national (domestic) dimension of politics and policies. Evidence shows, however, that globalisation complicates gender, class and ethnic relations in the welfare state and now care is frequently being structured and delivered beyond national borders (Deacon, 2007; Orozco, 2009; Yeates, 2005). It is therefore imperative to recognise the transnationalised nature of care (Williams, 2011; Yeates, 2011). One way in which care can be transnationalised is by the direct intervention of supra-national agencies such as international organisations, international NGOs and transnational corporations (Deacon,

1997; Mahon, 2011). Outsourcing care through the involvement of (international) migrants is also an important mechanism constituting a “global mix of care provision” (Gough and Wood, 2004: 30). The following sections seek to analyse the second mechanism of care transnationalisation more fully.

#### **2.4.1. Feminisation of Migration and Migrantisation of Care**

Global human mobility is a central dynamic in globalisation and it is rapidly growing in volume and diversifying in pattern, partly thanks to breakthrough in transport and communication technologies as well as recent political and cultural changes (Sassen, 1988; Urry, 2007). More and more countries are critically affected by migratory movements, and the effects are not just limited to the economic dimension, but the social, cultural and political dimension as well. Consequently, once what was regarded as ‘national’ domain has rapidly become an ‘inter-national’ or ‘trans-national’; for example, the concept and experience of membership (both as ‘becoming a citizen’ and as ‘being a citizen’) are increasingly diversified (Castles and Davidson, 2000: Chapter 4 & 5).

Since the 1980s international migration has expanded sharply and involved all regions of the world. While conventional circuits of international migration may persist, new patterns and flows are continuously added in response to economic, political and cultural changes. As Castles and Miller (2009) argue, it is still possible to identify general tendencies of contemporary international migration: among those most relevant to this research is *the feminisation of migration* (Kofman, 1999; Morokvašić, 1984). As a part of the gendered aspect of global migration, the feminisation of migration can be understood in terms both of an increase in female migrants and of their growing importance in the overall migration scales and patterns.

Women now comprise nearly half (48 per cent as of 2013) of the total global migrant stock; however, considerable differences exist across regions: the proportion of female migrants is the highest in Europe (51.9%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (51.6%), Northern America (51.2%), Oceania (50.2%), Africa (45.9%), and Asia (41.6%) (OECD-UNDESA, 2013: 2). Female migrants, when calculated as a share of the total migrant population for each of the four migration pathways (South to South,

South to North, North to North, and North to South), were found to be in the majority in the North to North context, but the proportion of women migrating within the South is also increasing (IOM, 2013: 109). The number of female migrants has increased, but what has really changed over the last decades is the fact that women are increasingly migrating as autonomous agents rather than as *dependants* traveling with their husbands or joining them abroad (UN-INSTRAW, 2007). Most female labour migrants are concentrated in jobs regarded as “typically female”: domestic/care workers, staff in hospitality businesses and assembly-line workers in clothing and electronics (Castles and Miller, 2009: 133-4). Another important feminised migration route is marriage migration: it is typically a marriage between a foreign bride and a native bachelor in destination countries, which is particularly the case in the development of intra-Asian migration (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005).

The feminization of migration is closely related to the phenomenon called “migrantisation of domestic/care work” (Kilkey *et al.*, 2010: 380). During the last decade, many countries in the Global North have witnessed migrants’ growing involvement in both private and institutional care settings. It is argued that this is because of a growing care deficit caused by both the increasing demand for care due to notably population ageing and women’s increased labour market participation, and the shrinking supply of care resulting from a lack of care labour from familial sources, the domestic labour market and inadequate (or changing nature of) public care services resulting from welfare state restructuring (Williams and Gavanas, 2008). It is especially the case if a country encourages migrants to fill the care deficit through certain types of migration and care policies because it is more likely to lead to the normalisation of a care practice of drawing on migrant domestic/care workers (Williams and Gavanas, 2008). Against this background, the nexus of migration and care has surfaced as a new field of social inquiry as well as a heated social policy agenda, adding complexity to an existing debate of commodification/re-familialisation of care (Lister *et al.*, 2007; Yeates, 2011).

### 2.4.2. Global Care Chains

The combination of the feminisation of migration and the migrantisation of care work has been best captured by the concept of ‘Global Care Chains (GCC)’, which refers to a mechanism in which the provision and attainment of care are arranged in and across the nations. To illustrate, migrants from one, usually poorer, country cross the borders to take care jobs in another (richer) country, while leaving their own care gaps behind to be expected to be filled by someone else from the origin country (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Hochschild, 2000a; Parreñas, 2001; Yeates, 2004b). The main arguments of the GCC theory include: i) Care is a core reproductive labour, the demand for which is often not fully met by the internal care sources; ii) Care analysis must go beyond the state level in order to fully grasp the political economy of care in the context of globalisation; iii) Care is organised by a series of links which are mediated by national and international factors; iv) Global division of labour in care provision reveals a highly classed, gendered and racialised (also skill-based) social relation; v) The formation of GCCs reinforces the existing patterns of global inequality (Williams, 2010: 391; Yeates, 2004b).

The concept of GCC consists of three parts: ‘global’, ‘care’, and ‘chain’ and each part contains its own analytical element and implications. I already discussed the analytical value of care above. Let me further the discussion by specifying what is meant by ‘global’ in the GCC analysis. GCC incorporates transnational dimension into care analysis. Care is now organised by multiple actors based in multiple sites: there are involved at least two governments (in sending and receiving), migrants, consumers, recruitment agencies and global governing bodies. In GCC, ‘global’ means more than transcendence of national territories; it implies strong transnational inter-dependence or interaction in the demand and supply of care. However, it is important to note that while emphasising ‘beyond the state’ characteristics of care provision, the GCC proponents do acknowledge the certain degree of policy autonomies of individual states as well as agency of individual migrants. In this regard, Yeates (2011: 1112-3) cogently points out that GCC adopts specifically a ‘transnational perspective’, rather than ‘globalist’ or ‘internationalist’ one.

The term ‘chains’ is ontologically and methodologically informing. GCC utilises the concept of ‘chain’ to describe and analyse one or multiple links by which care

providers and recipients are globally linked. The idea was borrowed from ‘Global Commodity Chain Analysis (GCCA)’ because GCC takes a form of international outsourcing: extracting resource (care) in one place and deploying it somewhere else through the globally operating networks, just as multinational corporations run their businesses with geographically dispersed bases (Yeates, 2004b, 2012). The formation, dissolution and reformation of these chains (links) of care services are intermediated (either facilitated or discouraged) by an array of agencies and infrastructures, both governmental and non-governmental agents (both for-profit and non-for-profit) (Yeates, 2004b).

To sum up, two contributions of the GCC concept deserve emphasis. GCC has been serving as a powerful conceptual instrument to understand ‘the globalisation-migration-care nexus’ by overcoming the state-centric methodological prejudice of earlier care analysis (Kilkey *et al.*, 2010; Yeates, 2005). In doing so, furthermore, GCC successfully maintains analytical frames sensitive to classed, gendered and racialised social relations in investigating the relationship between globalisation, migration and welfare states (Yeates, 2005, 2012). However, the original concept of global care chains has been criticised for focusing too narrowly on the “refamilialization of care” (Mahon and Robinson, 2011: 12). Although gaps still exist, the frontier of the GCC research has been expanding from early focuses on unskilled (paid) care workers in domestic settings to comprise different skill types, gender and care settings (England and Henry, 2013; Kilkey, 2010b; Kilkey *et al.*, 2013; Kofman and Raghuram, 2006; Yeates, 2004a, 2009). However *globally* GCC can be stretched, it is not operating in a vacuum. The state and its institutions (most importantly, regimes of care and migration) play significant influences over the process of care transnationalisation. It is why some researchers began to more intensely analyse how those regimes are intersecting.

## **2.5. Intersections of Migration Regime and Care Regime**

Care transnationalisation research, exemplified by GCCs, has documented the growth of care migration and the dynamics underpinning it, successfully highlighting the international division of reproductive labour which is deeply classed, gendered and racialised. The research, however, has not fully examined how the growth in care

migration relates to the existing migration and care regime within a welfare state or how it varies across nations. This is partly due to the lack of mutual academic engagement between migration/care literature and welfare state/care regime literature (Kilkey *et al.*, 2010: 379). Analysing how the care regime and the migration regime of a state are intersecting enhances the understanding of care transnationalisation by rightly positioning the phenomena in a broader policy context, and it crucially helps explain how the modality of care transnationalisation differs cross-nationally.

The phenomenon of migration into care work can be observed and analysed on at least three levels: ‘the personal relations of migration and domestic/care work; state policies, regulations and discourses; and the transnational and global movement of labour’ (Williams, 2010: 385). The national level of research is specifically interested in examining how the migration regime intersects with the existing care regime (with wider references to gender regime, care culture, employment regime and the welfare state regime) of a country (Lister *et al.*, 2007: 137; Lutz, 2008a: 2). Lister *et al.* (2007: 138-9) give an illustration on how the regimes can actually interact: a transition of the welfare state regime from male breadwinner to ‘adult-worker model’ creates a pressure on care demand by increasing women’s paid economic activities. Preference for a specific care policy package such as ‘cash for care’ may accelerate the commodification of care by encouraging practices of care outsourcing. Launching certain migration policies, e.g. quotas for domestic workers and special entry permits for care migrants, may further facilitate care transnationalisation, which in turn can influence future migration flows (such as feminisation). The actual patterns of intersection are expected to vary state to state, reflecting the country’s own cultural and institutional legacies toward (de)commodification and migrantisation of care.

### **2.5.1. European Experiences**

Data permitting, standardised cross-national comparative research can be most useful to construct a systematic understanding of the dynamics of intersectionality (Williams, 2010). Although it may not be considered a highly rigid systematic comparative analysis, Williams and Gavanas (2008)’s research involving the cases of the UK, Spain, and Sweden demonstrates how the intersection study can be conducted and how it can

bridge the welfare (state) regime research and (care) migration research. Williams and Gavanas (2008) show both converging and diverging patterns across different welfare state regime types: in all those countries, more and more women take up paid work but face challenges maintaining a balance of work and care responsibilities due to some (or all) of such reasons as work practices, limited public care services and unequal gender relations; however, differences are also found in the degree to which each country resorts to migrants as a way of responding to these challenges depending on its own institutional settings, dominant care culture, and policy stance toward migrant care workers.

Unlike Williams and Gavanas (2008) who dealt with countries having different welfare state regimes in the area of childcare, Spencer *et al.* (2009) conducted a comparative research with four countries having the same liberal welfare regime (the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada and the United States). They found that in the context of ageing, migrant caregivers already had played a substantial role in all four countries, and lack of public provision of care for older people along with the shift toward population ageing and declining domestic labour supply were the primary reasons for the increasing reliance on migrant care workers. Moreover, it was found that the lesser-skilled and lower-paid care workers across all four nations were admitted often outside of labour migration channels such as family migration, adding significant challenges to managing inflows of foreign workers.

Also through empirical case studies, researchers have attempted to account for the varying patterns of migrantisation of care work with explicit reference to the particular welfare, gender and migration regimes. Mediterranean countries often receive the highest attentions due to higher visibility of migrant care/domestic workers. In relation to Spain, León (2010) found that the combination of historical legacy of a familial care regime with a highly permeable migration system for the last two decades has increasingly encouraged the commodification of care work inside private homes and caused high dependence on migrant domestic/care labours. Sharing similarities in escalating care demand and feminised migration with other Southern European welfare states, Portugal is also experiencing the rapid integration of migrant women in the domestic sector but this is only the case for the upper-income households, so Wall and Nunes (2010) conclude that 'migrant in the family' type of care model seen in Spain has not emerged in Portugal (Wall and Nunes, 2010). Although less frequently,

conservative welfare (care) regime countries are also included in the intersection scholarship. Lutz and Palenga-Möllenberg (2010), for example, observed that the German conservative-corporatist welfare state becomes increasingly dependent on migrant domestic/care workers, although the existence of migrant care workers is acknowledged only tacitly due to a highly managed migration system, which renders private care work clandestine in nature and a particular niche for undocumented migrants (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenberg, 2010).

What about social social-democratic (or ‘caring’) states? Nordic countries are conventionally believed to have relatively similar welfare state models. However, in terms of migration policies, paradoxically, is far from being one model: Sweden takes a rather liberal stance but Denmark is far more restrictive while Norway is somewhere in-between (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2011). However, similar trends in the commodification of domestic/care work through migrant workers have also been witnessed in Sweden, Denmark and Norway, so “the Nordic region may be becoming less an outlier than is often assumed” (Williams, 2012: 369). Privatisation, marketisation, deregulation and the recent emphasis on consumer choice intersect with migration regimes, consequently expanding the care service market where (female) migrants are overrepresented (Gavanas, 2013; Lutz, 2011). The main growth areas of care migrantisation in Nordic countries are eldercare and au pairs (Bikova, 2010; Stenum, 2010).

Intersection scholarship has been largely limited to the western (European) welfare states. However, both feminised migration and migrantised care work are not limited to the traditional migrant receiving countries. An increase in female migrants can contribute to a country’s transition from a country of emigration into one of immigration. Indeed, the feminisation of migration has also been witnessed in Asia’s new destination countries such as Japan, Hong-Kong, Taiwan and Korea especially since the 1990s because of the increasing demand for female domestic/care workers as well as foreign wives; this demand will serve as a major factor for the future migration growth in the region (Castles, 2014; Castles and Miller, 2009). Given that Asian countries are strongly implicated in the global mobility of care migrants, incorporating them into the research of care-migration nexus can benefit this specific field of research as a whole (Daly, 2012).



Nevertheless, extending the applicability to other types of (welfare) states in different regions may not be straightforward. Applying the analytical frame of care transnationalisation developed in the West to other countries (or regions) may face many challenges. One such challenge is the issue of “transposability” (Huang *et al.*, 2012: 130). Research drawing on highly fluid and contested concepts like ‘care’ may pose a ‘universalistic bias’ when *transposed* without criticism to different settings because care can be differently understood and experienced by different regional contexts as well as social, political and economic contexts, so sensitivity to contexts should be first guaranteed (Huang *et al.*, 2012; Milligan and Wiles, 2010). The next subsection contextualises the East Asian countries in terms of migration patterns, migration regimes and care regimes.

### **2.5.2. The East Asian Context**

Despite the historical importance of East Asia in understanding global migration patterns both as origins and destinations, policy research linking migration regimes with care regimes (and welfare state regimes) in this region is rare (Ochiai, 2009). The study of Michel and Peng (2012) is one of few comparative intersection studies dealing with East Asian countries, and they found that these countries increasingly turn to migrant care workers to deal with growing care demand. The way in which they resort to migrant care workers to deal with growing care demand is comparable to the experiences of the European (Mediterranean in particular) societies, but to a degree they differ from other countries and also among themselves because of their cultural and institutional contexts. Then what are those contexts specific to East Asian countries<sup>6</sup>?

Asia is not only a major source of emigration, but also an important immigration destination. Asia has 60 per cents of the total world population due to two population giants - China and India. As presented in Table 2.1, as of 2013 Asia hosts about 71 million migrants, making up 30.6 per cent of the global migration stock. As one of the

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<sup>6</sup> ‘East Asian countries’ in this study are more relevant to high income countries (or areas) in the region which have transformed to predominantly migrant-receiving countries such as Japan, South Korea, Hong-Kong (Special Administrative Region of China), and Taiwan (a province of China, by the UN perspective). Taiwan is by the UN term a part (province) of China, but this study treats it as a separate ‘nation’ for research purposes.

sub-regions of Asia, East Asia holds a rather (comparatively) small number of migrants: 3.3 per cent (about 7.7 million) of the total world migrant stock, considering its population share of 22.3 per cent of the world. However, almost all countries in this sub-region have been experiencing a growth of their migrant stock (UN-DESA, 2013a).

**Table 2.1: International migrant stock by region (millions)**

	1990	2000	2010	2013	2013	
					% in the world migrant stock	% in the world population
World	154.2	174.5	220.7	231.5	100	100
Africa	15.6	15.6	17.1	18.6	8.0	15.5
Asia	49.9	50.4	67.8	70.8	30.6	60
- <i>East Asia</i>	4.0	5.4	7.2	7.7	3.3	22.3
Europe	49	56.2	69.2	72.4	31.3	10.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	7.1	6.5	8.1	8.5	3.7	8.6
Northern America	27.8	40.4	51.2	53.1	22.9	5
Oceania	4.7	5.4	7.3	7.9	3.4	0.5

*Note:* This is a subregion category by the UN classification which includes China, Japan, Hong-Kong, Macao, Mongolia, North Korea and South Korea.

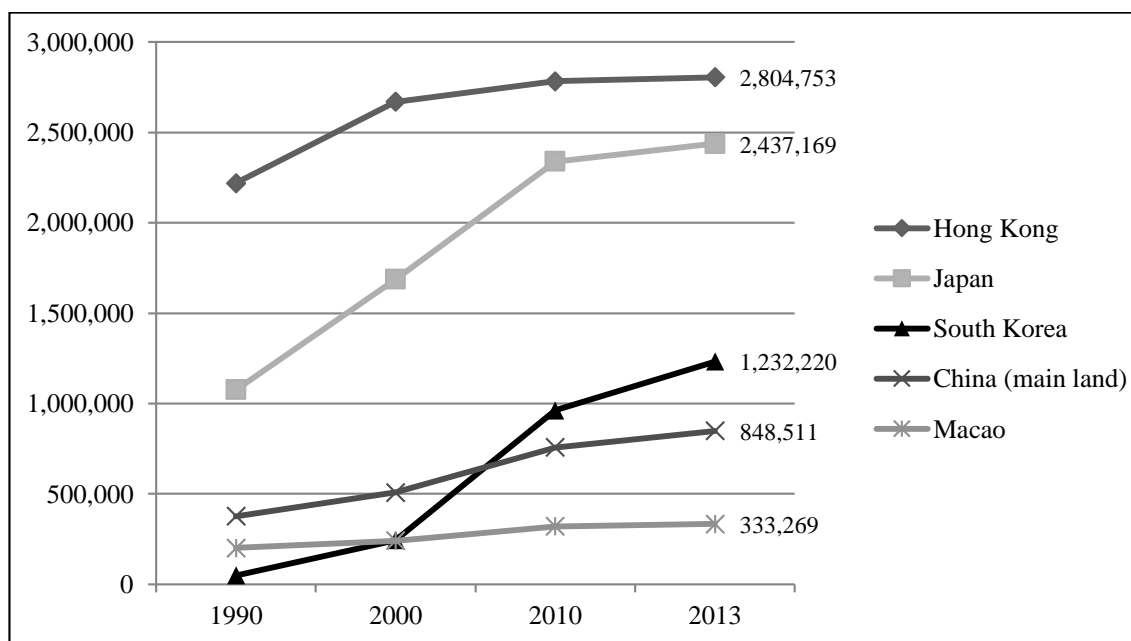
*Source:* Compiled by the author from UN-DESA (2013a)

As Figure 2.1 shows, Hong-Kong has the largest stock of international migrants in East Asia, with about 2.8 million migrants, followed by Japan (around 2.4 million); (South) Korea is ranked the third in East Asia as a country of destination holding around 1.2 million migrants<sup>7</sup>, but it showed the fastest growth rate in this sub-region (UN-DESA, 2013a). It should be noted that the migration of Korean Chinese (co-ethnic migrants) is *the* most important migration path to Korea both as labour migration and family migration (refer to Chapter 4). When calculated as a proportion of the total population from the same dataset above, it is shown that despite the recent rapid migration growth, Japan and (South) Korea still maintain a far more homogeneous racial/ethnic makeup in East Asia, 1.9 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively, not to mention a mere 0.1 per cent of migrants in the mainland China.

In addition, it is worth noting that East Asia hosts the highest proportion of female

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the figure here is lower than that presented in Chapter 4 because the Korean government's statistics includes migrants staying between 3 months to a year whom the UN defines as 'short-term immigrants' (see UN, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/migration/migrmethods.htm>)

international migrants in the world (54 per cent) (refer to Table 2.2). Outstanding economic success of some East Asian countries since as early as the 1970s has triggered labour migration within the Asian region (for low-skilled jobs in particular) for both men and women. However, the recent feminised migration flow in East Asia is closely related to a significant increase in (female) marriage migration, and this is especially the case in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan.



**Figure 2.1: Growth in migrant stocks in East Asian countries**

Source: Compiled by the author from UN-DESA (2013a)

**Table 2.2: Percentage of female migrants in the international migrant stock by region (%)**

	1990	2000	2010	2013
World	48.8	49.1	48.1	48.0
Africa	46.6	47.2	46.1	45.9
Asia	45.6	45.4	42.0	41.6
- Eastern Asia*	49.3	52.7	54.2	53.9
Europe	51.4	51.8	51.6	51.9
Latin America and the Caribbean	49.8	50.1	51.5	51.6
Northern America	51.1	50.5	51.2	51.2
Oceania	49.1	50.0	50.2	50.2

Note: This is a sub-region category by the UN classification which includes China, Japan, Hong-Kong, Macao, Mongolia, North Korea and South Korea.

Source: Compiled by the author from UN-DESA (2013a)

A marked increase in international migrants in some destination countries in East Asia such as Japan, Hong-Kong and Taiwan has posed great social and economic challenges. Given that all these countries are experiencing a rapid decline of the fertility rate and an acceleration of ageing, policy makers in these countries, on the one hand, try to offset the negative impact of this demographic transition and continue to (re)vitalise economies by drawing on migrants and, on the other hand, they have to address or prevent social problems potentially caused by the increasing migrant population (IOM, 2010). International marriages and the formation of families having different racial/ethnic backgrounds have emerged as growing policy issues (such as multiculturalism and integration) particularly for the countries having long maintained cultural and racial/ethnic homogeneity (HR Kim and Oh, 2011; Parreñas and Kim, 2011).

Despite the shared experiences of the recent migration transition and perceived cultural similarities among the East Asian destination countries, the policy approach to migrants varies. The way each country incorporates migrant (unskilled) workers in the labour market is very much determined by the government's position on importing this type of worker: while Hong-Kong and Taiwan tend to adopt a less strict policy, Japan and Korea's approach are much more cautious (Chan *et al.*, 2011). Regarding marriage migrants, however, these countries seem to have adopted rather similar policies: various support programmes have been introduced to ensure their full integration, or ultimately, assimilation. A dominant policy rationale backing up these support programmes is to frame marriage migrants "primarily as wives, daughters-in-law and mothers" rather than potential active citizens for their own sake (IOM, 2010: 63).

Social (care) policies are closely related to migrant policies in East Asia, as in the case of Europe and elsewhere. East Asian destination countries are now more or less facing unprecedented demand for care in the context of the rapid ageing of populations together with changing values in relation to family life and familial obligations (Chan *et al.*, 2011; Daly, 2012). However, the emergence of welfare states is a more recent phenomenon to most East Asian countries than in the West, and possibility of sharing care role with the state and the market began to be seen a viable option for families only very recently even in the welfare leaders in East Asia (Peng, 2010). The East Asian welfare state regime, known as 'productivist welfare states' (Holliday, 2000) or 'developmental welfare states' (H-j Kwon, 2007b), prioritise economic growth and

securing the supply of productive labour, so social policies are designed to best protect (male) paid workers through contributory social insurance schemes (refer to Chapter 5). On the other hand, reproductive labour, i.e., care, has been provided typically through (women in) the family in the East Asian countries (Ochiai, 2009). The Confucian ideal of ‘filial piety’ along with the patriarchal gender relations have formed a care culture which strongly normalises and prioritises familial and feminised provision of care (J-W Kim and Choi, 2013; Sung, 2003). When a family care capacity is diminishing and the traditional gender roles are challenged, the state, the market and the third sector begin to assume bigger roles, transforming the mix of care provision. The division of care responsibility has been further complicated by the involvement of migrants in two ways: recruiting paid care workers for both home and institutional care and incorporating unpaid care givers within the family.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

This chapter provides a review on three bodies of literature in which this research project is situated: care, migration and the intersection of the two. In essence, it is all about ‘care’. Firstly, accumulated studies so far, as examined here, proves that the concept of care has evolved to capture multiple facets of care work on the individual level, and to provide an alternative tool to analyse the nature and varieties of the welfare states on the national level. Furthermore, on the global level, when placed in the context of migration, the concept of care helps overcome the methodological nationalism in the study of welfare states. Now the nature of care itself and welfare states’ role in the provision of care can be properly studied only by applying a transnational perspective on social entities such as class, gender and race/ethnicity. However, my review of migration-care intersection research, both comparative and case studies, has shown that the actual modality of the intersection between migration regime and care regime vary across the different welfare (care) regimes and also within the same regime. That is why the intersection research needs to continue to include more cases beyond the well-known three worlds of welfare states. Lastly, before unfolding the case study on Korea in the chapters to come, here I located the case in the East Asian contexts of migration and care, implied how the Korean case potentially makes interesting but valuable

contributions to migration-care relationship literature, the intersection research specifically, essentially by bringing in co-ethnic migration and marriage migration as well as a new welfare state regime type - a productivist welfare state - into this scholarship.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The aim of this research project is to add new knowledge about the way in which migrants are incorporated into various types of care work through certain policy combinations in destination countries. As indicated in Chapter 1, this research employs two strategies to achieve this aim: by utilising a broadened understanding of ‘care’ as an analytical core and by focusing on the analysis of ‘regimes’ of migration and care. This chapter explicates how those two strategies have been rationalised and substantialised into specific research tactics in order to carry out the project. The chapter consists of two sub-sections: the first section discusses the general orientations of the current research including the design and epistemological and ontological stances of the research; the second section examines the specific methods adopted for this research to collect and analyse the data, and reviews technical and ethical issues arising over the research process.

#### **3.2. Research Orientations**

This research is a study on the intersections of care regime and migration regime. As reviewed in Chapter 1 and 2, intersection research is theoretically informed, on the one hand, by the *feminist theorisation* of care as (social) reproductive labour and its transnationalisation in the context of gendered migration, and by *regime studies* analysing the formal and informal institutions as new (historical and sociological) institutionalism emphasises, on the other hand. Staying consistent with these theoretical stances, this research has applied two organising principles: one is that it adopts ‘a single case study’ for the research design; the other is that it forms ‘a policy study’ on the state level rather than a study on individual experiences. These orientations not only

provide a framework and rationale of the project, but they also direct the data strategies and delineate the boundary of the research.

### 3.2.1. A Single Case Study

It is reasonable for this research to constitute a single case study since the primary goal of the study is to generate detailed and holistic knowledge on a specific case (Korea), so that it can contribute to the current body of literature on the chosen subject. This research setup determines the nature of the relationship between theory and the research. As reviewed in the preceding chapter, the subject of this research, the relationship between migration and care, has developed its own set of concepts and theories validated by accumulated empirical evidence. That established knowledge directly informs this Korean case study, and, the findings from the study, in return, feed back to the knowledge in several ways, for example, providing an additional endorsement and/or calling for substantial modification of it. In this respect, this research project at the designing stage was clearly intended to emulate the Popperian ‘hypothetico-deductive model’ of reasoning (Popper, 1972).

I was convinced at first that this ‘testing out’ type of research could give a very neat formula which makes any social research (look) *scientific*: the researcher first located the limitations of previously proposed generalisations (concepts or theories), from which researcher’s original contributions can be claimed by specifying, modifying or clarifying those, significant yet premature, generalisations. However, it turned out eventually far more difficult than first expected to make this research project neatly fit into the ‘hypothetico-deductive model’. The difficulties arose from the nature of the research subject itself as well as from the features of the research design adopted for this project. In essence, this research *borrow*s a key analytical tool (care transnationalisation) developed in the West and applies it to totally different geographical, cultural and institutional contexts. Expectedly, wearing borrowed spectacles has caused a great deal of epistemological issues from the beginning of the research.

The research was motivated by the desire to find links between welfare states and (international) migration/migrants. At first, I was interested in researching how the welfare state provides social protection to migrants, in other words, examining migrants



through a lens of passive welfare (care) recipients. This initial focus may partially reflect the migration research tendency among social policy researchers in Korea. I quickly realised, however, that the opposite direction, how migrants provide care for the citizen in the welfare state as active agents, is an equally important but neglected dimension to the welfare state-migration research field. In an attempt to address this lacuna, the existing literature on the relationship between migration and care has influenced not only how I see (analyse) the reality, but also what I see (Bryman, 2012). It is without doubt that there has existed an observable *reality* that some migrants were somehow involved in care work in various forms in Korea despite its short history of immigration. However, the reality has hardly been framed as a phenomenon of ‘care outsourcing’ or ‘transnationalisation of care’, nor has been highlighted the role of government policies over this process. So, examining migrants’ involvement in care work in Korea through the concept of care transnationalisation required dual processes: the application of theory to a given reality and, simultaneously, the construction of the reality *per se*.

Indeed, the concepts and theories developed in the western context gave me fresh eyes to recognise the complexity behind the recent migration growth in Korea. Government policy documents and media outputs on migration-related issues began to read different ways to me with new nuances and implications. However convinced I was, it was quite a challenge to convince other Koreans of the validity of my research agenda. During my preliminary research visit to Korea, I had chances to present my research proposal on the relationship between migration and care to a handful of social policy academics and government officials. I received rather contrasting feedback. They all did acknowledge the growing importance of the subject itself; however, some were very sceptical whether there was enough *substance*, or whether I could find proper methods to investigate the topic. Some pointed out that the migration-care relationship had never been staged as a serious policy agenda or a political discourse on the (social) policy community in Korea. It was rather surprising to see that some social policy researchers abroad, scholars based on North America in particular (from a personal communication with Ito Peng and other colleagues in her recent project<sup>8</sup>), seemed to be more convinced

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<sup>8</sup> The project 'Gender, Migration and the Work of Care' (<http://www.cgsp.ca/research>). I myself am a postgraduate participant to this project.

of the existence of the substance, i.e. the interconnectedness of migration and care in Korea.

This disparity in awareness of the nexus of migration and care originates from the difference in the preformed social reality (for example, different immigration history and the characteristics of institutions). But, more importantly, the disparity also comes from different *understanding* or *interpretations* of social phenomena, most representatively ‘care’, and intellectual traditions within academia such as the strength of feminist/gender analysis. This interpretative or constructivist understanding of social ontology is particularly prominent when applying the definition of care to the Korean context. To illustrate, domestic work such as cleaning and washing has rarely been discussed as ‘reproductive work’, let alone ‘care work’ in Korea. When challenging this established position, the researcher’s theoretical stance and values play a significant role. This is why this research has demanded a high level of reflexivity and sensitivity when interpreting the phenomena and related policies throughout the research process.

### **3.2.2. A Policy Study**

The second orientation of this research project is that it focuses on studying public policies related to migration and (social) care. According to Blakemore (1998: 2), studying (social) policy can be done in three directions: 1) what the policies are; 2) how the policies are developed; 3) why the policies exist (or do not exist). These questions are explored in this research through the analysis of ‘regimes’. Adopting the concept of regime determines the scope (mainly, formal institutions) and the level (middle range i.e., the national level) of this study. Investigating formal institutions of care and migration in Korea meets the purpose of this research to expand the understanding of the intersection of migration and care regimes. Regime(s) by its definition can be ideally studied for and through the comparative research, but it can also be useful for a single case study. Detailed data produced is itself contributing to the current intersection research, and it can potentially provide background data for future comparative studies as well. For this purpose, I have employed transferrable (applicable to other cases) ‘indicators’ (refer to Chapter 1).

The intersection research basically is an attempt to recognise the national and regional differences (and/or similarities). In doing so, researchers have tried to highlight characteristics of institutions of each case (country or regional bloc). Whether comparative studies or single case studies, they share the same emphasis on institutions. Institutions do matter in a sense that social phenomena “cannot be simply reduced to the aggregate consequences of individual behaviours”; instead, it is to be shaped to a significant extent by the institutions within which individuals interact (March and Olsen, 1983: 747). Recognising the importance of institutions is relevant not only to the European welfare states which have a long tradition of welfare ‘state’ analysis, but also to an emerging welfare state, Korea, in that the state has played a critical role for its social and economic development.

However, what exactly constitutes ‘institution’ varies among researchers (Burnham *et al.*, 2008). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, regimes can be analysed by various indicators, some of which, such as ‘culture’ or ‘norms’, are difficult to operationalise into specific policy terms. The current research is in the main guided by a relatively narrow definition of institutions i.e., in terms of formal structures and laws (rules); however, wherever relevant it also tries to capture wider (or informal) aspects of institutions such as norms, expectations and traditions (Hall and Soskice, 2001: 9). This holistic approach to institution is especially useful when attempting to construct in-depth historical interpretative accounts on the development of the regimes of a specific country. For the Korean case here, for example, historical legacies (as a path dependence) are found particularly useful in explaining its regime characteristics, as historical institutionalism hypothesises (Hall and Taylor, 1996). Such a broader definition of institutions also sits well within ‘regime analysis’.

### **3.2.3. Limitations of the Research Design**

At least three limitations relating to the research orientations should be elucidated. First of all, most obviously, the findings from this single case study are limited in its potential for generalisation; instead, they should be considered as a new piece of knowledge and insight added to the existing body of literature.

Secondly, as discussed earlier, this research is explicitly in line with the feminist tradition of migration and care research. I have no intention to limit the scope of this research to one gender type, but undoubtedly this research tends to prioritise the perspective from/for female migrants over their male counterparts, although overall discussions around the migration regime and the care regime are relevant, albeit disproportionately, to both genders. This is because, on the one hand, I myself strongly support the ‘gender-sensitive analysis’ as feminist care/migration researchers have been promoting, and, on the other hand, (im)migration growth and related social discourse as well as government policies in Korea are indeed constructed by gender along with class, race/ethnicity and/or skill.

Thirdly, this study prioritises institutions over individuals, which can inevitably downplay the ‘agency’ of individual migrants. Migration can happen only through the existence of pre-established institutions e.g., immigration programmes and visa rules. Even undocumented migrants by definition can be seen as the consequences of the institutions. In this regard, this research seems to endorse a rather one-directional understanding of social ontology: individual actors are passively controlled by fixed realities (institutions) which are ‘already out there’. However, this is simply not true: individual migrants in Korea do exercise their agency in order to maximise utility as the rational choice theory anticipates. Nevertheless, this research understands that individuals’ utility maximising behaviours are ultimately conditioned, sometimes more effectively, *through* institutions (Peters, 2005). The evolution of the Korean version of guest worker programme provides a good example of how individual migrants can interact with institutions under the given conditions (refer to Chapter 5).

So far I have discussed how the research aim and the focal theory provide rationales and frameworks within which the Korean experience of care transnationalisation can be researched. I have also highlighted priorities of this research and their weaknesses. Those priorities and limitations of the research determine what kind of data is needed and how they should be collected and analysed, which the next section turns to.

### 3.3. Data Methods

The way in which researchers choose and employ specific data methods for any project is “dictated both by its [the project's] objectives and by its boundaries” (Burnham *et al.*, 2008: 5). My research objective has been to investigate the Korean case of care transnationalisation, and it required a historical interpretation of the migration-care relationship and the role of state policies therein. To do so, the research has demanded three categories of core data, both quantitative (statistics) and qualitative (words): (im)migration growth, societal changes including demographic transition and changes in families, and state policies on social care and (im)migration.

To collect, analyse and interpret these data, the research adopted a combined approach: documentary analysis and expert interviews. Various types of documentary materials have constituted the primary source of evidence to construct the thesis, and the data from expert interviews were less in volume and only selectively used to make specific arguments. The synthesis of these two data methods was an attempt to increase the credibility of the research by diversifying data sources, which is often called “triangulation” strategy (Bryman, 2012: 392). This is a single case study and its orientation is largely qualitative, so measures could be eclectic and less reliable, so crosschecking the argument by different sources of data is crucial to guarantee the validity of the research.

The boundaries dictating the selection of data methods refer to not only the research focus and scope, but also ‘physical conditions’ under which the research is carried out. First of all, the researcher (in the UK) and the research subject (in Korea) are geographically distanced. The geographical separation has influenced the way I conducted the research both positively and negatively. In a positive way, I have been able to maintain fresh eyes on the subject and keep a rather objective attitude. However, in a negative way, the limited physical access to the subject has also limited my access to data, forcing me to draw on the data only accessible from abroad via online facilities. All real world research projects are carried out within certain constraints, but this PhD project has been even more stringent: lack of funding and fixed time frame (3 years) certainly limited the options I could choose for data methods as well as research design. However, it is the researcher's ability and duty to carry out the project negotiating through all those constraints and to produce the best possible outcomes. The following

sections will explicate how the two data methods have been justifiably employed for the research and discuss technical and ethical issues involved.

### **3.3.1. Documentary Analysis**

This research project has been primarily built upon a comprehensive survey of ‘documents’ from both governmental and private sources. Burnham *et al.* (2008: 212) argue that “careful use of a wide range of documentary material is one of the most reliable methods open to political researchers and provides an opportunity for the production of authoritative studies”. This can also be the case for the social (policy) researchers. A large quantity of documentary materials in all varieties is readily available and becoming increasingly accessible ‘globally’ via new information technologies. In addition, it is easier to apply various analytical tools to documentary data. Particularly when digitalised, these types of data can save the researcher a great deal of time and cost, and thus make the research process more efficient.

#### ***Types of materials***

The documentary data for this research comprise official statistics, policy documents, academic papers and media outputs. Combined in different proportions in each chapter of this thesis, these four categories of documentary data were used to construct detailed historical narratives and interpretations of Korea’s migration transition (Chapter 4), the evolution of migration and care regimes (Chapter 5 and 6), and the intersections between the two regimes (Chapter 7).

As noted earlier, this research is a study of *public* policies. So, the most essential ‘primary data’ for this research has been official statistical information. Official statistics were extensively incorporated throughout the thesis in both a descriptive and an analytical way. The main gateway for acquiring the official statistical data was the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS) of the Statics Korea (a bureau of statistics in Korea), which contains virtually all statistical data created by the government agencies and affiliated organisations such as government-funded think

tanks. The KOSIS runs a very accessible website<sup>9</sup> where raw datasets including metadata<sup>10</sup> can be downloaded. The data on population (including foreign nationals), households, labour markets and social welfare were retrieved from the KOSIS. Another important source of the statistics on migrants is the Korea Migration Service website<sup>11</sup>, maintained by the Ministry of Justice, which provides detailed statistical reports on immigrants and emigrants on a monthly and a yearly basis.

This research also heavily drew on the policy documents directly provided by the Korean government (refer to Appendix 3.1). Laws have been the most authentic references to this policy study. The Ministry of Government Legislation provides an online database of the entire body of laws in Korea often with English translations (translation issues to be discussed below).<sup>12</sup> This facility was found particularly useful in tracing policy changes through successive amendments. Another type of crucial policy documents was policy reports directly published (on- and offline) by the central government. Migration and care are major policy agendas in Korea, and the relevant ministries periodically create joint policy reports as a form of ‘master plan’. Apparently, some of the ‘plans’ in those reports more often appear mere political rhetoric rather than substantialised policies, but these plans do reveal the government’s own policy evaluation, emphases and future directions. Access to the information on government policies is guaranteed by a law in Korea, and all governmental organisations are disseminating up-to-date policy information through media release and official websites. Policy reports and surveys produced by think tanks and experts constituted also an important data source for this research. It is a common practice in Korea that the central government commissions research on certain topics, typically large-scale survey, to governmental/private research institutions or simply a group of experts before the introduction or reformation of certain policies. Those materials are not necessarily academically rigorous, but they are very useful to gain the background knowledge of certain social phenomenon and to preview the government attitude toward the phenomenon and proposed policies.

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://kosis.kr>

<sup>10</sup> Metadata is a statistical term to refer to information about data and about processes of producing and using data (OECD, <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1647>)

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.immigration.go.kr>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.law.go.kr>

Needless to say, genuine academic publications written in Korean as well as English have been indispensable as secondary data. Together with governmental or quasi-governmental policy documents, scholarly literature was utilised in setting up theoretical background and analytical frames for the current study. Korean literature, through my own translation, was of a particular value in showing how migration and care have been framed and researched in Korea. Considering the importance of interpretative effort on a single case study, as highlighted earlier, incorporating academic discussions happening in Korea to this research is vital.

The documentary data sources above were complemented by media outputs. As migrants have surfaced as a major social issue and a policy agenda since the mid-1990s, various types of migrant/migration-related information have been spreading online. The information exists in various forms including news articles, personal blogs and postings in social network services. This research, however, only incorporated news articles, interviews and speeches released online by the government, news agencies or organisations to guarantee the credibility of data.

### *Analysis of documentary data*

Documentary data were identified, collected and processed by the following steps. To begin with, I identified the four main themes of research informed by the focal theories, care and care transnationalisation (refer to Chapter 2): migration transition, migration regime, care regime and the intersections of migration and care regimes. These themes have been developed into four empirical chapters. I started with searching the most frequently referenced academic papers/books via Google Scholar, through which I managed to build up background knowledge and key contributors and concepts/issues for each chapter.

Then, I visited official websites of the related Korean government departments and retrieved main policy documents (mainly ‘master plans’) from their archive. From those main policy documents, I traced back other policy documents and statistical data set via the KOSIS system the original documents refer to. In parallel, I searched policy reports on specific policy area published by think tanks and academics, and compared their findings and policy recommendations with the official policy documents and the academic papers. To be informed of most recent policy updates, media interviews, open



discussions and public responses, I conducted unrestricted (non-academic) online searching using the key words using search engines like Google or Naver.

Next, all the collected documentary data were categorised thematically and chronologically for analysis. In analysing numerical data, I used MS Excel and IBM SPSS programmes. For textual materials, I simply used a ‘search and find’ function of MS Word and Adobe Acrobat.<sup>13</sup> In doing so, I attempted to highlight how the key concepts/issues initially identified from focal theories were translated into actual policy terms and presented in the Korean policy documents. In addition, my analysis paid particular attention to how declared policy goals and rationales were established into actual policies, and how statistical data show the outcomes of the policies. This stage helped me draft and refine critical interview questions for the expert interviews.

In order to verify and update my observations, the whole process of data gathering/analysing has been repeated three times (roughly once a year) between September 2012 and May 2015. In writing up the findings, I returned to the academic publications to see how my findings can meaningfully contribute to the existing academic understanding of the chosen topics. This overall research strategy was similarly applied to the interview method (see below).

### ***Technical issues in the documentary analysis***

The government tends to afford to carry out large scale research projects and produces a large quantity of, and potentially more reliable, data for academic social research (Bryman, 2012). However, it is important to realise that even official documents deriving from the state are “socially constructed” (May, 2001: 84). In other words, those data may not be totally neutral but can be biased by the producers of the documents, which demands an extra caution from researchers dealing with them. Statistical data on migrants are not an exception since they are heavily influenced by government political intentions and its policy approaches. To illustrate, the Korean government started to collect and provide more detailed statistical information on marriage migrants and their naturalisation only when marriage migrants received policy spotlights. On the other hand, the government has not so far provided a separate dataset of migrant care workers

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<sup>13</sup> I did not feel an absolute necessity to utilise any other qualitative research software such as NVivo since the data were rather small in volume and already well organised and indexed from the collection stage using key words consistently. Moreover, after several attempts, I found that the Korean language was not fully compatible with NVivo yet.

by types (such as domestic workers or nannies); instead, they are grouped together under the entry of 'household employment'. This is the result of the lack of a legal framework for domestic care workers. The addition (or removal) of certain visa categories and changes in migration policy frames directly affect the way statistical data are collected and presented. The official statistical data that I needed in some cases were categorised differently, making it impossible to construct a consistent time-series data, and in other cases, the data simply did not exist. In those cases, I could not but to turn to the second best, the secondary data which other scholars' and institutions' produced.

Textual materials from the government also call for cautions. Bryman (2012: 551) alerts us to note that "people who write documents are likely to have a particular point of view that they want to get across." The 'master plans' published by the Korean government are the most apparent examples, where the government promotes specific values and attitude toward immigrants and immigration policies. So, what the documents reflect may not the actual reality but a separate level of reality in their own right (Atkinson and Coffey, 2011; Bryman, 2012). Therefore, "all users of documents face problems of interpretation", which demands that the researchers be aware of the document creators' intentions, the conditions under which the text was produced, and, most importantly, the limitations of the documents (Burnham *et al.*, 2008: 211-2). One way to address these issues is to buttress the research with additional data method(s). That is what I intend to do for my research with expert interviews.

Language translation from Korean to English has been a recurring challenge over the entire process of the study. Some Korean words in translated in English may lose the original meaning and nuances. In addition, so-called official English translations provided by the Korean government often turned out simply inappropriate or inconsistent across documents and departments. On the first hand, I adopted academic researchers' Korean-English translations and compared them to choose better expressions with the official translations if available. In other cases, I tried to comply with international usage of terms. As the Korean government has increasingly engaged with global knowledge gathering efforts through international organisations, many policy and statistics data on Korea became available in English from the organisational archives of the UN, ILO, OECD and IMO, from which I took references for translations.

### 3.3.2. Expert Interviews

Interviews with experts were employed as a means to supplement the findings from the documentary analysis. Immigration is a very recent but rapidly developing phenomenon in Korea. Migration has become such an important political and policy issue in Korea due to its enormous social, economic and cultural implications. Migration policy itself has become a new challenge to the Korean government and a contested area where multiple policy actors with different interests are competing in the policy making. It is possible to figure out through official policy documents how *the government* approaches (im)migration and defines its relationship to other public policy areas, notably social care policies. However, it is often the case that the government's genuine policy intentions and political considerations are not explicitly expressed in the official documents. This is why the current research has sought additional data through qualitative interviews with experts.

#### *Sampling*

Then who are the experts? This research touches two distinct policy areas, migration and care, which make all different types of experts, such as lawmakers (congress members), government officials as well as academics, potential interviewees. However, the interviews here, as one component of the data which the research draws on, were used in a limited manner which aims to triangulate the evidence from the documentary analysis rather than to produce own arguments. Since I was interested in finding out the government's intentions and rationales behind introducing and reforming specific policies, I decided to interview middle-rank government officials who were actually in charge of devising and operating policies. The sampling of the interviewees was therefore guided accordingly.

On the ministerial level, three ministries are found relevant to migrants' work and life: Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL), and Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). MOJ is the main control tower which is in charge of providing legal frameworks for migration policies and administering overall immigration control (entry, residence and settlement). MOEL operates 'labour migration' programmes while MOGEF deals with 'family migration'. The selection of the interviewees was based on their job duties. Contact information

was obtained from each ministry's official website which provides detailed information on the staff and their duties. In case I called the department main number, they put me through the person(s) in charge of the policies I was interested in. Thereby, three interviewees working for each ministry were finally selected. In addition, I managed to recruit one official from the Small and Medium Business Administration (SMBA) through a personal route. SMBA is a sub-ministerial body specialising in assisting small and medium-sized enterprises, so it is highly relevant to migrant workers. I tried to recruit an interviewee from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) but it was eventually not included because MOHW apparently had neither such policies nor officials specifically dealing with migrants.

During the sampling stage, lawmakers were ruled out first due to the difficulty of accessibility. Academics were also excluded on the ground that their professional opinions can be obtained through their publications; however, a more fundamental reason is that, noted earlier, such academics are rare who have accumulated a specialty on the intersection of migration and care. I did have some chances to talk about the issue of migration-care connection with both Korean and foreign scholars but not as formal interviews. However, at the later stage of the study, I was lucky enough to recruit an academic whose specialty lies on gender and welfare/care politics of Korea. The person was willing to participate in a formal interview (face-to-face). I thought it could be a good way to compensate the lack in care policy-related interview data.

The rather limited number of interviewees of five can be justified by following reasons. Geographical separation and financial and time constraints were, in part, the reasons for not having been able to increase the sample size. Constrained resources have dictated me to 'select and focus'; more fundamentally however, locating suitable interview candidates (officials) having good understanding of this issue (migrants for care work) was far more difficult than initially expected, exactly as I had been warned off earlier by a Korean academic. Even those who were working at the relevant ministry and department had very limited awareness on this very recent and specific issue. This lack of awareness substantially limited the size of the potential interviewee pool.

There was an episode that when I tried to find who and which ministry/department were in charge of the employment policies for (female) marriage migrants, officials from MOEL and MOGEF referred me to each other repeatedly, saying "they have a speciality on that policy, not us." It may have resulted from the fact that the Korean

migration regime takes a sort of joint governance system, so that individual officials inevitably have limited knowledge by their ranks (refer to Chapter 5). In this regard, the information from the interviews alone should not be used to construct arguments due to the limited sample size. And it is also the reason why the analysis of documentary sources, such as joint policy reports, is so crucial for this research in order to grasp the big picture. Nevertheless, however small it may seem, my sampling successfully covered the core government institutions related to migration policies (MOJ, MOEL and MOGEF). The interviews have provided valuable chances to glimpse how the people inside the government evaluated and rationalised their migration-related policies.

### *Conduct of interviews*

I chose the telephone interviewing method due to following benefits. First of all, it was a pragmatic consideration. Given that the researcher could not afford to carry out long-term on-site fieldwork but potential interviewees were geographically dispersed, telephone interviewing seemed a reasonable choice. Secondly, telephone interviewing allowed greater flexibility in arranging and conducting interviews at interviewee's most convenience. Considering government officials are extremely busy and frequently work overtime in Korea, telephone interviewing causes less distress to them. Indeed, in my preliminary discussions, two government officials suggested that government officials would prefer telephone or email communications over face-to-face interviews not only because their calendars are already loaded with schedules, but they feel more comfortable with 'just talking over the phone' rather than revealing their faces. Lastly, each call may be relatively short but telephone interviewing does allow multiple chances of interviews over a certain period of time.

After my research proposal approved in October 2013, I visited Korea for a month to share my research idea with others and to recruit potential interviewees. I managed to recruit the interviewees and earned consents to have telephone interviews when I came back to the UK. Actual interviews with the government officials were conducted via telephone between December 2013 and August 2014. The interviews were not rigidly structured but guided by a set of questions prepared by the researcher. All the conversations were recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis. Disappointingly, interviews happened only once with each interviewee but in one case, there was a follow-up email communication with a valuable 'internal document'. As indicated

above, I had a chance to conduct a face-to-face interview with one participant at the later stage of research (May 2015). It taught me a valuable lesson on the difference in the two interview methods.

The telephone interview should not necessarily be seen as an inferior method to face-to-face interview because it can be the best option under certain circumstances (Harvey, 2011). There is some evidence that there are few differences in the kinds of response that researchers can get when interviewing by telephone instead of in person (Bryman, 2012). However, during the telephone interviews, I experienced some obvious drawbacks. As Bryman (2012) pointed out, it was difficult to secure a certain length of interview time, and respondents seemed to be less engaged. Even though I managed to reach him or her later again, it was difficult to maintain the natural flow of dialogue, so the interviews became something similar to ‘question and answer’ time. In addition, telephone interviewing prevented the researcher from appreciating respondents’ non-verbal signals such as gestures. In contrast, the face-to-face interview was much more spontaneous, personal and engaged. However, under the given situations, the advantages of telephone interviewing in general far outweighed the disadvantages for the current research project.

#### ***Analysis of interview data***

All the audio-recordings were firstly literally transcribed in Korean, and then they were translated into English by the author. In this stage, translation became an issue once again. Admittedly, the translator’s understanding and preference of certain terms and expressions were inevitably reflected. The English version of interview transcripts were repeatedly read, and any wordings revealing policy intentions and rationales were highlighted. Then they were juxtaposed with the findings from the documentary analysis to see whether they support or contract each other. Comparing my interview findings with media interviews with lawmakers and a presidential speech turned out to be a very effective way of triangulation.

#### ***Ethical considerations in the expert interviews***

This research involves a direct contact with people, so it cannot be free from the ethical consideration. The primary ethical issue involved in this research is with regard to how to guarantee anonymity of interviewees. The interviewees were not asked to reveal

personal stances against any highly controversial issues; rather, all the questions were about the *official* positions of the government. However, they were middle-rank government officials who were actually making and delivering policies and programmes. Some of their opinions could be understood politically incorrect or maliciously distorted if their identity is revealed. So, all the possible measures have been sought to guard their privacy. Gathering of interviewees' personal information was minimised: names, job roles or any identifiable personal information are not to be exposed in the thesis. Only official contact information appeared on the official websites was collected and used for the arrangement. What they said during the interviewed were translated into English and cited only with the title of the ministry they were working for. The transcription has been completely anonymised and the voice recordings have been destroyed right after the transcription completed. All transcriptions have been securely protected in the author's password-protected laptop only, and they will also be destroyed when the research ends. All of these precaution measures were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Coordinator of the Department of Sociological Studies, the University of Sheffield.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the general orientations of the current research project: a single case study and a policy study, and discussed how these orientations are related to epistemological and ontological frameworks adopted for this research. I highlighted 'reflexivity' when conducting this case study and interpreting the data. In addition, the chapter also justified the data methods which this research employed with detailed discussion on their strengths and weaknesses. Documentary analysis and qualitative interviews were conducted for different purposes and the data from them were used in different ways accordingly. For both methods, online research facilities have been found indispensable. Every effort has been made to maintain a scientific rigor over the entire process of the research; however, I only found that a real world research would not be the one conducted through a neat linear process but the one in which the researcher should be ready to deal with full of unexpectedness and messiness, yet find the best possible research methods under the given situation.





## **CHAPTER 4**

### **MIGRATION TRANSITION IN KOREA**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

One of the contemporary global migration phenomena is “the proliferation of migration transition” (Castles and Miller, 2009: 12). Migration transition happens when a traditional migrant-sending country becomes a receiving country. The dichotomy of emigrant and immigrant countries may be no longer sustainable because many countries are in reality simultaneously migrant sending and receiving countries in the fast globalising world (Held *et al.*, 1999). Nevertheless, either form of migration may be identified dominant in a country. Countries in migration transition are often likely to become predominantly migration destinations in the long run, which can have critical impacts on countries, such as Korea, which have hitherto maintained ethnic and cultural homogeneity.

Korea’s transformation into a migrant-receiving country over the last three decades constitutes an important background to the current research. The aim of this chapter is to set the scene for forthcoming chapters, essentially by giving statistical data to show how (im)migration has become such a significant social (and policy) issue in Korea. The chapter consists of two parts: the first section briefly examines the recent regional history regarding the migration transition of some new destination countries in Asia including Korea, and it takes stock of the migration growth in Korea in terms of its scale and patterns. The next section analyses various factors which have been contributing to the growth of different types of migration in Korea. This is followed by a short conclusion.

## **4.2. Migration Growth in Korea**

### **4.2.1. Recent Regional History**

Korea's migration transition is an integral part of the growing intra-regional migratory activities in Asia (Debrah, 2002; Hujo and Piper, 2007). Migration in and out of Asia has a long history but the migration growth *within* the region from the 1990s is a new dimension. The intra-regional flows had been limited in scale until the late 1980s. By the early 1990s, intra-regional migration had reached a significant level, transforming East Asia (Japan, Taiwan, Hong-Kong and South Korea) and a part of South-East Asia (Singapore) into "the newest migration pole" (Athukorala, 2006; Findlay *et al.*, 1998; H Jones and Findlay, 1998). Political liberalisation and continuous integration into the global market have accelerated the migration mobility in this region (Castles and Miller, 2009). Asian countries currently hold a much smaller proportion of migrants in the total population (2 per cent), compared to other regions (10 per cent in Europe and 15 per cent in Northern America, for example); however, some destination countries show far greater concentration and faster growth of migrants (UN-DESA, 2013a).

Disparity in the economic development within Asia is often attributed to the growth of intra-regional migration. In fact, economically successful countries in East and South-East Asia such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore are all experiencing migration transition in a varying stage (Athukorala, 2006; Castles and Miller, 2009; Piper, 2004). Researchers have attempted to find some common denominators of those countries in the migration transition, mainly in terms of labour migration. Abella (2014: 3), for example, asserts that "the East Asian economies have undergone two kinds of transformation since the post war period: the first transformation was the emergence of the industrial sector replacing agriculture as the major generator of income and employment, and the second was the growth of services replacing manufacturing as the provider of high productivity jobs." These economic transformations, the first one in particular, were initiated by their governments through targeted investment in the export-oriented large-scale production industries such as electrical, machinery, motors and high-tech goods later on.

Those industrialisation strategies were highly successful, so that they created labour demand often beyond the capacity of the domestic reservoir, which consequently

triggered the early growth of labour migrants in heavy industries (Debrah, 2002; Fields, 1994). In addition, some historical events, notably the fall of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War in 1990, contributed to the growth of intra-regional migrant flows. The former event added another international migration supply and the latter changed the direction of migration to Asia (Seol, 2000). When one of the largest migrant receiving spots, the Gulf, had been shut down due to the war, newly industrialised countries such as Korea emerged as an attractive alternative. However, as the economic transformation of those countries reached the next stage, namely ‘post-industrial economies’, new demands for migrants began to arise, for example employment in service jobs of varying skill-levels, diversifying patterns of migration.

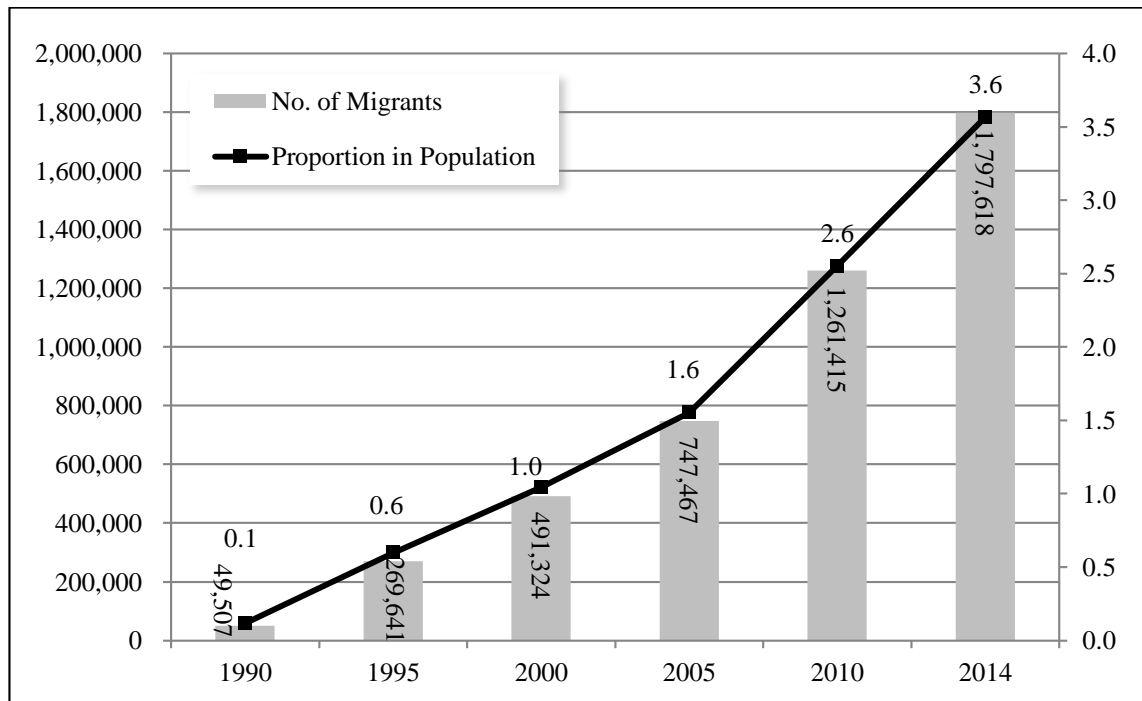
#### **4.2.2. Taking Stock of the Migration Growth in Korea**

##### ***Speed and Scale of Migration Growth***

Korea’s migration transition is a very recent phenomenon. Post-war Korea was characterised by high rates of emigration, with its population providing labour, typically as farmers, nurses and construction workers, to states such as Japan, Russia, the USA and Germany (Castles and Miller, 2009; Held *et al.*, 1999). With the exception of a small number of professionals, including foreign government officials and military personnel, Korea had remained virtually shut to international migrants, including irregular migrants, until the 1970s, rendering it virtually a zero-migrant country. Confident, however, that economic development was on track from the late 1970s, the Korean government became interested in attracting human resources from abroad. Starting with investors, traders and engineers, there was a trickle of technical trainees and students from nearby Asian countries into the country from the 1980s. However, Korea had to wait another decade to see a more constant inflow of migrants. When the Korean government systematised the foreign trainee system and subsequently introduced non-skilled labour migration schemes (refer to Chapter 5) from the 1990s, the number of migrants finally began to rapidly grow.

The scale of migration may look small by the global standard but the speed of growth has been dramatic. As shown in Figure 4.1, there were merely about 50,000 migrants in 1990 but the number grew more than 10 times over the next decade. The

growth remained robust even during the economic crisis in 1997 to 1999. As of 2014, the number of migrants is 1,797,618 accounting for 3.6 per cent of the total population of Korea. If we consider irregular migrants, the exact number of migrants in Korea would be larger than suggested by the official statistics.<sup>14</sup> The government has estimated that the migrant population will reach 3.2 million, representing 6.12 per cent of the total population, by 2030 (IPC, 2012a: 20).



**Figure 4.1: Growth of migrant stock in Korea (person, %)**

Source: KIS, *Migration Yearbook* (various years)

### ***Patterns of Migration Growth***

The migration growth has been patterned by route. As Table 4.1 shows, migrants for short-term visit and (industrial) training led the growth in the early stage of the transition. This is closely related to the increase in undocumented migrants until 2002 because short-term visitors and industrial trainees often overstayed for work. Since 2002, labour migration and family migration have emerged as more dominant forms of

<sup>14</sup> Interpretation of migration statistics deserves double scrutiny. There is an allegation that government is underestimating the real number of the undocumented migrants on purpose. For example, Martin (2009) suspected the data from Korean government by pointing out that as many as 200,000 undocumented workers were not included in the Korean government's report to UN.

migration. Combined, those two routes account for 70.6 per cent of all migrants as of 2014.

Labour migration refers to a migration route for employment, while family migration comprises wider types of migrants whose primary purpose of entry is not working but staying as dependants, spouses or relatives. Family migration constitutes the single largest migration route into Korea: at 36.3 per cent of the migrant stock, it is just slightly ahead of labour migration (34.3 per cent). It should be noted that certain groups of migrants, notably those having F-4 visa, classified here as family migrants, are simultaneously economic migrants for employment or business since they are given both residence and labour rights. Therefore, there is a chance that the proportion of labour migration is underestimated here by the author's classification.

**Table 4.1: Migration growth by route in Korea (stock, person)**

Migration routes	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2014 (%)
Total	49,507	269,641	491,324	747,467	1,261,415	1,797,618 (100)
Family	39,524	53,530	73,903	150,327	326,677	653,395 (36.3)
Labour	2,833	8,540	18,563	252,562	557,114	617,145 (34.3)
Short-term Visit	3,274	145,941	242,710	168,338	196,371	337,944 (18.8)
Education & Training	2,106	56,950	146,305	90,838	112,759	91,764 (5.1)
Business	1,765	4,630	8,931	10,742	13,564	16,475 (0.9)
Other	5	50	912	74,660	54,930	80,895 (4.5)

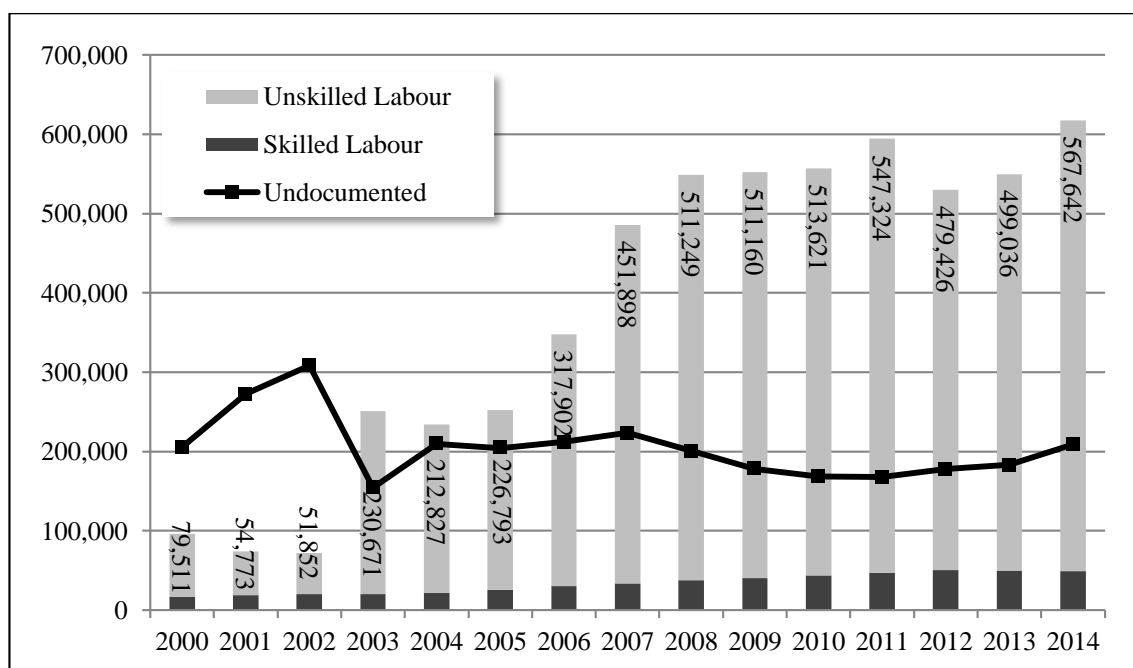
*Note:* Visa classification for each route as of 2014: Family (F-1 to F-6), Labour (C-4, E-1 to E-9 and H-1 to H-2), Short-term Visit (B-1, B-2, C-2, C-3, D-5 and D-6), Education and Training (D-2 to D-4), Business (D-7 to D-9) and Other (G-1 and others).

*Source:* KIS, *Migration Yearbook* (various years)

### ***Labour Migration Growth***

The labour migration growth in Korea has been largely driven by the increase in unskilled migrant workers, while skilled migrant workers have remained constant in number (refer to Figure 4.2). The growth in the former was a direct consequence of the introduction and expansion of unskilled labour migration programmes from 2002. These programmes resulted in a large number of undocumented migrants in the country before 2002 being rapidly absorbed into the labour migration system. The size of labour

migration has remained almost constant since 2008 due to the new labour migration system established in 2007 which turns out to have been very effective in regulating unskilled labour migrants by either expatriating or absorbing them in the system.



**Figure 4.2: Growth in labour migration by skill-level in Korea (stock, person)**

*Note:* The number of undocumented migrants here represents both labour and non-labour migration.

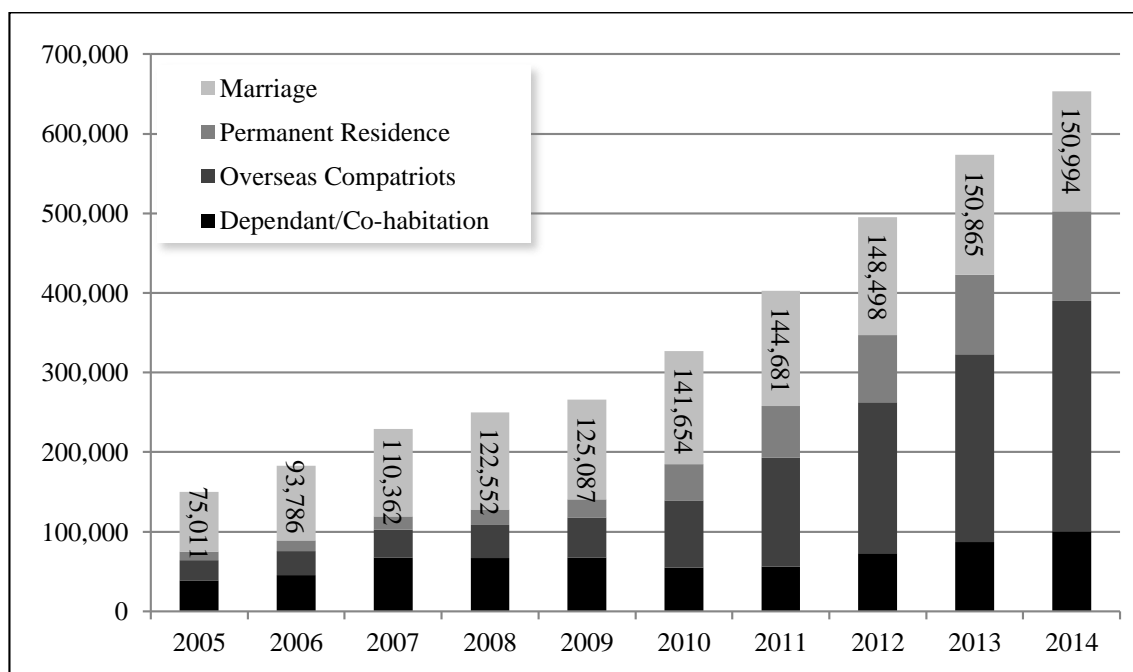
*Source:* KIS, *Migration Yearbook* (various years)

### ***Family Migration Growth***

Compared to labour migration, the growth of family migration has been more persistent (refer to Figure 4.3). One of the major factors is a strong growth of marriage migration since 2000, occupying the largest proportion in the family migration stock until 2011. Although the growth rate of marriage migration began to decline since then due to tightened regulations on international marriage arrangement and marriage migration status, the stock itself is on a steady growth path.

In addition, the category of ‘Overseas Compatriots’ has become increasingly significant in the composition of family migration from 2000. The government enacted a law, called ‘Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans’, to promote return migration through favourable treatment on ethnic Koreans overseas in 1999. Based on the Act, a new visa category (F-4) was created for overseas Koreans apart from the special unskilled labour migration programme for ethnic Korean

migrants. Obtaining an ‘Overseas Compatriots’ visa is exclusively available to ethnic Koreans, with which they can stay and work on a long-term basis. Some of F-4 visa holders stay in Korea indeed for family matters but it is reasonable to believe that a large proportion of them are in effect labour migrants although they cannot take most of the unskilled jobs which are reserved for both unskilled Korean workers and migrant workers.



**Figure 4.3: Growth in family migration by visa category in Korea (stock, person)**

*Note:* The number excludes those already naturalised.

*Source:* KIS, *Migration Yearbook* (various years)

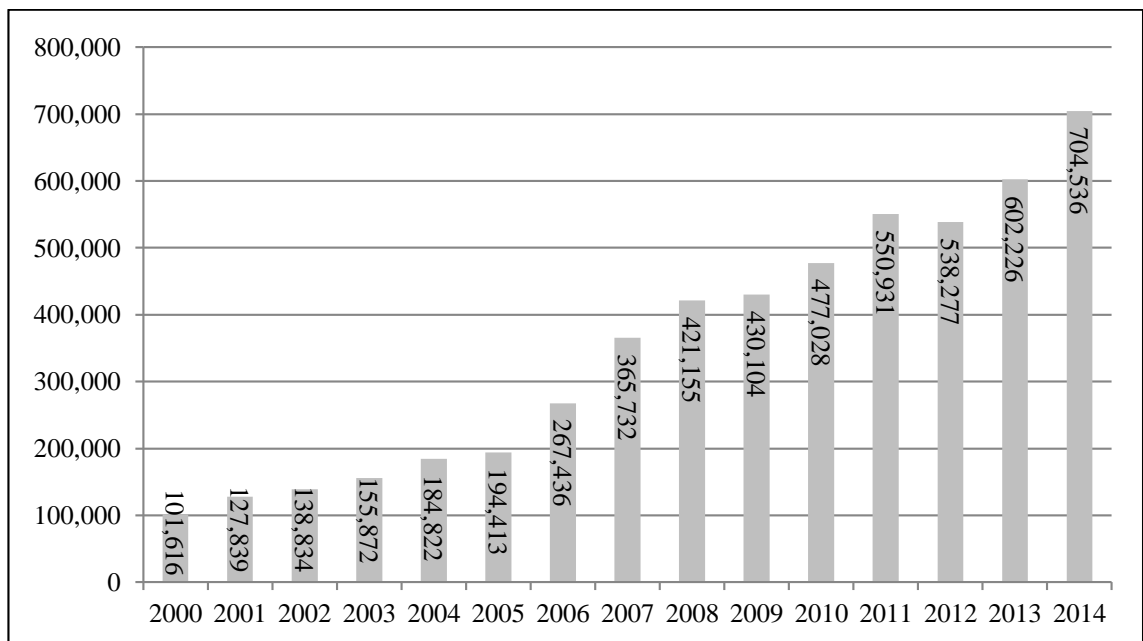
### ***Significance of Co-ethnic Migrants in both Labour Migration and Family Migration***

It cannot be emphasised too much the importance of co-ethnic migrants in understanding Korea’s migration growth. Co-ethnic migrants refer to the migrants who have the Korean ethnic background. Most of them are the descendants of the Korean diaspora living in China, CIS countries<sup>15</sup>. However, about a quarter of co-ethnic migrants are also from ‘advanced’ countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia, which reflects the long history of Korean out-migration to those countries: the second

<sup>15</sup> CIS countries refer to ‘Commonwealth of Independent States’ which consists of ten former Soviet Republics: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. (*World Atlas*, <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/cis.htm>)

and third generations of the early Korean emigrants are often immigrating back to Korea for various reasons such as business, work and study.

As you see in Figure 4.4, the number of co-ethnic migrants has been continuously increasing. The number slightly waned in 2012 as the first cycle of 5-year long co-ethnic labour migration programme ended but it bounced back right away. It is crucial to note that co-ethnic migration contributes not only to family migration but also to labour migration. As of 2014, almost 40 per cent of co-ethnic migrants are employed as unskilled workers (H-2) and some of those with the F-4 visa, as mentioned above, are likely to be engaged in the labour market.



**Figure 4.4: Growth in co-ethnic migrants in Korea (stock, person)**

*Note:* The relevant visa types for co-ethnic migrants include F-1 to F-4, H-2 and H-5.

*Source:* KIS, *Migration Yearbook* (various years)

It is often the case that family migration leads to naturalisation. This is particularly true for marriage migrants in Korea. As Table 4.2 shows, marriage migration has been a major path to obtain citizenship, consisting of 68.7 per cent of the total naturalisation cases as of 2014. Therefore, although smaller than labour migrants, the significance of family migrants, including those already naturalised, should not be underestimated, considering their long-term impact on the receiving society.



**Table 4.2: Naturalisation from marriage migration in Korea (accumulative, person)**

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Total	54,051	73,725	111,110	133,704	147,904
From marriage migration	38,991	41,417	69,804	83,929	101,507
Percentage	72.1	56.2	62.8	62.8	68.7

*Source:* Compiled by the author from MOGAHA (2014) and KIS (2015)

### 4.3. Factors Contributing to the Growth

The migration routes to Korea are complex, so are the contributing factors to the migration growth. The current chapter analyses those factors drawing on Martin’s (2009) framework as presented in Table 4.3. He divided migrants into two types: economic and non-economic migrants and listed factors in three categories: ‘Demand-Pull’, ‘Supply-Push’ and ‘Network’, arguing that migration is caused by the combination of these factors. The framework is in line with so-called ‘push-pull’ scenario which has been typically utilised in explaining labour migration growth (Abella, 2014; Martin, 2009). The push-pull theory, however, has been criticised as “individualistic and ahistorical” due to its preoccupation with individuals’ rational choice and a resultant neglect of collective decision making at the level of households and institutions (Castles and Miller, 2009: 22). While I agree that this neo-classical account of migration potentially oversimplifies the reality (Debrah, 2002), I do, however, find Martin’s framework useful for analysing the Korean case. To begin with, the framework takes both economic and non-economic migrants into consideration: this is crucial because family migration is also significant in Korea’s migration growth although economically motivated individual unit of migration has been most prevalent. In addition, the framework does take note of the role of public policies and networks which are influencing migration flows beyond the individual level. Lastly, this framework considers both ends of the migration flow, which allows us to better capture the intra-regional economic dynamic propelling migration, although the current research is more concerned with the demand side.

Nonetheless, I had to substantially modify the framework to make it more applicable to the Korean case. The original framework includes family reunification and

refugees/asylum seekers but they are excluded here because the migration route for family reunion is largely discouraged and the number of refugees/asylum seekers is nominal. Instead, I have added both social and cultural factors in order to explain the flow of a unique form of non-labour migration (marriage migration) and ethnicity-based migration. Martin (2009) acknowledges that the factors listed here are not exhaustive, and are subject to change in importance over the course of migration development. On top of that, it is important to recognise that the division of economic and non-economic migration is not clear-cut, neither is that of demand-pull and supply-push. The nature/purpose of migration may change as the stay prolongs. In addition, some factors, notably demographic transition, can be applied to both categories of factors. Therefore, the framework and the factors here should be understood as only a snapshot of a dynamic process of migration.

**Table 4.3: Analytical frame to examine factors contributing migration growth in Korea**

Type	Demand-pull factors	Supply-push factors	Network factors
Economic migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Labour shortage due to structural changes in economy and demographic transition</li> <li>▪ Introduction of labour migration programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disparity in economic conditions (low income and high unemployment)</li> <li>▪ Emigration as Government's development strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Migrant communities and information sharing</li> <li>▪ Geographical and cultural proximity</li> </ul>
Non-economic migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'Bachelor surplus' and changes in norms around marriage, family and gender roles</li> <li>▪ Support from the government and the civil society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emigration as family's livelihood strategy</li> <li>▪ Desire for better life chances (education or new life experiences)</li> </ul>	

*Source:* Adapted from Martin (2009: 4)

#### **4.3.1. Demand-Pull Factors**

##### ***Labour Shortage due to Structural Changes in Economy and Demographic Transition***

The economic migration growth in Korea is primarily attributed to labour shortage triggered by Korea's rapid economic expansion since the 1970s. The Korean labour

market had almost full employment, maintaining an unemployment rate of around 2.5 per cent until the mid-1980s; however, from then onwards certain industries began to suffer from a severe labour shortage (Seol, 2000). Ever expanding industries required an abundant supply of workers. At first, this labour demand was met by internal migrants. A large number of workers, both men and women, migrated from rural areas to industrialised areas to work in factories. However, the internal labour reservoir was soon drained. Factories in industrialised areas became severely understaffed. Remaining farming and fishing industries had been drastically shrunk as young workers left but no replacement labour sources were found. Despite the heavy investment on developing human resources by the government, the economic growth was so rapid that inter-sectoral transfer of labour alone would never fully address the labour shortage (Abella, 2014). These situations served as a background against the increase in undocumented migrant workers before the official foreign labour importing system began to fully function from the early 2000s.

Labour shortage in small and medium sized enterprises (hereafter SMEs) in manufacturing sectors continued to worsen as the Korean economy began to be restructured. As Korea continued to be industrialised, native-born workers were fast moving to jobs in the service sector for better work conditions and higher income. This labour market restructuring and the consequent deficit in production workers has been often referred to as ‘3D syndrome’ (attitude of avoiding dirty, dangerous and demanding jobs) in Korea (AE Kim, 2009b: 71). Already understaffed SMEs in manufacturing, farming and fishing industries, could not but demand more intense and longer work to survive, which made it even more difficult for them to recruit enough native-born labour. To compound the matter, the government’s large conglomerates (*chaebol*<sup>16</sup>)-centred development strategy widened the gap between major companies and SMEs with regard to income level and work conditions. Given that there were plenty of white collar jobs even in major companies, the labour shortage in SMEs became structural and chronic. This is why employers in SMEs had been so keen in the early 1990s on lobbying the government to introduce a labour migration scheme.

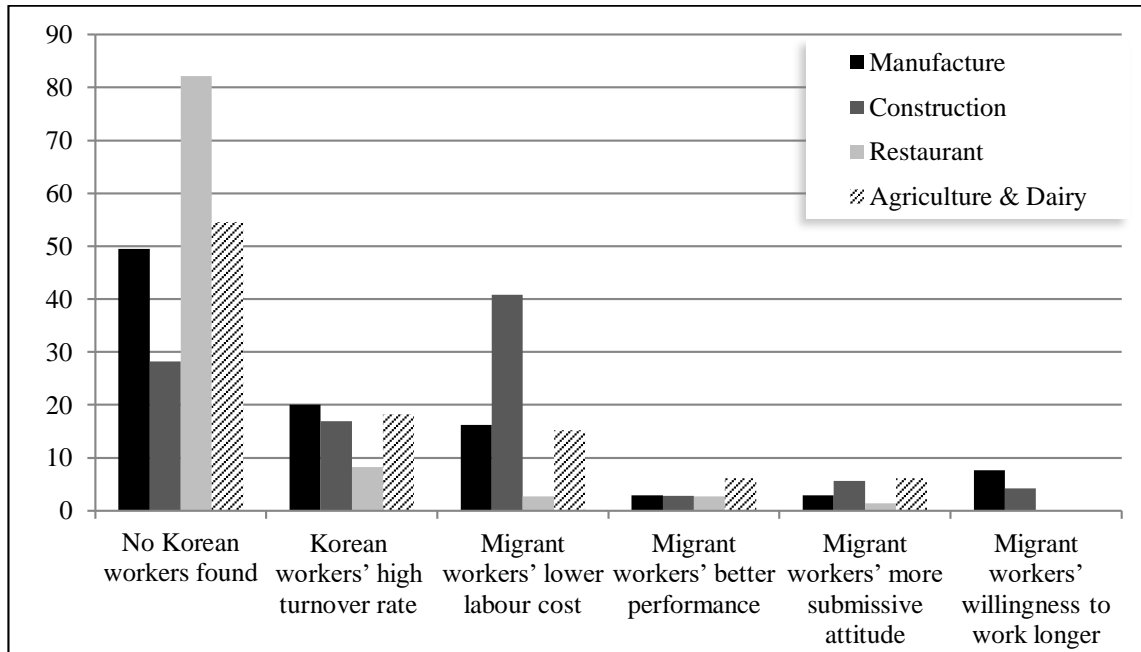
As the labour shortage now became more structural and prevalent, it became apparent that the domestic workforce alone would never meet the demand, especially in

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<sup>16</sup> Collins English Dictionary defines ‘chaebol’ as a large, usually family-owned, business group in South Korea

the low skilled areas. This explanation is in line with dual labour market theory (Debrah, 2002). Historical evidence gives credit to this argument. During the East Asian economic crisis from 1997 to 2000, Korea recorded minus economic growth and the unemployment rate doubled. Even major companies stopped new recruiting and went through painful restructuring, inevitably involving massive lay-offs. To mitigate social unrest caused by soaring unemployment, the government tried to take jobs occupied by migrant workers and give them to unemployed native workers, believing that even a bad job would be better than no job during the crisis. The government promised to subsidise the companies replacing migrant workers with Korean workers. However, this 'replacement project' did not work as expected. The fact that SMEs failed to hire native-born workers even in the midst of the unprecedented unemployment may suggest that they do not compete for the same jobs but rather there exist certain job niches which are meant to be filled only with migrant workers.

Evidence confirms, as illustrated in Figure 4.5, that the lack of native-born applicants and high turnover rate are the primary reasons why manufacturing and agriculture/dairy industries turn to migrant workers. It is consistent with previous survey results (Y-b Park, 2000; Yoo and Lee, 2002). Construction companies are in the similar situation but saving labour cost by hiring migrant workers is proved to be a bigger advantage for them. The data for service economies, restaurant businesses here for an example, are more telling. Recently, the hospitality, catering and care sectors have increasingly become more and more dependent on a migrant labour force because native-born workers simply do not want those jobs any more. Although not presented here, we can assume that private homes would be in the same situation when attempting to hire home-making and personal care workers.



**Figure 4.5: Primary reason to hire migrant workers by industry (selected), 2009 (%)**

Source: Adapted from G-y Lee *et al.* (2011: 44)

Labour shortages can be addressed in different ways other than hiring migrants. One of the options is to utilise the part of the female labour force inactive due to career interruptions (typically those in between 30s and 50s). The Korean government has attempted to encourage women's labour market participation since the enactment of 'Equal Employment Act' in 1987 and its amendment in 1989. However, these legislative measures including affirmative actions, had a limited success in boosting women's employment. This was primarily because while labour shortage was most severe in small to medium scaled manufacturing industries, the measures introduced were only compulsory for large firms and the public sector. Besides, the gender-biased culture (regarding recruiting, employment, jobs, positions, and promotions) at male-dominant workplaces undermined the effectiveness of those policies (Patterson *et al.*, 2013; Patterson and Walcutt, 2014). Consequently, activating the female labour force has been an ineffective solution for the labour shortage especially in so-called 'heavy' industries.

Another option can be offshoring factories to more labour abundant but less costly countries such as China. Relocation, however, is not a viable option for all businesses because many SMEs lack enough resources to operate overseas production facilities. It was found that many SMEs considered that hiring more migrant workers, along with

automation, was a more effective long term solution to labour shortage particularly if they had already employed migrant workers (Yoo and Lee, 2002). Saving labour costs by replacing native workers with migrant workers is a key consideration for SMEs. One official in an interview with the author for the current research said:

Labour shortage of SMEs is ever becoming chronic. At the same time, cutting down the labour cost is almost the only way for SMEs to become profitable, given that SMEs are operating mainly through contract-out from major companies in which SMEs tend to be left with little room to create profits except saving labour costs. These are the reasons why migrant workers are desperately needed and I expect that this situation will continue. (Interviewee A, 2 December 2013)

Low(er) wages, long hours and hazardous work environments have been identified as the primary reasons why SMEs have difficulty recruiting native-born workers (Chung *et al.*, 2013b). However, a recent large scale survey of employers (n=567) of migrant workers reveals that even though work conditions improve, the possibility of filling the vacancies with native young or female workers is limited, and the chances are even lower in agriculture/dairy industries and in smaller companies than in manufacturing industries and in larger companies (Chung *et al.*, 2013b). So, the government's attempts so far to reduce the demand for migrant labour force by encouraging (or forcing) companies to make efforts to hire native-born workers first have been largely unsuccessful due to the structural changes in the labour market.

Coupled with the transformation in the economic/labour market structure, the labour deficit has been further exacerbated by the change in the population structure in Korea. It is expected that the number of economically productive people (aged between 15 and 64) will sharply drop to 28.87 million by 2040, approximately 80 per cent of the level of 2010 (Statistics Korea, 2014a). As witnessed in the West, change in demography and the labour market would not reduce labour demand but rather create a new type of labour demand, such as workers in care facilities. Therefore, we might expect that labour shortage will continue to be a leading factor in the migration growth into the future.

### ***Introduction of Labour Migration Programmes***

Labour shortage itself, however, does not automatically lead to migration growth since, as pointed out above, there is more than one option to deal with labour shortages. Actual migration inflow can only be realised by the willingness of a state to support migration (Hollifield, 2004). Although it was employers who initiated the process by making requests for the admission of migration workers, recruiting migrant labour was a strategic policy decision made by the Korean government (Abella, 2014). In order to mitigate the severe shortage in unskilled workers, the Korean government has developed two labour migration programmes, called the Employment Permit System (EPS) and the Working Visit Programme. A detailed examination of the development and content of these migration policies is reserved for the next chapter. An important point to note here is that the growth in economic migrants in Korea has been accelerated by the introduction of a type of ‘guest worker programme’, as happened in some countries in the West a generation ago (see Castles and Miller, 2009: Chapter 5).

The Korean government, however, wanted to avoid repeating the problems experienced in the West with guest worker programmes. For instance, in Germany in the 1970s many ‘temporary’ guest workers did not return but stayed for the long term and brought in their families, betraying policy makers’ intentions (Castles, 2004). The Korean government would provide migrant workers as the market requires; however, the government made it clear that the admittance of an (unskilled) migrant labour force under the above programmes should be only temporary and it would not lead to subsequent family migrations. So, the government has placed all possible measures to tightly manage the flow and the stock of migrants, including yearly sectoral quotas and a prohibition on migrant workers from changing workplaces. Thus, it is unlikely that the number of economic migrants is rising unexpectedly solely based on the market demand. Instead, political considerations and policy decisions will continue to play a critical role in determining the future growth. Interestingly, however, the initial principle of ‘temporary’ labour migration has been gradually loosened by the government: the Korean government has repeatedly lengthened the maximum period of employment (from 1 year initially to 4 years and 6 months later on), and has added various exceptional rules allowing opportunities for long-term work and stay. Consequently, the labour migration stock has been persistently on the rise.

It remains to be seen whether the Korean case in the long run, as were cases in Europe (Castles, 2004), will become another example in which historical lessons on guest worker programmes were once again over-ridden by the government's naive confidence in its ability to control migration flows as it wishes through modern administrative systems. However, the main reason why labour migration keeps growing in Korea is that the Korean economy has become ever more structurally dependent on a migrant labour force. Therefore, it is important to note that the migration growth has been a part of the economic restructuring process in Korea. The Korean government approaches admitting more migrants as one of the solutions to remedy population ageing and a consequent slowdown of economic development (IPC, 2012a). Thus, it is highly probable that the Korean government would continue to maintain extensive labour migration programmes to accommodate varying demands for migrant workers not only from traditionally labour absorbing industries, but also from service sectors, as well as private homes. An official mentioned this point in an interview with the author for this research:

The EPS system has been limited to as an unskilled labour importing system, so it needs to develop into a more comprehensive system comprising different skill levels. The sustainability of the EPS, I believe, depends on Korea's industrial development and characteristics of the economy. But I don't think the current industrial structure heavily drawing on a sizeable supply of unskilled labour would soon change in Korea. (Interviewee D, 5 August 2014)

### ***'Bachelor Surplus' and Changes in Norms around Marriage, Family and Gender Roles***

Now let us turn to the factors contributing to non-economic migration growth. As identified earlier in the chapter, an increase in marriage migration marks an important feature of the (family) migration growth in Korea. The number of marriage migrants in Korea has been on a steady rise and accounts for 6.7 per cent of the total migrant stock as of 2014 although the growth rate itself has been slowing down. The growth of marriage migrants in Korea has resulted from increasing international marriage. Before the new millennium, international marriage was rare in Korea. Marrying a foreigner had been something to be avoided if possible in Korea because it often comes with a strong



social stigma. Furthermore, there were no official infrastructures to support international marriages or mixed families.

As shown in Table 4.4, international marriages, however, have grown fast since 2000. International marriages occupied only 3.5 per cent of all marriages in 2000, but by 2005 they reached a peak of 13.5 per cent. Since then international marriage cases began to decrease due to tightened regulations on commercially arranged international marriages and marriage migration, as pointed out earlier. It is interesting to see that international marriages with Korean nationals are strongly gendered: over 70 per cent of all international marriage cases since 2002 are between Korean males and foreign females, while the remaining 30 per cent are between foreign males and Korean females. It should be noted that not all international marriages lead to marriage migration into Korea. The data (Table 4.4) includes international marriages that happen while Korean nationals are staying abroad (the number is not available but presumably small), so the foreign partners may not migrate to Korea. In addition, some foreign nationals who get married to Korean nationals in Korea may have different visa status such as labour migration or permanent residence rather than marriage migration visa. However, among those migrants entering Korea specifically with a marriage migration visa (F-6 or equivalents before 2012), the feminised nature of this route is stronger: over 85 of them are female foreigners marrying Korean males.

This highly feminised flow of marriage migration is a direct consequence of the so called 'bachelor surplus' in Korea. Skewed sex ratio caused by successive family planning policies from the 1950s to the 1980s is often mentioned as a primary factor for the severe mismatch in the marriage market from the late 1990s when the post-Korean War generations reached marrying age (Seol, 2006). The family planning policies turned out to be very successful and Korean families started to have fewer children, increasingly normalising nuclear forms of family. It was a part of the process in which the Korean society had been modernised along with the process of industrialisation. However, combined with a strong preference for sons, the family planning often led to sex selection (in other words, sex selective abortion) in the midst of a strong discouragement against having multiple children. Sex off-balance continued to deteriorate, reaching its highest ratio of 117:100 in 1990. After three decades of tight family planning and selective birth, some males at their marriage age found themselves having not enough potential native-born brides.

**Table 4.4: Trend in international marriages in Korea**

Year	All marriages	International marriages	%	Marriages with a foreign wife	%
2000	332,090	11,605	3.5	6,945	59.8
2001	318,407	14,523	4.6	9,684	66.7
2002	304,877	15,202	5.0	10,698	70.4
2003	302,503	24,776	8.2	18,751	75.7
2004	308,598	34,640	11.2	25,105	72.5
2005	314,304	42,356	13.5	30,719	72.5
2006	330,634	38,759	11.7	29,665	76.5
2007	343,559	37,560	10.9	28,580	76.1
2008	327,715	36,204	11.0	28,163	77.8
2009	309,759	33,300	10.8	25,142	75.5
2010	326,104	34,235	10.5	26,274	76.7
2011	329,387	29,762	9.0	22,265	74.8
2012	327,073	28,325	8.7	20,637	72.9
2013	322,807	25,963	8.0	18,307	70.5

*Note:* The number of international marriages here includes those who get married abroad and report back to Korea for family registration.

*Source:* Statistics Korea (2014b)

The enhanced social and economic status of Korean women also contributed to the mismatch (S Park, 2011). With the decline in the birth rate, parents were willing to get their son or daughter as much education as possible. Advancing to a college or a university became a norm for boys and girls alike. Higher and extended education of women means their increased career aspirations and delayed or given up marriages. Most of the female college graduates tend to find employment in cities. Even those women considering marriage expect their male partners to have better educational backgrounds and occupational potential. Where females have wider choice than males, there is no reason for them to marry *down* the social and economic ladder. The marriage market in disadvantageous areas was further squeezed, leaving some bridegrooms virtually no options but to turn to foreign wives (H Lee, 2012). Males employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries suffered the most from this discrepancy due to their disadvantageous social and economic status.

Marriages in a society are not determined solely by the ratio between sexes, but they are also approached and negotiated in wider social and cultural contexts, which are bound to change over time. Over the last decade or so, the Korean people on average

have become ever more liberal regarding marriage. According to periodical national surveys by the Statistics Bureau, 69.1 per cent of the respondents agreed that ‘one must marry’ in 2002, but the figure decreased to 56.8 per cent in 2014; however, people in rural areas and males seem to remain more supportive in formalising marital relationship than their urban and female counterparts (Table 4.5a). In the meantime, marrying a foreigner has become increasingly socially acceptable in Korea even over a short five-year period: 56 per cent of those surveyed were agreeable in 2008 but it rose to 62.9 per cent in 2014. As shown in Table 4.5b, not much difference is found between rural and urban areas or males and females; yet, positive change in attitude toward international marriage among people in rural areas has been growing faster (8.8 per cent) than in urban areas (7 per cent) since 2008. Residents in rural areas, especially from older generations, seem slightly less agreeable to the idea of international marriage (see Table 4.5b), but they have been no less active on seeking foreign wives as alternative marriage partners when marriage with native-born brides apparently becomes more difficult.

This somewhat ironical situation can be a result of negotiation between personal relational needs and socially constructed norms and expectations regarding marital relationship and marriage partners (Le *et al.*, 2014). In other words, (male) people in rural areas might be under higher social pressure to find marriage partners and their (female) partners, in turn, are expected to assume traditional gender roles within the family as wives, mothers and daughters-in-law so that families continue to be biologically and socially reproduced (Jang *et al.*, 2009; Lan, 2008). However, as in the case of labour migration, ‘demand’ for foreign wives itself cannot automatically explain the actual increase in marriage migrants, but it can only be realised into actual marriages and subsequent migrations through the relevant government policies as well as societal supports.

**Table 4.5a: Change in attitudes on marriage: 2002 and 2014 compared (%)**

One must marry.	2002			2014		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Sub-Total	Strongly agree	Agree	Sub-Total
Nat'l average	25.6	43.5	69.1	14.9	41.9	56.8
Urban areas	23.2	44.2	67.4	13.4	41.9	55.3
Rural areas	36.0	40.4	76.4	22.2	41.9	64.1
Males	29.5	47.8	77.3	16.3	45.2	61.5
Females	21.9	39.4	61.3	13.5	38.8	52.3

**Table 4.5b: Change in attitudes on international marriage: 2008 and 2014 compared (%)**

It is acceptable to marry a foreigner.	2008			2014		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Sub-Total	Strongly agree	Agree	Sub-Total
Nat'l average	10.3	45.7	56.0	17.0	45.9	62.9
Urban areas	10.7	45.9	56.6	17.8	45.8	63.6
Rural areas	8.5	45.2	53.7	15.8	46.7	62.5
Males	10.1	46.7	56.8	16.7	46.8	63.5
Females	10.5	44.8	55.3	17.9	45.1	63.0

*Note:* Respondents are those aged 15 or above.

*Source:* Compiled by the author from Statistics Korea, 2002, 2008, 2014c, 2014d

### ***Support from the Government and Civil Society***

Marriage in essence can be seen as a very private matter, but combined with migration it becomes a highly complicated legal process which requires a series of policy arrangement in both the sending and receiving country. Especially, family (marriage) migration policies in a receiving country are critically important in order that marriage migration can be actually realised. So far, active support from the government has been vital in the growth of marriage migrants. The details of those marriage migrant-related policies and their policy rationales are to be more fully investigated in Chapter 5 and Chapter 7. One point, however, can be highlighted here that continuous positive framing of marriage migrants by the government itself has sent off encouraging signals for both inviting men and prospective wives. Female marriage migrants have been regarded as deserving migrants by the government in that they not only relieve the social tension caused by 'bachelor surplus' but also help form a family, a crucial unit in which the members are biologically and socially being reproduced. Unlike other types of migrants, marriage migrants are encouraged to settle permanently and they can enjoy a wide range

of supportive programmes and full rights. It is a rather surprising move for Korea where anti-settlement policy orientation prevails (Seol and Skrentny, 2009b).

In addition, civil society organisations and activists in Korea have influenced to a substantial degree the process of both labour and family migration in Korea. They may not be the direct drivers of the migration growth but they have contributed to it by helping provide and reform migration policies and assisting existing migrants with their settlement and integration. Thanks to their pressure, unskilled labour migrants, for example, can enjoy enhanced labour/human rights even amongst harsh crack-downs during the early stage of migration transition. On the other hand, marriage migrants most benefit from the support of the civil society groups which have contributed to enhancing public acceptance of marriage migrants and establishing very supportive policies targeting marriage migrants as well (Jeon, 2012; I-J Yoon, 2008). Many related NGOs, often forming a liaison with local governments, provide various types of settlement and integration support programmes such as Korean language classes and legal advice services. Information regarding such support may well spread and encourage further migration. In both labour and family migration, positive signals from the civil society as well as the market partly constitute what Castles (2004: 209) calls “opportunity structure”, through which migrants can negotiate to increase their chance of entry and later survival, often regardless of government’s policy intention.

#### **4.3.2. Supply-Push Factors**

##### ***Disparity in Economic Conditions***

While labour shortage exerts the strongest pulling power from the demand side, it has been argued that Korea’s higher income and employment chances among Asian countries are the strongest push factor from the sending countries’ perspective (Lim, 2002; Seol, 2000). Uneven industrialisation in the region has widened the disparity in economic performances, which generated “a regional division of labour” through migration (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005: 1). In this regard, it can be hypothesised that the greater the differentials of GDP and unemployment rate are between Korea and a certain country, the more labour migrants would come to Korea. Table 4.6 shows the largest 18 labour migrant sending countries and their per capita GDPs (ppp) and

unemployment rates. When statistically tested, however, no significant correlation is established between the macroeconomic indicators (represented by GDPs and unemployment rates) and the size of labour migration regardless of their skill levels (refer to Table 4.7). The result confirms that the differential in income and employment opportunities itself cannot lead to the actual migration. The primary reason is that the scale of the unskilled labour migration, which is the largest proportion of the labour migration, is not an entirely free movement but is predetermined by intra-governmental agreements and related policies. To illustrate, even though someone may want to come to Korea for a job in a factory, they may not be admitted unless there is a labour migration agreement with their government or they belong to certain ethnic group in another case.

**Table 4.6: Labour migrant sending countries to Korea and their economic indicators, 2014**

Sending Country	Total labour Migrants	Unskilled labour migrants	GDP(PPP) per Capita, USD	Unemployment rate
China	251,214	234,666	9,844	4.6
Vietnam	53,538	48,966	4,012	1.9
Indonesia	32,617	29,352	5,214	6.0
Uzbekistan	27,075	26,924	3,762	10.8
Cambodia	25,542	25,525	2,576	0.3
Philippines	25,116	20,567	4,682	7.3
Thailand	22,719	22,291	9,875	0.8
Sri-Lanka	21,448	21,390	6,531	4.2
Nepal	18,846	18,462	1,508	2.7
United States	13,158	0	53,101	7.5
Myanmar	11,461	10,885	1,740	3.5
Bangladesh	9,469	9,287	2,080	4.3
Mongolia	8,854	8,578	5,885	4.9
Pakistan	4,188	4,014	3,149	5.2
Canada	3,784	0	43,472	7.1
Japan	1,706	0	36,899	4.1
Russia	1,112	544	17,884	5.8
Australia	603	0	43,073	5.6

*Note:* No. of migrants is as of 2014; GDP and Unemployment Rate as of 2013. With the same time point, the per capita GDP(PPP) and the unemployment rate for Korea are 33,189 USD and 3.2 respectively.

*Source:* Compiled by the author from KIS (2014c), IMF, World Economic Outlook Database (April 2014)<sup>17</sup>, ILO. Global Employment Trends (2014)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> IMF, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/weodata/index.aspx> (accessed on 31 June 2014)

<sup>18</sup> ILO, [http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS\\_233936/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS_233936/lang--en/index.htm) (accessed on 31 June 2014)

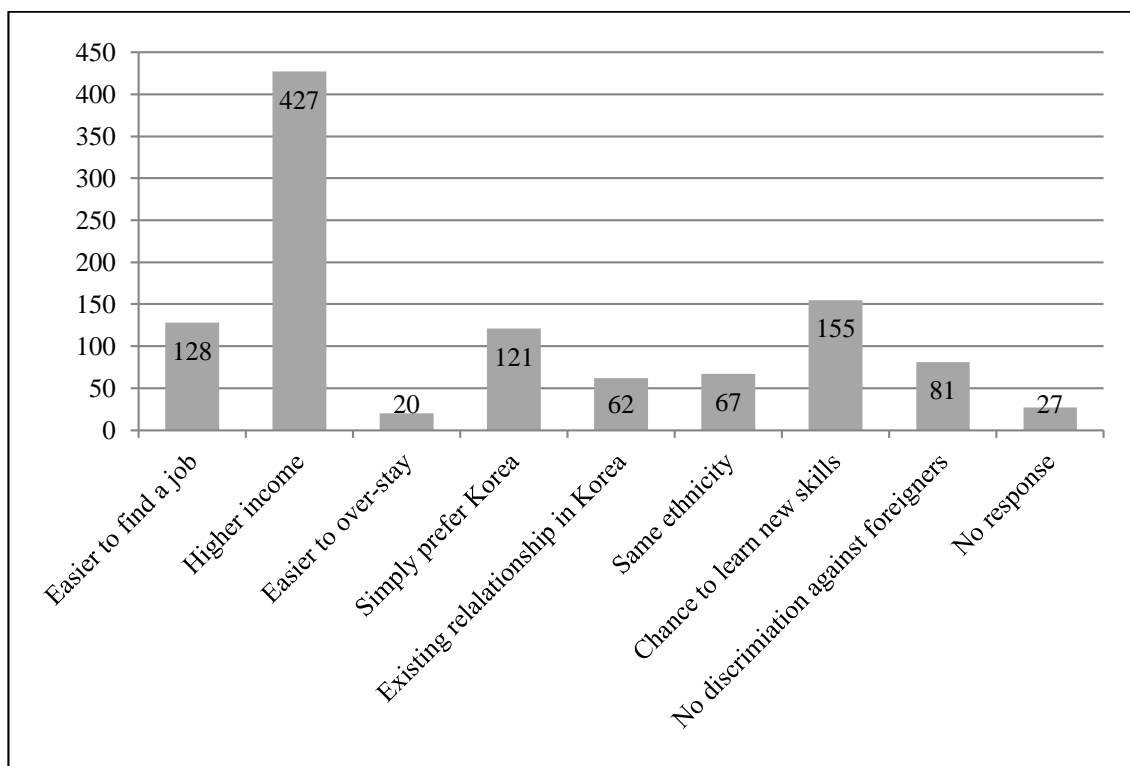
**Table 4.7: Correlation between the scale of labour migration into Korea and economic performances of the sending countries**

		GDP(PPP),per Capita	Unemployment rate
Total labour migrants	Pearson Correlation	-.177	-.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.482	.776
	N	18	18
Unskilled labour Migrants	Pearson Correlation	-.218	-.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.385	.711
	N	18	18

*Note:* Pearson's correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of the strength of a linear relationship between paired data. The closer the value is to 1 or -1, the stronger (either positive or negative) the linear correlation.

*Source:* Author's calculations (SPSS ver.19 used) based on data presented in Table 4.6

It is, however, not to deny the critical importance of economic disparity in the migration flow. Rather, it is to emphasise that various motivations are factored in migration decisions and they are often based on very personal experience and expectation rather than the aggregate level of economic performances. A survey commissioned by the Korean government asked 795 unskilled migrant workers of their reasons to choose Korea for a destination. The result reveals that higher income is indeed a leading driver for migration (refer to Figure 4.6). Interestingly, the second most important factor is not job availability but chances to learn new skills in Korea. The reason is related to how the migration system works. Easiness to find a job can be an irrelevant question to some migrant workers because a work contract is arranged for them even before they depart. However, newly earned skills may guarantee them a better position in the labour market even back in the country of origin. In the same survey, 41.4 per cent of migrant workers were reported to earn 2 to 3 times higher salary than they used to in the country of origin; 23.7 per cent of them earn even 4 to 5 times higher (G-y Lee *et al.*, 2011: 67). This experienced income difference is not only a strong incentive to potential migrant workers, but also helps retain existing workers and their return to Korea.



**Figure 4.6: Reasons for migrant workers to choose Korea, 2009 (cases)**

*Note:* Multiple choices are allowed, Total n=795,

*Source:* Adapted from G-y Lee *et al.* (2011: 66)

### ***Emigration as a Development Strategy for Governments***

As noted earlier, unskilled labour migration to Korea is arranged by the bilateral agreement between the Korean government and the sending country. Therefore, sending countries' policy considerations are decisive in exporting migrants. The potential of economic development by labour emigration has been the centre of debate (Lucas, 2005). In this migration-development nexus, migrants become "agents of development" through financial and social remittance which benefit receiving households and the government by reducing unemployment and increasing income, consumption and social protection (Hujo and Piper, 2007: 4). It can also make a strong case for East and South-East Asia. Athukorala (2006: 19) argues that "the governments of labour sending countries in the region generally believe that the national gains from emigration outweigh the potential costs. In particular, they consider labour migration as a safety valve for unemployment and underemployment and as an important source of foreign exchange. Reflecting this favourable perception, the facilitation and promotion of labour export has become an important aspect of their labour and employment policies".



Once their economies become structurally dependent on emigration, governments encourage emigration through official policies, as in the Philippines under Marcos, and it has long-term effects on their economy and society (Abella, 1993 Castles, 2000a). One such effect is the creation of “a culture of emigration”, in which working/living abroad can be accepted as “a normal rite of passage for young people” as seen in the Philippines and other countries (Castles, 2004: 210). While the genuine contribution of emigration to the development is often doubted (Geiger and Pecoud, 2013; Sanderson, 2013), these countries keep making a continuous outflow of migration throughout the world not only for work but also for marriage and living. As of 2014, migrants from the Philippines constitute the fifth largest group in Korea's labour migration stock and the third in its marriage migration stock (KIS, 2015). One official in an interview with the author for the current research highlighted how the development agenda become part of Korea's unskilled labour migration system (EPS):

We [the Korean government] hope that migrant workers not only earn money for them while working here in Korea but also build capacity to contribute to their countries when they go back. That's the reason why we provide to migrant workers various industrial training on the government subsidy such as heavy machinery operation, vehicle maintenance, computer skills, etc. When they willingly return to their countries, we organise information/consultation sessions for their successful resettlement. (Interviewee D, 5 August 2014)

### ***Emigration as Family Livelihood Strategy***

As shown above, migration cannot be adequately explained just by income differences on an aggregate level between the destination and the origin country. This is in part because migration is often a collective decision made in the context of a much wider range of factors (Castles and Miller, 2009). Unlike the neoliberal understanding of human behaviour, social groups, notably families, rather than utility-maximising individuals, may make a decision to send one or more members to another region or country which they find most optimal to manage risks and maximise survival chances (Castles, 2004; Taylor, 1999).

This ‘new economics approach’ can explain marriage migration as well as labour migration flows. Research on Vietnamese marriage migrants reveals that marriage migration decisions are family-level strategies to secure family livelihoods (Le *et al.*,

2014). Typically, marriage migrants are given a large sum of money (as a ‘gift’) from the inviting husbands at the point of the marriage which may be large enough to rescue the sending families out of economic trouble right away, and continuous remittances from their daughters after migration can also be a significant financial source. It was found that “the economic consideration of a married life abroad is the major drive in their [Vietnamese women marriage] decision. Beliefs in the prospect of a better economic situation, the possibility of supporting the family left behind, and of securing a better future for their possible children are all associated with such marriages” (Le *et al.*, 2014: 96). Marriage migrants from Vietnam currently account for 26 per cent of all marriage migrants in Korea, making them the second largest ethnic group in this migration category (KIS, 2015).

### *Desires for better Life Chances*

Although many marriage migrants may never become free from the pressure to support their original families left behind, marriage migration like other non-economic migration such as study can also be prompted by more subjective and diverse motives. Others may see marrying overseas as an opportunity to start a new life in a better environment (Le *et al.*, 2014). Migrants may decide to leave to escape not just poverty but also traditional gender roles, domestic violence or lack of life chances such as education, or they leave simply because they yearn for new experiences. Desires for better (or new) life chances can be as strong as the economic motivations. However, those motives cannot be entirely isolated from economic ones. For student migrants, for instance, newly earned academic qualifications as well as industrial skills significantly increase economic potentials. As noted above, marriage migrants can be even more eager to find employment in the destination. Some exploit the marriage migration channel ultimately to access the labour market with long-term residence rights as fraudulent marriage migration cases show.

### **4.3.3. Network Factors**

#### ***Migration Communities and Information Sharing***

In general, while demand-pull and supply push-factors are decisive at the beginnings of a migration flow, the network factors become more influential as the flow matures (Martin, 2009). This is because migration takes place drawing on various forms of networks and they tend to become “self-sustaining once started” (Castles, 1998: 180). Existing connections between the origin and the destination country can have a strong influence over potential migrants’ choice of routes and destination for both economic and non-economic migration cases. Here the information sharing is critical in migration decision-making. Information about income, job condition, overall market situation, and migrant-related policies and procedures may encourage or discourage the decision to migrate. Once moved, migrants can receive various types of support over the process from arrival to settlement from the established migrant communities (Castles, 2004).

Networks are important also in that they can trigger ‘chain migration’ by which an initial migration is followed by others often from the same family or community. Even before the Korean government officially admitted labour migration, some migrants managed to settle in Korea and started to form ethnic communities and networks, which encouraged further migration inflow because the existence of settled migrants can reassure the survivability of new comers. A government-commissioned survey on the process of labour migration to Korea confirms that ‘recommendations from friends who used to work in Korea’ is the second most influential factor (11.7 per cent) in the migration decision making other than higher income (50.6 per cent) (Chung *et al.*, 2013b). It was also found that in the case of co-ethnic migration to Korea, advice and assistance from relatives and friends were far more influential than other sources of help (Chung *et al.*, 2010). Many (female) marriage migrants find their partners through agencies, but ‘introduction by families, relatives or friends’ becomes an increasingly frequent channel (J Kim *et al.*, 2014; Le *et al.*, 2014).

#### ***Geographical and Cultural Proximity***

Geographical and cultural closeness itself may not explain migration growth but proximity does influence migration mobility and its patterning especially in the context of intra-regional migration growth is which Korea is situated. First of all, geographical

proximity to Korea is another appeal since migrants' travel cost is directly related to their economic motivation (Hujo and Piper, 2007). In an effort to reduce overstay and consequent illegalisation, the Korean government allows a chance of rehiring, another three years maximum, to those migrants who showed a good work record and departed voluntarily at the end of the first stint. In this case, migrants may well consider multiple travels in and out of Korea. In this case travel distance matters a lot.

Similar appearance, cultures (custom) and language, as well as geographical closeness, can give migration candidates additional incentives. Indeed, many Korean employers show absolute preferences for ethnic Koreans who can speak Korean over any other Asian migrant because they are thought to fit in better and thus cause less tension with natives in and out of the workplace (Chung *et al.*, 2013b; Gwak, 2012). Even when having become undocumented, some ethnic Koreans manage to find employment more easily compared to other migrant workers from different ethnic backgrounds (Chung *et al.*, 2013b).<sup>19</sup>

China's contribution via all types of migration routes to Korea's migration transition supports the proximity argument. As of 2014, migrants from other Asian countries occupy 86.6 per cent of total migrant stock in Korea, and 55.7 per cent of those Asian migrants originate from China (KIS, 2015). China is apparently not the poorest countries in the region but geographically and culturally one of the closest countries to Korea. China, as shown in Table 4.8, is the single largest migration source country for both labour migration and marriage migration. It is important to note here that 65.7 per cent of those Chinese have Korean origin.

**Table 4.8: Chinese migrants by route in Korea (stock), 2014**

	All migration	Labour migration	Marriage migration
Total migrants	1,797,618	617,145	150,994
Chinese migrants	898,654	292,839	60,663
% in total migrants	50.0	47.5	40.2
Korean origin	590,856	271,250	24,604
% in Chinese migrants	65.7	92.6	40.6

*Source:* Compiled by the author from KIS (2015)

<sup>19</sup> This is the very reason why the Korean government introduced a separate labour migration system for co-ethnics in order to deter them from overstaying in an attempt to find or keep a job (also refer to Chapter 5).

Most of Chinese Koreans are from a Korean Autonomous Prefecture in south-eastern China, called ‘Yanbian’, which is currently bordered with North Korea. North Korea, of course, used to be the same nation with South Korea before politically being divided in 1948. The formation of a Korean settlement in Yanbian can be traced back to the 19th century. Many were driven by economic hardship on the Korean Peninsula. After the Japanese colonised Korea in 1910, a significant number of migrants migrated also for political reasons. Ethnic Koreans once reached around 60 per cent of the population in the Prefecture. Although their share had fallen to 32 per cent by 2000, their economic connection with Korea remains strong. It is estimated that the ethnic Koreans, also known as ‘*joseonjok*’, contribute 33 per cent of the local GDP each year through remittances earned in. One retired *joseonjok* from Yanbian in a media interview said:

My wife used to work in Korea for some ten years. Thanks to her, we managed to buy two apartments and successfully educated my daughter to be a medical doctor. It would’ve been impossible without Korea, and one in two *joseonjok* families here went to Korea to work with same expectations. (*Yonhap News*, 2014b)

The significance of *joseonjok* in the Korean migration growth shows the importance of both “material and cultural linkages” previously established between Korea and origin countries (Seol, 2000: 10).

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has been concerned with identifying and analysing the patterns of migration growth in Korea and the contributing factors. Starting from the ignorable existence of Filipina maids in better-off families in Seoul and a handful of industrial trainees brought into Korea, migrants have dramatically increased in number, exerting profound impacts on a hitherto ethnically homogenous labour market and families. We have observed that the migration growth in Korea is closely related to its changing economic status in the East and South-East Asian region. It was also found that labour migration, un-skilled in particular, is the largest contributor to the growth and family

migration including marriage migration has been increasingly important. On top of that, ethnic Korean migrants are significant in labour migration and family migration alike. The earlier migrant rush, including that of undocumented migrants, seems to be stabilised. However, the growth is expected to continue not only because the economy is now structurally dependent on a foreign labour force, but also because migration origins and patterns are becoming more diversified, responding to the newly growing demand for migrants such as in care services. In addition, the possibility of permission of family reunion of unskilled migrant workers may cause a second wave of migration growth in Korea. In this regard, Korea's ongoing transition to a migrant-destination country seems hardly reversible.

The factor analysis shows that labour market conditions, in terms of higher income and wider job opportunity, in the destination are the strongest driver; however, no statistically meaningful correlation can be found between the aggregate economic indicators and the actual number of migrants. It shows that migration decisions, either economic migration or non-economic migration, are influenced by a complex interplay of factors on the state, family and individual level. The conditions under which these factors are interacting are not static but in a process of constant change, linked to both global factors and the local historical and cultural legacies (Castles and Miller, 2009). Examining the cases of the Philippines and Vietnam confirms that emigration can be sought out both as a state strategy for economic development and a family or individual strategy for livelihood and life chances.

Over the process of migration growth, it is important to recognise that the migration process is heavily intervened by both sending and receiving governments. In other words, migration can happen only when related legal bases and policies are present. Although Korea has been receiving more migrants than before, it does not necessarily mean an 'open door' policy. Migration into Korea has been highly controlled (at least meant to be) mobility operating upon carefully calculated bilateral arrangements between states. Migration type, size and flow are predefined and regulated by the governments with specific rationales and procedures. As Cohen and Kennedy (2000: 206) pointed out, "migration shopping" can be found anywhere to a varying degree. Korea is not an exception and its instrumental approach has been even more conspicuous. The Korean government has reformed its migration regime in order to

facilitate (or discourage) certain types of migration, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.





## **CHAPTER 5**

### **MIGRATION REGIME OF KOREA**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

While the preceding chapter mainly dealt with migration ‘growth’ in Korea and the driving forces behind it, this chapter is concerned with the ‘the (im)migration system’ developed in Korea over the ongoing process of its migration transition. International migration is far from a free movement; rather it is a mobility highly controlled by states’ policies (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000; Findlay and Wahba, 2013). Like transnational economic activities such as trade and foreign investment, “migration cannot and does not take place in a legal or institutional void” (Hollifield, 2004: 901). Even irregular migration does not result from the absence of states’ control; instead, it should be interpreted as one of the consequences resulting from states’ legal and institutional efforts in managing migration through constant negotiations and adjustments (Castles and Miller, 2009). As an emerging migrant-receiving country, Korea has also developed a range of migration-related policies and institutions. They have been introduced not only to ‘manage’ a rising demand for various types of migrants but also to respond to the rapidly increasing migrant population and growing ethnic diversity. This chapter examines those institutional arrangements, highlighting how the government approaches different types of migrants with different policy measures and rationales to achieve certain policy goals.

Since migration is an integrated element of the global economics and politics, states often develop similar tendencies in formation of migration policies, labour migration policies in particular. For example, many highly industrialised countries in Western Europe adopted ‘guest worker systems’ at some point between 1945 and 1973 to supply labour for their rapidly expanding economies (see Castles and Miller, 2009: Chapter 5). Following the post-war migration boom, however, in the midst of economic slowdown since the oil crisis of 1973, the unexpected settlement of guest workers in Europe and increase in undocumented migrants in North America made ‘controlling

migration' a central feature of both national and international migration policies (Castles and Miller, 2009; Martin, 2013). Although global mobility of capital and labour is increasingly difficult to be separated, "most governments effectively restrict migration flows or at best adopt a managed migration approach" (Hujo and Piper, 2007: 5). However, when taking a full spectrum of migration including family migration into analysis, patterns of migration policies vary cross-nationally, even within the same regional bloc due to different historical legacies, institutional constraints, economic conditions and dominant social norms and cultures (Boucher and Gest, 2015; Castles, 2000b; Martin, 2013).

Variations in the form of migration governance across nations enable researchers to apply the notion of 'regimes' in analysing migration policies and to construct typologies (refer back to Chapter 2). According to Boucher and Gest (2015), a variety of migration regime typologies have been developed with two different policy focuses: admission and settlement/integration. Following are some examples. Focusing on admission-related policies, Freeman (1995) makes a distinction between English-speaking 'settler societies' (the United States, Canada and Australia), 'European states' with post-colonial links and guest worker systems (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland) and 'new countries of immigration' (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece); in a similar vein, Cornelius and Tsuda (2004) distinguish between 'classic countries of immigration' (the United States, Canada and Australia)', 'reluctant countries of immigration' (France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and 'recent countries of immigration' (Italy, Spain, Japan and South Korea). With a focus on settlement (citizenship) and integration policies, Brubaker (1992) differentiates between 'French republicanism' and 'German ethno-nationalism'.

Castles and Miller (2009: 44-5) add further complexity to typologies of citizenship by identifying five categories: 'imperial model', 'folk or ethnic model', 'the republican model' and 'multicultural model' with an addition of 'transnational model'. Some scholars have attempted to distinguish countries by measuring the restrictiveness of nationality acquisition and cultural rights attribution (Koopmans *et al.*, 2012) or the character and strength of multiculturalism policies (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006). Others employ the existing typology of welfare states, notably that of Esping-Andersen

(1990), in analysing (im)migrants' differing welfare entitlements according to visa status (Sainsbury, 2012).

As Boucher and Gest (2015) criticise, the existing (im)migration regime research almost exclusively deals with western states and tends to examine admission and settlement regimes in a separate manner, ignoring the possible admission-integration policy nexus. As a consequence, how Asia's new migrant destination countries manage migration through admission and settlement policies (and their nexus) has rarely been systematically researched. It is not the intention of the current chapter to directly engage with developing migration regime *typologies*. Instead, the chapter aims to help address the limitations noted above by supplying an in-depth examination of the migration regime of one of the key migration countries in Asia, Korea.

Following suit of the existing migration regime studies reviewed above, the chapter analyses the migration regime of Korea by examining two roughly divided policy areas: 'admission and residency' and 'settlement and integration'. Each area is empirically informed by analysis of indicators listed in Table 5.1. In the admission and residency area is immigration control - a main body of policy. Visa specifications, entry and residency regulations of each visa type and special arrangements of screening migrants are examined under this area. The (stratified) degree of economic (labour), civic and social rights which migrants and their dependants are entitled to exercise are especially crucial elements to be examined (see Morris, 2001, 2003). The policy area of 'settlement and integration' is concerned with long-term aspects of migrant lives. Although 'settlement' and 'integration' are ultimately linked, each has a different emphasis: while 'settlement' is more related to the legal status of migrants associated with gaining permanent residency or citizenship, the term 'integration' is adopted here to describe a policy goal/tendency and a series of social programmes assisting migrants with their smooth life transition and functioning in the new country, including supports for their children. National norms and practices governing relationships between majority and minority groups and laws for anti-discrimination (or for multiculturalism) are related to the integration policy area.

**Table 5.1: Analytical frame in the examination of the Korean migration regime**

Policy Area	Admission and Residency	Settlement and Integration
Description	Policies on the conditions and rights under which a migrant enters and remains in the state	Policies on the conditions and rights under which a migrant gains citizenship
Analytical Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rules on entry, exit and residency</li> <li>▪ Screening measures: quota (total or sector-based) and/or selection based on skills or financial capacity</li> <li>▪ Regulations on dependants</li> <li>▪ Provisions on economic (labour), civic and social rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rules on naturalisation of migrants and their dependants</li> <li>▪ Privilege systems applied to certain migrant/ethnic groups</li> <li>▪ Integration (support) programmes for migrants and their families</li> <li>▪ Norms or measures for anti-discrimination (or for multiculturalism)</li> </ul>

*Source:* Adapted from Williams (2012: 371-2)

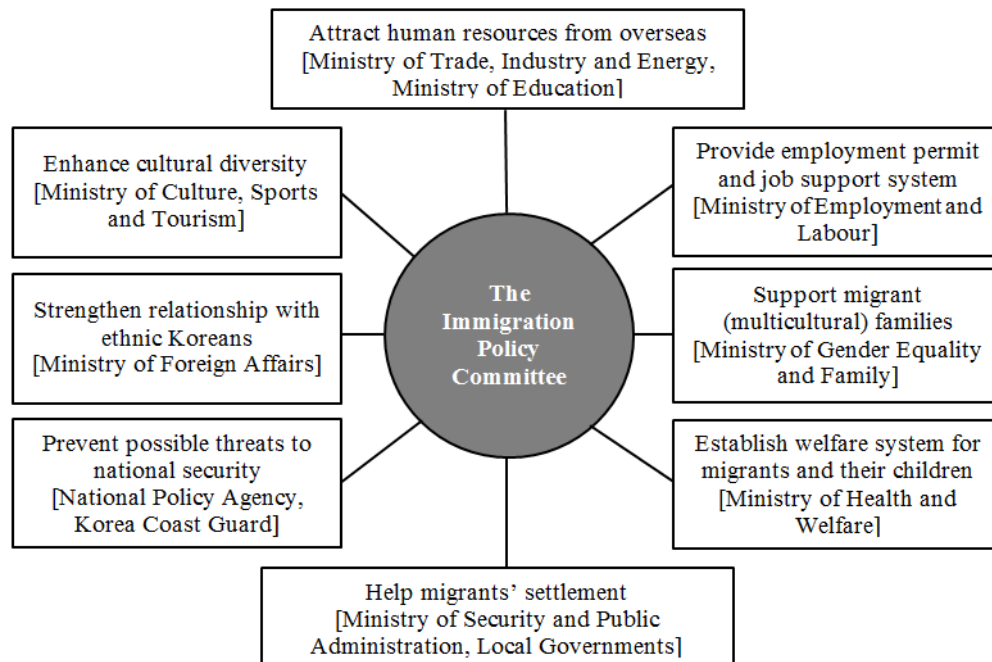
The chapter is further divided into five sections. The next section (Section 5.2) overviews the institutional settings of the Korean migration regime: it first discusses the Korean government's migration governance structure and its policy goals and orientations, and then it examines the Korean migration system with a focus on the visa system, and identifies major migrant routes and key migrant categories in each route. Against these backgrounds, the chapter closely examines three sets of migration policies in detail. These policies govern the largest categories of long-term migrant flows/stocks in Korea, namely, unskilled labour migrants, (unskilled) co-ethnic migrants, and marriage migrants. Firstly it analyses two different unskilled labour migration policies: the (general) unskilled labour migration policy (Section 5.3) and co-ethnic (labour) migration policy (Section 5.4). Then the chapter examines the policy on marriage migrants (Section 5.5), *the* most significant type of the family migration to Korea. The last section (Section 5.6) summarises the findings, highlights the main features of the Korean migration regime and provides some concluding comments.

## **5.2. Institutional Backgrounds**

### **5.2.1. Migration Governance Structure in Korea**

The history of migration policy in Korea is short but has experienced many changes. The migration policy before the 1990s was narrowly defined as ‘a border (immigration) control’. It was mainly because the international migrant movement into Korea was limited in scale and pattern (refer to Chapter 4). From the mid-1990s, the nature of the Korean migration system was rapidly transformed to ‘a foreign labour policy’, coinciding with the introduction (and subsequent reforms) of unskilled labour migration policies. Then the year 2007 marked a major watershed in the Korean migration policy history. The migrant population finally passed the historic one million mark in 2006. Then the government expressed a need to develop a long-term and comprehensive migration policy frame in order to manage not just the increasing inflow of various types of migrants but also the issues arising from their prolonged or permanent stay, such as integration (IPC, 2008). Against this background, the ‘Act on the Treatment of the Foreigners in Korea’ was legislated in 2007, which stipulates the state’s roles and responsibility regarding the treatment of foreigners (and migrants) and their social adjustment. Since then, Korean migration policies began to be framed as a comprehensive ‘immigration policy’ rather than simply border control or migrant labour policy.

With respect to migration governance, there is no separate government bureau on the ministerial level to formulate and implement migration policies in Korea; alternatively, the Korean government has developed a collaborative governance system. By the law aforementioned, the ‘Immigration Policy Committee’ (hereafter, the Committee), the central immigration policy planning body, was created in 2007. It is led by the prime minister, and heads of 14 relevant ministries join it. The key role of the Committee as a policy designer and coordinator is to set up a master plan with specific policy goals and tasks every five years, called ‘The Basic Plan for Immigration Policy’ (hereafter, the Basic Plan). Then the Committee allocates policy tasks to relevant governmental agencies. To carry out the tasks, related government bodies, both central and local, are required to develop and implement yearly action plans (see Figure 5.1).



**Figure 5.1: The governing system of Korean migration policies**

Source: IPC (2012a: 8)

### *The Basic Plan for Immigration Policy*

The first Basic Plan became effective from 2008 until 2012 with four policy goals and 13 related programmes (refer to Table 5.3 below). The policy goals cover four policy areas: proactive immigration (admission-related policies), social integration, immigration administration and human rights. In order to realise these goals, the central government agencies had carried out 149 tasks and local governments had completed 804 tasks by 2012 according to the action plans (IPC, 2012a: 12-3). Accordingly, numerous migration/migrant-related programmes were newly introduced. For such an extensive scale of the project, a total budget of 1,336,398 million KRW (equivalent to 786 million GBP) was allocated between 2009 and 2012 (Table 5.2). The financial input was concentrated on both ‘proactive immigration’ policy (44.7 per cent) and ‘social integration’ policy (50.4 per cent): the former is mainly related to operating labour migration programmes and the latter to supporting marriage migrants and their families. The finance was shared by both the central administrative agencies (640,564 million KRW) and local governments (695,834 million). The budget for the central government had increased on average by 28 per cent year by year, and eight per cent for the local governments during the period.

**Table 5.2: Budget allocations for the First Basic Plan for Immigration Policy (million KRW)**

Policy Goals	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total (4 years)	%
Total	342,549	249,878	355,635	388,336	1,336,398	100
Proactive immigration	244,027	112,313	113,488	127,325	597,153	44.7
Social integration	90,604	125,989	216,762	240,201	673,556	50.4
Immigration administration	2,059	2,966	14,770	6,554	26,349	2.0
Human rights protection	5,859	8,610	10,615	14,256	39,340	2.9

*Note:* Budgets of the central government and municipal governments are combined.

*Source:* Compiled by the author from IPC (2012b: 18-27)

Examining the contents of the First Basic Plan reveals several policy orientations. The Korean government became more positive or even proactive toward receiving migrants. The government asserted that “Korea has maintained control-oriented immigration policy, prioritising security concern, but Korea needs to change migration policy orientation to ‘strategic openness’ in order to utilise foreign human capital in the globalising world” (IPC, 2008: 8). This policy orientation justified the adoption of a very differential approach to different types of migrants. Labour migrants are approached as a development resource to help ‘enhance national competitiveness’, but priority was clearly put on attracting skilled migrants (or brains). In addition, receiving more co-ethnic migrants was explicitly encouraged. To promote ‘greater social integration’, adaptation and integration support programmes targeted marriage migrants and their children. It is interesting to see that promoting human rights of foreigners was listed as one of the policy goals. Judging from the budget allocation above, this policy area is only nominal, not to mention that, in reality, unskilled migrant workers continue to be denied family reunion and undocumented migrants are subject to ever more tightened crackdowns and forced repatriation.

The second Basic Plan was launched with the new administration in 2013, and it is currently underway. The second Basic Plan more or less stays in line with the previous one in terms of policy goals (refer to Table 5.3). Migration policies are framed as a process of securing human resource for economic development. Migrants’ social integration continues to be emphasised. The earlier notion of human rights protection is now more clearly articulated as measures for anti-discrimination and mutual cultural

respect. Some new policy goals emphasising safety and migrants' responsibility are also found. The action plans corresponding to these new goals show that the government started to consider social conflicts between nationals and migrants more seriously, particularly with regard to migrants' (including both regular and irregular migrants) criminal activities against nationals. So, the second Basic Plan expresses a strong intention to strengthen entry/status control and calls for an active participation of sending countries' governments in controlling migration.

The subtle change can be illuminated in the way that two Basic Plans define 'immigration policy': the first one defines immigration policy as "the policy comprehensively covering matters related to granting official temporary and permanent status to foreigners and their children planning to immigrate to Korea and to creating the proper environment for them to live in Korea" (IPC, 2008: 2), whereas the second one terms it as "policies encompassing matters on border control, immigration, nationality, and social integration for immigrant" (IPC, 2012a: 7), which delivers more regulatory and coercive nuances. The government argues that the second Basic Plan puts a priority on addressing various social issues associated with a rapid increase in migrants such as violation of immigration rules (typically, overstay), other migrant-involved crimes and (uncontrolled) residential concentration, whereas the first one was primarily about establishing a migration governance policy system for the first time in Korea (IPC, 2012a: 21). The added emphasis on safety and responsibility shows the government's growing concern over aforementioned social problems and its intention to prevent migrant-related social unrests recently witnessed in the West. To back up the point, the government cited Merkel's saying "Germany's attempt to create a multicultural society has utterly failed" (IPC, 2012a: 17).<sup>20</sup> The notion of 'failed multiculturalism' in the West is brought up by the Korean government to justify more tightened regulations and migrants' fuller integration to the society.

The second Basic Plan has not been fully substantiated as policies or programmes yet but the direction of the migration regime is moving toward a tougher migration control and a fuller integration of migrants. However, the plausibility of the Basic Plan is in question since tensions seems inevitable due to the lack in congruency found in

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<sup>20</sup> See *Reuters*, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/10/16/uk-germany-merkel-immigration-idUKTRE69F19T20101016>



policy goals and action plans, for example, between ‘attracting foreign labour’ and ‘tight control’; ‘respecting cultural diversity’ and ‘full integration’.

**Table 5.3: The Basic Plan for Immigration Policy: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> round compared**

	The 1st Basic Plan (2008-2012)	The 2nd Basic Plan (2013-2017)
Vision	Make Korea a leader in embracing foreigners	Vibrant Korea growing with immigrants
Policy Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt proactive immigration policies to enhance national competitiveness</li> <li>2. Pursue greater social integration</li> <li>3. Establish an orderly administrative process on immigration</li> <li>4. Advocate the human rights of foreigners</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attract human resources from overseas to supply economic stimulus</li> <li>2. Promote social integration that respects shared Korean values</li> <li>3. Prevent discrimination and respect cultural diversity</li> <li>4. Ensure a safe society for Koreans and Non-Koreans alike</li> <li>5. Promote co-prosperity with the international community</li> </ol>
Action Plans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-1. Secure growth engines by attracting talented foreigners</li> <li>1-2. Attract foreign workers for the balanced national development</li> <li>1-3. Create a suitable living environment for foreigners</li> <li>2-1. Raise public awareness of the multi-cultural society</li> <li>2-2. Help foreign spouses adjust to Korean society</li> <li>2-3. Help immigrant children grow up in a healthy environment</li> <li>2-4. Encourage ethnic Koreans to fulfil their economic potential</li> <li>3-1. Enforce immigration laws</li> <li>3-2. Control borders and personal information on foreigners for the greater national security</li> <li>3-3. Conduct nationality programs for accepting qualified immigrants</li> <li>4-1. Prevent discrimination against foreigners and promote human rights</li> <li>4-2. Protect the human rights of foreigners in protective custody</li> <li>4-3. Establish an advanced registration and support system for refugees</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-1. Invite more foreign visitors who contribute to the economy</li> <li>1-2. Attract in-demand human resources from overseas</li> <li>1-3. Draw foreign students to secure future growth engine</li> <li>1-4. Attract foreign investment for balanced regional development</li> <li>2-1. Refine the Nationality and Immigration System in the interest of self-reliance and social integration</li> <li>2-2. Operate a well-organized Korea Immigration and Integration Program for immigrants</li> <li>2-3. Prevent fake marriages and support the settlement of immigrant spouses</li> <li>2-4. Provide a friendly environment for children with a foreign background</li> <li>2-5. Increase the infrastructure and finances for social integration</li> <li>3-1. Institutionalize immigrants’ human rights protection and discrimination prevention</li> <li>3-2. Improve society’s tolerance of cultural diversity</li> <li>3-3. Build an international environment where Koreans and foreigners can interact</li> <li>4-1. Control borders safely and surely</li> <li>4-2. Control immigration offenders effectively</li> <li>4-3. Expand procedures for tracking irregular immigrants</li> <li>4-4. Enhance the management of comprehensive information on foreigners</li> <li>5-1. Enhance international cooperation with sending countries, international organizations</li> <li>5-2. Promote refugee policies befitting Korea’s national status</li> <li>5-3. Expand exchanges and cooperation with overseas Korean communities</li> </ol>

*Source:* Compiled by the author from Immigration Policy Committee (2008, 2012a)

The government acknowledges that it needs to keep the door open to migrants because they contribute to the Korean economy by complementing the labour deficit, replenishing the population, and sharing knowledge/skills, but at the same time it realises that receiving more migrants can increase the social and financial burden of ‘managing’ migration with regard to administrative costs, welfare provision to migrants, and public safety (IPC, 2008, 2012a). These competing benefits and costs have put the Korean government in a difficult situation in which it has to find a best balancing point. Korea does not seem too free from the dilemma that an open democratic economy faces between openness and closure (or at least, less openness) to migrants which Hollifield termed as “liberal paradox” (Hollifield, 2004: 886). The government proposes a rather straightforward solution to this dilemma: while minimising the migration stock, it attracts more ‘desirable migrants’ such as skilled workers or other types of migrants who are expected to be integrated better to the society, ethnic return migrants and marriage migrants. The next part of the section investigates how the differential inclusion/exclusion policy strategy is embodied in the current migration system in Korea.

### **5.2.2. Immigration System in Korea**

#### ***Visa Classification***

One useful starting point to comprehend the feature of (im)migration system of a country is to investigate its visa system which specifies by type requirements, restrictions and rights over migrants’ entry to their settlement. The Korean migration system is characterised by a highly segmented system of visa categories. As of February 2013, there are 36 visa types to enter and remain in Korea. The official immigration information website groups all visa types into six categories according to the purpose of visit: tourism/transit, temporary visiting, business, work, visit and stay with family including overseas Koreans, education and others.<sup>21</sup> Based on this classification, I have constructed six ‘migration routes’ by reorganising most frequently granted 28 visa types (Table 5.4). However, it should be noted that the notion of ‘route’ does not sharply emerge in the Korean migration system because regulations often differ substantially for

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<sup>21</sup> *Hi Korea*, [http://www.hikorea.go.kr/pt/InfoDetailR\\_en.pt?categoryId=2](http://www.hikorea.go.kr/pt/InfoDetailR_en.pt?categoryId=2)

different entry types even in the same migration route. Instead, migration policies tend to be organised for specific ‘migrant categories’ indicated by visa type. In fact, the aforementioned visa classification by the government is more an informational guide than the official policy structure. So my formulation of migration routes here is only for an analytical guide.

As Table 5.4 presents, among six migration routes, the labour migration and the family migration combined dominate the migration pattern in Korea by occupying 70.6 per cent in the total migrant stock. Both routes are almost equally divided in half (family migration is only slightly larger by two per cent). Migrant workers under two unskilled labour migration visas (E-9 and H-2) are the most important entry schemes consisting of the labour migration route to Korea. Migrants holding either an ‘overseas compatriot’ visa (F-4) or a marriage migration visa (F-6) are main contributors to the family migration route except those already having a permanent residence visa (F-5). The ‘overseas compatriot’ visa is exclusive to ethnic Koreans. Migrants holding this visa are either people who had Korean nationality in the past but have since acquired nationality of another country, or those who have at least one parent or grandparent who is Korean or had a Korean nationality in the past. Although the government classifies them as not an employment-purpose migration but a form of family migration (‘F’ visa series)<sup>22</sup>, many of them actually come to Korea for business and employment purposes. In this regard, ‘overseas compatriot’ visa (F-4) is strongly relevant to the labour migration route. Thus, I argue that, policy-wise, H-2 visa and F-4 visa combined form a distinguishable route of (labour) migration to Korea, namely, ‘co-ethnic migration route, although not all co-ethnic migrants are admitted with either of those visas (see also Table 5.9 in this chapter).

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<sup>22</sup> This research follows the government classification (see KIS, 2015: 20)

**Table 5.4: Migration routes and scales by visa type in Korea, 2014**

Route	Visa type <sup>a</sup>	No. of persons entering with the visa	% in the total migrant stock
Labour	Temporary employment (C-4)	593	0.03
	Professor (E-1)	2,664	0.15
	Language instructor (E-2)	17,949	1.00
	Research (E-3)	3,195	0.18
	Technical guidance (E-4)	186	0.01
	Special profession (E-5)	645	0.04
	Culture/art (E-6)	5,162	0.29
	Specially designated activities (E-7)	19,109	1.06
	Non-professional work (E-9)	270,569	15.05
	Seaman employment (E-10)	14,403	0.80
	'Working visit' (H-2)	282,670	15.72
	Sub-total	617,145	34.33
Family	Visiting/Staying with relatives (F-1)	71,203	3.96
	Residency (F-2) <sup>c</sup>	37,504	2.06
	Family dependency (F-3) <sup>d</sup>	21,809	1.21
	'Overseas compatriot' (F-4) <sup>b</sup>	289,427	16.10
	Permanent residence (F-5)	112,742	6.27
	Marriage migration (F-6)	120,710	6.71
Sub-total	653,395	36.31	
Short-term visit	Visa exemption (B-1)	93,619	5.21
	Travel/Transit (B-2)	96,113	5.35
	Temporary visit (C-3)	146,357	8.14
	Religious work (D-6)	1,855	0.10
	Sub-total	337,944	18.80
Education & Training	Overseas study (D-2)	61,257	3.41
	Technical training (D-3)	3,507	0.20
	General training (D-4)	27,000	1.50
	Sub-total	91,764	5.11
Business	Intra-company transfer (D-7)	1,593	0.09
	Corporate investment (D-8)	6,026	0.34
	Trade management (D-9)	8,856	0.49
	Sub-total	16,475	0.92
Other	Other	80,895	4.50
Total		1,797,618	100

Note: <sup>a</sup> English translations of visa types presented here are taken from the official website of the Ministry of Justice for foreigners. See *Hi Korea*, [http://www.hikorea.go.kr/pt/InfoDetailR\\_en.pt?categoryId=2](http://www.hikorea.go.kr/pt/InfoDetailR_en.pt?categoryId=2).

<sup>b</sup> 'Overseas Koreans' in other translations

<sup>c</sup> F-2 is granted to dependants of either Korean nationals or permanent residence visa holders, and those who want to stay longer by changing their visa type (typically semi- or skilled workers or business persons/investors).

<sup>d</sup> F-3 is granted to other types of family dependants than F-2.

Source: KIS (2015)

### ***Regulations on Entry, Residency, Settlement and Labour/Social Rights***

All the different migration routes are subject to different stipulations on entry, residency, and labour/social and settlement rights, although not all types of migrants become relevant to all those stages. This mixed arrangement of controls and rights is a policy device to manage migration, called ‘civic stratification’, and it is operating by means of differentiated access to rights often based on skill level, class, nationality or ethnicity (Morris, 2001, 2003). With all 36 types of visa, the Korean government provides two over 600 page-long volumes of detailed immigration manuals. Considering the scale and complexity, it is impossible to cover all migration routes and visa types here. Some general rules on entry, residency, labour/social rights and settlement are briefly discussed here. In the later sections, regulations on three key migrant categories are examined in finer detail.

Foreigners entering Korea, except those coming through the ‘short-term visit’ route and ‘temporary employment’, are granted a period of stay between as short as 6 months and less than 5 years (Table 5.5). In general, the paths leading to permanent settlement are usually open exclusively to professionals or long-term residents. In either case, the length of stay is decisive for a chance of settlement (either permanent residency or nationalisation). There are some special arrangements to grant migrants a settlement right without attaching the residency requirement in Korea. Typically, however, only foreign nationals who have legally stayed consecutively at least for 5 years in the Korean territory are entitled to apply for a permanent resident visa, which then makes them eligible for a citizenship application (test). Linking the length of residence to a settlement right is a very effective (stratifying) migration control. If the government limits the length of stay or the renewal of visa, affected migrants are automatically denied the chance for settlement (as you will see in the case of general unskilled workers under the E-9 visa).

**Table 5.5: Residency regulations on labour and family migrants in Korea as of 2015**

Route	Purpose of Visit	Visa Types	Length of Stay
Labour	Temporary employment	C-4	No more than 90 days
	Skilled workers or special professions	E-1 to E-7	2 to 5 years (R)
	Unskilled workers	E-9	3 years (+1 years 10 months)
	Seaman employment	E-10	1 year
	Working holiday	H-1	6 months to 1.5 years
	‘Working visit’ (exclusive to co-ethnic migrants)	H-2	3 years (+1 years 10 months)
Family	Visiting/staying with relatives	F-1	2 years (R)
	Residency	F-2,	3 years (R)
	Family dependency	F-3	Vary (R)
	‘Overseas compatriot’ (exclusive to co-ethnic migrants)	F-4	3 years (R)
	Permanent residence	F-5	Permanent
	Marriage migration	F-6	3 years (R)

*Source:* Compiled by the author from MOJ (2015)

*Note:* (R) means a possibility that the visa can be renewed ‘without’ requiring re-entry.

To those on the labour migration route, the right to access the labour market is predetermined by their skill level-based entry visas. Change of the visa type after admission and mobility between the different skill levels are tightly controlled: lower skilled migrants may have some chances to move up by acquiring higher qualifications but higher skilled migrants’ entering low-skilled jobs is prohibited in order to prevent competition over the same job areas with migrants admitted through the official unskilled labour migrant programmes. In contrast, family migrants’ access to the labour market is not straightforward. While some dependant visa holders (F-1 and F-2) have limitations in their choice of job, F-3 holders are given full access to the labour market except certain unskilled job areas. Permanent residence visa holders (F-5) and marriage migrants (F-6) have no limitations in their activities. Family migrants’ change to a labour migrant status is also very conditional. Besides the skill level, ethnicity also matters in the Korean migration regime: in both the labour migration and family migration routes, having a Korean ethnicity gives migrants a wider freedom and privilege in social and economic activities.

With regard to social rights, most migrants are in general not entitled to tax-funded (non-contributory) social benefits except marriage migrants and some permanent

residents. However, contributory programmes are more accessible. All documented labour migrants become immediately entitled to work-place related social insurances (the Employment Insurance and the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance) and the National Health Insurance. Any other type of migrants staying over 3 months can also benefit from the National Health Insurance after 3 months when they start paying insurance premium (including premiums for first 3 months). For both labour and non-labour migrants, entitlement to the National Pension is optional, determined by the mutual recognition of each other's pension scheme between Korea and the origin country. The next section closely examines how these general rules/regulations are operating in a different way with the major migrant groups.

### **5.3. Unskilled Labour Migration Policy**

The Korean government divides labour migration into two categories based on skill levels: skilled and unskilled. Skilled (or professional) migrant workers are sub-divided into eight categories according to their speciality or job area (Table 5.6). The rest of labour migrants having no specific qualifications are collectively referred to as unskilled labour migrants. As you see in Table 5.5, unskilled migrant workers occupy an absolute majority (92 per cent), while skilled migrants make up only eight per cent. Then unskilled labour migration is further segmented into two types on the ethnicity ground: general unskilled migrant workers and co-ethnic migrant workers.<sup>23</sup> Before discussing the current policy for each type, I will briefly present an overview of the development of unskilled labour migration policy in Korea, which provides background knowledge for both types.

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<sup>23</sup> The seaman migration programme is excluded from the analysis because of its separate regulations and distinctive work nature (working on a boat).

**Table 5.6: Composition of labour migrants in Korea, 2014**

Skill Level	Visa Type	No. of persons entering with the visa	% in the total labour migrant stock
Skilled	Temporary employment (C-4)	593	0.1
	Professor (E-1)	2,644	0.4
	Language instructor (E-2)	17,949	2.9
	Research (E-3)	3,195	0.5
	Technical guidance (E-4)	186	0.0
	Special profession (E-5)	645	0.1
	Culture/art (E-6)	5,162	0.8
	Specially designated activities (E-7)	19,109	3.1
	Sub-total	49,503	8.0
Unskilled	Non-professional work (E-9)	270,569	43.8
	Seaman employment (E-10)	14,403	2.3
	‘Working visit’ (H-2)	282,670	45.8
	Sub-total	567,642	92.0
	Total	617,145	100

*Source:* KIS (2015)

### 5.3.1. Development of Unskilled Labour Migration Policy

The early history of the migration system in Korea was marked by the establishment of unskilled labour migration systems. In the midst of a soaring demand for unskilled labour force in Korea, a growing number of migrants already start to meet the demand from the early 1990s. However, it was well over a decade later for the Korean government to provide a fully operating labour migration system. Table 5.7 shows how Korea has become equipped with comprehensive unskilled labour migration schemes. A series of reforms up to now can be summarised as the transition from ‘Industrial Trainee System’ into ‘Employment Permit System’, which includes a special labour migration scheme for co-ethnic migrants called ‘Working Visit Programme’. The overall policy reform process reveals the government’s changing attitudes and rationales toward unskilled labour migration and competing pressures from other related stakeholders such as business, civil society and migrants themselves.



**Table 5.7: Development of unskilled labour migration policies in Korea**

Period	Trend	Policy Basis
before 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only a small number of migrants</li> <li>▪ No public attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only skilled labour migration allowed</li> </ul>
1991 - 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increasing demand for migrant trainees (workers)</li> <li>▪ The Government expanded trainee quotas</li> <li>▪ Tacit allowance of hiring migrant trainees as workers</li> <li>▪ Repeated amnesties and round-ups</li> <li>▪ Increasing cases of human rights violation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Industrial &amp; Technical Trainee Programme</li> <li>▪ Industrial Trainee System (ITS)</li> </ul>
1998 - 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic crisis and large scale layoff of migrants</li> <li>▪ Increase of undocumented migrant workers</li> <li>▪ Mixed approaches: legalisation and deportation</li> <li>▪ Migrant trainees get ‘worker status’ for 1 year after the 2 year training (changed to 1 year training and 2 year work later)<sup>a</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work After-Training System (WATS, a revised version of ITS)</li> <li>▪ Employment Management System for ethnic Koreans</li> </ul>
2004 - 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The economy recovered and migrant workers returned</li> <li>▪ New unskilled foreign worker system in operation</li> <li>▪ Sharp increase in ethnic Korean migrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment Permit System (EPS), temporary cooperation with WATS until 2006</li> <li>▪ Working Visit Programme for ethnic Koreans (WVP)</li> </ul>
after 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unskilled migrants are highly regulated migration</li> <li>▪ Number of undocumented migrant workers was subdued</li> <li>▪ Preference to skilled labour migrants and co-ethnic labour migrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unified to EPS including WVP</li> </ul>

*Note:* <sup>a</sup> In legal perspective, Korea first had non-professional migrant ‘workers’ under the WATS in 2000.

Until early 1990s, only a small number of foreigners with skilled professions were invited in specific areas where there were no Korean substitutes available. In 1991 the Korean government first allowed the overseas branches of Korean companies to bring local workers to Korea as ‘industrial and technical trainees’ a short-term basis, allegedly emulating the Japanese ‘Foreign Trainee Programme’ (S Kim, 2010). Those trainees from less developed countries were admitted for the purpose of job training and skill transfer. However, many trainees did not depart after the training period had expired and became undocumented workers because they could find employment elsewhere in Korea often with better conditions than in the trainee scheme. While the government did not take any official measures against it, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) started hiring migrant workers without any legal basis. In the meantime, it was often the case that private agencies illegally recruited migrant workers and exploited them by charging high arrangement fees. Human rights violation and exploitative practices by employers became also prevalent and consequently the number of runaways and

undocumented workers soared and the Korean civil society started to express deep concerns for them (Martin, 2013; Seol, 2005).

The Korean government decided to formalise the Korean version of industrial trainee programme named the Industrial Trainee System (ITS) in 1993, hoping that the ITS would meet the growing demand for cheap workforce and deal with the soaring numbers of undocumented migrants at the same time. The ITS expanded an official channel for the companies suffering labour shortage to recruit foreign trainees for two years. Unfortunately the new system did not operate as intended, failing to mend the existing problems with the previous system. In essence, The ITS shared the same embedded limitations with the previous 'Foreign Industrial Trainees' programme. The migrants hired through ITS were still called 'trainees' not 'workers'. Businesses requested the government to maintain ITS because they preferred 'trainees' to workers since they could hire trainees at lower cost without extra spending on social protection and benefits for them.

The government was reluctant to admit the fundamental limitations of the ITS. So the government tried to fix the problems by modifying the existing ITS system rather than redesigning it. The government devised a very interesting hybrid labour migration system, called the Work after Training System (WATS), which grants foreign trainees a worker status after their completion of the training period: two years as a trainee and then one year as a worker from 2000 and one year as a trainee and two years as a worker from 2002. This measure was introduced in order to provide a legal basis on which companies can continue to maintain migrant labour force after the training. Despite the gained worker status, exploitative practices against migrant workers were not effectively addressed, so many migrant workers kept running away from the designated workplace. As a result, a large number of migrant workers ended up becoming undocumented eventually, putting themselves in even more precarious situations. The government periodically carried out roundup operations against undocumented migrant workers in order to suppress the soaring number of undocumented workers. Escaping harsh crackdowns, some migrants had tragic accidents and other committed suicide, which ignited great public outcry. The civil society groups again took the initiative to protest against the government, asking for the complete reform of labour migration policy (Seol, 2005). This situation served as a

background for Korea to introduce a new labour migration system for unskilled migrant workers later on.

The need for an alternative labour migration system to replace the industrial trainee system had gained a wide social consensus and preparation for the reform already was underway even from the mid-1990s. Some progressive politicians, social activist groups and academics as well as migrant workers themselves came to form an extended coalition for migrant worker policy reform (I-J Yoon, 2008). They gained support from the general public and were backed up by the newly elected government led by the former president Kim Dae-jung (officed from 1998 to 2003). Even the opposition party also supported the reform. SMEs, however, did not welcome the reform in fear of the burdens if migrant workers come to have enhanced labour rights. After much struggle and negotiations, the reform bill was finally submitted to the Congress in 1997. After some delay due to the Asian economic crisis of 1997, the Employment Permit System (EPS) was eventually legislated on 31 July 2003. After about two years of co-operation with the WATS from 2004, the EPS came to be fully effective as of 1 January 2007.

The EPS has become the only official channel of hiring unskilled migration workers since 2007. The new system was intended not only to streamline the process of hiring and managing labour migration but also to address the limitations of the previous systems such as human rights violations by guaranteeing migrant workers a right to find an employment while equally protecting them under the labour laws. It is important to note that the EPS is a dual system: general unskilled migrant workers, i.e. migrant workers through the E-9 visa and co-ethnic migrant workers through H-2 visa. In this section, I focus on examining how the EPS operates for general migrant workers first. The H-2 programme will be discussed in the following section. The H-2 programme operates with different rules and procedures from the E-9 programme and it should be analysed as an integral part of a bigger policy frame of 'co-ethnic migration', rather than simply a labour migration programme.

### **5.3.2. Employment Permit System (EPS)**

#### ***Admission and Residency***

The admission of unskilled migration workers through the EPS (E-9) is a highly regulated process which involves both sending and receiving governments. The Korean government first selects origin countries. As of 2014, Korea has arranged memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the EPS with a total of 15 countries, including Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Nepal, Uzbekistan, China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Pakistan and others (ordered by majority).

The EPS, on the one hand, assists businesses to import foreign labour more efficiently, but, on the other hand, it tries to discourage their dependency on migrant workers. So, the EPS places various measures to protect the internal labour market so that migrant labour force should be sought only as the last resort. To begin with, the EPS specifies applicable industries and yearly admission quota, reflecting labour demands and economic situations. As Table 5.8 shows, admission increased sharply over the early years of the EPS implementation (2007 to 2008). The number declined during the global economic recession from 2008 to 2009, but since then the yearly entry scale has not fluctuated much. Expectedly, admission has been concentrated on the industries which suffer from the labour deficit. The largest portion of the EPS workers has been allocated to the manufacturing sector (79.7 per cent for the 2014 entry) and the second largest to the farming and dairy sector (11.3 per cent). It should be highlighted that most businesses in the service sector are not allowed to hire unskilled migrant workers (E-9) through the EPS.

There are also regulations on the dependency ratio (the proportion of migrant workers in the total number of employees) according to the size of business. There are ceilings: for example, manufacturing businesses whose total employees are 300 or less can hire up to 30 migrant workers, and no more than 40 migrant workers for larger businesses. Furthermore, any businesses want to hire migrant workers via the EPS must prove that they have tried to hire native-born workers for at least 14 days. One official interviewed for the current research explained the rationales behind these measures:

The reason for regulating company size and industry in importing foreign workers is to harmonise the need for foreign labour and the need for the protection of the

domestic labour market, especially jobs for vulnerable workers. The purpose of the EPS is to supply foreign labour to companies suffering from the labour deficit due to the difficulty of finding native-born workers, but some companies may intentionally choose to hire foreign workers instead of Korean workers in order to cut the labour cost. In this case, foreign workers can substitute the domestic labour force. Labour cost and conditions are decided at the tense equilibrium between the demand and supply of labour. If the government supplies foreign workers, considering only the demand side, overall work conditions/income level can be negatively affected, and, we are afraid that, in the long run, native-born workers may forever lose the chance to enter those industries. (Interviewee D, 5 August 2014)

**Table 5.8: Yearly admission quota for the EPS by industry in Korea (person)**

Industry	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (%)
Total	49,600	72,000	17,000	34,000	48,000	57,000	62,000	53,000 (100)
Manufacturing	42,100	60,800	13,000	28,100	40,000	49,000	52,000	42,250 (79.7)
Farming and Dairy	1,900	4,000	1,000	3,100	4,500	4,500	6,000	6,000 (11.3)
Construction	4,400	6,000	2,000	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	2,350 (4.4)
Fishing	1,000	800	900	1,100	1,750	1,750	2,300	2,300 (4.3)
Storage and Recycling	200	400	100	100	150	150	100	100 (0.2)

*Note:* These quotas are exclusively applicable to the migrants through E-9 visa.

*Source:* EPS website, <https://www.eps.go.kr>

Regarding the exit control, the government is now emphasising ‘voluntary return’. The government rewards migrants who voluntarily leave at the point the EPS contract expires by giving them a chance for a contract extension or rehiring. It is a more positive approach than crackdown to prevent overstays. Employers also can save costs by bringing back previous workers who are already well trained. The government also started to call for increased responsibilities of sending countries regarding migrant workers’ return and settlement back in origin. It may refuse to renew the EPS agreement with certain sending countries according to the number of migrant workers failing to return. As a matter of fact, the Korean government suspended the EPS agreement with Vietnam in 2012 (restored 16 months later), one of major sending countries, on account of the increasing number of Vietnamese undocumented migrant workers.

Over the process from recruiting to placement and management, the Korean government directly intervenes in every stage. The direct intervention by the government in the labour migration allows a better position in dealing with issues raised with previous systems. One official in an interview with the author for the current research emphasised:

The EPS is a fairly well made system. The overall process of recruiting foreigners - making a labour pool, making a contract, deploying them to companies, etc. - is honest and transparent. Human rights of migrant workers are also well protected under the EPS. That is, the EPS is to eliminate the possibility of private brokers' interruption and officials' corruption, and it also minimises the arrangement fee for migrant workers. In addition, we educate them with pre-employment training, useful information for living, laws, procedures to appeal when their rights are violated, and so forth. (Interviewee D, 5 August 2014)

However, it is important to note that the EPS is based on the idea of 'employment permit' which, in essence, priorities the position of the recruiting parties rather than job seekers or employees. In practice, migrant workers are given little room to negotiate: the employment contract is signed with only a specific company even before the departure and they can neither change the workplace nor their visa type afterwards.

Two consecutive Basic Plans (IPC, 2008, 2012a) repeatedly confirm that the number of unskilled migrant workers should be limited to the necessary minimum. In reality, however, annual quotas for unskilled migrant workers have gradually expanded since 2009 in response to the growing demand from industries. Contrary to its policy goals, the government apparently is failing to increase the proportion of skilled labour migrants. Recently, the Korean government is trying to experiment a different strategy to minimise the unskilled labour force. According to the second Basic Plan, the government now emphasises 'up-skilling' of current unskilled migrant workers (IPC, 2012a: 32): the government is encouraging some qualified unskilled migrant workers to upgrade their E-9 visa to E-7 (applicable to skilled- or semi-skilled occupations), which allows them more freedom in job-seeking with an increased chance of long-term stay. The prospect of this measure does not seem to be very promising because employment opportunity (i.e., demand for foreign labour) is still wider in unskilled jobs.

### ***Settlement and Integration***

In essence, the EPS is a short-term (up to 3 years in principle) and circulatory labour migration scheme. Unskilled migrant workers are not supposed to take up a long term residence. Therefore, policies on settlement/integration are largely irrelevant to them. That is the reason why family invitation was not considered at the first place. Exclusion from the settlement/integration programmes makes them isolated and vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. The only way for general unskilled migrant workers to stay for a long time is to become undocumented by overstaying. The Korean government had repeated crackdowns and unexpected legalisation measures to control the total scale of undocumented migrant population. This lack of consistency in migration control, especially before the establishment of the EPS, made migrant workers distrust the government policies, so some simply did not return to hope for another chance of legalisation (S Kim, 2010; Seol, 2000).

However, opportunities to legally stay for longer-term have been widened. For one thing, the government has continuously extended the employment permit period itself: only one year of employment at first in 2000, two years in 2002, then three years from 2007 and now almost five years, by renewing the contract. The government recently opened an additional way for a long-term stay. It introduced a re-hiring scheme, called a 'Special Return Employment Programme for Diligent Workers'. If a migrant worker has consecutively worked for the original company for 4 years and 10 months and the employer want to keep hiring him/her, the worker can continue to work there for another full term after the 3 month waiting in the origin country. The requirement to return for a period before achieving 5 year continuous residence is to deny them the right to permanent residence and settlement. The system is to encourage migrant workers to keep working for small manufacturing and farming/fishing industries which suffer from the chronic labour shortage most. Furthermore, the Korean government arranges the Korean language test more frequently in sending countries in order to speed up the rehiring process by minimising waiting time for the mandatory language test. So technically speaking, migrant workers can now work and stay in Korea almost for ten years through an extension and a rehiring; however, the increased chance for longer residence will not necessarily lead to the legal settlement of unskilled migrant workers due to the length of residence (5 years in most cases) requirement.

## 5.4. Co-ethnic Migration Policy

### 5.4.1. Development of Co-ethnic Migration Policy

About 40 per cent of all migrants in Korea as of 2014 have a Korean ethnic background. It is a consequence of the implementation of special migration policies encouraging the immigration of overseas ethnic Koreans since 1999. Those policies include various favourable treatments for overseas ethnic Koreans in entry, settlement and social and economic activities.

As European experiences testify, it is not uncommon for states to adopt such selective migration policies based on ethnicity (Joppke, 2005a; Skrentny *et al.*, 2007). Germany, for example, has developed a migration policy favourably treating ethnic German returnees from Russia or Eastern Europe, through special arrangement for their resettlement and quick integration (Joppke, 2005b). An interesting point is that not all ethnic migrants are equally treated. They are often subject to differing treatments by their origin nationality and the skill level in terms of social/labour and membership rights. In other words, certain types of co-ethnic migrants are more (less) welcomed than others. It is also the case in Korea which has developed the hierarchical policy approach in a very explicit way to co-ethnic migrants who are believed to share the same blood (Seol and Skrentny, 2009a).

As shown in Table 5.9, there are two dominant co-ethnic migration types in Korea: ‘overseas compatriot’ (F-4) and working visit (H-2). Each occupies 47.3 per cent and 46.2 per cent respectively in the total co-ethnic migrant stock as of 2014. The ‘overseas compatriot’ visa scheme was introduced according to ‘Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans’ of 1998, which stipulates the provision of special benefits to ethnic Koreans (with both Korean and foreign nationality) living abroad to encourage them to come to Korea to work in skilled or professional jobs. By this law, the special migration scheme, ‘overseas compatriot (F-4)’, was established. This scheme grants social and economic rights almost equal to Korean citizens with the exception of the rights of voting and public office, albeit not conferring citizenship automatically, (J-S Park and Chang, 2005; Seol and Skrentny, 2009a). However, ‘overseas compatriot (F-4)’ targeted ethnic Koreans from rich countries who were not likely to seek unskilled employment. The eligibility included (still does) higher degrees, skill qualifications or



financial capacity. Despite the largest co-ethnic population (Chinese Koreans, ‘*Joseonjok*’), China initially was excluded from this scheme, fearing that a large inflow of ‘Chinese’ Koreans via this entry scheme may disturb the Korean labour market (Gwak, 2012; Seol and Skrentny, 2009a).

**Table 5.9: Co-ethnic migrants by visa type in Korea, 2014**

Visa	Purpose of Visit	No. of persons entering with the visa	%
Total		704,536	100
F-4	Long-term stay or skilled/semi-skilled work (‘overseas compatriot’)	289,427	47.3
H-2	Unskilled work (‘working visit’)	282,670	46.2
F-5	Permanent residence	74,870	12.2
F-1	Visit families/relatives	16,278	2.7
Other	Business, study and marriage	41,291	6.7

Source: KIS (2015)

Expectedly, many ethnic Korean communities in those areas protested against it and, as a matter of fact, the Korean Supreme Court ruled that the law goes against the Constitution regarding the fundamental rights of equality on 29 November 2001 (Gwak, 2012: 38). Complying with the rule, the Korean government had to make ethnic Koreans from China and CIS regions also become eligible for the F-4 visa. However, instead of reforming ‘overseas compatriot’ visa system into a fully inclusive co-ethnic migration system, the government tried to maintain the divide between the two by introducing a separate labour migration programme for ethnic Koreans living in China and CIS (see Section 5.4.2). While subject to the lesser privileges than ‘overseas compatriot’ visa holders, ethnic Koreans from China and CIS regions are allowed to freely seek an employment at least in unskilled jobs. In addition, from 2008, the government has broadened the chance that they can obtain an F-4 visa which can lead them to long-term residence or possibly settlement. Consequently, the number of Chinese Koreans (*joseonjok*) has been rapidly increasing, dominating both (F-4 and H-2) co-ethnic migration schemes (Table 5.10).

Despite the recent reforms, differential treatment continues between co-ethnic migrants from China and CIS regions and those from advanced countries. A detailed examination will follow in the next sub-section, but the main point is that despite the same ethnicity, co-ethnic migrants from China and CIS regions are still largely excluded from the ‘overseas compatriot’ policy; rather, they are approached and managed together with other general unskilled foreign migrant workers through the E-9 visa (Gwak, 2012; Seol and Skrentny, 2009a). The Korean government operates these labour migration systems juxtaposed each other under different policy goals and rationales. Therefore, it is important to examine the relation among the three labour migration programmes, although the ‘Working Visit Programme’ (H-2) is the main interest for this section due to its immediate relevance to (unskilled) service sector jobs (care jobs, in particular).

**Table 5.10: ‘Overseas Compatriot’ and ‘Working Visit’ migrants by nationality in Korea, 2014**

Visa	Nationality	No. of persons	% in each visa
Overseas Compatriot (F-4)	Total	289,427	100
	China	208,312	72.0
	US	46,165	16.0
	Canada	14,509	5.0
	Russia	4,650	1.6
	Australia	4,267	1.5
	New Zealand	2,149	0.7
	Other	9,375	3.2
Working Visit (H-2)	Total	282,670	100
	China	267,922	94.8
	Uzbekistan	12,386	4.4
	Kazakhstan	1,054	0.4
	Other	1,308	0.5

*Source:* KIS (2015)

## 5.4.2. Working Visit Programme (WVP)

### *Admission and Residency*

The 'Working Visit Programme (WVP)' was launched in 2007, replacing the previous special migrant employment programme for co-ethnic migrants, called the 'Employment Management System' (refer back to Table 5.5). The WVP is an integral part of the EPS, so they share some common features: both are basically short-term circulatory unskilled labour migration schemes, and both are somehow controlled by quotas.

As summarised in Table 5.11, there are, however, a number of significant differences between two, let alone the ethnicity-based eligibility. To begin with, admission procedures are different: E-9 visa applicants first have to pass the Korean language test, and when a visa is granted, they sign the contract only with the designated workplace even before they enter Korea. In contrast, the WVP migrants are exempted from the Korean language test<sup>24</sup>, and enter Korea first if they are granted a visa. After completing the official induction/orientation programmes, they make a contract with the company they find themselves or a job centre introduces to them. Admission priority is given to those who can prove their direct ancestral links to Korean nationals (admission through invitation by families or relatives in Korea); other applicants having no familial connections can still apply for a visa but they can be admitted only if vacancy remains unfilled within the total quota.

Entitlement to social rights is identical to both E-9 and H-2 migrant workers, but labour rights are different. Once admitted, the WVP workers can freely seek employment in a wide range of industries (restricted only to unskilled jobs, though). Unlike the general EPS workers, they can access to jobs in the service sector, even in private homes (refer to Chapter 7 for detailed information on the way in which the WVP workers participate in the service sector). On top of that, the WVP workers can change their work places at their will, which is a significant privilege compared to general unskilled migrant workers. No sector-based yearly quota is applied to the WVP but only the total number of migrants (working in Korea) is limited to 303,000 persons.

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<sup>24</sup> The Korean language requirement was abolished in 2011 because the government believed that the test was meaningless (too easy) for co-ethnic applicants but only delayed the procedure to admit them.

**Table 5.11: Comparison between general unskilled labour migration visa (E-9) and ‘Working Visit’ visa (H-2)**

	Working Visit (H-2)	General Unskilled (E-9)
Applicable to	Ethnic Koreans from China or CIS, aged 25 or above	Foreigners from the countries having a formal labour migration agreement with the Korean government
Feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unskilled</li> <li>▪ Short-term and circulatory (3 years + 1 year 10 month)</li> <li>▪ Free job search after orientation(education)</li> <li>▪ Free change of workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unskilled</li> <li>▪ Short-term and circulatory (3 years + 1 year 10 month)</li> <li>▪ Contract before arrival</li> <li>▪ Change of workplace not allowed</li> </ul>
Quota	Total stock limited to 303,000	Sector-based yearly quota
Employment area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manufacturing, construction, agriculture/dairy, fishing, storage, recycling</li> <li>▪ Service (e.g., sales, hospitality and institutional/personal care)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manufacturing, construction, agriculture/dairy, fishing, storage, recycling</li> </ul>
Change to skilled work visa	Conditionally possible	Denied

*Source:* Summarised by the author from MOJ (2015)

### ***Settlement and Integration***

In principle, the WVP migrant workers, like general unskilled workers, are irrelevant to settlement/integration policies. As it is, they will not be able to meet the requirement for settlement. Like the E-9 workers, they can remain only for 4 years 10 months and must leave and come back even in the case that they are to be rehired. However, the Korean government provides legal opportunities through which they can pursue settlement. Firstly, the WVP workers can upgrade their status to an ‘overseas compatriot’ visa (F-4) which guarantees repeated visa renewal without re-entry. With an F-4 visa, securing permanent residence and even naturalisation becomes much easier. To be eligible, they have consecutively worked for over two years for specified industries suffering labour deficit most (refer to Table 5.12). Secondly, the WVP migrants can make a special application for a permanent residence visa (F-5) directly. In this case, conditions are extremely tough: they are expected not only to have longer work record (over 4 years in the certain industries) but to prove they have finance to sustain themselves (equivalent to per capita GNI of the previous year) or licences for skilled work (Table 5.12). It is understandable why the WVP migrants overwhelmingly choose to take the first path for

settlement although the upgrade (to F-4) option is not without its disadvantages, such as losing access to unskilled jobs.

**Table 5.12: Comparison between ‘Overseas Compatriot’ visa (F-4) and ‘Working Visit’ visa (H-2)**

	Working Visit’ (H-2)	Overseas Compatriot (F-4)
Applicable to	Ethnic Koreans from China or CIS, aged 25 or above	Ethnic Koreans who had a Korean nationality in the past, or at least one of their parents or grandparents have (or used to have) a Korean nationality.
Eligibility options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One registered as a Korean nationality when born, and their lineal descendants</li> <li>▪ One invited from a close relative in Korea who is a Korean citizen or a permanent resident</li> <li>▪ One who has greatly contributed to the national interests of Korea</li> <li>▪ Dependent spouse or parents of an overseas study visa (D-2) holder</li> <li>▪ One who used to work in Korea with a H-2 visa and voluntarily returned</li> <li>▪ Among ethnic Koreans who cannot prove their ancestral links: randomly selected within the total quota</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional employed in Korea for more than 6 months</li> <li>▪ Skill license holder</li> <li>▪ Higher degree holder in science and engineering</li> <li>▪ Permanent resident of OECD countries</li> <li>▪ Foreign government official / law maker for more than 5 years</li> <li>▪ Representative of overseas Korean communities</li> <li>▪ Executive officer of a corporation</li> <li>▪ CEO of a corporation (valued more than 100,000 USD)</li> <li>▪ Private investor (more than 100 million KRW)</li> <li>▪ <b>H-2 visa holders who having worked over 2 years for childcare, manufacturing, agriculture/dairy or fishing industries</b></li> </ul>
Labour Right	Restricted to 38 unskilled jobs specified by the government	No restrictions except 38 unskilled jobs specified by the government
Other Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residence: maximum 4 years 10 months, re-entry allowed</li> <li>▪ Family: not allowed except students</li> <li>▪ <b>Settlement: those who having worked over 4 years for manufacturing agriculture/dairy or fishing industries can apply for a permanent resident visa (F-5), if meeting income and/or skill level criteria.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residence: 3 years but repeatedly renewable</li> <li>▪ Family: spouse and minor children are granted visit/stay visa (F-1)</li> <li>▪ Settlement: eligible to apply for a permanent resident visa (F-5)</li> </ul>

*Source:* Summarised by the author from MOJ (2015)

Considering how conscious the Korean government has been about the increase in unskilled labour migrants, it is surprising to see the Korean government taking a very generous and permissive attitude toward the admission and settlement of co-ethnic migrants. To be sure, nationalistic sentiment plays a part because there has been a societal consensus in granting ethnic Koreans living in other countries special treatment including citizenship because many of them left home due to hardships during the

Japanese colonial period (Kong *et al.*, 2010). An official in an interview with the author for the current research legitimised the ethno-specific migration policies by saying:

‘Dongpo’ [a Korean word for co-ethnic migrants] are allowed to come and work more freely in Korea for the purpose of strengthening bonds between them and their mother country [Korea] and fostering good relationship between Korea and the origin country. (Interviewee B, 5 December 2013)

One official in an interview with the author also claimed:

I think favoritism to the migrants of the same ethnicity can be justifiable. Not all foreigners can be accepted as social members to the equal level. So, this type of frame [of ethnic selection] will continue for a while, I believe. (Interviewee A, 2 December 2013)

Pragmatic considerations are also conspicuous. The Basic Plans (IPC, 2008, 2012a) confirm government’s position to continuously promote close ties with overseas Koreans to make the most of their economic potential. The government makes it an explicit rule that co-ethnic migrant workers should be chosen over those with other nationalities, other conditions being equal, by arguing that “co-ethnic migrants can more easily adapt to the Korean society due to their linguistic and cultural similarities” (IPC, 2008: 10). However, it is expected to become increasingly difficult to expect the second and third generation of overseas ethnic Koreans to maintain the same cultural traits (including language). Furthermore, recent serious crimes committed by co-ethnic migrants challenge the very assumption of co-ethnic migrants’ better social integration and ethnicity-based social bond (*Sisafocus*, 2014).

## **5.5. Marriage Migration Policy**

### **5.5.1. Development of Marriage Migration Policy**

One of the most important migration paths to Korea is via marriage. Marriage migration is smaller than unskilled labour migration in size but it has no less significance in that

marriage migrants are generally long-term residents or citizens, having far broader relationship with the society (J Kim *et al.*, 2014). As investigated in the Chapter 4, the growth in marriage migrants results from increasing incidences in international marriages since the mid-1990s due to demographic, social and cultural factors. Although the growth rate of international marriage gradually slowed from 2005, the number of marriage migrants (stock) has been on a steady increase. As of 2014, the number of marriage migrants is 150,994, accounting for 8.4 per cent in all migrant stock.<sup>25</sup> As shown in Table 5.13, the majority of marriage migrants are from nearby Asian countries, including China (40.2 per cent) and Vietnam (26.3 percent), and over 85 per cent of them are female spouses married to Korean males.

**Table 5.13: Marriage migrant population by origin and sex in Korea (stock), 2014**

Nationality	Total		Female	Male
	No. of persons	%		
Total	150,994	100	128,193	22,801
China	60,663	40.2	48,575	12,088
Vietnam	39,725	26.3	39,099	626
Japan	12,603	8.3	11,380	1,223
Philippines	11,052	7.3	10,736	316
Cambodia	4,618	3.1	4,601	17
Thailand	2,675	1.8	2,605	70
Mongolia	2,394	1.6	2,312	82
Other	17,264	11.4	8,885	8,379

Source: KIS (2015)

When the growth in international marriage reached its peak in 2005, marriage migrants' social adaptation and integration began to surface as a new social challenge. Neither the government nor the public has experiences of coping with permanent foreign settlers to this scale and growing ethnic and cultural diversities. Adjustment failure of marriage migrants, represented by the high rate of divorce among mixed-marriage couples and consequent family disintegrations, alarmed the government (MOGEF, 2012). The growing number of marriage migrants' children also emerged as an urgent policy agenda. To address these issues, the Korean government began to

<sup>25</sup> The number of those naturalised from the marriage migration is also significant (accumulatively 101,507 until 2014). Although they are not technically 'migrants' but the government includes them in the settlement and integration policy frame.

systematically intervene from the mid-2000s over the course of recruitment, admission, settlement/integration of marriage migrants and their families.

In 2006, the Korean government first formalised inter-ministerial efforts to manage marriage migrants and their families in the document called the ‘integration support for female marriage migrants and mixed-blood families’ (MOGEF, 2006b). In the following year, the government launched ‘Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea’. The law contains the provisions of special treatments on marriage migrants and their children: “the State and local governments may assist immigrants by marriage and their children in quickly adjusting to Korean society by providing them with education in Korean language, education on Korean institutions and culture, support with child care and education, etc.” (*Article 12*).

A legal framework specifically aiming at marriage migrants/families was established through the legislation of ‘Multicultural Families Support Act’ in 2008. The purpose of the Act is “to help multicultural family members enjoy a stable family life, and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and their integration into society” (*Article 1*). Here the term ‘multicultural family’ was adopted as a legal term to refer to ‘the family comprised of a lawful migrant (or the naturalised) married to a Korean national and their children’. The 2011 amendment of the Act expanded the scope of the definition of ‘multicultural family’ to include naturalised migrants (and their families) under the same policy frame. Adoption of the term ‘multicultural family’ has become a subject of much contention, the discussion of which will follow later. The chapter will first examine the contents of ‘multicultural family policy’.

### **5.5.2. ‘Multicultural Family Policy’**

Complying with ‘Multicultural Families Support Act’, the government is to provide a comprehensive marriage migrants/family policy package known as the ‘Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy’ every five years. The package, in part, addresses the issue on immigration control in accordance with the upper-level immigration governance framework examined earlier in the current chapter, it is mainly concerned with facilitating a quick social adaptation and integration of marriage migrants and families. The first round ran exceptionally for three years from 2010 to 2012, and the five-year



long second round commenced in 2013 with the new government. Table 5.14 summarises the policy ‘goals’ and ‘tasks’ consisting of each Basic Plan. In terms of policy goals, the first plan emphasises *support* for ‘multicultural families’, while the second Basic Plan seems to balance it by stressing migrants’ *contribution* and mutual respects. Despite the change in rhetorical tone in policy goals, the policy tasks remain quite consistent between the two plans.

**Table 5.14: The Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> round compared**

	The 1st Basic Plan (2010-2012)	The 2nd Basic Plan (2013-2017)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for the settlement and the quality of life of ‘multicultural families’</li> <li>▪ Support for children of ‘multicultural families’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance capacity of ‘multicultural families’ as to contribute to social development</li> <li>▪ Build a society respecting cultural diversity</li> </ul>
Strengthen admission control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a policy infrastructure for service delivery</li> <li>▪ Strengthen monitoring on international marriage brokers and entry screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Streamline the delivery system of the ‘multicultural family’ policies to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes</li> </ul>
Facilitate adaptation/integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for the early adaptation of marriage migrants and provide social protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help strengthen family (marriage) life through a close monitoring adaptation/integration process</li> <li>▪ Encourage social and economic participation of marriage migrants</li> </ul>
Support children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build a healthy environment for children of ‘multicultural families’ by providing specialised childcare and education programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for the healthy growth and development of children from ‘multicultural families’</li> </ul>
Raise awareness/acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance societal understanding and acceptance of ‘multicultural families’ and cultural differences through public education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance social acceptance of multicultural families’ and cultural differences through public education</li> <li>▪ Improve social support for cultural diversity</li> </ul>

*Source:* Summarised by the author from MOGEF (2012),

The various policy tasks can be categorised into four policy areas: admission control, adaptation/integration support for marriage migrants, support for their children, and the enhancement of public awareness/acceptance toward ‘multicultural families’. The admission-related policy deals with the marriage migration procedure and the regulation of international marriage brokers is a main issue. The adaptation/integration policy is related to marriage migrants’ smooth life transition and prompt integration to Korean society. Supporting the children of marriage migrants with their successful

adaptation and development is continuously stressed in both Basic Plans. The public awareness/acceptance policy is intended to educate nationals to develop a more accepting attitude toward migrant residents and to build necessary infrastructures for a harmonious coexistence. The most conspicuous addition to the second Basic Plan is the emphasis on marriage migrants' economic participation. Already settled marriage migrants indeed began to express desires to get involved in broader activities including employment. More importantly, the government began to stress 'capacity building' and 'self-help' of marriage migrants, which exactly echoes the notion of 'contribution' and 'responsibility' in the second Basic Plan for Immigration Policy.

### ***Admission and Residency***

International marriages between Korean males and foreign females have grown fast from the early 2000s with the proliferation of private brokers, some of which were believed to be unlicensed or scam (S Park, 2011). The central government had not directly been involved in managing marriage migration at first. Some of the local governments, in an effort to remedy diminishing municipal population, promoted international marriages or often directly engaged in the process, for example, by supporting expenses of travel and marriage ceremonies (J Kim *et al.*, 2014). In the meantime, their growing number and integration issues started attracting public attention. Reported were increasing incidents of agency exploitation, fraud marriages and settlement failure resulting from divorce or runaway. Experts and civil society activists began to call for enhanced management of international marriage (*Law Times*, 2009).

In order to tighten monitoring, the Korean government set up a separate visa type, Marriage Migrants (F-6) in 2011. Previously, marriage migrants were categorised and managed as a sub-category of other types of family (dependant) migrants.<sup>26</sup> The tightening took three forms. Firstly, international marriage brokers are now required to meet a certain level of financial status to maintain their registration, and are subject to regular on-site inspections. Secondly, from 2014 Korean nationals who want to bring a marriage-partner from abroad should prove that they have a minimum level of income according to their family size: for example, 14,795,000 KRW per annum for a couple

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<sup>26</sup> Visa types applicable to marriage migrants: F-1-3 and F-2-1 before 2009; F-2-1 and F-5-2 (after 2010); F-2-1, F-5-2 and F-6 from 2011.

(equivalent to 8,700 GBP) and ‘suitable accommodation’ (KIS, 2014b). The level of the income threshold is slightly higher than the national minimum (approximately the first percentile of all households). Thirdly, proving a basic level of Korean-language proficiency was newly attached as a requirement in 2014. It is worth noting that if the couple applying for a marriage migration visa has a child they can be exempted from both the income screening and the language test (see also Chapter 7).

**Table 5.15: Labour and social rights of marriage migrants in Korea**

Area	Marriage migrants (F-6)	Labour migrants (E-9, H-2)	Permanent resident (F-5)
Labour rights	Full access	Limited to certain skill level and sectors	Full access
Public assistance (tax-funded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basic Livelihood Security</li> <li>▪ Emergency Medical Subsidy</li> <li>▪ Disability Grant</li> <li>▪ Emergency Medical Grant</li> <li>▪ Basic Old-age Pension (conditional)</li> <li>▪ EITC (conditional)</li> </ul>	Not eligible	Not eligible
Social insurance (contributory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Pension System</li> <li>▪ Employment Insurance</li> <li>▪ Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance</li> <li>▪ National Health Insurance</li> <li>▪ Long-Term Care Insurance</li> </ul>	Eligible to all	Eligible to all
Social service (tax-funded with some user-charge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emergency medical support</li> <li>▪ Support to prevent domestic violence and prostitution</li> <li>▪ Support for lone-parent</li> <li>▪ Korean language training service</li> <li>▪ Child development/education support</li> <li>▪ Job finding/training support</li> <li>▪ Other</li> </ul>	Eligible to Emergency medical support	Not eligible

*Source:* Adapted from A-n Kim *et al.* (2012: 56)

Once admitted, marriage migrants can enjoy far greater level of labour and social rights, compared to other prominent labour and family migrant groups (see Table 5.15 above). They are permitted to participate in the labour market without any restrictions. They are also entitled to various social welfare provisions. As mentioned earlier, contributory social assistances are accessible to most migrants; however, unlike labour migrants or even permanent residents, marriage migrants are entitled even to public

assistance benefits for poor households. In addition, extensive social service programmes are provided to them and their families. It is no surprise to see some, including the government itself, criticize that social support on marriage migrant/families has been so far too lenient and unevenly distributed to them, causing reverse discrimination against nationals as well as other groups of migrants (IPC, 2012a: 15). The recent emphasis on the balance between support and contribution seems to be an effort to evade from such criticism.

### ***Settlement and Integration***

The Korean government assists marriage migrants to quickly settle and be naturalised, so, requirements and procedures for permanent residency or naturalisation tend to be less demanding and simpler than other types of migrants. Recently, however, conditions of settlement of marriage migrants have also been tightened. The government in 2013 made it a prerequisite for migrants to obtain a permanent residence visa first and wait at least two years on probation before applying for settlement. In the interim, the government monitors marriage records to prevent ineligible residence. If marriage migrants divorce, either upon agreement or at their primary fault, they are denied residence status. They are exceptionally allowed to remain for a limited time, however, where they are the sole care-givers for Korean-based children. Such measures by the government are effectively squeezing the international marriage market. The families formed through international marriage, however, continue to grow and there are attempts by government to support these families through a programme of integration policies.

In fact, the actual policy resource for the first Basic Plan was disproportionately distributed: the largest slice of funding was devoted to adaptation and integration policies (40 per cent); the second largest on policies to support the children of marriage migrants (31 per cent); and the least on public awareness/acceptance policies (7 per cent) (MOGEF, 2012: 7). It shows that the fast and complete adaptation and integration of marriage migrants and their children into Korean society is a priority of marriage migration policy in Korea. The government expects marriage migrants to embrace a new identity as Korean and it maintains that only those who have ‘a voluntary will to integrate’ will be supported” (IPC, 2012a: 44). So, full membership and related benefits can be granted on the condition of full integration (assimilation, more precisely). The

reasons behind the emphasis on full integration are three-fold. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, marriage migrants are expected to stay. Secondly, marriage migrants have more diverse ethnic backgrounds than labour migrants, which can be a major challenge in Korea's predominantly ethnically and culturally homogenous society. Lastly, but most importantly, marriage migrants' failure in adaptation and integration can jeopardise the entire process of production and reproduction of the Korean family, which, I maintain, is a key rationale of Korea's 'multicultural family' policy (How these measures, combined with welfare/care policies, are related to marriage migrants' various roles in social reproduction to be more closely examined in Chapter 7).

### **5.5.3. 'Multicultural Family Policy' and 'Multiculturalism' Debate in Korea**

A large scale migrant admission and settlement and a consequent ethnic/cultural diversity are something new in Korea, and there were no proper Korean words for the phenomenon. The term 'multicultural family' used to refer to the Korean marriage migrant policy is neither a theoretically-grounded definition nor a direct reference to 'multiculturalism' or 'multicultural policy' as understood in the West (Y-k Kim, 2009; Y-s Lee, 2011). Indeed, it was not academics which popularised the term 'multicultural families' in Korea. Rather, an NGO - 'Healthy Family Citizen Coalition' - in 2003 suggested the expression 'multicultural people' in order to broadly refer to the migrant population and their families as an alternative to the then prevalent expressions of 'mixed race' or 'foreign blood', which have derogative and exclusionary connotations. Since then, the term has been taken up by the policy community, as well as the general public. It is interesting to see how the almost accidental adoption of the term 'multicultural family' has influenced the migration (policy) discourse in Korea ever since.

As Castles and Miller (2009: 34) argue, migrant receiving countries come to develop into somewhere between a multicultural society and a divisive society according to the degree of their openness to migrants' settlement, granting them of citizenship and gradual acceptance of cultural diversity. However, it is not so easy to pinpoint the exact position of the Korean migration regime in this spectrum. Different, often contrasting, policy orientations are mixed up in forming the admission and

settlement/integration policies in Korea (J-y Jung and Jung, 2013; M-j Jung, 2010). Korean scholars tend to frame this policy discrepancy as a tension between multiculturalism and assimilation.

As noted earlier, the Korean government adopted the term ‘multicultural (family) policy’ to describe marriage migrants’ settlement/integration-related programmes, which inevitably triggered a debate over how it can be understood in the light of the existing understanding of ‘multiculturalism’. Multiculturalism is equally rooted in political struggle for ‘minorities’ and challenge against the notion of culturally homogenised nation states; however, states have formulated different modes of policies with the same ingredients (Joppke, 1996). Multiculturalism is typically associated with such elements as ethnically/culturally diversified demographic composition, social ideals positively recognising and respecting socio-cultural diversity, and migration/migrant policies guaranteeing equal opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity and nationality (Troper, 1999 cited from I-J Yoon, 2008: 74). Likewise, the Korean multiculturalism debate stretches across those three dimensions of multiculturalism: phenomenon, ideals and policies (I-J Yoon, 2008).

Despite the absence of explicit acknowledgement, the government seems to accept the ideals and values which multiculturalism entails such as tolerance of diversity, making them integrated in the settlement/integration regime developed in Korea (JT Kim, 2012; Y-s Lee, 2011). Multiculturalism is often positively mentioned by the Korean government as universal human rights or equality (anti-discrimination at least) (S-u Park, 1995; Seol, 1995; I-J Yoon, 2008) and a remedy for Korea’s exclusive nationalism, ethnic-based stereotyping and hostility (AE Kim, 2009b). One congressman in a seminar on a multicultural society hosted in the National Assembly asserted:

We [Koreans] stand at a crossroad. Multiculturalism may open up a new frontier for us. So it is important for Koreans to genuinely accept foreigners residing in Korea as neighbours and to respect them. (*Yonhap News*, 2012)

Another participant in the seminar said:

Respecting and protecting cultural and racial diversities benefit Korea as the biodiversity does to the nature by preventing it from degrading. (*Yonhap News*, 2012)

Approaching multiculturalism as a recognition of and respect for diversity is also found in the two related legislations: “National, municipal, and local governments shall make efforts to take measures such as education, public communication activities, and correction of unreasonable instructions in order to ensure that Koreans and foreigners in Korea understand and respect each other's history, culture and institutions” (*Article 18, Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea, 2007*); “The State and local governments shall take measures, such as education and advocacy activities for understanding diverse cultures, as necessary for preventing social discrimination and prejudice against multicultural families and for encouraging members of society to acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity (*Article 5, Act on the Support for Multicultural Families, 2010*).

With regard to two remaining dimensions, i.e. phenomenon and policies, scepticism arises on whether it is appropriate to use the adjective ‘multicultural’ to refer to the current Korean migration regime. First of all, Korea does not have sufficient demographic and cultural diversity to reach the stage of multiculturalism: the migrant population occupies a comparatively small portion of the total population, around 3.5 per cent, albeit the growth has been rapid and the migrant population is dominated by Korean Chinese and other nationalities from within Asia. Even ethnic Korean labour migrants and marriage migrants may have limited multicultural impact on the society. Ethnic Korean labour migrants are culturally very similar to native Koreans, not to mention that most of them are fluent Korean speakers. Even if marriage migrants are at the centre of the multiculturalism debate, ironically marriage migrants are more likely to become absorbed into the culture and custom of the destination country rather than maintain their own cultural identities, communities and customs (JT Kim, 2012). In this regards, some researchers suggest that Korea is simply a mixed-ethnic country rather than a multicultural country (Jeon, 2012; Joe, 2012).

On top of that, the contents of the Korean ‘multicultural family policy’ are different from those of the traditional migrant destination countries which also term their migration/migrant policies as multicultural policies, notably Australia and Canada, and the UK’s ‘Race Relations Policy’ in the same vein.<sup>27</sup> Migrants under multicultural policies in traditional destination countries are allowed to maintain their distinctive

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<sup>27</sup> Multicultural policies, including the case of the UK, have been increasingly challenged in recent years by higher expectations for integration/assimilation.

cultures and form ethnic minorities as long as they conform to national laws while governments ensure equal treatment and promote successful integration (Castles and Miller, 2009). It is worth noting that (unskilled) labour migrants are the majority in the total migrant population but largely excluded from the ‘multicultural family’ discourse. In fact, the Korean government seems to betray its ideological manifestation of multiculturalism, by denying their family/social rights as well as the chance of long-term residence or settlement (Jeon, 2012; AE Kim, 2009a; Ko, 2008). It remains to be seen whether Korea will go beyond the political rhetoric and eventually harmonise its multicultural ideals with the actual policy implementation in the future.

## **5.6. Discussion and Conclusion**

My examination above has identified characteristics of the Korean migration regime of three major migration routes (migrant categories in each route). Despite the early reluctance and policy failures, the Korean government has quickly developed a comprehensive migration system. In a nutshell, the Korean migration regime can make a typical example of so-called ‘managed migration’ regarding both admission and settlement/integration policies. The Korean government has been actively engaged in managing the migration flow and existing migrants with various policy instruments, making its migration regime multi-faceted. A key instrument is to stratify different migrants by the axes of skill, ethnicity, gender and class, with regard to how they are controlled and what rights they are accorded.

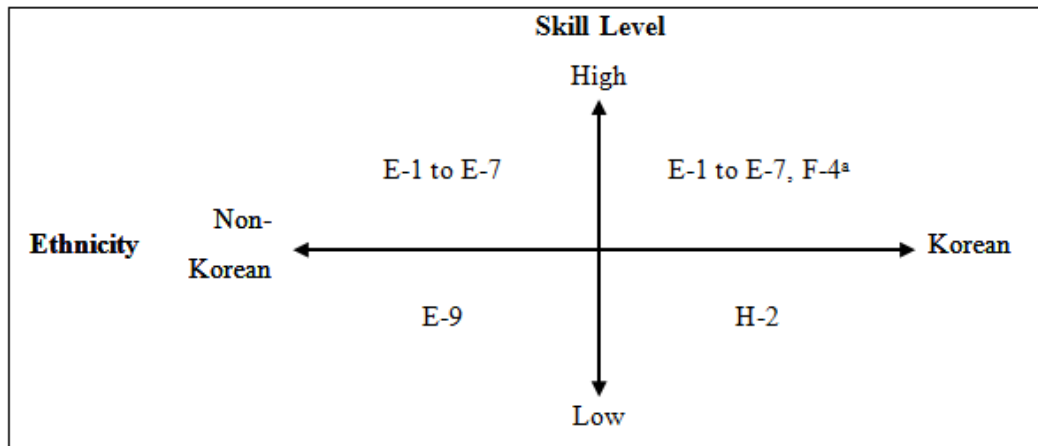
First of all, the Korean migration regime is characterised by a skill level-specific labour migration. Despite the government’s expressed preference over skilled or professional labour migration, unskilled labour migration has dominated the stream. The Korean government takes a ‘dualistic approach’ to reverse this situation by seeking to invite more skilled migrant workers while restricting the number of unskilled workers and the length of their stay (Castles and Miller, 2009: 188). Unskilled migrant workers are highly instrumentalised for the purpose of economic development (Seol and Skrentny, 2009b). They are required to work in designated workplaces during the fixed term lest they disturb the domestic labour market by taking jobs from the native workforce. Tight restriction on applicable industries and quotas are justified in the same



vein. Then every effort is made to make sure their return home after the contract. Fixing their stay up to 4 years and 10 months is one of the government's devices to prevent the settlement of unskilled migrant workers. In countries of origin there is a large pool of unskilled labour migrant candidates wanting to seize an opportunity for a relatively high-paying job in Korea, while employers, in the destination country, have little chance to recruit native-born workers. As long as these structural conditions persist, Korea will soon face a test on whether its temporary worker programme will operate as hoped. Employers and migrants may find ways to prolong their mutual dependence, as happened under European guest worker programmes (Martin, 2013).

Secondly, Korea has developed an ethno-specific migration regime. The government explicitly favours migrants having the same ethnic background by introducing special migration programmes. Co-ethnic migrants are allowed much higher chance of employment and settlement. It is very interesting to see how a democratic nation state which is built on constitutional citizenship actively embraces a certain group of 'foreigners', drawing on a very sentimental notion of 'same blood' and grants them privileges. Discrimination based on nationality has been eradicated to the large extent by law but discrimination based on ethnicity has been newly created (NH-J Kim, 2008). Promoting co-ethnic migration may be seen as Korea's aspiration to maintain a racially and culturally homogeneous nation.

However, this may not always be the case when considering the fact that the Korean government is actively attracting skilled labour migrants and marriage migrants without any ethnic preference attached; rather it is keen on channelling in migrants from so-called 'advanced countries' in the West who have obviously very different racial and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the preference for co-ethnic migrants should be understood in relative terms. They are preferred over other foreigners but they are less desirable than skilled migrants, not to mention the native-born (Seol and Skrentny, 2009a). Admittedly, the Korean government approaches co-ethnic migrants with a very pragmatic consideration: to make the most of cheap(er) labour having minimum adaptation difficulties thanks to geographical, linguistic and cultural proximity (refer to Chapter 4). This explains why co-ethnic migration is most noticeable in the unskilled labour migration in Korea. Putting the first and the second axis of stratification together, the Korean labour migration regime can be illustrated as Figure 5.2.



**Figure 5.2: Labour migration regime of Korea by skill and ethnicity (visa type)**

*Note:* <sup>a</sup> Not all F-4 visa holders are labour migrants.

Thirdly, adding to the axes of skill and ethnicity, Korea has developed a highly gendered structure of migration regime although there is no gender-specific entry control in all migration routes. As set out in Table 5.16, the unskilled labour migration is extremely male dominated whereas the marriage migration is highly feminised and the co-ethnic migration is more evenly distributed. The difference between the general unskilled and co-ethnic labour migration can be explained by the sector restriction of the EPS: co-ethnic migrant workers are granted access to jobs in the service sector which gives female migrants more employment chances, but general unskilled migrant workers are restricted to typically male dominant jobs such as heavy industries and construction. Another pillar of the highly gendered migration pattern in Korea is marriage migration. The major pattern of international marriages in Korea is the marriage between a Korean male and a migrant female.

One thing obvious here is that this extreme feminisation of marriage migration is far from the outcome of natural relations in the private realm of love, considering, for example, unconventionally wide age gaps between partners. The overall condition around marriage migration looks very similar to the phenomenon known as ‘mail-order bride’, although it is becoming more regulated than commercialised in Korea now (H-K Lee, 2008). As analysed in Chapter 4, the dimension of political economy is at work in the national and international levels here: most female marriage migrants are from nearby poorer Asian countries and they get married to Korean males who have

relatively disadvantageous social and economic backgrounds. So the Korean migration regime is also ‘classed’ as much as gendered in both labour and family migration.

**Table 5.16: Gender structure in the Korean migration regime, 2013 (person)**

	Total	Male	%	Female	%
General unskilled (E-9)	246,695	223,117	90.4	23,578	9.6
Co-ethnic Unskilled (H-2)	240,168	136,342	56.8	103,826	43.2
Marriage (F-6)	116,917	17,895	15.3	99,022	84.7

*Source:* KIS (2014a)

To conclude, I argue that a migration regime is ultimately related to how a country defines its membership. The criteria regarding skill level, ethnicity, gender and class dictate the nation state’s membership selection (Baral, 2011). The Korean government is also extremely cautious on deciding ‘who can be legitimate members’. The government, on the one hand, wants to make sure that the migration growth may not undermine a cohesive national identity (Parreñas and Kim, 2011), and, on the other hand, it is motivated by pragmatic considerations. In doing so, the government privileges co-ethnic migrants (preferably skilled) and marriage migrants. It is important to note that the Korean government needs migrants for their productive contribution to complement the labour deficit, but it needs them for reproductive labour as well to replenish the demographic and care deficit. This is particularly the case for female migrants. Their varied reproductive activities are conditioned not just by the migration regime but also by the other policy areas, (social) care policy, most significantly. The next chapter investigates the regime of care provision in Korea, which allows us to ultimately examine how those two policy regimes intersect in formulating the reproductive labour of migrants.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CARE REGIME OF KOREA**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter investigates the patterns and changes of (social) care policies in the Korean welfare state<sup>28</sup>. The chapter starts with overviewing the development of core social security programmes and illuminates the characteristics of the Korean welfare (state) regime by engaging with the existing welfare state regime discussions (Section 6.2). Against this broad backdrop, Section 6.3 discusses changes in the society and the policy environment specifically around the issue of ‘care’. The section examines how demographic, socio-cultural and economic factors have contributed to forming the ‘care crisis’ in Korea. Then it explains how the Korean government has approached the care crisis (care reform platform) and how we can best understand the care reforms (analytical frame). Drawing on this knowledge, Section 4 and 5 closely analyses how care responsibility has been (re)distributed on the macro-level (between the state, the market and the family) and the micro-level (between mothers and fathers in home) respectively through various policy instruments. In the last section, I summarise the findings and discuss how the current Korean care regime is producing mixed results with different groups and in different levels, and how the evolving characteristics of the Korean welfare state regime are embedded in the recent care reforms.

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<sup>28</sup> The welfare state in this chapter refers to a set of public policies and institutions that aim to protect citizens against varied social contingencies. This does not, however, necessarily presume the adequate level or coverage of social protection in it.

## 6.2. The Korean Welfare State

### 6.2.1. Development of the Social Security System in Korea

The welfare state in Korea is termed by law as a ‘social security’ system (Framework Act on Social Security). The Korean social security system currently consists of five ‘social insurances’, one ‘public assistance’ and varied types of ‘social (welfare) services’ (Table 6.1). The social insurance programmes include the ‘National Pension System (NPS)’, the ‘Employment Insurance (EI)’, the ‘Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance (IACI)’, and the ‘National Health Insurance (NHI)’ and the ‘Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI)’. The primary function of the NPS, the EI and the IACI is income maintenance, while the NHI and the LTCI are for health and personal care. The ‘Basic Livelihood Security (BLS)’ and the ‘Basic Old-age Pension (BOP)’ can be grouped as public assistance programmes. Both the BLS and the BOP are tax-funded and means-tested welfare programmes, which aim at guaranteeing the minimum standard of livelihood of citizens. Social services incorporate a variety of public programmes, which are usually co-financed with tax and user payments and typically target children, older people and the disabled.

**Table 6.1: Structure of the Korean social security system**

Social Insurances	Public Assistances	Social Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Pension System</li> <li>▪ Employment Insurance</li> <li>▪ Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance</li> <li>▪ National Health Insurance</li> <li>▪ Long-Term Care Insurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basic Livelihood Security</li> <li>▪ Basic Pension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welfare services for children, older people and the disabled</li> <li>▪ Medical social work</li> <li>▪ Welfare Services for women and family</li> <li>▪ Other services</li> </ul>

*Source:* NHI website, <http://www.nhis.or.kr/static/html/wbd/g/a/wbdga0301.html> (accessed on 13 March 2015)

The Korean welfare state took its root in the early 1960s. Starting from special pension schemes for both civil servants (in 1960) and the military personnel (in 1962), the Korean government subsequently introduced social insurance programmes: the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance (IACI) in 1964, the National Health

Insurance (NHI) in 1977, the National Pension System (NPS) in 1988 and the Employment Insurance (EI) in 1995. These social insurances have all gone through several reformation stages. They were usually made available to the workers in major companies and the public sector first due to the relative easiness of introduction, administration and financing as well as their strategic importance in industrialisation and politics (refer also to the sub-section 6.2.2), and then the coverage was gradually expanded.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, the development of public assistance has been less dramatic. The first public assistance programme, the Livelihood Protection (LP) enacted in 1961 had remained largely unchanged until a whole new programme called the Basic Livelihood Security (BLS) finally replaced it in 2000. The BLS is regarded as one of the landmark welfare reforms of the economic crisis-time administration (1998 to 2003), in that the BLS, for the first time in Korea, guarantees the national minimum regardless of demographic conditions or workability<sup>30</sup>. The significance of the BLS as a last-resort social safety net, nevertheless, is often challenged. The most contested issue is that it prioritises family care responsibility by mandating a means-test on other family members to decide the entitlement. In principle, the BLS disqualifies those who have other immediate family members (parents, children and sons/daughters-in-law) deemed to have sufficient resources to support themselves and the poor family members.

Most recent social security legislations in Korea are elderly-related: the Basic (Old-age) Pension (BP) and the Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI). The Korean government introduced a non-contributory flat rate income support, called the Basic Old-age Pension, in 2008 to support the livelihood of older people (aged 70 or over) whose income level is at or lower than the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile. Given that the national pension was fully universalised only from 1999, many older people will have failed to meet the minimum contribution period (20 years) for the full pension benefit by the time they retire. The government aims to prevent them from falling into old-age poverty

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<sup>29</sup> For example, the NHI was first implemented in 1977 with the public sector workers including private school teachers and the workers in major enterprises (having 500 or more employees). It was not until 1989 when the programme finally covered the whole population. The NPS started with salaried workers in 1988 and then gradually expanded to include the workers in smaller businesses and the self-employed, making it a proper *national* pension in 1999. The expansion of the EI, however, was much quicker - it reached every single employee in just three years of introduction- than other social insurances in an effort to mitigate the impact of the economic downturn and the labour market restructuring during the Asian economic crisis of 1997.

<sup>30</sup> Those who are able to work should participate in workfare programmes to become entitled to the BLS.

by supplementing their income through this basic pension benefit. In 2014, the government reformed the programme and changed its name to the Basic Pension: the age threshold was lowered to 65, and the benefit level was doubled to 200,000 KRW per month (equivalent to 118 GBP)<sup>31</sup>. The Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) was also introduced in 2008 in an attempt to alleviate the care burden of families. The LTCI is a social insurance which specifically aims to address the care needs of older people aged over 65 having geriatric diseases or frailty. The LTCI benefit is non-means-tested, so the degree of disability (difficulty living independently) is the only eligibility criterion. The LTCI, together with the recently expanded childcare services, is a main pillar of the Korean social care system. Both are to be examined in greater detail further below.

To sum up, by 2008 Korea had rapidly become equipped with core social security programmes - social insurance, public assistance, and social services, which can be found in advanced welfare states. The development of the Korean social security system, however, has been dominated by social insurance programmes. Social insurance has been favoured by the successive Korean governments partly because it can be an effective tool to protect productive labour without requiring a huge contribution from the government. Social programmes for 'non- or less- productive' populations such as older people and children began to develop only from very recently. The development of the Korean welfare state has not been a linear process but a dynamic one in which different policy ideas and rationales have competed under the given socio-economic and political situations. Then how can we make sense of the development trajectory of the Korean welfare state and the patterns of its social policies? The next section addresses this question.

### **6.2.2. Evolution of the Korean Welfare (State) Regime**

Before 1990s, East Asian countries were largely ignored in the study of the welfare state and regime typology with few exceptions such as C Jones (1990) or Midgley (1986). Following Esping-Andersen (1990), studies of East Asian welfare have gradually expanded in volume, earning an important place in comparative social policy (Esping-

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<sup>31</sup> The benefit level, however, is no more a flat rate but varies (minimum 100,000 KRW) in accordance with the income level.



Andersen, 1999; Hudson and Kühner, 2009; Ku and Jones, 2007). The focus of the debate has been whether East Asian countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Hong-Kong and/or Singapore can be fitted into the original welfare state triad of Esping-Andersen (1990) together with Japan, or whether they can form an additional distinctive regime type (Ku and Jones, 2007).

Findings have yet been incongruent. Powell and Kim (2014) identified six different ways suggested so far to categorise the Korean welfare state: ‘liberal’, ‘conservative’, ‘hybrid’, ‘the East Asian welfare model as the fourth regime’, ‘the East Asian welfare model as a distinct regime’ and ‘underdeveloped’. Furthermore, some are sceptical of making a homogenous constellation within East Asia (Ramesh, 1995; White and Goodman, 1998). This sub-section does not intend to further engage with the welfare state modelling literature; instead, it aims to highlight the commonly observed characteristics of the Korean welfare (state) regime and trace its evolutionary path.

For those scholars who consider Korea (and aforementioned East Asian states) to have a distinctive welfare regime, a leading approach is to frame the Korean welfare state as ‘a developmental welfare state’ (SK Kim and Kim, 2008; H-j Kwon, 2007a; Y-J Lee and Ku, 2007) or ‘a productive (or productivist) welfare state’ (Holliday, 2000; Hudson and Kühner, 2009, 2012; Kuhnle, 2002; Wilding, 2008). The two terms are used interchangeably more often than not. For example, Holliday (2000) and Gough (2001) share the same components in their definitions of ‘the productive welfare capitalism’ and ‘the developmental welfare state’, for example, a subordinate position of social policy to economic policy.<sup>32</sup> Both terms take ‘the political economy approach’ (Powell and Kim, 2014) and denote overarching policy logics of the macro-economic management of a state and social policy implementation. A main analytical element in both frames is the relationship between development and welfare, or between economic policy and social policy (Gough, 2001; Holliday, 2000).

However, it is also possible to distinguish both terms by their conceptual origins and ranges. Midgley and Tang (2001), for example, find the early root of the concept ‘developmental welfare’ from the late nineteenth century interventionism challenging the dominance of laissez-faire and Social Darwinist theories. In the East Asian context,

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<sup>32</sup> Holliday’s conceptualisation of the productivist welfare capitalism is one of the broadest, and he suggested three different forms of the productivist welfare state: facilitative, developmental-universalist, and developmental particularistic (Holliday, 2000: 710).

the idea of ‘developmental welfare state’ can find its origin from the term ‘developmental states’ which was coined to describe the governmental strategy for an efficient industrialisation exemplified by Japan since the mid-1920s, and subsequently emulated by other Asian economies (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000; Johnson, 1999; White, 1988). In this sense, ‘developmental state’ at least in the East Asian context can be understood as certain logics or patterns of the macro-economic management of a state, but the state is not necessarily the ‘welfare’ state. On the other hand, ‘productive (productivist) welfare state’ is more directly related to the pattern of the welfare state whose policy orientations emphasise workfare, self-reliance, investment in human capital and the effectiveness of social policies.

I consider the term ‘a developmental welfare state’ is more appropriate for Korea before the 1997 economic crisis and ‘a productive welfare state’ after the crisis, although I do not think they are clear-cut periodisations or mutually exclusive approaches. The Korean security system became more fully institutionalised during and after the crisis period. In addition, the term ‘productive welfare’ has a direct historical reference point in Korea which is when the former President Kim Dae-jung mentioned ‘productive welfare’ as a new national vision in the National Liberation Day speech on 15 August 1999.

### ***A developmental welfare state: development first***

The early history of the Korean (welfare) state was characterised by its developmental aspects. According to Gough (2001: 178), a developmental state can be defined “as a state where elite policy makers set economic growth as the fundamental goal and pursue a coherent strategy to achieve it. This can be combined with different social policies, but all entail the explicit subordination of social policy to economic policy and economic growth”. There is nothing new, of course, to view social policy as an instrument for promoting economic competitiveness. For example, Titmuss (1974) and Furniss and Tilton (1977) suggested that such a view of the purpose of social policy marked out a particular type of welfare state - the ‘industrial achievement-performance’ model in Titmuss’ terms and the ‘positive’ state in the terms of Furniss and Tilton. In the ‘industrial achievement-performance’ model, the purpose of social policy is to provide the minimum standard of social security, but social policy remains secondary to the

economy. In the 'positive' state, social welfare exists to the extent it does not hinder the economic objectives of growth and efficiency.

Indeed, the subordinate positioning of social policy is the first characteristic of the Korean developmental state. From 1960 Korea adopted developmentalism as a macro-economic management strategy with a strong emphasis on the strategic role of the government (White, 1988; Woo-Cumings, 1999 Tang, 2000). A wide range of policies has been devoted through the various government interventions with the sole purpose of successful industrialisation. The belief that economic development and its trickling down in the long run is the best way to deliver social welfare for people was politically supported. Nevertheless, social (welfare) policy was not rejected but adopted in a way which would serve the developmental goals (H-j Kwon, 2007a). In fact, many social programmes were introduced at much lower levels of socio-economic development than the European countries (Hort and Kuhnle, 2000), or at the point when neither party politics nor leftist social movement were strong enough (Aspalter, 2006).

However, social programmes were carefully targeted and selectively implemented by the government. It is a shared characteristic of the East Asian developmental states to privilege politically important interest groups in the application of social security benefits and the control of governmental spending (Tang, 2000). Military personnel, civil servants and employees from major companies/industries became the first beneficiaries of social programmes because they were strategically important not only for strengthening the legitimacy of the authoritarian governments (1960 to 1987), but also for the continuous economic development (Aspalter, 2006). As highlighted earlier, Korea first introduced contributory social insurance programmes while denying or delaying the introduction of tax-funded or more universal social programmes including social assistance and social services up until recently. It is argued that the social insurance based social security system could effectively minimise the state's financial input by avoiding universalised social entitlement while ensuring industrial stability (H-j Kwon, 2007a, 2007b).

Limited state input in social welfare necessitated a heavy reliance on the family and the market for the welfare resource including care. As Abu Sharkh and Gough (2010) suggest, if we take a 'welfare regimes' approach rather than the 'welfare state regimes' approach, the importance of other welfare contributors become more prominent in the welfare mix in Korea (see also JW Kim, 2004). Despite the variety of

social programmes introduced, the level of social expenditure has been very low, failing to reach even half of the OECD average (refer to Appendix 6.1). Although Korea had nearly all types of social security programmes in place before 1998, the role of the Korean state in welfare provision was largely limited to a ‘regulator’ of the social security system rather than a ‘provider’ or a ‘financer’ (Shin, 2000). In this regard, we may call Korea in this period merely ‘a developmental state’ rather than ‘a developmental *welfare* state’.

### ***A productive welfare state: balance between development and welfare***

The developmental (welfare) state of Korea was seriously challenged from the late 1990s. The Asian economic crisis of 1997 provided a critical juncture which revealed the fundamental limitations of the Korean welfare state based on the assumptions of continuous economic development and full employment. When the unemployment rate sharply rose and the economic growth rate plummeted from 1998 (refer to Appendix 6.2), the legitimacy, as well as the accumulation function, of the Korean developmental welfare state was seriously undermined. An intense neoliberal economic restructuring process ensued as mandated by the World Bank and the IMF as conditionality to the bailout loans. The social security system turned out to be far too weak to successfully absorb impacts from the economic crisis and the economic restructuring. Demand for fundamental welfare reforms was mounting from inside and outside.<sup>33</sup>

Although the Korean economy began to recover, the policy rationale of ‘development first’ and (re)distribution later through trickle-down was fast losing political support. So the relationship between development and welfare needed redefining. The crisis time administration (1998 to 2003) formally adopted ‘productive welfare’ as a new paradigm for the Korean welfare state. The Korean government began to emphasise a balance between economic growth and welfare (YH Kim, 2003). Under this paradigm, the status of social policy was elevated from a subordinate position to an indispensable partnership with economic policy (Office of the President, 1999). A series of social programmes were either substantially reformed or newly adopted during this period. The nature and form of those programmes were varied: from workfare to social investment; from selective to universal programmes. The rapid expansion of the welfare

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<sup>33</sup> Strengthening the social safety net was actually included in the Structural Adjustment Programmes (see World Bank, 2000).

state in the midst of a severe economic constraint and a neo-liberal economic restructuring may seem unexpected or even “paradoxical” (H-j Kwon, 2007a; S Kwon and Holliday, 2007). However, as mentioned above, it was an inevitable result of the urgent necessity for stronger social programmes in order not only to deal with acute social problems caused by the economic crisis but also to facilitate the economic restructuring process to restore the economy to its pre-crisis state.

The mixed adoption of social programmes of different natures/forms under the slogan of ‘productive welfare’ made researchers form dividing opinions on the exact (regime) character of the Korean welfare state. It can make a comparable case with the New Labour’s ‘third way’ which was not coherently applied across different policy sectors, but used as a pragmatic and “pick and mix” strategy (Powell, 2000: 57). The Korean government acknowledged that the productive welfare had been essentially informed from the ideas of ‘the third way’ of Giddens (1998) and the related policy reforms of the advanced welfare states (Office of the President, 1999). However, I am sceptical of equalising the ‘productive welfare’ of the Kim administration with ‘the third way’ because the context of each was totally different. In the Korean history, there had been neither the first way (a genuinely liberal/neo-liberal capitalism) nor the second way (a fully-fledged welfare state) policies to reform through the third way. Until the point when the productive welfare regime was declared, only one way had existed in modern Korea, developmentalism.

The legacy of the developmental welfare state was not completely phased out by the productive welfare regime (SK Kim and Kim, 2008). The productive welfare approach, however, marked the shift in a dominant welfare rationale in Korea from the previous governments’ residual and reluctant stance toward social welfare to a more universal and positive one. By the end of the 1990s, for example, the main purpose of social insurances had shifted from its original aim, from a tool for limited social risk pooling for core workers in key industries and professional groups to a system for wider social risk pooling *and* income redistribution. Thus even if the structure of Korean welfare regime may seem unaltered, its policy purposes have changed significantly (Peng, 2009; Peng and Wong, 2008). Some may be reluctant to call it a total paradigm shift (YH Kim, 2003), yet, it seems obvious that Korea is making a rapid move toward a more universal welfare state in which government’s greater welfare responsibility is acknowledged (Y-M Kim, 2008; Kuhnle, 2002).

### *A social investment welfare state?*

I do not object to labelling the current Korean welfare state regime a productive (or productivist) regime, but the evolution of the regime continued, adding new elements. The ideas and institutions of productive welfare of the Kim Dae-jung government (1998 – 2003) was succeeded by the Roh Moo-hyun administration (2003 – 2008). Staying in the same line with the productive welfare to a large degree, the new government staged ‘social investment’ as a new welfare paradigm (Government-Civil Joint Taskforce, 2006). Valuing social investment, of course, is not an entirely new element to the Korean welfare state history. As Gough (2004) stresses, the focus of productivist social policy is social investment rather than social protection - the traditional focus of western social policy. However, the social investment approach from the mid-2000s in Korea became more explicit and developed some novel elements, reflecting a changing policy environment. The Roh government started with multiple challenges: the economic performance was not as great as hoped, and poverty and income-inequality were ever worsening; besides, the total fertility rate continued to decline, making ageing and care needs rising social concerns (Peng, 2011b). In these contexts, social investment was welcomed as a comprehensive solution to save the economy, the welfare state as well as the regime’s political stability.

The policy report ‘Vision 2030’ was a policy blueprint of the Roh Moo-hyun administration’s social investment welfare state. In ‘Vision 2030’, the government argued that welfare is not consumption but investment for humans and a sustainable economy (Government-Civil Joint Taskforce, 2006). The social investment strategy typically emphasises human capital development and activation policies, and children and (inactive) women are primary considerations (Esping-Andersen, 2002; Lister, 2003). Likewise, ‘Vision 2030’ targeted children and women (or broadly ‘family’) (H-S Yoon, 2011). Universal childcare and (re)training of the inactive workforce (especially of females) were mentioned as major policy measures (Government-Civil Joint Taskforce, 2006). Although the expression ‘social investment’ became less frequently used officially since then, subsequent administrations of Lee Myung-bak (2008 - 2013) and Park Geun-hye (2013 - to present) inherited the policy directions suggested in ‘Vision 2030’ to a large degree regarding care and women (family) policies, although they are ideologically different (conservative) from the Roh government. One social care policy

expert in an interview with the author for the current research explained why social investment gained wide political support:

The social investment discourse was formally introduced for the Roh government's social policy. The idea that welfare can be an investment appealed to both the left and the right; both social [welfare] experts and economists. In addition, policies to support children and women served as a powerful populism for both progressive and conservative governments. Consequently, there was little political conflict in adopting the social investment strategy. (Interviewee E, 2 May 2015)

The Korean government began to see care as an effective solution to address a variety of social issues such as low-fertility, population ageing, obstacles against women's employment, poverty and gender equality (Peng, 2011b). Furthermore, care can create jobs when the social service market is formed both for children and older people. In fact, the government highlighted welfare (care) as "a new growth engine for the sustainable economic development" (Government-Civil Joint Taskforce, 2006: 39). Here the relationship between welfare and economy (development) was redefined once again. Their relationship was more positively framed than in the productive welfare regime: welfare not just assists the development but it can also actively *generate* and *sustain* the development. So, social policy was no more subordinate to economic policy in Korea and it began to be approached as an essential element for the nation's social and economic sustainability. In this regard, 'social investment state' rather than productivist welfare state may be a more appropriate term to describe the social policy developments since 2003 (Wilding, 2008).

I suggest that the path from the developmental welfare state to the productive welfare state and/or the social investment welfare state be understood as a continuum with overlapping rather than separate phases. So far welfare regime scholars' portrayals of the Korean welfare (state) regime have tended to be somewhat static. I do not suggest that the path of the regime development in Korea has been a natural or autonomous process, since there have always been political and ideological forces competing one another. However, the development of regimes did happen path-dependently under the given socio-economic and political situations. What I highlight here is the fact that the development of the Korean welfare (state) regime should be viewed as dynamic and evolutionary in nature. Only in doing so, we can fully understand why care has become

a centre piece of the recent welfare reformations in Korea and how different regime approaches have been applied to different care policies.

### **6.3. Care and the Korean Welfare State**

#### **6.3.1. Mainstreaming of Care in Korea**

As argued in the literature review chapter (Chapter 2), ‘care’ is a central element in explaining the transformation of contemporary welfare states. The Korean welfare state is not an exception. As a domain of the welfare state policy activities, “care has been of varying significance historically in terms of how it has been approached by public policy” (Daly and Lewis, 2000: 290). Historically speaking, care had not taken up an important position within the Korean welfare state until the late-1990s. Compared to social insurances and public assistances, social (care) services for children, older people and the disabled in Korea has been slower to develop despite gradual improvements (Peng, 2011a). The absence of both public and (affordable) private market sources of care had rendered the family the only viable source of personal care in Korea until the significant remodelling of social care policies started from the early- 2000s (S-H Lee, 2013; Peng, 2009).

This underdevelopment of care originates from institutional and cultural legacies of the Korean welfare state. As reviewed earlier, the successive governments in Korea have developed a social insurance-centred social security system which makes contributions a condition for social entitlement (H-j Kwon, 2007b). As social entitlement was predominantly attached to productive labour and contribution, the economically inactive, i.e., ‘unproductive’, population such as children, not-working women and older people were largely marginalised from the formal welfare state provision. Furthermore, the Korean culture traditionally normalised the view that care is a private (or family) matter and (female) family members should assume primary care roles. Combined with the social insurance-based social security system and the familialistic care culture, the Korean welfare state has not only reinforced stratification based on status in the labour market, but also encouraged a gendered division of male-breadwinner (production regime) and unpaid female care giver (reproduction regime) in



Korea. The Korean government hardly expressed any intention to collectivise care until the point when it realised that the assumptions of the male breadwinner/female housewives model and unpaid family/female care input could not be taken for granted any more (see Sub-section 6.3.2).

Entering into the new millennia, the policy environment around care began to rapidly change. Having major social programmes already in place, care, gender equality, and social (welfare) services were surfacing as huge and urgent social policy issues. The Korean government launched several task-forces and even established a separate ministry to address those issues.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the Kim and Roh governments located social care provision in a wider perspective of gender equality/relations rather than a simply an area of social service (S-H Lee, 2013).<sup>35</sup> When the conservative government took office in 2008 in Korea, people initially feared that welfare retrenchment would follow, but the government not only stayed on the same social policy track with the previous progressive governments, but also further expanded social care in its commitment to social investment (Peng, 2011b).

In fact, care began to dominate Korean politics and remains a high priority today. Korean policy makers become increasingly interested in ‘care’, ‘women’s economic participation’ and ‘gender equality’. This is because, in part, the social and political expectation has been increasing for the welfare state to make ‘gender equality’ an explicit policy goal (Daly and Lewis, 2000). Promoting women’s (equal) employment emerged not just as an economic issue but it also became part of the ‘equality agenda’ in Korean politics along with democratisation and liberalisation, as in the case of the ‘second wave of feminism’ in the 1960s to 70s (Williams, 2002). Conversely, the supply of women’s paid labour is related to the concerns over the supply of their care labour because women’s changing roles both in the family and in the market have especially important implications on the balance between care demand and supply (Daly and Lewis, 2000: 290-1).

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<sup>34</sup> ‘Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF)’ was established in 2001, which specialised in operating women and family-related policies for children, young adults and migrant families.

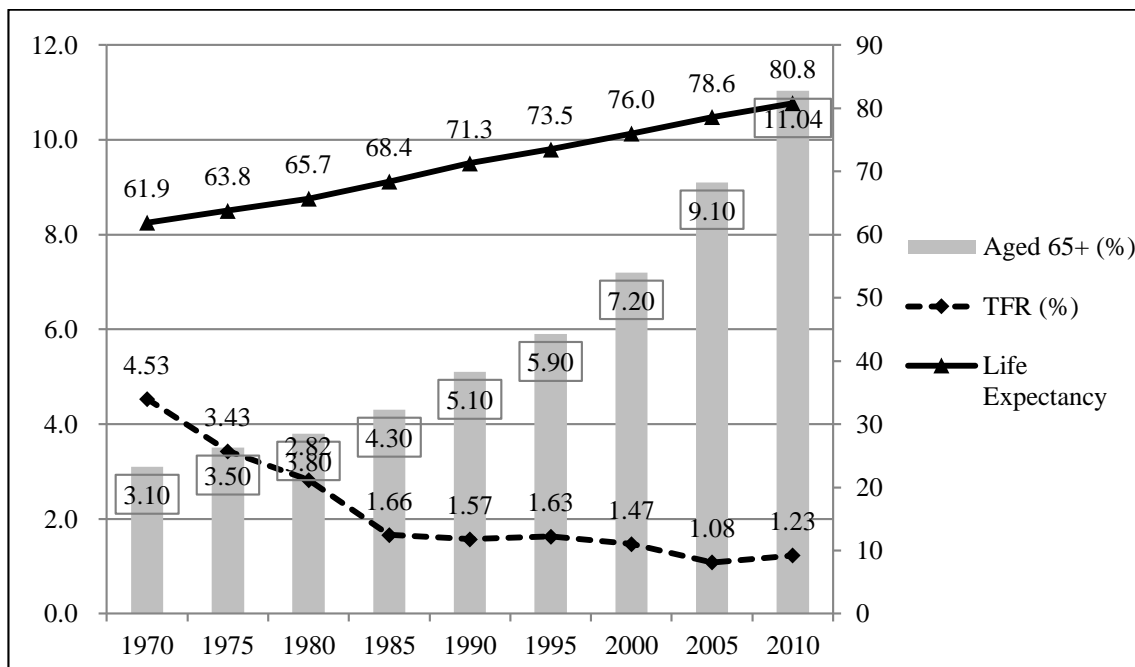
<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to note that the Roh government transferred the childcare duty from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) to the Ministry of Gender and Equality (currently, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family) in 2004 in order to deal with childcare from a gender mainstreaming perspectives. Although the MOHW took the care duty back in 2008, the incident shows the intensified politicisation on care and gender issues in Korea (for the detailed discussion of gender politics between the ministries at that time, see S-H Lee, 2013).

### 6.3.2. Care Crisis in Korea

The changing policy environment propelling the recent politicisation of care in Korea since the early-2000s can be summarised as a ‘crisis of care’. The crisis comes from the growing care deficit to which various factors from both the demand side and the supply side have contributed. For example, a number of demographic and economic factors can act as pressures to increase demand for care whereas socio-cultural factors can effectively decrease the supply of care (Daly and Lewis, 2000; Lister *et al.*, 2007). This sub-section investigates how Korea has been experiencing its own care crisis and what factors have been involved in it.

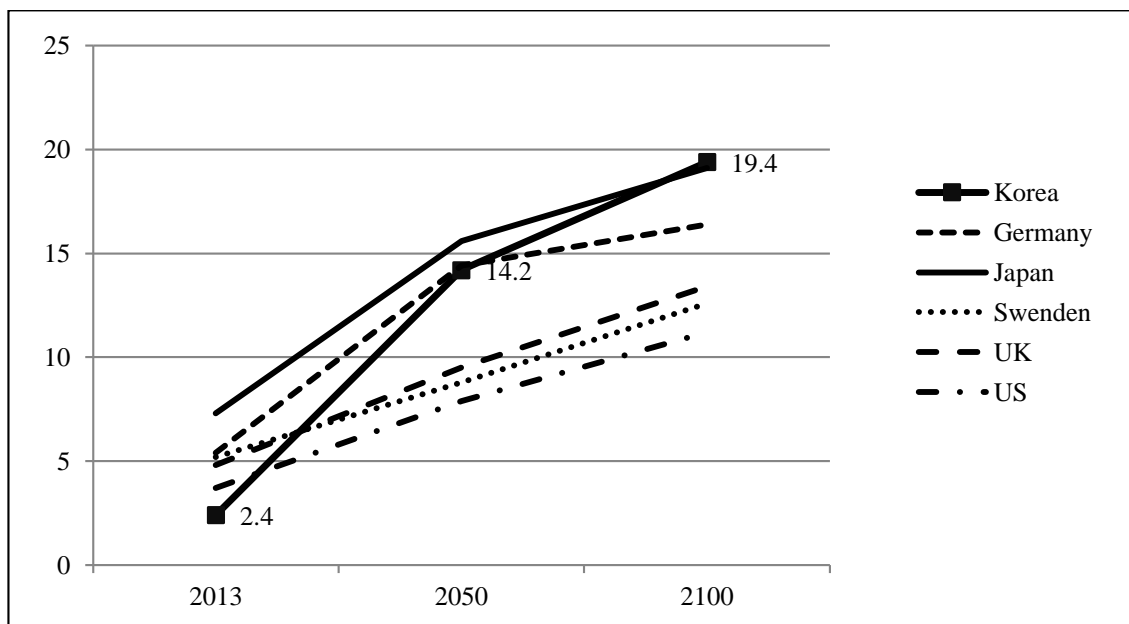
#### *Demographic factors: declining fertility and population ageing*

A shift in the demographic profile is one of the leading factors contributing to the care crisis in Korea. Demographic ageing is a shared experience in most advanced countries and some developing countries as well, but what sets Korea apart is its rapid speed of ageing. As shown in Figure 6.1, the combination of the declining fertility rate and the extended life expectancy has rapidly transformed Korea into one of the fastest ageing societies. The current figure 12.2 per cent does not rank high among the OECD countries (refer to Appendix 6.3) but the ageing speed is remarkable. What worries the government most is the ageing projection: the figure is expected to reach 24 per cent in 2030 unless the current fertility rate significantly improves (Statistics Korea, 2014a). The expected increase in the highly aged population (aged 80 or above) in Korea is much more striking (Figure 6.2). According to the UN’s scenario (UN-DESA, 2013b), the proportion of the highly aged group in Korea is expected to reach 19.4 per cent in 20 years, making Korea one of *the* most aged societies in the world. The Korean government has been profoundly alarmed by this demographic transition and projections, fearing that fast ageing with the extremely low fertility may significantly undermine the nation’s economic potential by shrinking the productive population while increasing ‘burden’ of social welfare (care) for older people (Government of Korea, 2005, 2010).



**Figure 6.1: Ageing trend in Korea (% age)**

Source: Compiled by the author from Statistics Korea (2014a); e-National Index, *TFR*, *Life index*, <http://www.index.go.kr> (accessed on 5 April 2015)



**Figure 6.2: Projections on the percentage of the population aged 80 or over, selected countries (%)**

Source: UN-DESA (2013b: 23-6)

*Socio-cultural factors: diversifying family forms and changing attitudes toward family life and care*

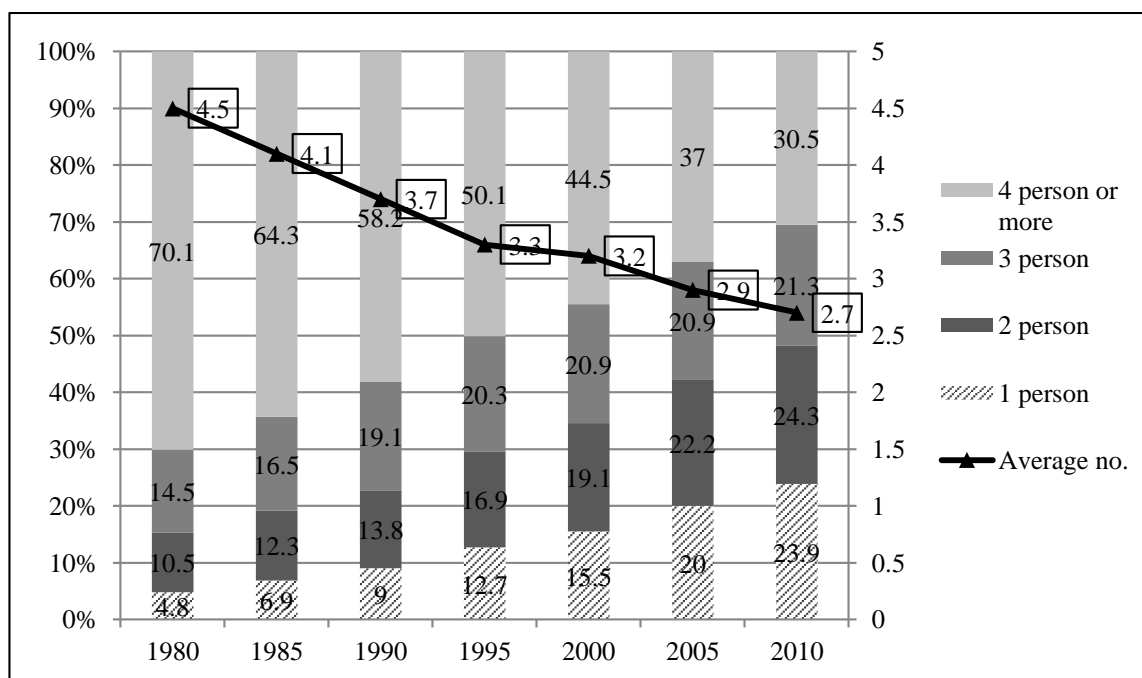
The Korean welfare state has long assumed a family structure where the father, as a household head, earns a living while the mother, often as a daughter-in-law, cares for cohabitant family members. This assumption has been challenged by the changes in the form and the composition of the family, which in turn have a significant impact on the demand and the supply of care. The first noticeable change in the family over the recent past in Korea is the gradual shrinking of the family size. As shown in Figure 6.3, the average household size has reduced by half between 1980 and 2010. The decline of the average family size has resulted from the dramatic increase in the one-person households, combined with a gradual decrease in the multi-person households. Declining of large families is directly related to the gradual decrease in the multi-generation households (Statistics Korea, each year).

These changes in the family size and generation compositions can have especially significant implications on older people. As presented in Figure 6.4, the percentage of older people living together with their children sharply decreased: older people are increasingly living independently either as a couple or alone. Living separately from their children does not necessarily mean that older people do not receive care from their children anymore. However, the shrinking household size and declining proximity among families can mean the reduced availability of personal care by family members, especially in the case of one-person households. In addition, as traditional care relations between the family members cannot be automatically presumed, the older people may require more non-kinship based care sources. Until this point, I have tended to construct older people as primarily ‘care-receivers’; however, their roles in care provision for partners and grandchildren has been significant in terms of frequency and length (KEIS, 2012: 61). In this regard, changes in forms of the family can affect the way in which care is provided in multiple directions.

Another significant change in the family is the increase in female-headed households. Figure 6.5 shows the number of female-headed households and their marital statuses. Here ‘female-headed household’ refers to a family unit in which a female adult is responsible for the livelihood of other co-living members. Until the mid-1990s, female-headed households resulted typically from the death of the male household heads (usually the husband or the father), but recently reasons have become

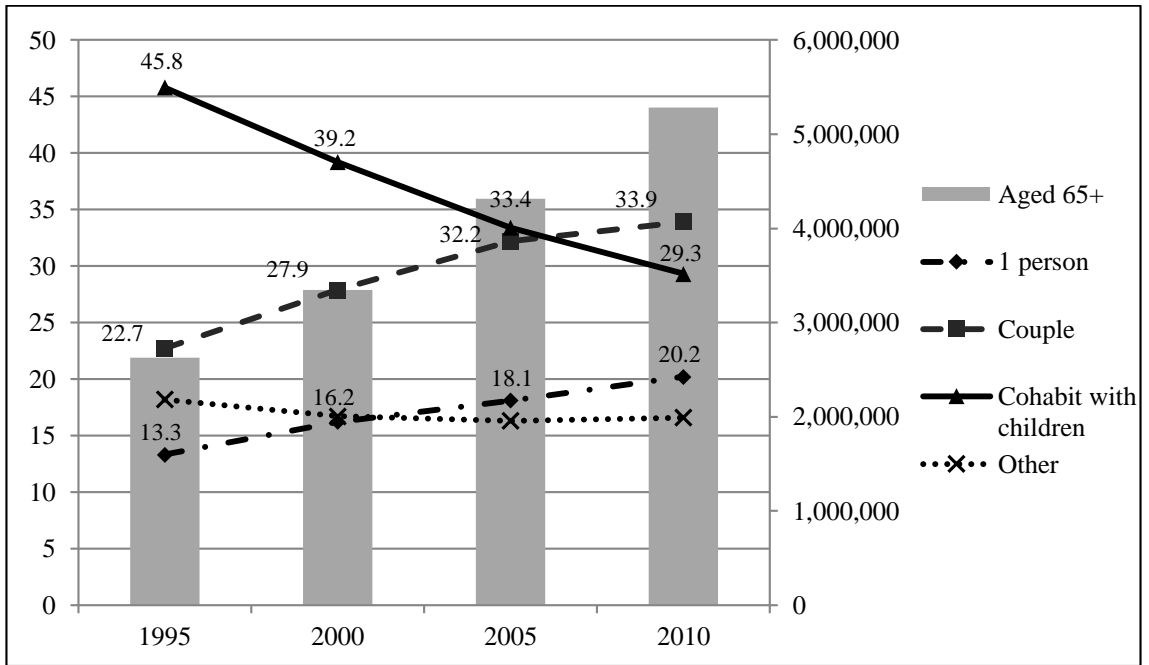
diverse compared to a generation ago. Loss of a male breadwinner is becoming a less frequent reason; instead, any more and more females have become major providers of livelihood for the family even with their male partners since the mid-1990s. In addition, while ‘remaining unmarried’ has been a more common reason to become a female-headed household, the cases by divorce have been on a more constant increase.

It is important to note that the ageing trend and the increase in one-person households and female-headed households are related to each other: due to women’s longer life span and increasing divorce rate, many one-person households are headed by lone mothers or elderly females. According to Statistics Korea (2010), female-headed households are smaller in size (1.93 persons) than male-headed households (3.2 persons), and female household heads tend to be older than their male counterparts (54 compared to 47.6). Ever diversifying family forms in Korea presents emergent social risks by weakening family welfare/care capacity because such types of families are not compatible with the Korean social security system based on the assumption of a male-breadwinner/female-housewife family model (S-H Lee, 2013).



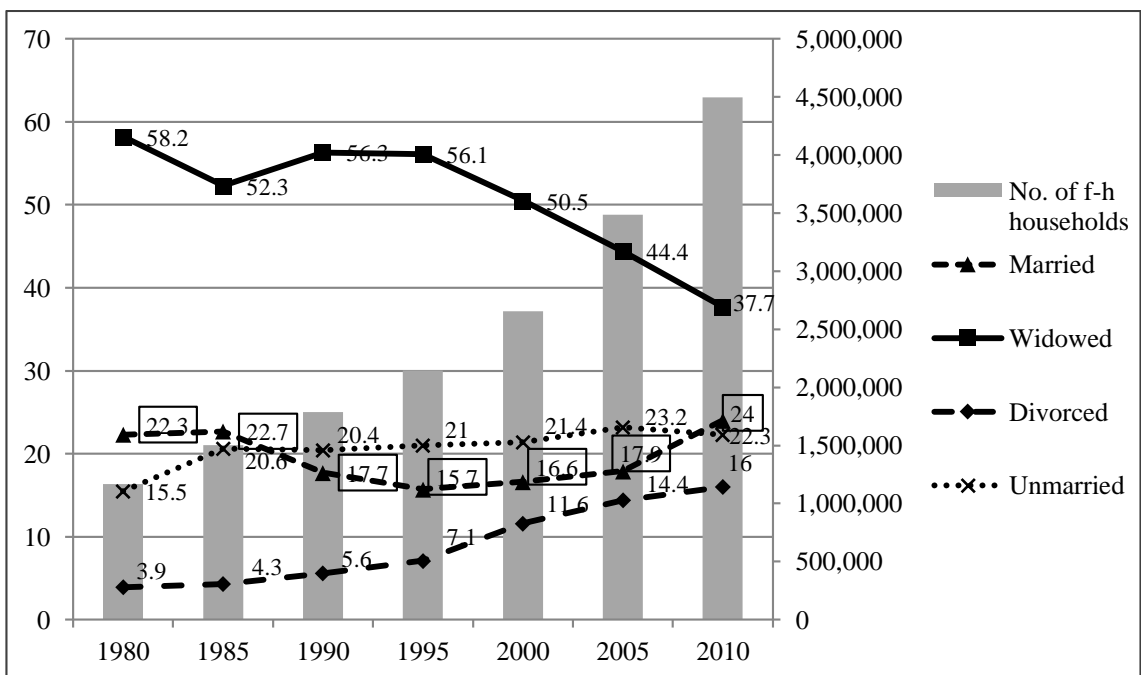
**Figure 6.3: Change in the household size in Korea (% , person)**

Source: Statistics Korea, *National Census* (each year)



**Figure 6.4: Change in the household makeup of the families with the aged 65 or over in Korea (% person)**

Source: e-National Index, [http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtIPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=2926](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtIPageDetail.do?idx_cd=2926) (accessed on 1 May 2015)



**Figure 6.5: Increase in female-headed households and their marital statuses in Korea (% person)**

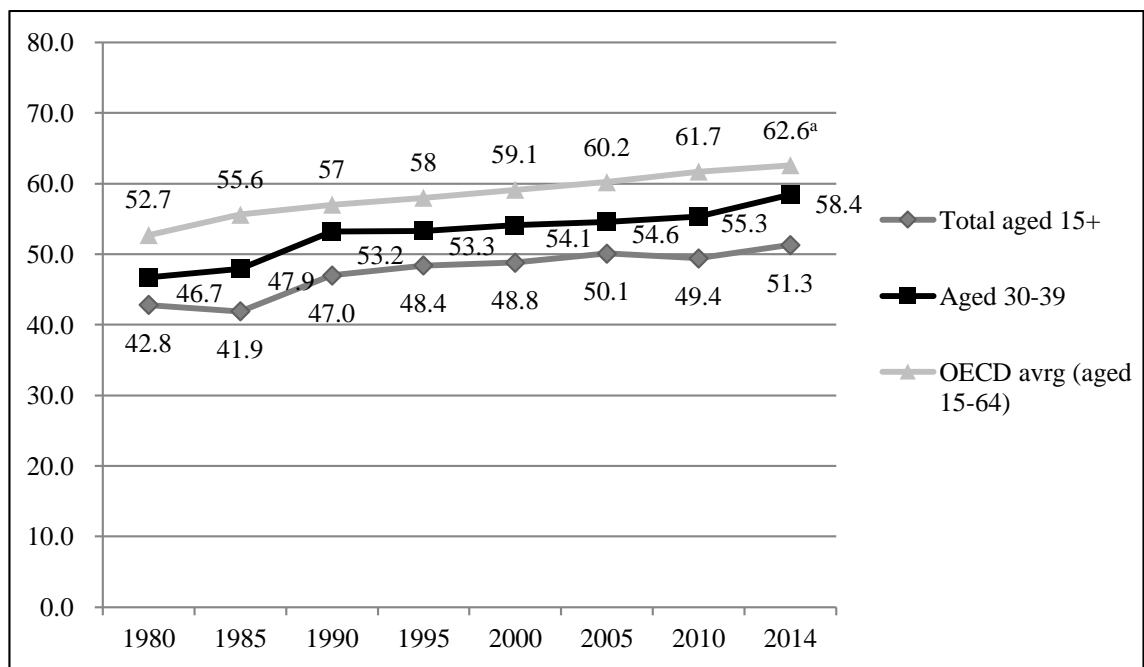
Source: Statistics Korea, *National Census* (each year)

Along with changes in family structures, as Daly and Lewis (2000) pointed out, changing norms about marriage, family, kin responsibilities and the expected (care) role of women in the family can also alter the conditions under which care is appreciated and provided. Choice not to get married began gradually to be accepted and cultural pressure to maintain marital relationships has substantially been weakened (refer to Chapter 4). While gender equality begins to be acknowledged in public life, the long-held assumptions of children's care obligations for their elderly parents and women's primary care responsibilities began to be resisted. Many women in marriage/maternity ages are willing to choose to pursue career or other activities over conforming to the traditional expectations. At the same time, some aged parents actually opt to live independently or in a facility if they require assistances rather than living together with children (MOHW, 2011: 122). This may be associated with to the wider societal changes of a post-industrial society such as an increasing 'individualisation' (Beck, 2002).

***Economic factors: women's labour market participation***

Women's labour market participation is also related to both care demand and care supply. If they are the main care givers for young children and adult dependants at home, their employment can mean a loss of a primary care giver, at the same time, it necessitates alternative care resources to make up the resultant care deficit. As shown in Figure 6.6, despite slight fluctuations, women's labour market participation rate in Korea has gradually risen. The age cohort 30 to 39 shows higher participation rate, and the increase has been accelerating over the recent years. It has significant implication for care because females belonging to this group are supposed to be in the highest need of childcare services, considering the average age of giving birth to the first child is 30.73 as of 2013 (Statistics Korea, 2015d). Although the female labour market participation rate has been low compared to the OECD average (Figure 6.6), the deteriorating job security of 'male-breadwinners' due to the changes in the labour market such as increasing 'flexibility' has created more pressures on women to seek and maintain paid work outside the home, making 'dual-earner families' more common (Baek *et al.*, 2011; Peng, 2011a).

Given that public care provision was limited until very recently, many married women tried to deal with the pressure of combining paid work and care responsibilities by taking up temporary or part-time work while they continued to be a primary care provider in home. Figure 6.7 shows a stark contrast between males and females in employment patterns. Despite the gradual increase, the number of female regular (full-time) workers is much smaller than for their male counterparts, but the number of female irregular workers started to exceed the growth of male irregular workers from 2008. Part-time jobs available for women were not only limited in supply in the Korean labour market where the male full-workers are dominant, but also tended to be poor in quality (Statistics Korea, 2010). In these situations, women have often been forced to make a choice between work and care (S-k Kim *et al.*, 2012). These challenges that women face between work and family-life/care became an important background for the care reforms from the early-2000s because the Korean government considered them main obstacles to raising both the fertility rate and women’s labour participation rate (Government of Korea, 2010: 25-6).

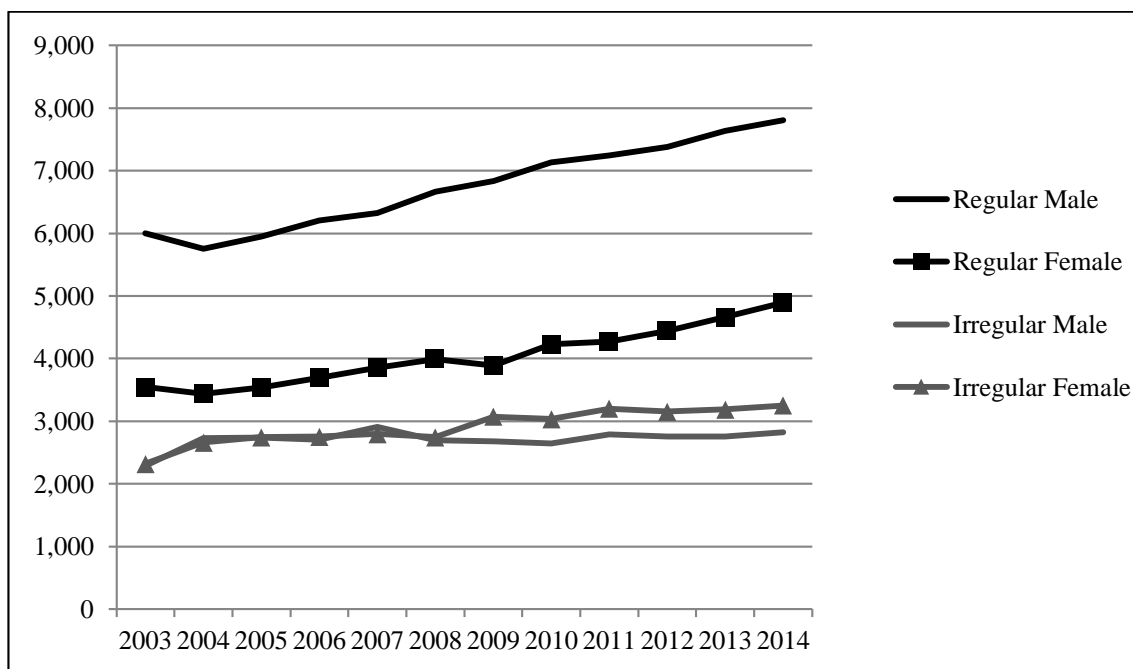


**Figure 6.6: Trend in the women’s labour market participation rate in Korea (%)**

Note: <sup>a</sup> 2013 data.

Source: Statistics Korea (2015c); OECD *LFS*, [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=LFS\\_SEXAGE\\_I\\_R#](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=LFS_SEXAGE_I_R#) (accessed on 10 May 2015)





**Figure 6.7: Gender difference in the labour market participation in Korea (1,000 persons)**

*Note:* Regular workers refers to full-time workers while irregular workers represent temporary workers, part-time workers and other atypical types of workers.

*Source:* Statistics Korea (2015b)

To sum up, demographic, socio-cultural and economic factors have contributed to the care deficit the care crisis in Korea either by increasing demand or by decreasing supply of care. It is important to see that these factors are inter-related and often mutually reinforcing. For example, the ageing trend and the increase in one-person households are a related phenomenon. Women’s changing roles in the family and the market are also inseparable. In addition, the welfare state itself should be considered as an influential factor in the care balance. To illustrate, the government’s intention to encourage women’s integration into paid work can trigger the care demand from parents and the supply as a consequence. In this regard, it is essential to consider institutional dimensions in analysing the care crisis in order to avoid reading off the care crisis and care policies a linear cause and effect scenario. The welfare state does not simply react to the crisis but it also can be proactive against the crisis by transforming its care policies.

### 6.3.3. Care Reforms in Korea

The care crisis in Korea revealed the limitations of the existing care arrangement presuming the familial care provision and women's unpaid care labour within the family. Finding optimal ways to address the growing care deficit became an utmost policy goal for the Korean welfare state. It is important to see that care reforms in Korea are an integral part of the government-led policy response to low fertility and population ageing. Deeply concerned with the demographic crisis and its economic implications, in 2004 the government launched the 'Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society', specifically aiming to develop and coordinate policies to tackle the low fertility and ageing-related issues. Based on the newly legislated 'Framework Act on Low Birth Rate and an Ageing Society', the Committee has developed mid- to long-term policy roadmaps, called the 'Basic Plan for Ageing Society and Population'<sup>36</sup> (hereafter the Basic Plan) (Government of Korea, 2005, 2010). The Committee renews this policy roadmap every five years and related ministries and local governments are required to set up implementation plans every year. The first round of the Basic Plan was effective from 2006 to 2010 and the second five year round has just begun in 2011.

As presented in Table 6.2, the Basic Plan consists of three main policy areas: 'Low fertility', 'Ageing' and 'Growth Engine'. The first two areas are directly relevant to the childcare and eldercare policies respectively. The third one is concerned with the development of human resource which also has certain implications for the labour market participation of women and older people as well as migrants. The Basic Plan is a far-reaching policy blueprint related to various policy areas, namely, health, social security, labour market, education and migration with an overarching goal of boosting the fertility rate (Government of Korea, 2005, 2010). At the centre of this pan-government collaboration lies 'care'. The importance of public support for childcare and work-home harmonisation has been repeatedly stressed. It has been identified that the main reasons for not getting married and not having a child were firstly 'unstable employment status and negative career prospect', secondly 'difficulty maintaining work-home balance' and thirdly 'insufficient support (cash and facilities) for childcare' (S-k Kim *et al.*, 2012; S-s Lee *et al.*, 2009). So the government understood that the measures to reduce women's care burden and to help them reconcile work and family

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<sup>36</sup> It is also known as 'Saeromaji' in Korean which literally means welcoming the new (society).

responsibilities would be an effective way of raising the fertility rate (Government of Korea, 2010).

**Table 6.2: Structure of the ‘Basic Plan for Ageing Society and Population’**

Areas	‘Low fertility’ Area	‘Ageing’ Area	‘Growth Engine’ Area
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen social support for marriage, childbirth and childrearing</li> <li>▪ Support work and home reconciliation</li> <li>▪ Raise sound future generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen income maintenance of older people</li> <li>▪ Healthy and well-cared elderly life</li> <li>▪ Form an elderly-friendly social environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilise potential labour forces such as women and older people</li> <li>▪ Develop competitiveness of the human resource</li> <li>▪ Raise an elderly-related business</li> </ul>
Key Policy instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for marriage and pregnancy</li> <li>▪ Cash support (Childcare allowances, Childcare fee support, Early childhood education fee support)</li> <li>▪ Expand quality childcare facilities</li> <li>▪ Leave arrangement (maternity, paternity and parental leave)</li> <li>▪ Personal care services for new-born babies and mothers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Pension</li> <li>▪ Basic Pension</li> <li>▪ Long-Term Care Insurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Active labour market policies for women and older people</li> <li>▪ Active ageing</li> <li>▪ Utilise migrant workforce</li> </ul>

*Note:* The table is based on the first round (2006 - 2010), but all elements are shared with the second round (2011-2015)

*Source:* Government of Korea (2005)

### ***Analytical Frame***

The next two sections (6.4 and 6.5) investigate how care reform agenda listed above have been realised into actual policy making. In doing so, I track the changes in the Korean care policies mainly from 2003 and onward, and over a decade of care policy reformation process is here referred to as ‘care reform’, while the changes after 2008 until now are typically referred to as the ‘recent’ care reform.<sup>37</sup> Before examining the care reforms in detail, here I first introduce an analytical frame for the following sections. Given that it is extremely difficult to quickly remedy shrinking care resources by reversing demographic and socio-cultural trends, any care reform needs to engage in *rebalancing* existing care resources and responsibility to address the care deficit. As

<sup>37</sup> This time frame covers four governments (presidents): two progressive - Kim Dae-jung (1998 – 2003) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003 – 2008) and two conservative - Lee Myung-bak (2008 - 2013) and current Park Geun-hye (2013 - 2018).

Lister *et al.* (2007) identify, care policy involves the redistribution of care responsibility which happens at three different levels: firstly, between state, market and family; secondly, within family members; and thirdly, between national and transnational resources. I analyse the first two levels of care redistribution here and the third dimension will be discussed in Chapter 7.

To study the Korean care regime and its reforms, the section here adopts, with substantial modification, the framework suggested by Daly and Lewis (2000). The main strength of their framework is that it allows us to investigate both the macro and the micro level of care redistribution. Table 6.3 shows how a care regime can be conceptualised and empirically indicated in each level of care redistribution. The macro-level dimension refers to the division of care between the state, market and family,<sup>38</sup> and the micro-level dimension is concerned with the care division between family members. Both dimensions of care rebalancing are informed by each set of empirical indicators. The purpose of care policy and its instruments (e.g. finance, benefits and regulations) are crucial indicators in analysing a care regime on the macro-level. Who actually provides care labour on what conditions either in public or private care institutions, in other words, ‘employment regime of care worker’, is also an important consideration in the macro level analysis. In contrast, particular care benefits and services promoting/discouraging the division of care among family members, specifically between mothers and fathers, are to be analysed for the micro-level care rebalancing. The patterns of economic activities of women at caring age will be highlighted again in the micro-level analysis. Then we can trace the directions in which the care reform(s) has altered the division of responsibility between the state, market and family and between men and women within the family.

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<sup>38</sup> Community (or the third sector) is often combined in the care regime research but the current study excludes it because the roles of community have not been strongly implicated in recent care reforms in Korea.

**Table 6.3: Analytical frame to examine the Korean care regime**

Dimensions	Macro-level	Micro-level
Conceptual References	The division of care responsibility between the state, market and family	The division of care responsibility among individuals within the family
Empirical Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Care policy structure: policy purpose and scope</li> <li>▪ Care policy instruments: finance, benefits and regulations</li> <li>▪ Employment patterns of care workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Benefits and services in facilitating sharing of care between family members</li> <li>▪ Relations between care givers and recipients</li> <li>▪ Patterns of economic activity of women at caring age</li> </ul>
Reform Trajectories	An alteration in the distribution of care responsibility between sectors	An alteration in the distribution of caring activities among individuals within family

*Source:* Adapted from Daly and Lewis (2000: 287)

#### 6.4. Care Rebalancing on the Macro-level

With regard to the mix of care provision, Korea has been often referred to as a ‘familialistic’ regime based on a strong male-breadwinner model and the heavy reliance on family care resources (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Empirical research has repeatedly confirmed that family indeed has assumed the largest care responsibility in the Korean welfare state due to the insufficient public care provision and a limited private care market (Baek *et al.*, 2011; Chan *et al.*, 2011; Ochiai, 2009; Peng, 2009). However, this diagnosis on the Korean care regime should not be considered as a frozen picture. Care regime is subject to change over time and so is the Korean care regime. Researchers have investigated how the state and the market (and the community) have altered the existing family dominant ‘care mix’ or ‘care diamond’ over time. Ochiai (2009: 72), for example, argues that Korea has developed “a familialistic welfare regime combined with liberalism” by highlighting the increasing involvement of the market in the care provision. Peng (2011a: 908) sees Korea moving to “a modified form of familialism” rather than a full care socialisation despite the increased government’s care input in recent years. Existing literature has focused on care policy developments during the Kim Dae-jung (1998 – 2003) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003 – 2008) administrations (e.g.,

S-H Lee, 2013; Peng, 2009, 2011b). However, as shown in Table 6.4, although policy developments during the Roh government (2004-2008) were most substantial, the reforms continued after 2008, ever changing the dynamics of division of care on the macro-level. The remaining part of the section will examine in more detail the contents of the childcare and eldercare reforms.

**Table 6.4: Care policy developments in Korea**

Period	Childcare development	Elder development
before 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited number of private nurseries for poor families and workplace nurseries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited public eldercare services for the poor elderly</li> </ul>
1992 - 2003 (President Kim Y-s & Kim D-j)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislation of the ‘Child Care Act’ (1991)</li> <li>▪ ‘Childcare fee support’ introduced (1999)</li> <li>▪ Maternity leave extended 90 days (2001)</li> <li>▪ Parental leave became paid (2001)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislation of the ‘Welfare of the Aged Act’ (1981, 1997 revision)</li> </ul>
2004 - 2008 (President Roh M-h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete revision of the ‘Child Care Act’ (2004)</li> <li>▪ Subsidy to care facilities increased (2004)</li> <li>▪ ‘Childcare fee support’ increased (2004)</li> <li>▪ Parental leave extended to 1 year (2004)</li> <li>▪ Childcare worker certificate upgraded (2004)</li> <li>▪ Care facility certification system implemented (2005)</li> <li>▪ Paternity leave extended to 5 days (2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislation of ‘Act on Long-Term Care Insurance’ (2007)</li> <li>▪ Residential and domiciliary care services through the LTCI</li> <li>▪ Eldercare worker certificate for the LTCI</li> <li>▪ Basic eldercare service (home visit) for non-LTCI recipients</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive eldercare service (home visit and day care centre) for the poor elderly among the non-LTCI recipients</li> </ul>
2009 - 2012 (President Lee M-b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ‘Care (cash) allowance’ for homecare families introduced (2009)</li> <li>▪ Replacement of parental leave increased to 40% (2011)</li> </ul>	
after 2012 (President Park, G-h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ‘Childcare fee support’ and ‘Early childhood education fee support’ universalised (no means-test), cover 100% of the standard fee (2013)</li> <li>▪ Parental leave applied to children aged 8 or under (2014)</li> <li>▪ ‘A father’s month’ introduced (2014)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LTCI reform: refined the eligibility standard (2014)</li> </ul>

Source: MOHW website, <http://www.mw.go.kr>

### 6.4.1. Childcare Reforms

The expansion of childcare is a central feature of the care reform since 2004. Before 2004, parents with young children had to rely on other family members when they needed extra care source. Public childcare facilities/services were extremely limited and

private care facilities available were expensive and their qualities were not guaranteed. There were no cash benefits for parents who wanted to take care of the children themselves or hire nannies. A virtual absence of affordable alternative childcare sources made it extremely difficult for dual-earner families or lone parents to reconcile work and care. Seeing this as a main culprit against fertility, the government decided to assume a greater role in providing childcare by either strengthening the existing programmes or introducing new ones (Government of Korea, 2005). Under the ‘Basic Plan for Ageing Society and Population’, a series of policy plans have been developed specifically for childcare: namely, ‘*Saessak* Plan 2006 - 2010’ and its revised version ‘*Aisarang* Plan 2009 - 2012’ (MOHW, 2009). Following these policy plans, various childcare programmes have been reformed or newly introduced. As all key programmes became fully operative from 2009, the government’s financial input in childcare started to rapidly expand (Table 6.5). The total budget has been tripled between 2009 and 2014. The largest portion of the budget was allocated to finance ‘Childcare Fee Support’ (for institutional childcare), followed by ‘Homecare Allowance’ programmes (for home-based childcare), which are two main pillars of the Korean childcare system.

**Table 6.5: Government spending on childcare by programme in Korea (million KRW, %)**

Programme	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	%
Total	1,710,430	2,127,510	2,478,380	3,028,567	4,131,345	5,273,950	100
Childcare Fee Support	1,282,168	1,632,204	1,934,611	2,391,291	2,598,219	3,329,228	63.1
Homecare Allowance	32,390	65,664	89,794	102,646	880,950	1,215,319	23.0
Subsidy for care facility operation	354,976	404,621	418,100	501,360	594,908	702,404	13.3
Childcare infrastructure	40,896	25,020	35,875	33,270	55,268	26,868	0.5

*Note:* It only includes the central government budget.

*Source:* MOHW, *Childcare statistics* (each year), <http://www.mw.go.kr>

### ***Institutional childcare***

The most important instrument for the childcare reform has been to expand the institutional childcare provision. There are two different types of ‘childcare facilities’ in Korea: ‘childcare centres (*Orinijib* in Korean)’ and ‘kindergartens (*Yoochiwon* in

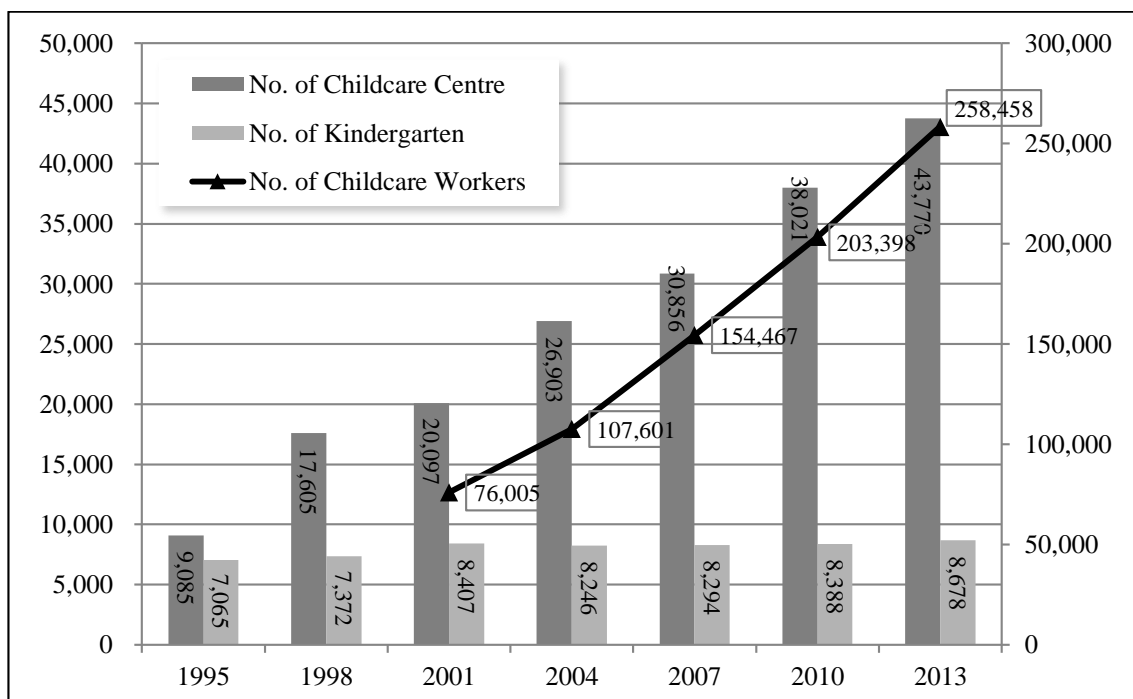
Korean)'.<sup>39</sup> Although both facilities provide institutional care for children before formal schooling starts typically at age 6, they differ to some degree. First of all, the primary function of childcare centres, albeit with some educational elements, is *care* while kindergartens are more directly related to early childhood *education*. In addition, childcare centres not only cover wider age groups (0 to 5) than kindergartens (3 to 5 or above), but also often operate longer and flexible hours (e.g., outside of nine to five). Childcare centres have been a primary venue to deliver childcare in Korea and the focus of the care policies. This section also mainly discusses the policies regarding 'childcare centres (*Orinijib*)'.

The supply of childcare facilities has quickly expanded since the legislation of the 'Child Care Act' in 1991 (a legal base of childcare facilities). The Kim Young-sam government (1993 - 1998) then played a decisive role to the growth of childcare facilities (S-H Lee, 2013). Increasing the level of institutional childcare was needed to address the growing demand for affordable care provision from families, but it was important for the government at that time for its successful bid to a OECD membership (M-w Lee *et al.*, 2012). The government not only set up more publicly-funded childcare centres, but it also encouraged private enterprises to establish childcare centres of varying types. Consequently, the number of childcare centres has rapidly grown, while the number of kindergartens has remained largely unchanged (Figure 6.8). Along with the increase in childcare facilities, the number of childcare workers has also rapidly increased (For a discussion of characteristics of childcare workers, refer to Chapter 7).

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<sup>39</sup> Each is governed by different laws and ministries. The former is governed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare whereas the latter by the Ministry of Education and each has a separate qualification control over the staff although Koreans equally called them both 'teachers'. Attempts to merge two systems of 'care' and 'education' have so far failed due to strong vested interests, although both ministries agreed to share the same curriculums for the age groups from three to five.





**Figure 6.8: Increase in childcare institutions in Korea**

*Note:* The number of the childcare workers here includes only ‘teachers’ in childcare centres and kindergartens. The combinable data is available from 2001.

*Source:* Compiled by the author from Statistics Korea (2015e); Statistics Korea (2015f); e-National Index, [http://www.index.go.kr/potal/stts/idxMain/selectPoSttsIdxSearch.do?idx\\_cd=3022&clas\\_div=&idx\\_sys\\_cd=848&idx\\_clas\\_cd=1](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/stts/idxMain/selectPoSttsIdxSearch.do?idx_cd=3022&clas_div=&idx_sys_cd=848&idx_clas_cd=1) (accessed on 5 April 2015)

Childcare centres in Korea can be categorised into seven types: public, social welfare corporations, private corporations/institutions, private (enterprises), home-based (enterprises), parents’ coops, and work place. Public childcare centres are those established and run by the central or municipal government(s) whereas other types of facilities are set up by varying private entities, although they are also subsidised and supervised by the government. The proportion of for-profit private care providers (private and home-based enterprises) has been ever increasing, occupying 88 per cent as of 2013 while public 5.3 per cent (Statistics Korea, 2015e). With the supply of childcare centres ever growing, institutional childcare became increasingly available; however, the extreme commercialisation of childcare often discouraged (low to middle income) families’ access to institutional childcare due to the care cost (fee). In addition, disparity among care centres in terms of facility conditions, curriculum and quality of childcare workers began to grow (MOGEF, 2006a).

In order to deal with these issues, subsequent governments did not choose to fully *socialise* the institutional childcare (by making them public); instead, they have

maintained the principle of ‘care provision through the market’. There have been much debate and political struggle regarding the mode of institutional childcare provision: progressive experts and social ministries proposed a more public form of childcare facilities, but childcare centre owners and economic ministries preferred marketised provision (Peng, 2011b). Eventually, the latter won the battle not just because it was virtually impossible to revoke the existing vested interests of the market care providers, but also because promoting the care market and job creation through it suit well the ideals of the ‘social investment welfare state’ in Korea (S-H Lee, 2013; Peng, 2011a). Instead, the government has strengthened a qualification requirement for childcare workers and tightened the monitoring of private care providers. In addition, the government provided common curriculums (*Nurigwajung* in Korean) for both childcare centres and kindergartens to level the quality between facilities.

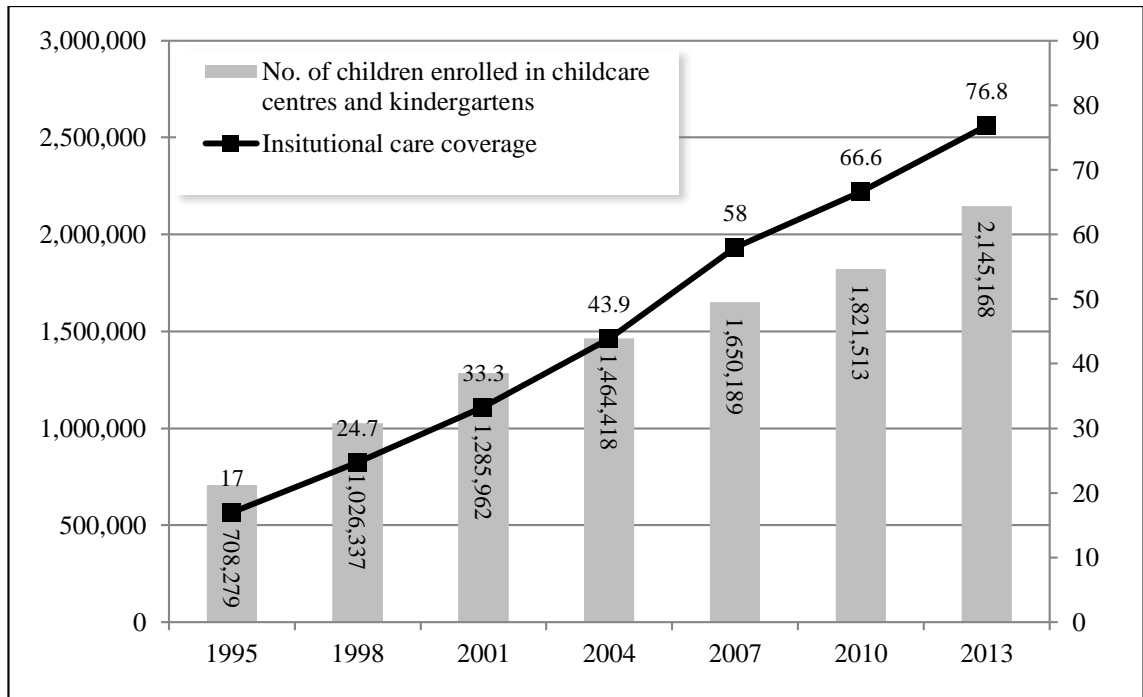
To effectively relieve families of childcare cost, the government substantially increased ‘Childcare (facility) Fee Support’ (*Boyookryo Jiwon* in Korean). It is a subsidy for parents who send their child (aged 0 to 5) to a childcare centre. Childcare Fee Support was first introduced in 1999 but it covered only the families below the national poverty line until 2005. Then the threshold was gradually lowered to include all the families at and below the 50<sup>th</sup> income percentile by 2009 and the 70<sup>th</sup> by 2012. According to the second childcare master plan (*Aisarang* Plan 2009 - 2012), the government decided to universalise the Childcare Fee Support, firstly for the children having special needs such as very young children (aged 0 to 2), children with a disability and children from the ‘multicultural families’ (refer to Chapter 5) (MOHW, 2009). Finally, Childcare Fee Support has been completely universalised and equalised from 2013. The benefit level has also been raised and now it covers the standard fee (set by the government) at the 100 per cent level.<sup>40</sup>

Thanks to the increase in childcare facilities and care facility fee support, the proportion of children receiving institutional care of all children under five has rapidly expanded (Figure 6.9). One thing to note is that children under two, who used to be taken care of at home, are now increasingly attending childcare centres (Figure 6.10). We can see that the childcare reform in Korea since 2004 has substantially institutionalised the childcare provision, especially for the very young children over the

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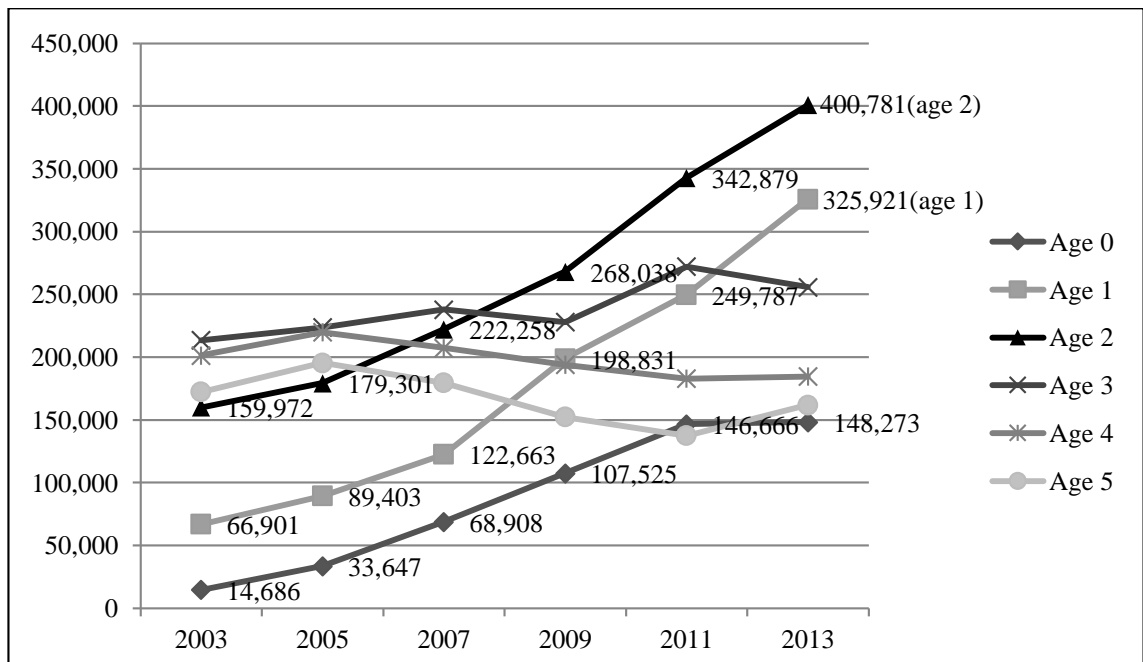
<sup>40</sup> It is often the case that facilities charge separate fees for extracurricular activities and other user benefits.

last two decades.



**Figure 6.9: Increase in childcare institutions and enrolled children in Korea**

Source: Statistics Korea (2015e)



**Figure 6.10: The number of children attending childcare centres by age in Korea**

Source: Statistics Korea (2015g)

### ***Home-based childcare***

The government introduced another type of childcare benefit called ‘Homecare Allowance (*Yangyooksudang* in Korean)’ with different rationales. The government childcare reform was focused on expanding the institutional care provision and the support for the parents using a care facility, so the parents not using a care facility felt discriminated (M-w Lee *et al.*, 2012). There was another concern that the increase in the Childcare Fee Support may cause an unnecessary demand for institutional care even from the parents having very young children (aged 0 to 2) for whom homecare by parents may be more desirable for their development (MOHW, 2009). So, in an attempt to make a ‘balance’ between institutionalised care and homecare, the government introduced a cash allowance in 2009 for the primary care givers (parents or grandparents) who take care of the children at home. Until 2012, the homecare cash benefit of 100,000 KRW per month was given only to the family whose income level was less than the 120 per cent of the national minimum livelihood when they take care of very young children (aged 0 to 2) at home. As of 2013, the Homecare Allowance has been increased to 200,000 KRW per month (equivalent to 118 GBP), and the entitlement has been universalised to all children aged 0 to 5 staying at home, and no other conditions are attached to the eligibility (Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6: Childcare cash benefits per month in Korea, 2014 (KRW)**

Age	Childcare Fee Support (A)	Homecare Allowance* (B)	A/B
0	406,000	200,000	2.0
1	357,000	150,000	2.4
2	295,000	100,000	3.0
3 - 5	220,000	100,000	2.2

*Note:* \*Children in rural areas receive slightly larger allowances.

1,000 KRW is equivalent to 0.6 GBP.

*Source:* MOHW website, <http://www.mw.go.kr>

When comparing the benefit level of two benefits, however, we can see that the Homecare Allowance can hardly be an incentive for home-based care since the level of the Childcare Fee Support is two to three times higher than that of the Homecare Allowance. Given that all parents having under school-aged children are entitled to use childcare facilities for 12 to 24 hours almost for free, many parents may well choose to

send their children to care centres although some of them do not actually need to. The level of Homecare Allowance is too low either to compensate family carers for their opportunity cost of choosing care over paid-work, or to hire nannies if they want to keep the very young children at home for the development and safety reasons. So, it seems that the Homecare Allowance is not the measure for the Korean government to actively promote the homecare but an attempt to avoid the accusation of the reverse discrimination against the homecare families. Consequently, despite the introduction of the Homecare Allowance, a strong incentive remains to the institutional care, which, I believe, is exactly what the Korean government has intended. A lawmaker who has been leading the childcare policy design, including the Homecare Allowance, talked about the (im)balance between institutionalised care and home-based care in a media interview:

Around 2003, the childcare budget was very small, and the [childcare] infrastructure was very poor. The Roh government increased the supply of childcare centres and invested a lot. The balance between care facilities and homecare could've been considered then. But, at that time, formal childcare services were poorly equipped, so the government had to focus on investing on facilities. The subsequent Lee government was on the same track [of expanding care facilities]. A difference was that Lee government was more market oriented than the Roh government. The issue of balancing home-based care with institutionalised care should've been raised earlier. But the situation is getting better as the Homecare Allowance has expanded to reach all families from this year [2013]. Unlike the previous year, we observe some toddlers under two returning to home. (*Baby News*, 2013)

#### **6.4.2. Eldercare Reforms**

Compared to childcare, the policy development on the eldercare has not been as dramatic and complicated (see Table 6.4). Before the introduction of the Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) in 2008, only the very poor elderly could receive limited public care services. Families had to take care of older people themselves or use an expensive private facility without any government support. The introduction of the LTCI marked an important shift in the eldercare regime in Korea. To begin with, the care responsibility for the older people was for the first time publicly acknowledged as

shared responsibility beyond individual families. Table 6.7 summaries the main features of the LTCI. Compared to the previous eldercare systems, the LTCI is a universal benefit for older people. The entitlement is solely based on their care needs (mental/physical conditions). The care services under the LTCI are diverse and more consumer-oriented rather than providers. Most importantly, however, the LTCI is a ‘social insurance’ by which care burden (cost) is socially redistributed both between classes and generations. Along with the subsidy from the government, users (families) are required to pay a certain percentage (15 to 20) of service charge in addition to their social insurance premium when applicable.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 6.7: Eldercare regimes compared in Korea**

Regime	LTCI system (since 2008)	Previous systems
Legal bases	‘Act on Long-Term Care Insurance’ (2007) and The Welfare of the Aged Act	The Welfare of the Aged Act’(1981, 1997 revision)
Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universal to older people (aged 65 or above) who require care services due to mental/physical conditions</li> <li>▪ No means-tested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Selective to the poor elderly</li> <li>▪ Means-tested</li> </ul>
Services	Types of service to be chosen by the consumers (the recipient/family)	Services to be chosen by the provider (the authority/facility)
Funding	Mix of the social insurance fund, the government subsidy and the user payment	The government subsidy

Source: LTCI website, [http://www.longtermcare.or.kr/portal/site/nydev/MENUITEM\\_CAREINFO](http://www.longtermcare.or.kr/portal/site/nydev/MENUITEM_CAREINFO)

### ***LTCI benefits and coverage***

People aged 65 or above, or exceptionally those having geriatric diseases such as Alzheimer’s although they are younger than 65, can apply for the LTCI benefit without a means-test. Applicants are to be medically examined and screened according to the severity of their conditions (disability). When proven entitled, they can choose a suitable care service(s). The LTCI provides three types of benefits: ‘Residential Care’, ‘In-home Care’, and ‘Family Care Allowance’. The Residential Care is for those who require intense care while staying in a facility (nursing home or elderly hospital) for an extended period of time. The In-home Care provides either a personal care at the

<sup>41</sup> The family under the poverty line is exempted from the user charge.

recipient's home (home-visit care) or short-term/day care at the centre. The Family Care Allowance is a cash subsidy to the recipients who are under very exceptional circumstances: in case of having contagious diseases or living in the area where no care facilities are available in the vicinity e.g. remote rural towns. So, the Family Care Allowance, unlike the Homecare Allowance in the childcare policy, is not a universally applicable cash allowance for the family who choose home-based care. Interestingly, the LTCI allows (and pays) people to provide care service for their own family members at home if the care giver has a relevant care worker certificate, but only one hour of care work per day will be paid through the LTCI. As seen in Table 6.8, the total volume of the LTCI finance has fast grown as the programme expands. Expectedly, insurance contribution (premium) from families is the most important source of the revenue, while the central government's financial input is limited. The spending has also rapidly increased, but the revenue was proportionately spent for both 'Residential Care' and 'In-home Care' while the payment for 'Family Care Allowance' has been nominal.

**Table 6.8: Finance of the LTCI in Korea, 2008 - 2013 (million KRW, %)**

	Item	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	%
Revenue	Total	868,974	2,084,929	2,877,741	3,263,144	3,561,673	3,831,212	100
	Contribution	477,011	1,199,551	1,831,555	2,142,332	2,369,669	2,542,098	66.4
	Central	129,408	245,948	353,237	418,163	444,493	494,126	12.9
	Local	257,476	618,486	649,531	647,469	672,528	708,870	18.5
	Other	5,079	20,944	43,418	55,180	74,983	86,118	2.2
Spending	Total	554,900	1,908,462	2,589,135	2,787,758	2,937,322	3,317,962	100
	Residential Care	262,858	754,498	1,033,623	1,221,075	1,396,220	1,598,158	48.2
	In-home Care	164,572	985,020	1,374,034	1,374,494	1,329,687	1,493,255	45.0
	Family Care Allowance	564	1,656	1,316	1,049	984	1,027	0.0
	Administration	107,897	135,720	144,137	155,571	166,256	178,159	5.4
	Other	19,009	31,568	36,025	35,569	44,175	47,363	1.4

Source: MOHW, *LTCI statistics yearbook* (each year)

The number of the LTCI applicants has almost doubled since the introduction, accounting for 10.9 per cent of the total elderly population as of 2013 (Table 6.9). Only about half of the applicants (53.6 per cent) have been screened qualified for the benefit. Consequently, the overall coverage of the LTCI has been modest, covering just about

six per cent of the total elderly population (aged 65 or above). According to a panel survey (KIHASA, 2011), 40.6 per cent of people answered that they would apply for the LTCI service if possible, so we can assume that the care demand has not been fully addressed despite the rapid expansion of the LTCI system. The deficit may grow bigger when the ageing population increases.

**Table 6.9: The accumulative number of LTCI applicants and beneficiaries by each year in Korea (person, %)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Applicants (A)	355,536	522,293	622,346	617,081	643,409	663,776
Recipients (B)	214,480	286,907	315,994	324,412	341,788	355,727
Population 65+ (C)	5,086,195	5,286,383	5,448,984	5,644,758	5,921,977	6,071,994
Application Rate (A/C)	7.0	9.9	11.4	10.9	10.9	10.9
Qualification Rate (B/A)	60.3	54.9	50.8	52.6	53.1	53.6
Coverage (B/C)	4.2	5.4	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.9

*Source:* MOHW, *LTCI statistics yearbook* (each year), reformatted by the author

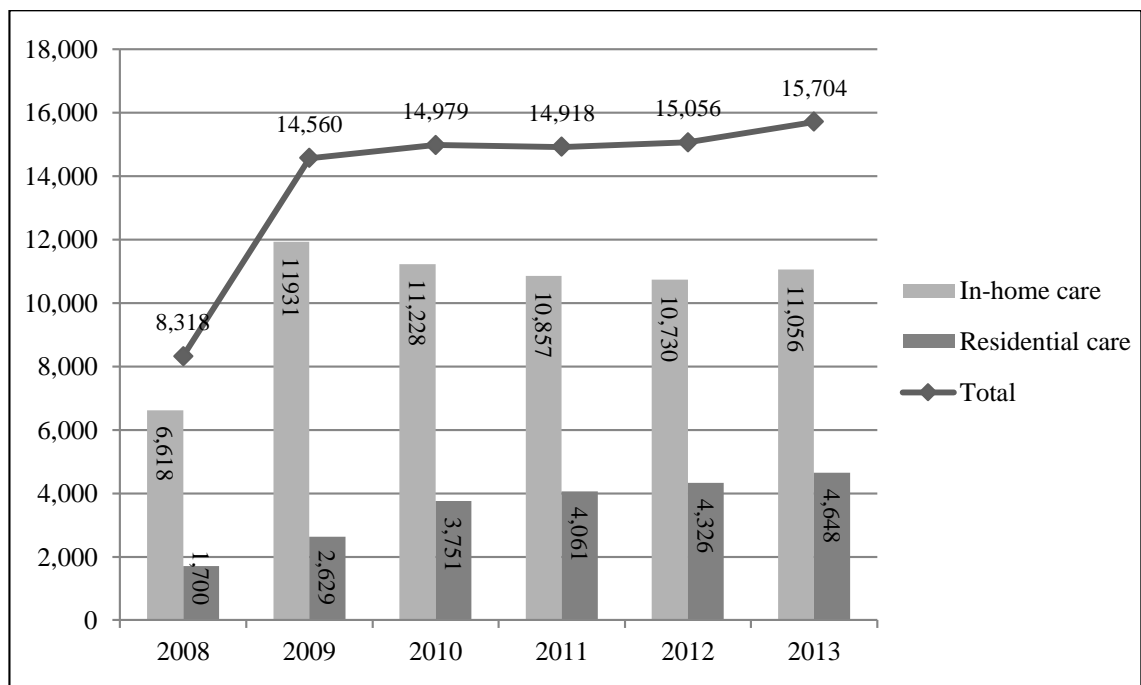
### ***LTCI facilities and workers***

The implementation of LTCI requires a sufficient supply of care facilities and care workers working for them. The total number of care facilities was 8,318 when the LTCI was launched in 2008 and quickly increased to 14,560 by 2009 (MOHW, *LTCI statistics yearbook*). However, as shown in Figure 6.11, since 2009 the total number of eldercare facilities has been largely unchanged ever since despite a small increase in very recent years. One trend to note is a steady growth of residential care facilities although In-Home Care (home visit care and day care) has been a more frequent form of the LTCI care service. Another point is that eldercare provision is, as in the case of childcare, also highly marketised: public eldercare facilities only account for 1.5 per cent as of 2013, while individual businesses (74.7 per cent) and public corporations (23.3 per cent) act as major providers (MOHW, 2014a).

In order to staff the LTCI services, the government arranged a new category of social care profession, called ‘*yoyangbohosa*’. This qualification (certificate) is given to exclusively to the eldercare workers working for the LTCI facilities. ‘*Yoyangbohosa*’ has doubled in number over the last five years, becoming primary care workers for the LTCI services (Table 6.10). They provide a wide range of personal care such as nursing



and bathing, and the skill level expected for the job is similar to or lower than that of social workers or nurses. Despite the demanding work, employment conditions are much poorer. Nevertheless, there was a huge supply of ‘yoyangbohosa’ over the early years of LTCI. The new care worker certificate was welcomed as a new job opportunity for older married women in particular (Um, 2013). It also suited the government’s job creation strategy by stimulating the growth of the social (service) market (Government of Korea, 2005). The number of ‘yoyangbohosa’ continued to grow until 2011 but sharply decreased by half and stabilised afterwards. This is mainly because, considering the total number of recipients and facilities, half a million care workers in 2011 turned out to be an over-supply. It is worth noting that the expansion of eldercare through LTCI has been facilitated by activating market sector involvement, both for facilities and workers, so the role of the government has been largely limited to an insurer and regulator (Government of Korea, 2005).



**Figure 6.11: Growth in eldercare facilities in Korea (number)**

Source: MOHW, *LTCI statistics yearbook* (each year)

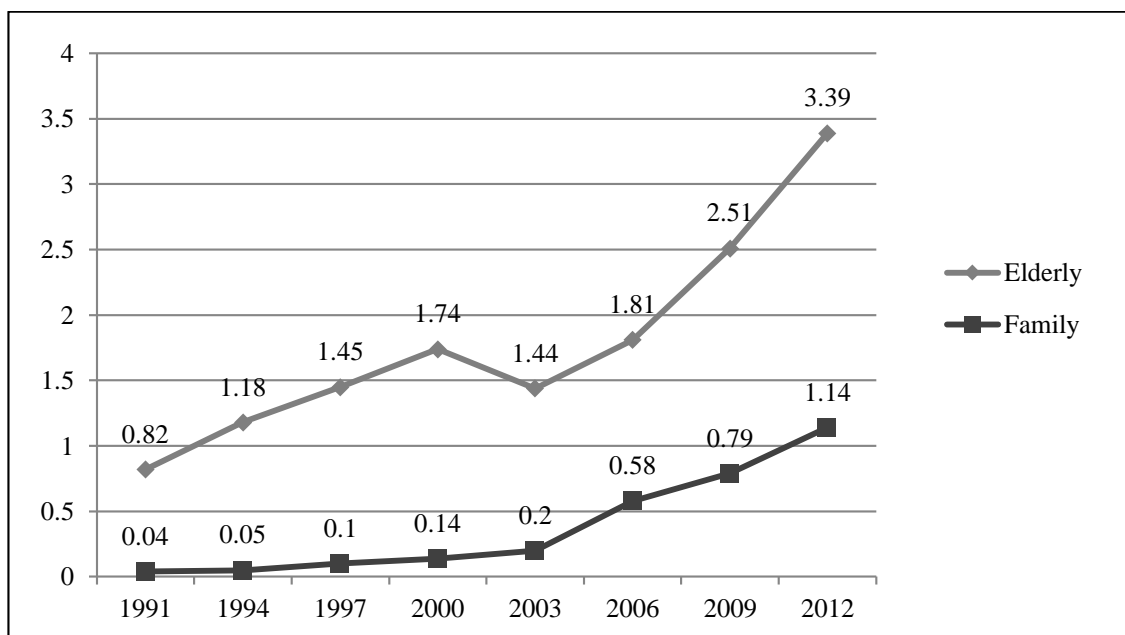
**Table 6.10: Care professionals working for the LTCI in Korea (person)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	125,334	204,226	473,944	491,797	252,280	263,661
<i>Yoyangbohosa</i>	113,756	190,026	455,058	471,938	233,459	243,689
Nurse	5,324	7,063	8,870	9,409	9,295	9,766
Social worker	4,195	4,979	7,136	7,347	6,751	7,054
Physiotherapist	1,002	1,217	1,490	1,608	1,626	1,993
Doctor	1,034	922	1,373	1,488	1,142	1,152
Dental hygienist	23	19	17	7	7	7

Source: MOHW, *LTCI statistics yearbook* (each year)

### 6.4.3. Reform Trajectories in the Macro-level

I have examined the recent policy developments on childcare and eldercare in Korea with regard to finance and policy instruments such as facility, service, cash and other regulations. We can identify overall directions of policy changes as to rebalancing care responsibility between the state, the family and the market. First of all, the state started to assume (and plans to continue to) a bigger responsibility in providing care by expanding existing care programmes as well as legislating new care services. Figure 6.12 shows the changes in the public expenditure (defined as percentage of GDP) on the family and elderly sectors since 1991. The spending for older people sharply increased during the economic crisis period (1997 - 2000). After the temporary drop, the spending rose again from 2006. In comparison, the public spending on the family benefits has shown a more persistent growth. The increase from the-2000s is noticeable. There have also been changes in the proportion of each area in the total public spending in Korea: the family-related expenditure has become increasingly important over the recent years while the proportions of other spendings such as health, survivors and incapacity-related benefits have largely remained unchanged or even diminished (refer to Appendix 6.4).



**Figure 6.12: Public spending on the elderly and the family sectors in Korea as percentage of GDP (%)**

*Note:* Family sector spending is the government expenditure on family-related programmes in the form of cash, service and tax-breaks, but it excludes the spending on older people-related programmes.

*Source:* Korea Statistics, *Social welfare expenditure* (each year)

However, the state's care commitment differs between children and older people. Although the size of the government's financial contribution for the elderly sector is substantially larger than that for the family sector, it does not necessarily mean that the state assumes a bigger responsibility for the eldercare than for the childcare. If the subsidies to the pension programmes are excluded, the government's contribution to funding the eldercare is much smaller. As highlighted earlier, the finance of the current eldercare system in Korea (the LTCI system) is mainly dependent on the family's insurance contribution despite the public subsidies (J-W Kim and Choi, 2013). The entitlement screening is strict to control the coverage. Besides, it does not provide cash benefits (only with rare exceptions). In contrast, the family/children-related benefits are funded by tax and the entitlement has been largely universalised. Furthermore, the benefits come in more diverse forms (services, cash allowance and tax-breaks) and the level is more generous. One social care policy expert in an interview with the author for the current research explained the rationales behind these differences:

The government's social investment focused on those who can work now and in the future. In this regard, children and women in working ages became care policy

targets deserving social *investment*; however, older people are not productive population, so they were largely excluded from the social investment frame. (Interviewee E, 2 May 2015, emphasis added)

In a similar vein, the former president Lee Myung-bak highlighted the importance of childcare when he pledged a full universalisation of childcare for children under the school age in the New Year Address by asserting that:

Low fertility and ageing are a serious challenge to our future. Increasing the fertility will become a central task for the government, and I will commit myself to this effort. To alleviate the care burden of the family, I will expand the childcare support for children from birth to the age 5. Investment on childcare is not just a matter of welfare, but also an investment on the future and a tool to address a low fertility and an ageing society (*KTV*, 2012).

His mentioning “investment on the future” reminds us of the idea of “a child-centred social investment strategy” of Esping-Andersen (2002: 20) and Lister (2003: 427)’s term “children as citizen-workers of the future”. In this regard, we may think the Korean welfare state is performing well in realising ‘intergenerational justice’<sup>42</sup> (in fact, it was ranked as the top second only following Estonia among 29 OECD countries) (Vanhuysse, 2014: 12). However, a caution is required here. Despite the recent rapid increase, the absolute scale of the family benefits, not to mention the total public expenditure, is far from being a high level: the current spending of 1.14 per cent in GDP on family/children-related benefits does not even reach the half of the OECD average (refer to Appendix 6.5).

When it comes to the delivery of care, the role of the market (private care providers) has remained most significant. Not only was it found extremely difficult to reverse the initial intuitional settings i.e., market-based care provision, but, as pointed out above, the Korean government also supported the idea of job creation through the expansion of social market in the care sector. As a result, for-profit individual institutions still far outnumber public ones both for childcare and eldercare. Some efforts have been made to increase the number of the public childcare facilities, but it was not the case for the eldercare provision. While acknowledging (and promoting) the market dominance in the care provision, the government, instead, has tried to regulate

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<sup>42</sup> The ‘intergenerational justice’ is an indicator to show the overall welfare conditions for children against those for older people (see also Schraad-Tischler and Azahaf (2013))

the quality by introducing accreditation and certificate system for both facilities and care workers. Due to the high demand and the lower qualification requirement for eldercare workers, older and less-skilled care workers, including migrant care workers, are entering the eldercare facilities (refer to Chapter 7 for a fuller discussion of the characteristics of eldercare workers). Despite the significant role of the market in care provision, it may be misleading to label the recent care reform as a purely ‘marketisation’ since the government is extensively regulating care facilities and care workers.

The critical question remaining is then how much of the care burden of families has been reduced. It seems clear that the recent care reform has contributed to making care responsibility shared beyond family boundary, i.e. ‘de-familialisation’. However, the degree to which care is de-familialised varies in the childcare and the eldercare. Families with young children now have options between home care and institutional care. The government is planning to supply more childcare facilities and diversify their operations to cater to the different time demand from working families (Government of Korea, 2010). On the contrary, families with the dependent elderly continue to have difficulty finding affordable alternative care resources when they fail the screening. The LTCI is currently covering less than 6 per cent of the total ageing population, and user fees added to the existing insurance contribution are a substantial financial burden for families when their service use, highly likely, is prolonged.

## **6.5. Care Rebalancing on the Micro-level**

The care regime analysis on the micro-level investigates who actually performs the caring and attempts to find any elements in benefits and services encouraging (or discouraging) the redistribution of care responsibility among family members. The Confucian ideal of ‘filial piety’ has provided a strong sense of moral obligation for children’s care for their ageing parents and other family dependants (Pascall and Sung, 2007; Won and Pascall, 2004 J-W Kim and Choi, 2013). Although gradually challenged over the recent decades, this normative imperative around care responsibility has been institutionalised as a form of ‘care by family members first’ principle in Korea. Even when the nuclear family becomes a prevalent form of household, some of the key social

protection programmes still presuppose the mutual care responsibility within the family, the public assistance benefit, for example (refer to the sub-section 6.2.1).

It is important to see, however, that this traditional care culture has gendered implications. Women, as mothers, wives, daughters and daughters-in-law, are expected to perform more direct care activities for children and ageing parents (typically for in-laws) (Sung, 2003; Sung and Pascall, 2014; Um, 2012; Won and Pascall, 2004). In contrast, men in Korea are often allowed to escape direct care-giving in exchange for providing material support (Peng, 2009). As highlighted earlier in the chapter, Korea's social security system as well as the employment pattern has privileged male full-time workers, which, in turn, have reinforced this gendered division of care: women's direct and men's indirect and familial care obligations (S-H Lee, 2013; Peng, 2009). In this regard, the Korean welfare familialism is "deeply gendered" as much as "filial" (Peng, 2009: 11). This part of the section examines how and to what extent the recent care reforms have attempted to dismantle this gendered structure of care division in Korea.

### **6.5.1. Dual Burden on Women**

According to a government-funded large-scale survey research (refer to Table 6.11), *mothers* assume the largest care role for children when they are home regardless of children's age or earning types while fathers are rarely involved in childcare in either case. For dual-earner families, grandparents on mother's side (presumably, grandmothers) are also important care providers along with other informal care sources. In the case of eldercare, children (including sons/daughters-in-law) continue to assume the biggest personal care duty (Table 6.12). The data does not tell gender differences, but considering the care culture discussed above, *daughters* and *daughters-in-law* rather than sons and sons-in-law would make primary care givers for older people. While the disproportionately heavy care responsibility on the family as a unit has been challenged and (attempted to be) socialised, the imbalance in care work between genders (mothers and fathers, in particular) has remained largely unquestioned until very recently. Women's care duties in home despite their increasing labour market participation are rendering them a 'dual burden'.

**Table 6.11: Primary care givers for children who do not use formal institutional care services, 2010 (%)**

	Children aged		Earning type	
	0-3	4-6	Singe-earner	Dual-earner
Case (n)	113	85	183	12
Father	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.0
Mother	76.9	86.9	84.9	40.1
Grandparents(father side)	5.2	2.0	3.9	1.8
Grandparents(mother side)	2.5	1.5	0.6	24.9
Relatives	0.0	1.2	0.6	0.0
Friends and neighbours	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.0
Domestic worker	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.0
Other informal	9.5	5.4	5.9	33.2
None (alone)	3.8	1.6	2.3	0.0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100

Source: Cho *et al.* (2010: 428)

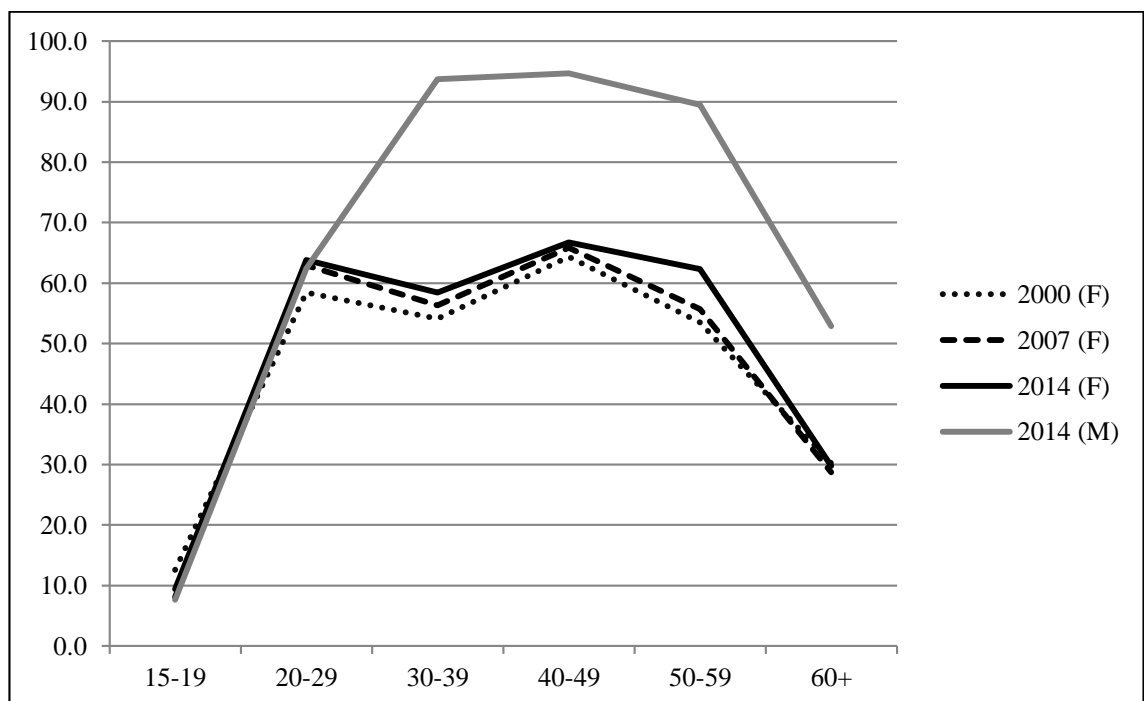
**Table 6.12: Primary care givers for older people who are entitled to the LTCI care services, 2010 - 2013 (%)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cases (n)	270,320	324,412	341,788	378,493
Children (including sons/daughters-in-law)	36.5	36.2	36.2	36.7
Partners	23.8	23.5	23.1	22.7
Other	12.9	14.1	15.2	16.1
Nursing care workers	19.7	18.5	16.7	15.0
None (alone)	3.4	3.9	5.0	5.5
Relatives	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4
Friends and neighbours	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3
Grandchildren	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8
Parents	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total (%)	100	100	100	100

Source: MOHW, *LTCI statistics yearbook* (each year)

A deeply dualised labour market has contributed to forming the care imbalance between genders. As Figure 6.13 shows, the labour market participation rate of women aged between 20 and 60 has gradually increased, but women who are at typical caring ages (30 - 39) continued to exit from work, maintaining 'M shape' over the last 14 years. Men's labour market participation, on the contrary, peaks at the age cohort 40 - 49 and

it remains high (90 per cent or above) until they reach the retirement age, making a huge gender gap in the employment pattern. The Korean government diagnosed this situation where women are compelled to leave work for care has resulted from “full-time based employment practice” and “disproportionately heavy care burden on women” (Government of Korea, 2010: 27). This has posed a serious challenge for the Korean government which wants to increase women’s economic participation and the fertility rate at the same time, which requires guaranteed ‘time for care’. This is the context in which the Korean government began to formally adopt ‘work-home reconciliation policies’.



**Figure 6.13: Gendered patterns of labour market participation rates by age in Korea (%)**

*Source: Statistics Korea, Survey on the economic activities (each year)*

### 6.5.2. Work-home Reconciliation Policies

The Korean government enacted the ‘Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-family Balance Assistance Act’ in 2007, replacing the previous ‘Equal Employment Opportunity Act’. The new law features various ‘leave programmes’ (reformed or newly introduced) as a key policy leverage to realise the reconciliation between work



and family life by redistributing the care time as well as care costs. There are currently three types of care-related leave programmes available in Korea: maternity/paternity leave, parental leave and family care leave. Maternity leave was the first paid/employment protected leave in Korea in 1953. At first it was for 60 days and then extended to 90 days from 2001. Employed women can now claim it before and after the birth for total 90 days. Salaries are paid at 100 per cent of the previous salary (the replacement rate) for the first 60 days, paid by the employer. The remainder is paid at 100 per cent of earnings up to a ceiling of 1,350,000 KRW through the Employment Insurance. Fathers can have a much shorter leave, for three to five days, and only for three days they are paid.

It was parental leave that has received a spotlight of the work-home harmonisation policies. So it has gone through several reforms. Parental leave was introduced in 1988, and it was then unpaid and only for women who have a child under age one. It became possible in 1995 for the father to claim a parental leave instead of the mother. It was not until 2001 that parental leave became paid as a means to alleviate care burden of the family: first 200,000 KRW per month (118 GBP) and subsequently increased to 400,000 KRW from 2004 and 500,000 KRW from 2007. Currently, either mothers or fathers on a parental leave get paid 40 per cent of their previous standard income with the ceiling of 1,000,000 KRW (minimum 500,000 KRW).<sup>43</sup> The age restriction of a child for the parental leave entitlement has also been significantly relaxed: from under age 1 to age 3 (2006), to age 6 (2010) and finally to age 8 as of 2014.<sup>44</sup> Combining maternity/paternity leave and parental leave, parents can claim 12 (fathers) to 15 (mothers) month-long paid leave.

As you see Figure 6.14, working parents are increasingly benefitting from parental leave. The percentage of mothers (with a child under age one) using parental leave was 57.7 per cent in 2012 and 62.3 per cent in 2013.<sup>45</sup> The number of fathers also has been rapidly increasing: male applicants account for about 4.5 per cent as of 2014 in the total parental leave claimants, more than doubled in less than five years. However, it confirms that there has been a huge gender gap in taking up the parental leave: in other

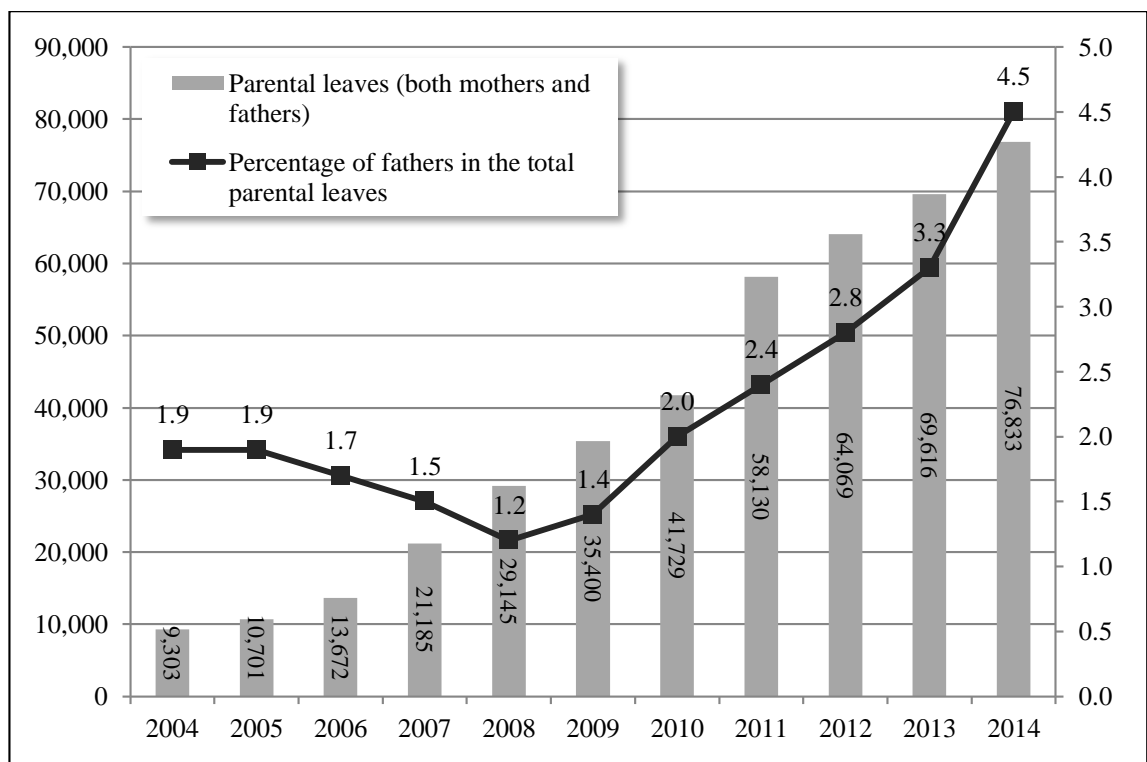
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<sup>43</sup> But 15 per cent of the total payment is to be paid only when they come back to the original workplace and continue to work there for another 6 months in order to provide an incentive for a return to work.

<sup>44</sup> Instead of taking a full leave, either parent use a shorted worktime scheme for a year.

<sup>45</sup> The earliest data available for an international comparison (see OECD, *Child-related leave*, <http://www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm>)

words, 95.5 per cent of the parental leave claimants are mothers. In order to further encourage fathers' care sharing, the government introduced the so called 'father's month' scheme in 2014. If a parental leave is transferred from one to another parent, the second user, usually a father, receive a financial incentive (the 100 per cent salary replacement with the ceiling of 1,500,000 KRW for the first month). Although it is not mandated to fathers, Korean fathers can have a longest and fairly generous parental leave by OECD a comparison (OECD, *OECD Family database*).<sup>46</sup> Despite the recent rapid increase in cases and the additional incentive, the proportion of fathers on a parental leave is still numerically insignificant, less than two per cent in the total male workers having a child under 1 (refer to Appendix 6.6).



**Figure 6.14: Use of parental leaves in Korea (person, %)**

Source: e-National Index, [http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtIPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1504](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtIPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1504) (accessed on 1 May 2015)

Korea has developed a full package of leave programmes.<sup>47</sup> The government has hoped that expansion of leave arrangement would not only prevent 'career disruption' of

<sup>46</sup> See [http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2\\_1\\_Parental\\_leave\\_systems.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2_1_Parental_leave_systems.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> In 2013, the Korean government also introduced 'Family Care Leave' to provide time to look after other family members regardless of age. A total of 90 days (can be used in split) of leave is guaranteed every year.

working mothers but also positively influence parents' fertility decision (Government of Korea, 2005, 2010). So far, these policy goals are far from being accomplished. Despite the improvement in the take-up rate, not all workers can make the full use of leave arrangement. According to a survey by the Ministry of Employment in 2013, most common reasons for not using parental leaves are firstly 'specific work commitment' (50.8 per cent), secondly 'difficulty finding a substitute' (18.6 per cent), and thirdly 'small staff size' (13.6 per cent).<sup>48</sup> So, availability of leave programmes is largely dependent on the applicant's labour market status (the type of a job and company). Employees in the public sector and large companies which have more capacity to rearrange job duties or provide substitutes are more likely to be in a position to fully utilise leave programmes. To most full-time based workers in small and medium sized companies, taking a leave can be a very challenging decision for both their careers and the companies.

### **6.5.3. Reform Trajectories in the Micro-level**

The recent care reform has engaged in redistributing care responsibility between family members through a policy frame of work-home harmonisation (Government of Korea, 2010). Various types of leave arrangement have been reformed or introduced as main policy instruments to rebalance care responsibility between family members, between mothers and fathers in particular. However, their effectiveness has so far been limited. For one thing, the number of fathers who actually use leave programmes is far smaller than mothers, although the entitlement for leave has become largely gender-neutral. The reasons behind are manifold. First of all, care culture is still discouraging for men to become a primary care giver for children. In addition, it is not easy for men to choose to care instead of female partners in the dualised Korean labour market where male workers tend to earn more and have a better job security. Male breadwinners' exit from the labour market for an extended period of time may jeopardise their career and ultimately the family's livelihood. The partner's leave programme, 'father's month', is

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<sup>48</sup> *Source:* e-National Index, [http://www.index.go.kr/potal/stts/idxMain/selectPoSttsIdxSearch.do?idx\\_cd=3030&stts\\_cd=303002&clas\\_div=&idx\\_sys\\_cd=852&idx\\_clas\\_cd=1](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/stts/idxMain/selectPoSttsIdxSearch.do?idx_cd=3030&stts_cd=303002&clas_div=&idx_sys_cd=852&idx_clas_cd=1) (accessed on 1 May 2015)

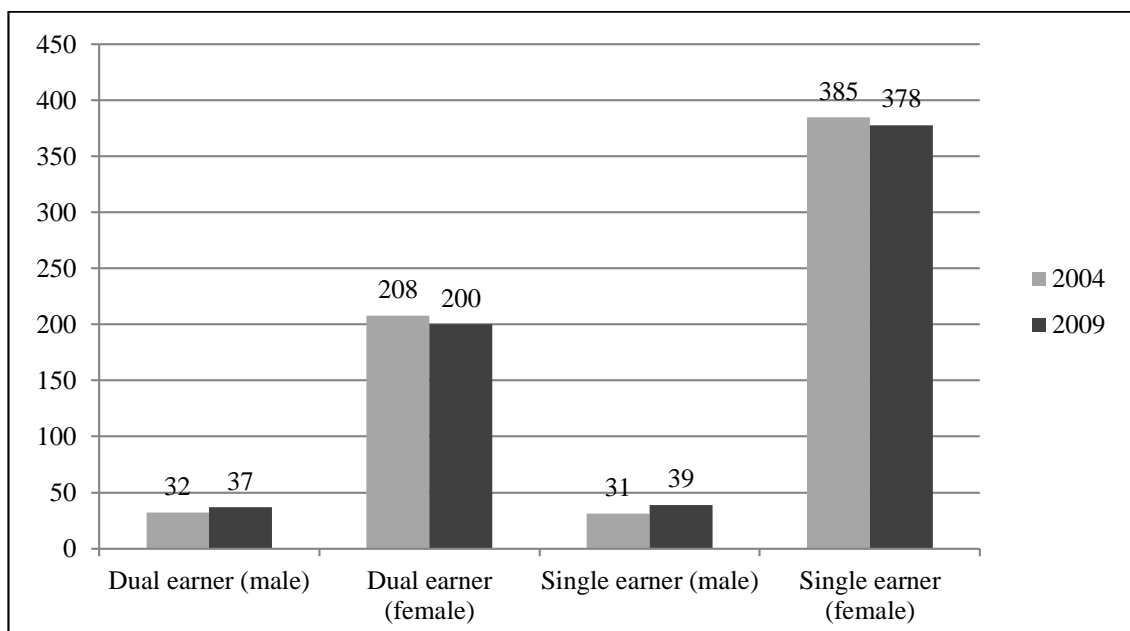
regarded a viable care option only for employees in the public sector and a few large companies.

Consequently, women's dual burden remains largely unchanged. The national survey on the time use conducted every five years<sup>49</sup> shows that despite the recent government effort the gender gap in the care time use persists (Figure 6.15): women are assuming much of the care/domestic work regardless of their employment status. It seems apparent that the expansion of social care provision including leaves does not necessarily lead to an equal redistribution of care in the household level. From a legal perspective, the idea of work-home reconciliation is institutionalised as a means to promote 'gender equality' in Korea. However, on the actual policy level, work-home reconciliation is treated as a concept only for women. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Employment, the main governance body for the work-home reconciliation policy, categorises the work-home harmonisation policy as one of the women-specific programmes.<sup>50</sup> The goal of the work-home harmonisation policy is to make sure that *women* remain in and return to the labour market after performing care work when necessary. In other words, care policies are instruments to support women to become 'citizen the worker' over the life-course (see Lewis, 2001). Drawing on Fraser (1994), I can argue that the Korean welfare state has attempted to get rid of some barriers to help women combine paid-work (or 'breadwinning') and care-giving, but it has not been equally keen on encouraging men to perform both on the same conditions.

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<sup>49</sup> The 2014 results are not available yet.

<sup>50</sup> MOEL website, [http://www.moel.go.kr/view\\_policy.jsp?cate=7&sec=8&smenu=2](http://www.moel.go.kr/view_policy.jsp?cate=7&sec=8&smenu=2)



**Figure 6.15: Time used for care/domestic work per day by gender and earning type, 2004 and 2009 (minutes)**

*Note:* Survey on married couples aged between 20 and 60.

Single earner households are the cases in which only husbands are employed.

The figure includes time used for domestic work (cooking, cleaning, etc.) and care work for family members.

*Source:* Statistics Korea, *Time use survey* (each year)

## 6.6. Discussion and Conclusion

The Korean welfare state has made a significant progress over the last several decades through policy expansions and reforms. Social insurance programmes have been substantially expanded in coverage and the public assistance programme was redesigned to effectively serve as a basic social safety net. The social service care also started to develop rapidly. Korea seems to have been similarly experiencing a new social risk of contemporary western welfare states, care deficit, which has resulted from the ageing population, increasing women's labour market participation and changing norms regarding care provision (Bonoli, 2007; Taylor-Gooby, 2004).

The recent policy efforts have been centred on reforming three areas of policies - childcare, eldercare and work-home reconciliation, which have affected the way in which care responsibility/cost is divided on both the macro-level and the micro-level. Korea's traditional care regime associated with strong familialism and women's

uncommodified care labour began to change. It is evident that the care mix in Korea has become more complex as the state is assuming more responsibility in financing, providing and regulating care, and the roles of market and family have changed accordingly. Nevertheless, the direction and outcomes of such changes have not always been straightforward or coherent. How and to what degree have the recent care reform altered existing, both highly familiarised and feminised, patterns of the division of care?

The Korean government intends to de-familialise care by primarily expanding institutional care for children and older people. Cash benefits which tend to promote familial/home care are small (for childcare) or exceptionalised (for eldercare). Some families, however, have difficulty finding an available care facility due to the insufficient supply or poor quality. Heavy reliance on private care facilities has increased a chance of additional financial burden for families. Families with older people in need of care have more trouble finding affordable public care provision due to stringent screening and high user charge in LTCI, let alone insurance contribution. So the role of the family is still critical in eldercare both as a financer and as a direct care giver. In short, Korean care reform makes a case that care policies generate *de-familialisation* and *re-familialisation* of care at the same time (see Leitner, 2003). Then, how far has care been *defeminised* in the household level? The government has intended to relieve women's care burden, but not necessarily to equalise it with men, although care has been framed a part of the 'gender equality' agenda. Consequently, no signs of meaningful change have been found in care rebalancing between genders. The government expanded paid leave programmes, including a father-specific leave, but they have been disproportionately taken up by mothers and it is not readily available to all workers due to different employment status. So far, care reforms in Korea may have been successful in helping with families in general, but they have not been so beneficial for women in specific (Peng, 2011a).

Currently, care reform affects different groups in a different way. Families with children can enjoy wider social care provision than ones with older people. Mothers' reconciliation between care and paid-work, rather than fathers', has been the primary policy goal of the work-home reconciliation policy, notably leave programme. These mixed results of the care reform reflect the government's mixed, thus sometimes confusing, approaches to providing social care (Peng, 2011a). Greater state commitment to care provision and enhanced gender equality have been implicated in care reform, but

pragmatic and instrumental considerations have also played their parts. Socialising care, from the state's point of view, can help achieve various economic objectives such as utilising inactive female labour force and creating new jobs in the social service market. Most importantly, however, the recent care reform in Korea is fundamentally an instrument for raising the fertility rate; in other words, it aims primarily at solving demographic crisis rather than care crisis *per se*. Care reform, therefore, needs to be understood as complex intersections of several key policy issues simultaneously such as low fertility, gender equality and economic growth. Such considerations are clearly mirrored in the design of the care reform.

My examination of the Korean care regime here has shed new light also on understanding of the Korean welfare *state* regime. Korean care reforms from the early 2000s have been initiated by the state itself as intentional and precautionary measures in order to prevent negative repercussions of the demographic transition and help keep vitalising the economy through social policies. In this regard, the increasing socialisation of care does not necessarily mean the Korean welfare state has fully broken from the developmental legacy. At the same time, a rapid socialisation of childcare and a promotion of the social market have been informed by social investment ideals. Encouragement of women's labour market participation through work-home reconciliation policy is a typical productivist agenda. Above all, *the* most defining feature of Korea's care reform is that very pragmatic policy discourses are constantly recurring, one of which is that the government firmly believes they not only 'should' but also 'can' control people's production/reproduction behaviours through public (care) policies as is in the interest of the nation.





## CHAPTER 7

# INTERSECTIONS OF THE MIGRATION REGIME AND THE CARE REGIME IN KOREA

### 7.1. Introduction

In preceding chapters, I have examined the development and characteristics of both the migration regime and the care regime in Korea. The current chapter investigates how those two seemingly separate domains of policies are interconnected. More specifically, I analyse how migrants are engaged in varied types of care work at the intersections of those policies. As suggested in Chapter 1 and 2, work of care is defined as (social) reproductive labour for the research. I aim to demonstrate how the Korean government has attempted to address Korea's care crisis by mobilising migrants' reproductive labour in various settings and the social reproduction of humans through a combination of policy instruments.

Migrants' social reproductive activities in Korea are configured at the intersections of the migration regime and the care regime including the care worker employment regime. Two categories of migrants, co-ethnic (labour) migrants and marriage migrants emerge pertinent to the function of social reproduction under the Korean migration regime. Co-ethnic migrants are the only group of migrant workers who have access to service jobs, some of which are directly related to what we can consider as care jobs here.<sup>51</sup> In addition, marriage migrants are selected here since they take a different route of migration, i.e. family migration, into Korea, and their reproductive roles are different but as equally significant as those of the co-ethnic labour migrants. Social reproductive roles of those migrants are patterned across different domains of care. The roles typically involve the provision of care for children, older people (and other dependants), and, equally importantly, other types of reproductive works such as general

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<sup>51</sup> As examined in Chapter 5, there are two types of co-ethnic labour migrants in Korea: unskilled circulatory labour migrants (H-2 visa holders) and semi- or skilled labour migrant workers (F-4 visa holders). It is important to be aware of the difference between them throughout the chapter although my focus lies on the former group of co-ethnic migrants.

house/maintenance works and biological reproduction if we broadly define the concept of care (also refer to Chapter 2).


Based on the findings from preceding chapters on the migration regime (Chapter 5) and the care regime (Chapter 6), two types of intersections can be identified between the migration regime and the care regime, as presented in Table 7.1. Some of migrants' social reproductive roles are distinctive at each area of care, for example when they exclusively look after either young children (childcare) or the aged (eldercare). For organisational purposes, I have simply divided the roles of migrants into childcare and eldercare. Reality, however, can be more complex. Borders between the care domains can easily be blurred (indicated as dotted lines in the table) and migrants can sometimes perform various tasks of care, especially when they work in private homes or work for individuals. In addition, it should be reminded that the biological reproduction of humans (and their socialisation) must be viewed as one of the care roles (marriage) migrants assume in Korea, which I posit it in the category of childcare. Drawing on this analytical frame, the rest of the chapter closely examines each intersection in turn: co-ethnic migrant workers in paid care work (Section 7.2) and marriage migrants in unpaid care work (Section 7.3), followed by a concluding discussion (Section 7.4).

**Table 7.1: Intersections between the migration regime and the care regime in Korea**

		Migration Regimes	
		Labour Migration (Co-ethnic Migrants)	Family Migration (Marriage Migrants)
Care Regimes	Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Domestic workers ('<i>Gasadowoomi</i>')</li> <li>▪ Nannies ('<i>Yoogadowoomi</i>')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Roles as wives and mothers</li> </ul>
	Eldercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eldercare workers ('<i>Ganbyeongin</i>' and '<i>Yoyangbohosa</i>')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Roles as daughters-in-law</li> </ul>



Intersection 1: Co-ethnic Migrants in Paid Care Work



Intersection 2: Marriage Migrants in Unpaid Care Work

## **7.2. Intersection 1: Co-ethnic Migrant Workers in Paid Care Work**

The first intersection is established between co-ethnic (labour) migration and care. This takes a form of paid care work by co-ethnic migrants in both homes and institutions. The types of care work they provide can be both childcare as nannies (*'Yoogadowoomi'*) and eldercare as eldercare workers (*'Ganbyeongin'* and *'Yoyangbohosa'*). Domestic workers (*'Gasadowoomi'*) are considered here as a type of care workers performing an essential reproductive function in homes. Although I examine them in the childcare context, domestic workers can also be engaged with eldercare and other types of care activities.

### **7.2.1. Employment Regime of Co-ethnic Migrants in the Service Sector**

Before examining the way in which co-ethnic migrants are engaged in various types of care jobs in detail, it is necessary to comprehend the employment regime of migrant workers in the service sector in general. Care-related jobs such as domestic workers, nannies and care workers are defined as 'unskilled service jobs' by the labour migrant (employment) policies in Korea. Migrants' access to unskilled service jobs in Korea is made exclusively available to co-ethnic migrant workers.<sup>52</sup> The majority of them are Korean Chinese who have obtained typically an H-2 visa through the Working Visit Programme (WVP), or few have F-4 visas (refer to Chapter 5 for the visa specification).

At first, migrant workers, including co-ethnic migrant workers had been completely prohibited from entering the service sector until 2002. Nevertheless, it was speculated that a substantial number of migrants (as the undocumented then) were already employed in the service sector.<sup>53</sup> Recognising the increasing demand for migrant workers in the service sector, the Korean government introduced a special labour migration programme specifically targeted at co-ethnic migrants, called the Employment Management System (EMS), in December 2002. The EMS extended

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<sup>52</sup> Some family migrants including marriage migrants are also allowed to work in the low-skilled service sector, but this section focuses on labour migrants.

<sup>53</sup> According to a survey, "among 260,000 foreign residents without a proper document in Korea who reported their residency between March and May 2002, 21 per cent of them (54,000) were employed in the service sector, and about 10,000 of (female) migrants were working as domestic workers." (H-K Lee, 2004 cited in Um, 2012: 98)

employment opportunities for co-ethnic migrant workers to the service sector, together with manufacturing and construction industries. Korea came to open an official channel for unskilled migrant workers to be employed in the service sector for the first time. The Working Visit Programme (WVP) has replaced the EMS since 2004 along with the launch of the Employment Permit System (EPS). The government limited the applicable jobs, but it has gradually expanded the list from just 6 job categories<sup>54</sup> in 2004 to 29 in 2010, including private care work and domestic work (refer to Table 7.2).

**Table 7.2: List of service jobs open to co-ethnic migrants under the WVP in Korea**

Category	Business examples
Hospitality	Hotels, inns or restaurants
Sales	Sales of goods, produce or livestock
Disposal and Recycling	Disposal of refuse or recycling of material
Transportation	Warehousing or distribution (on land)
Publishing	Publishing of books, magazines or others
Maintenance and Support	Building maintenance or cleaning
Tourism	Tour agencies
Repair	Repair of cars and motorcycles
Personal Service	Bathing and laundry service
Social (welfare) Service	Care work (in institutions)
Domestic employment	Domestic workers or nannies (in home)

*Source:* Summarised from MOJ (2013: 35-9)

The Korean government has not only expanded the range of permitted jobs but it also eased regulations on co-ethnic migrants' employment activities so that they could freely find and change workplaces, which is not permitted in the case of other general unskilled migrant workers. In addition, the government gave up the sectoral allocation of co-ethnic migrants in 2010. While the government imposes a limit on the total number (stock) of co-ethnic migrants, currently 303,000, their employment has become entirely subject to market mechanisms. Under the current WVP system, companies in the listed sector can hire up to ten co-ethnic migrant workers according to their business (staff) size. One of the most significant developments in the Korean labour migration regime is that families also can legally employ migrant care workers for

<sup>54</sup> They were restaurant, building maintenance, business support, social service, cleaning and others (Seoul, 2007).

domestic/personal care through the special co-ethnic labour migration programmes since 2002. Under the current WVP system, families can hire one migrant care worker either when they are dual-earner families or lone parents with children, or when they have other dependants who need personal care such as the sick, the disabled or older people with limited mobility (Table 7.3).

**Table 7.3: Family-employer qualification to hire migrant care workers in Korea**

Job category	Family-employer specifications
Domestic workers or nannies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dual-working parents or lone parents having one or more children regardless of age, or</li> <li>▪ Family having long-term (6 months or longer) patients or the disabled</li> </ul>
Private nursing (or similar service) workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Family having members with limited mobility including the disabled and older people having dementia, or</li> <li>▪ Family having member(s) aged 80 or over</li> </ul>

*Source: S Choi et al. (2013: 3)*

It is extremely difficult to figure out precisely what proportion co-ethnic migrant workers are working for each category of service job. The difficulty originates, in part, from the nature of their employment regime in the service sector. Co-ethnic migrant workers tend to work for small service businesses or private homes often without formal contracts. They are also subject to more frequent changes of workplaces and in many cases they do not report to the government. Consequently, their employment record cannot be effectively collected, or it becomes easily outdated. According to a recent government-commissioned large scale survey, 23.4 per cent of co-ethnic migrant workers are currently (or until recently) working for the service sector (refer to Table 7.4) (Chung *et al.*, 2013a). We need to be aware that there is a possibility that the service sector is underrepresented here since the survey samples are collected through the list of enterprises, which excludes the employment by individuals and families. In fact, the service sector occupied much higher proportion in other studies: 57.5 per cent (J-y Lee *et al.*, 2008) and 55.9 per cent (Gwak, 2012).

**Table 7.4: Co-ethnic migrant workers by industry in Korea, 2012 (%)**

Industry	Total	Male	Female
Manufacturing	72.9	84.0	54.8
Agriculture incl. livestock	0.7	1.2	0.0
Construction	2.8	4.2	0.6
Services	23.4	10.7	44.6
Total	100	100	100

Note: Total n=987

Source: Adapted from Chung *et al.* (2013a: 333)

The service sector comprises a vast variety of jobs (refer back to Table 7.2). Obtaining statistical data on care jobs (domestic workers, nannies and other care workers) has additional barriers. Care jobs often do not receive a separate occupational recognition in the employment statistics, falling in the category of ‘other’. In other cases, different types of care jobs are often grouped together, making it impossible for researchers to figure out exact break-downs. A small number of studies provide relatively detailed occupational distribution of co-ethnic migrant workers in the service sector. However, the results are mixed with significant similarities and differences. To illustrate, I present two studies published at the similar time point (2008 and 2010) on co-ethnic migrants’ labour market participation patterns (refer to Table 7.5). Different groups of researchers carried out the researches adopting different methods. Understandably, the two studies produced very different results. The first noticeable difference between two studies is about the proportions of agricultural industry. The study of J-y Lee *et al.* (2008) was carried out in a major city (Seoul) so there were no migrant workers found working in agriculture. There are also differences in the domestic/care-related jobs. The proportion of those industries are much smaller in Chung *et al.* (2010)’s study because their sampling method excluded individual or family employers. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect higher proportion of private care workers.

There are, however, some significant similarities to be found between the studies. To begin with, both studies similarly indicate that a large number of co-ethnic migrant workers are hired in manufacturing and construction industries as in the case of general unskilled migrant workers. For the service sector jobs, co-ethnic migrants are concentrated on restaurant jobs, domestic work and care jobs. In addition, both studies clearly show the highly gendered employment structure. Males are overrepresented in

manufacturing but limited in the service jobs (only moderately significant in restaurant business). In contrast, female migrants are concentrated in restaurant, domestic and other care jobs.

**Table 7.5: Co-ethnic migrant workers by occupation in Korea (%)**

Occupation	J-y Lee <i>et al.</i> (2008), Total n=991			Chung <i>et al.</i> (2010), Total n=987		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Manufacturing worker	14.2	23.7	4.5	66.2	80.1	40.9
Agricultural worker	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.8	2.4	0.9
Construction worker	28.2	54.4	1.2	6.1	8.8	1.1
Restaurant staff	27.4	7.4	48.1	18.6	3.3	46.6
Domestic worker and Nanny	10.2	0.0	20.7	2.2	0.0	6.3
Care or nursing worker	4.8	0.8	9.0	0.2	0.0	0.6
Other service worker	4.0	0.8	8.6	1.1	0.9	1.4
Sales person				0.4	0.3	0.6
Office worker	11.1	12.9	8.0	0.4	0.3	0.6
Other				2.9	4.0	1.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Source:* Compiled from J-y Lee *et al.* (2008) and Chung *et al.* (2010)

## 7.2.2. Co-ethnic Migrants in Childcare

### *Migrant care workers in home-based childcare*

The way in which co-ethnic migrant workers engage in childcare is primarily to work as domestic workers via either commuting or living-in. Families can hire migrants specifically for childcare (nannies), but it is less frequent. No quantified data exist to show how many co-ethnic migrant workers work as domestic workers or nannies. It is mandatory for co-ethnic migrant workers to report to the labour office within 14 days when they begin to work. But the overall report rate is less than 50 per cent across industries, and the rate of workers in the service sector tends to be lower, presumably

less than ten per cent. As of 2012, 3,471 co-ethnic migrant workers reported to begin work as domestic workers or nannies. So, researchers simply speculate that the number now between several thousands and tens of thousands (S Choi *et al.*, 2013; Y-k Choi, 2014).

In the global north, families have been increasingly relying on paid care workers to provide care for children and older people, and migrants have become main providers instead of native-born workers (Kilkey *et al.*, 2010; Lutz, 2002, 2008b Anderson and Shutes, 2014). As reviewed in Chapter 2, researchers have shown that the employment of migrant workers for domestic and care work reflects the interconnection between policies and social changes happening at the household, national, international and global level (Williams, 2012; Williams and Gavanas, 2005). From the destination countries' perspective, women's increasing labour market participation and the resultant care deficit which is not alternatively addressed due to the asymmetrical distribution of care responsibility across genders in the household level and the 'retrenchment' of the welfare state have been suggested as most important contexts behind the migrantisation of domestic/care work (Anderson, 2014; Kilkey, 2010b; Lister *et al.*, 2007; Williams, 2014; Williams and Gavanas, 2008; Zhou, 2013).

Growth in paid domestic work in Korea is situated in the both similar and different contexts. As of 2014, 116,000 are employed on a home-based work as domestic workers or nannies (Statistics Korea, 2015a).<sup>55</sup> It can be estimated a similar number of households purchase home-based care services in one form or another although the exact data is simply not available. Such practices once were thought to be exclusive to rich families, but they have become widespread among dual-earner families. Many Korean families are adopting the 'adult worker model'; however, as discussed in Chapter 6, the division of care work, including house chores, between genders has not been equalised. So, the need for buying-in extra care source can be essential for working mothers who have to juggle between multiple responsibilities. An interesting difference from the western experiences is that growing reliance on migrant care workers is happening in parallel with the social care expansion as examined in Chapter 6. Although public childcare service has recently been substantially expanded, institutional childcare does not always fit the parents' working schedules. Besides, parents of very young children prefer home-based personal care for safety and development reasons:

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<sup>55</sup> The figure includes 'any other unclassified jobs'. No further breakdowns by job are available.



94.6 per cent of parents with a child under one year expressed a preference for home-based care, and 81.5 per cent among those with a child between one and two years (M-w Lee *et al.*, 2012). Employing native-born domestic workers or nannies, however, has become increasingly difficult and costly because native-born workers tend to avoid these jobs due to poor economic return compared to work intensity and limited social rights attached to such jobs like other care jobs (J Yoon *et al.*, 2011). So the market system alone would not sufficiently provide home-based domestic workers or nannies.

The Korean government has responded to the growing demand for home-based childcare service in two ways. Firstly, it launched a government-run domestic worker/nanny provision system.<sup>56</sup> The government began to directly recruit, (re)train and provide home-based childcare workers, called '*aidolbomi*' in Korean. After a long piloting stage from 2007, the programme became fully operational from 2012 when the '*Aidolbom* [Childcare] Support Act' was enacted. '*Aidolbomi*', literally means 'persons who taking care of children', is a lower-skilled care profession distinguished from the existing childcare workers working for childcare centres and kindergartens.<sup>57</sup> Any parents of children under age 12 can purchase this service hourly (two to six hours) or full day (six hours or more), but the priority is given to working parent(s) rather than poor families. Households whose income level is below the national average can receive government subsidy from 25 to 75 per cent of the total fee according to their income level. Those household above the income threshold can use the service at 100 per cent user charge.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF), the governing body, says that this programme has been introduced to serve three purposes: to enhance the welfare of children, to support parents' work-home reconciliation, and to create jobs for middle-aged women in career disruption.<sup>58</sup> Accommodating 'varying types of care preference', the Ministry said, an important motivation to implement this programme, such as parents working non-traditional hours or those who prefer personal care for their very young children aged under two. Although only in the early stage, the popularity of this new programme has been growing due to its flexibility and expected quality (since it is government-run). However, the financial burden on the family remain largely the same

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<sup>56</sup> However, this programme does not replace the market but complements it.

<sup>57</sup> Note that this study keeps the term '*aidolbomi*' to distinguish them from institutional childcare workers.

<sup>58</sup> MOGEF, <https://idolbom.mogef.go.kr/EgovPageLink.do>

since most middle-income families get no government subsidy. The challenge for the provider (the government) is the stable supply of appropriate care workers. The programme has had difficulty recruiting candidates from the native-born workforce and has suffered from high staff turn-over mainly due to low pay. According to a recent survey, many '*aidolbomi*' expressed the view that payment does not reach their expectations (Y-k Choi, 2014: 74). In addition, there is a mismatch issue: '*aidolbomi*' in most cases only provides childcare.<sup>59</sup> Families wanting living-in domestic workers have to turn to migrant domestic workers.

As Table 7.6 shows below, affordability is the most frequent reason to hire migrant domestic workers (49 per cent). While the scarcity of the native-born domestic workers is the third most important reason, the patterns of care work that they can provide are also crucial such as possibility of *au pair* and willingness to assume multiple roles. As indicated above (Table 7.3), the WVP regulations demand that migrant care workers be hired only for a care purpose; however, almost all migrant domestic workers undertake various housework tasks such as cooking and cleaning along with childcaring (refer to Appendix 7.1). This explains why it is rare to hire migrant workers solely as 'nannies' in Korea. Researchers have found that it is not easy to determine what constitutes 'domestic work' and how it is different from 'care work' (Kilkey, 2010b; Kilkey and Perrons, 2010). If domestic workers live in as 'one of the family', it becomes particularly challenging to maintain the boundary between different roles (Lan, 2003). Despite the extra workload, the living-in option also suits migrant care workers since many co-ethnic migrant workers are typically middle-aged Chinese Koreans and they often migrate alone for family and financial reasons, so they need an accommodation and work at the same time (S Choi *et al.*, 2013).

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<sup>59</sup> In 2014, the government added a so called 'comprehensive service' option which provides both childcare and domestic work only on a part-time base.

**Table 7.6: Primary reasons to hire migrant domestic workers in Korea**

Primary reason	Percentage
Relatively cheaper	49.0
Possible to live in together ( <i>au pair</i> )	22.8
Difficult to find native-born workers	13.5
Willing to do housework in addition to childcare	8.1
Attentive to children	2.7
Feeling comfortable to supervise	1.9
Suitable for the specific needs of the family	1.5
Other	0.4
Total	100

Note: Total n=259

Source: Y-k Choi (2014: 264)

As a second solution to the increasing demand for home-based childcare service, the Korean government has taken some measures to further stimulate the supply of migrant childcare workers. Firstly, as mentioned above, the government permitted unskilled co-ethnic migrant workers (H-2 visa holders) to work as care workers in homes. Besides, entry to care jobs has been extended to even semi-/skilled co-ethnic migrant workers (F-4 visa holders) since 2010, which their access to other types of unskilled occupations is still restricted (*Donga Ilbo*, 2010). To further encourage the supply, the government decided to provide additional incentive to co-ethnic migrants in the same year: when they continue to work as domestic workers, nannies and nursing/care workers (in home or facility) for the same employer over a year, they were given a chance to ‘upgrade’ their visa (from H-2 to F-4), which guarantees longer (possibly permanent) stay and enhanced social rights. Becoming domestic/care workers became one of few routes to lead to a long-term employment and residency for co-ethnic migrant workers (refer to Chapter 5). However, this ‘upgrade card’ was discarded later in 2011 on the ground that this programme may cause co-ethnic migrant workers to compete for the same jobs with native-born care workers (Gwak, 2012). Knowing that families currently hiring migrant domestic workers or nannies demand a stable (long-term) employment, the government revived this scheme only for childcare workers (nannies) from 2013 when it started a migrant nanny training programme. So now co-ethnic migrant nannies can apply for a F-4 visa when they have worked for the same employer for two years after completing the training programme.

Due to an expanded employment opportunity and an incentive for co-ethnic migrant workers, the Korean society has witnessed a rapid growth in the migrant care worker market over the last decade. While the government officialised co-ethnic migrant workers' employment in the home-based childcare, employment practices remained entirely marketised: parent employers have to recruit them either through personal introduction or private agencies. No qualification control was put in place for migrant domestic workers or nannies working in homes. As their numbers are increasing, cases of crime and child abuse started to be reported and concerned parents asked for the government-level intervention often through a coalition with civil society groups and media (*Baby News*, 2012).

To deal with it, the government launched an official training programme specifically for migrant nannies in May 2013.<sup>60</sup> The programme is administered by a quasi-governmental corporation, Korea Immigration Service Foundation (KISF), under the auspice of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the immigration bureau of Korea. The programme runs for 40 hours, on Sundays for five weeks. The students (migrant workers) are responsible to pay the full fee of 250,000 KRW (equivalent to 150 GBP). The curriculum consists of ten subjects, whose topics cover child development, child safety, playing with children, roles of childcare workers, the Korean childcare culture as well as relevant immigration regulations for them.<sup>61</sup> Despite the brevity of the programme, the introduction of a migrant nanny training programme is a significant move in that the migrant nanny began to be officially recognised as a type of childcare worker, and in that it meant the first qualification control of migrant childcare workers in Korea. An employee from KISF emphasised the significance of this training scheme in a media interview:

Migrants used to work as nannies without clear legal foundations or training and this nanny training programme can educate and provide qualified migrant nannies so that they take care of children based on a mutual trust with hiring parents (*Yonhap News*, 2014a)

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<sup>60</sup> Other than co-ethnic migrants (both H-2 and F-4 visa holders), migrants with permanent residency (F-2 and F-5 visa holders) and marriage migrants (F-6) can also register for the training programme.

<sup>61</sup> KISF, <http://www.kisfbs.com/edu/01.php>

KISF is also running its own migrant nanny job shop through which trained migrant nannies are advertised, and potential (parent) employers review the information on training, health and criminal records of migrant nannies. Migrant care workers can find a job through other routes (agencies or job shops), but the KISF job shop guarantees the identity, criminal record clearance and training. The government made this programme a prerequisite for the aforementioned 'visa upgrade' of co-ethnic migrant nannies.

### ***Migrant care workers in institutional childcare***

Unlike the case in the home-based childcare, co-ethnic migrants' involvement in institutional childcare is extremely limited. It is closely related to the employment regime of care workers, as a part of the care regime, in Korea. Compared to domiciliary childcare workers, childcare workers in institutions require a high level of training and proficiency. As examined in Chapter 6, there are two types of childcare institutions: childcare centre and kindergarten. It is typically required that two year-long university level or equivalent education and field practice to become childcare workers in childcare centre and four year-long university level or equivalent training is required for care workers in kindergartens. Childcare workers to be hired in government-operating institutions are often expected to have competitive qualifications and longer experience.

In Korea both types of childcare workers are legally and socially acknowledged as 'teachers' and are held respectful by parents at a similar level to school teachers. Although work is demanding and the pay level is not so high, institutional childcare workers are highly sought-after positions in the Korean labour market, especially among female graduates with relevant degrees. Kindergarten teachers tend to work in better working conditions, so job opportunities in kindergartens are ever more competitive even among native-born workers. The high level of the professionalisation of care workers has made it virtually impossible for migrants to access jobs in institutional childcare. The Korean government continues to emphasise the enhancement of the quality of institutional childcare workers throughout the recent care reforms so the (unskilled) co-ethnic migrant workers' engagement in the institutional childcare is likely to remain discouraged.

### *Degree of migrantisation of childcare*

The policy measures examined above have aimed to facilitate the supply of home-based migrant childcare workers who may fill the gap not fully addressed by native-born domestic/care workers alone. It should be reminded that the Korean government has given a universal cash benefit for households with children aged 0 to 5 to subsidise home-based childcare costs from 2009. The combination of the legalisation of migrant childcare workers and the introduction of a cash subsidy for the home-based childcare seems to be a perfect formula to stimulate a phenomenon called ‘migrantisation of childcare’ in Korea’s highly marketised care worker employment regime. However, the degree to which childcare is migrantised has been limited to the home-based care setting due to several reasons. First of all, the level of cash benefit is too low to hire domestic childcare workers and there is no other government support for outsourcing childcare, e.g. tax benefit in Korea. So, if possible, utilising universal (and almost free) institutional childcare can be a more reasonable choice for most families rather than buying-in childcare at homes on their own expense.

Secondly, the migration regime effectively limits the expansion of the migrant domestic workers or nanny market. Protecting the native-born workers’ employment opportunity has been a strong rationale. Under the current migration regime, only co-ethnic migrant workers (most importantly, H-2 visa holders) can work as care workers, they alone would not fully accommodate the demand for migrant domestic workers and nannies considering the total admission quota. The actual relevant labour pool can be much smaller by the fact that virtually all migrant domestic worker and nannies are females in a certain age cohort (30s to 50s) with previous childcare experience (Y-k Choi, 2014).

Thirdly, the quality issue keeps reoccurring. Some malpractice cases by migrant nannies such as ID fraud, abuse and abduction have been reported. The recent government effort to control quality and reliability by introducing a training programme does not seem to fully recover parents’ confidence toward hiring migrant domestic workers and nannies. Given that most families wanting to hire migrant care workers prefer the living-in type, we can see why the quality-related issues play a big part. Besides, the KISF official nanny job shop does not seem to have been active: from January 2014 to now, only 25 migrant applicants and 18 family customers are

advertised.<sup>62</sup> For these reasons, migrant care workers tend to be considered just as the second best. A preference to native-born childcare workers is not new but migrant nannies have been often hired because they cost less and they are simply available. However, the lack of supply has driven up the cost of hiring migrant care workers as well, almost reaching the level of the native-born care workers. Congressman Geum-Rae Kim reported to the government in 2010 that hiring ‘*joseonjok*’ (Chinese-Korean) nannies had been increasingly expensive over the recent years: 1,100,000 KRW per month in 2008, 1,300,000 KRW in 2009 and 1,400,000 KRW to 1,500,000 KRW in 2010, and he also maintained that they attempted to increase their salary level through collusion (*Yonhap News*, 2010). The increase can have a significant impact on the migrant care workers’ competitive edge against government-provided ‘*aidolbomi*’.

Lastly, as we have seen above, the government has been attempting to make the domestic/childcare jobs, the social service market in general, as a way to increase the labour market participation of native-born middle-aged women. The government started this programme only to provide ‘childcare’ but now the service includes ‘domestic work’ as well. Consequently, in order to remain competitive, migrant domestic workers and nannies are forced either to work long as *au pair*, or to consider finding other types of care jobs which are less regulated but in more demanding working conditions such as eldercare.

### **7.2.3. Co-ethnic Migrants in Eldercare**

#### ***Migrant care workers in private eldercare***

Over the recent decades, taking care of older people is becoming a huge challenge for the working family especially when they cannot take care of themselves due to health reasons. They need somebody to provide essential personal care whether they are at home, in a nursing home or in a hospital. If they are qualified for the Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) benefits, they get residential or domiciliary care from the LTCI care workers. Otherwise, families have to take care of older people themselves or recruit private eldercare (or nursing) workers are called ‘*ganbyeongin*’ in Korean. It is one of two types of eldercare professions which migrant workers can take in Korea, together

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<sup>62</sup> See <http://www.kisfbs.com>

with ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ which is to be explained later on. Same to the case of childcare, among labour migrants, only H-2 and F-4 visa holders are allowed to have these care jobs. Again, there is no accurate statistical data on this type of migrant care workers (‘*ganbyeongin*’), but it is suggested that about 70 per cent of the total ‘*ganbyeongin*’ is Korean Chinese migrants (*Kukmin Ilbo*, 2012).

Families can hire co-ethnic migrant workers to have them take care of older people as well as long-term patients and the disabled (refer back to Table 7.3). Although there are cases that migrant ‘*ganbyeongin*’ work at employers’ homes but more frequently, they work at medical or long-term care facilities because their care-receivers often require medical interventions at hand. The involvement of medical facilities for both acute and long-term care puts eldercare workers, including migrant eldercare workers, in a rather unique employment configuration. From a legal perspective, migrant ‘*ganbyeongin*’ is ‘home employment’; the same as domestic workers or nannies. Most families directly recruit ‘*ganbyeongin*’, typically through private care worker agencies. It is interesting to see that in many cases, migrant ‘*ganbyeongin*’ provide care in the hospitals or care facilities, but those institutions rarely have responsibility for the management of ‘*ganbyeongin*’. Consequently, hiring families cannot be convinced of the quality of care migrant ‘*ganbyeongin*’ provide, and migrant ‘*ganbyeongin*’ often fall victim to the exploitations of the agencies.

Employing native-born personal eldercare workers has become extremely difficult and costly. This is why the immigration authority has opened this job area to unskilled migrant workers since 2002. Hardly is any policy intervention operating for the home employment of eldercare/nursing workers as well as domestic/childcare workers, which put workers in these jobs, either natives or migrants, in an extremely precarious condition. Despite the increasing eldercare burden of families due to the rapid ageing, an increase in geriatric diseases and the diminishing family care potential, the Korean eldercare system had been extremely limited until recently in terms of coverage, care services and care workforce. The absence of public provision of eldercare workforce and related regulations has created a highly marketised and segmented eldercare worker market, at the bottom of which co-ethnic migrant eldercare workers have found a niche.



### *Migrant care workers in institutional eldercare*

With a launch of the LTCI in 2008, a more professionalised form of eldercare workforce has emerged, which has had a huge implication on migrant eldercare/nursing workers. Despite the increasing supply of relatively *cheap* migrant eldercare workers, private eldercare workforce could not meet all the demand, not to mention a huge financial burden of families outsourcing eldercare. Relieving eldercare burden from families is one of the most important elements of the recent care reforms in Korea, as examined in the previous chapter. The introduction of the LTCI brought about a significant change to the eldercare workforce as well as finance, coverage and services of the Korean eldercare system. The expansion of the institutional (both residential and home-visit) eldercare through the LTCI has created a new type of eldercare profession (certificate) named ‘*yoyangbohosa*’, replacing previously used several different, thus confusing, names to refer to institutional eldercare workers (refer to Section 6.4.2 in Chapter 6).

Law demands that each LTCI eldercare facility employ certain number of ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ according to the patient-care worker ratio. To staff newly created eldercare institutions, the job of ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ has been passionately promoted by the Korean government as a new employment chance, for middle-aged women in particular (Um, 2012). In order to work as a ‘*yoyangbohosa*’, candidates must go through 240 hour-worth training consisting of lectures and practicum, and then pass the official certification test. Current or previous care workers, e.g. ‘*ganbyeongin*’ or nursing aides, can benefit from the reduced training hour according to their certificates or experience. Since there are no other conditions attached, such as on age, sex or education level, a large number of people have been trained and issued certificates. The number of certified native-born ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ alone soon exceeded the demand from LTCI facilities although the actual working number is much smaller due to poorer working conditions of care jobs in general.

The government has opened the opportunity to certain groups of migrants. Unskilled co-ethnic labour migrants and marriage migrants were initially considered for this new type of care job certificate. Later on, the chance has been extended to other family migrants such as those with permanent residency visas (F-5) and their dependants (F-2). The Immigration Law did not limit the employment activities of migrants with F-2 and F-5 visas but the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) used

to prevent them from joining the eldercare workforce. In the beginning, a migrant candidate was required to present a Korean language test score for the training itself but the language requirement was dropped later. Being certified as a legally recognised eldercare worker, i.e. ‘*yoyangbohosa*’, may increase employment potential with better conditions for migrants than working as ‘*ganbyeongin*’.

However, despite this legal training and employment channel, it seems that not many co-ethnic labour migrants have had certificates, and that even those with certificates might have had difficulty finding a job in LTCI institutions in reality. One reason must be that the training to become a ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ itself can be challenging (difficult, long and expensive) for (unskilled) migrant workers. A more important reason is that now migrant care workers have to compete with native-born care workers over the same eldercare jobs at the LTCI facilities, where employing native-born ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ is preferred. This point of *preference* will be revisited later. So having a certificate itself cannot guarantee a migrant a job in LTCI facilities.

A consequence of the recent institutionalisation and professionalisation of eldercare workers in Korea is the formation of a dual market of eldercare workers between ‘*ganbyeongin*’ and ‘*yoyangbohosa*’. Although there are no official statistics available to show actual number of migrant eldercare workers, the majority of co-ethnic migrant eldercare workers are working as ‘*ganbyeongin*’ outside of the LTCI system. Empirical research proves that the distinction between unprofessional ‘*ganbyeongin*’ and professional ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ is rather arbitrary because their actual functions and the required level of skill are similar (Um, 2012).

In reality, however, ‘*ganbyeongin*’ has become migrants’ care jobs and they are subject to poorer work conditions not to mention the lack of recognition as a profession. On the contrary, ‘*yoyangbohosa*’ has become jobs for native-born care workers working at institutional settings with better employment status. As Um (2012) argues, this newly established stratification in the eldercare labour market resulted from the discrepancy between the migration regime and the care (worker) regime. In other words, co-ethnic migrant workers continue to be framed as ‘unskilled’, and it contradicts the professionalisation tendency of care workforce. Although co-ethnic migrant workers are technically allowed to access the job, their employability is systematically hampered. It is interesting to witness that the division and the consequent discrimination are

happening in the Korean care worker market even between co-ethnic migrants and the native-born who are allegedly share the same racial, ethnical and cultural identity.

### *Degree of migrantisation of eldercare*

Co-ethnic migrants' involvement in eldercare has been fast growing. Demand for affordable migrant eldercare workers from families is ever increasing in the market. The expansion of the state social eldercare services has created a new demand. The Korean government has facilitated co-ethnic migrant workers to take eldercare jobs by easing immigration controls for them and by granting relevant training opportunities. However, the institutionalisation of eldercare and professionalisation of eldercare workforce have largely discouraged co-ethnic migrants from working at LTCI institutions. As a result, co-ethnic migrants have become increasingly concentrated at the less regulated care job market where native-born care workers are chronically in short supply due to low income, demanding workload and poor social recognition as professionals.

There is virtually no cash benefit for eldercare (granted only for very exceptional cases and its level is extremely low) in the Korean LTCI system. If families with a dependent elderly cannot benefit from the LTCI care services, they have to address it by themselves or by buying-in care workers from the market. Thus, the limited coverage of the state elder care system may continue to necessitate the migrantisation of eldercare in Korea. Currently, migrant elder workers are complementing this gap in the state social care capacity at the bottom of eldercare workforce.

### **7.2.4. Discussion**

Migrant workers' involvement in both childcare and eldercare in Korea has been growing in volume, partly taking over some of family and state care responsibility. The growth, however, is neither uniform nor straightforward: the government policies have constantly reconfigured how and to what extent they are engaged in different care areas. Ongoing reformation of the welfare state regarding the provision of social care has further complicated the mode of migrants' engagement in the paid care work. The Korean government has been playing important roles in migrants' increasing involvement in care jobs. It has eased the immigration rules so that migrant workers

take up a range of care jobs such as domestic workers and child/eldercare workers. Even more proactive measures have been often taken. The government introduced relevant care worker training programmes and job finding services for migrant care workers. It also provides an incentive of visa upgrade to migrant care workers when they work long enough in the care sector. It is rather surprising considering that the Korean government has been always concerned about the possibility that migrant workers take away jobs from native-born workers. The government seems to admit that the deficit in care resource cannot be fully addressed without migrant care workers despite the recent expansion of the social care system.

Ironically, the increasing inclusion of migrant workers in the care sector in Korea has been institutionalised by a very exclusive racial (ethnic) division in the migration/employment regime. In other words, only co-ethnic migrant workers are allowed to have care jobs, systematically excluding all other types of migrant workers. Why is it so ethno-specific? The complete ethnicisation of the migrant care workforce is a direct outcome of state policies and the absence of policies at the first place. Co-ethnic migrants had started taking care jobs even before the introduction of the special labour migration programme allowing their entry into the service sector. The scale was already too extensive for the government to deny the reality and drive them out of the service sector. In addition, the special labour migration programme for co-ethnic migrant workers allows free job-seeking/moving activities, and it has encouraged them to function almost in the same way to native-born workers in the labour market. So, limiting the access to care jobs only to co-ethnic migrants seems to be an inevitable compromise for the government which wants to minimise the labour market disruption by migrant workforce while providing much demanded migrant service workers.

Another reason for the ethno-specific care migrantisation can be found on the nature of care work itself and care tradition of a country. Care work can be very intimate and relational often to the level found between family members. *Foreign* care workers are new to Korea where care work has been performed largely by families alone. Speaking same language and having similar cultural codes make it possible for co-ethnic migrant workers to do the jobs. So in terms of preference, native-born care workers are absolutely preferred and co-ethnic migrant workers become the only alternative left. It should be also noted that ethno-specific care migrantisation in Korea is a part of a more general preference for migrants with the same ethnic background.

The Korean migration regime has been constructed in a way which helps maintain a racial and cultural homogeneity of Korea as much as possible. This puts Korean families in a very different situation from the family of the western countries where family employers are often in a situation to choose a preferred migrant care worker based on 'racial differences' or stereotyping, for example, a choice between Latin American and Eastern European care workers in the UK (Williams, 2010; Williams and Gavanas, 2008).

However, preference is changing. There has been criticism against limiting the care market only to co-ethnics because it may have increased the cost of co-ethnic migrant care workers by shrinking the supply, and it limits the choice for care workers. As a matter of fact, there are increasing cases reporting that some families are hiring Filipina for domestic workers or nannies because they are not only cheaper than 'Joseonjok (Korean Chinese)', but they also speak English which is good potential for children's education (*Donga Ilbo*, 2012). Under the current migrant regime, hiring a Filipina as a care worker in any type is illegal unless she is a marriage migrant. Whether to open the service sector to other migrant workers has been a recurrent agenda, given that the pool of co-ethnic migrant care workers is expected to reach the limit sooner or later compared to the increasing demand (S Choi *et al.*, 2013).

However, the chance does not seem wide at the moment. One official in an interview with the author for the current research explained the government's stance on opening the service sector to other types of migrant workers:

Generally migrants' employment in the service sector has been limited. Instead, the government has rather generously allowed compatriots [co-ethnic migrants] to work in various service jobs. Some industries have repeatedly requested to widen the door. However, the government is very cautious about it. The service sector plays a significant role in the overall job market. Once certain sectors become open to migrant workers, it will be very difficult to reverse it, and it may negatively affect the national workers' employment conditions. (Interviewee D, 5 August 2014)

It should be highlighted that the way in which co-ethnic migrant care workers are engaged in paid care work differs between childcare and eldercare, which leads, consequently, to the different levels of care migrantisation. In childcare, migrant workers are incorporated typically in home-based care jobs as domestic workers and

nannies, while they are not found in the institutional childcare. On the contrary, co-ethnic migrants' involvement in eldercare is more visible than in childcare. Unlike in childcare, most of them are working as eldercare or nursing workers within institutional settings although many are directly hired by families. These differences in the level of migrantisation result from the different systems of social care provision and the care worker employment regimes of childcare and eldercare in Korea. Simonazzi (2009: 16) argues that "national employment models also interact with care regimes to shape the features of the care labour market, which in turn affect both the quantity and the quality of labour supply and the degree of dependence on migrant carers". As examined in Chapter 6, both the childcare system and the eldercare system have been increasingly socialised, redistributing families' care responsibility. However, care for children is much more universalised and institutionalised. This is because educational considerations (human resource development) are strongly embedded in the Korean childcare system. Childcare is more highly valued in Korea's social investment frame as it directly contributes to raising the next generation. So, the childcare regime requires more skills and qualification from childcare workers. Childcare workers are mostly young females having higher standard of qualifications. Therefore, *unskilled* migrant care workers' entry to the institutional childcare becomes extremely difficult.

In contrast, care for older people is less universalised and much more dependent on the market, and elder-care workers are mainly older women with lower level of qualification (Peng, 2010; Um, 2012). So, migrant care workers find much wider employment opportunity either in the home-based childcare market (typically as a domestic worker) or in the less-regulated eldercare market. Recently, the institutionalisation of eldercare and the professionalisation of eldercare workers are being undertaken in an effort to control quality and cost as a part of the comprehensive care reform package in Korea. This may mean better working conditions for migrant care workers, but, at the same time, it can negatively affect migrant care workers by further pushing them down to the private care job market where they are forced to tolerate poorer working conditions than native-born licensed eldercare workers. This occupational ladder, of course, is subject to change by how these jobs are defined, regulated and valued in the future (Kofman, 2012).

As summarised in Table 7.7, the care worker regime is dualised according to ethnicity, ancestral linksto be precise, and skill level as well as care setting (home-based

or institutional). Native-born care workers occupy care jobs in higher skill levels in institutional settings, while migrant care workers tend to take up low-skilled care jobs in home-based care settings.

**Table 7.7: Care worker regime in Korea**

Skill level	Area	Migrant care workers	Native-born care workers
High	Childcare	(no participation)	▪ Childcare ‘teacher’ in institutions
	Eldercare	▪ ‘ <i>Yoyangbohosa</i> ’ in institutions (low participation)	▪ Social worker, Nurse, ‘ <i>Yoyangbohosa</i> ’ in institutions
Low	Childcare	▪ Domestic worker, Nanny in homes	▪ ‘ <i>Aidolbomi</i> ’ in homes (low participation)
	Eldercare	▪ ‘ <i>Ganbyeongin</i> ’ in homes or institutions	(limited participation)

### 7.3. Intersection 2: Marriage Migrants in Unpaid Care Work

The second intersection between migration and care in Korea can be observed in private homes where marriage migrants perform various care works including physical reproduction of family (members), i.e. reproductive labour, as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. Unlike the case in co-ethnic labour migrants, it takes a form of unpaid care work. This section investigates what kind of social reproductive roles marriage migrants assume in Korea, how national government policies intervene in this process both within the nation state and by acting transnationally, and why this particular form of the migration-social reproduction nexus has emerged in the Korean welfare state. It should be noted here that this section focuses on female marriage migrants. As examined in Chapter 4, marriage migration to Korea is a highly feminised flow. Over 85 per cent of marriage migrants are so-called ‘foreign brides’ marrying Korean males. Related state policies have also focused on female marriage migrants marrying Korean males.

### 7.3.1. Marriage Migrant Policies across the Life-course

Various policies targeting marriage migrants and their families are rather interestingly called the ‘multicultural family policy’ in Korea. Based on the ‘Multicultural Families Support Act’ of 2008, the Korean government has formulated comprehensive policy plans for marriage migrants and their families every five years, and currently its second round (2013 - 2017) is under way (refer to Section 5.5.2 in Chapter 5). Although not explicit in the law, it is evident that the multicultural family policy presumes a certain type of marriage migration: female migrants married to Korean men (by birth) and cohabitating in Korea’ (Seol *et al.*, 2009: 127). As a consequence, other types of marriage migration, such as foreign husbands or marriages between migrants, become largely irrelevant to the policy. This is not only because marriages between female migrants and Korean males are a dominant form, but it also because the way in which marriage migration policies are formulated in Korea has been privileging this specific arrangement of marriage migration.

The multicultural family policy has been designed to support marriage migrants and their families across their life-course (MOHW, 2008). As Table 7.8 shows, the multicultural family policy comprises all the stages of family life which a typical (female) marriage migrant might go through: from marriage preparation, the formation of a family and the expansion of a family by having children even including possible dissolution of family (set out in six stages). A range of policies are specified for each stage of the cycle. I argue that those policies intend to assist marriage migrants to perform various reproductive roles which can be translated into the roles of wives, mothers and daughters-in-law following the life-cycle of married women in the family.



**Table 7.8: ‘Multicultural Family Policies’ across Marriage Migrants’ Life-course**

Stage	Policies
Marriage preparation before migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regulation on international marriage agencies and human right protection</li> <li>▪ Pre-marital orientation to prospective marriage migrants</li> <li>▪ Pre-marital orientation to inviting persons</li> </ul>
Family formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language support</li> <li>▪ Information and advice services for living</li> <li>▪ Social protection (social security)</li> <li>▪ Support family revelations and prevention of family crisis</li> </ul>
Child bearing/rearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maternity support</li> <li>▪ Childcare services</li> <li>▪ Health service for mothers and children</li> <li>▪ Enhancement of parents’ childcare skills</li> </ul>
Child education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for children’s language, academic and emotional development</li> <li>▪ Support for children in poverty or other crisis</li> <li>▪ Enhancement of parents’ child education capacity</li> </ul>
Family capacity-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhancement of marriage migrants’ economic independence</li> <li>▪ Enhancement of marriage migrants’ social participation</li> </ul>
Family (Marriage) dissolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for single parent families and vulnerable children</li> </ul>

*Source:* MOHW (2008: 14), summarised by the author

### **7.3.2. Marriage Migrants as Wives**

The Korean government assists its citizens in finding wives, forming families and maintaining marital relationships. As argued in Chapter 4, the rapid increase in marriage migration in Korea is related to the phenomenon of 'bachelor surplus' resulting in some men having had difficulty finding a marriage partner and forming a family. Failure to marry in Korea is traditionally seen as a personal and family crisis of reproduction, so it tends to be problematised and stigmatised although these attitudes are changing. It is also perceived as a public problem, however, as delay and decline in marriage can lead to failure to reproduce the next generation and translated into sub-replacement fertility levels. The Korean government, therefore, has been concerned to address this 'reproductive crisis', and admitting more (female) marriage migrants has been explicitly

discussed as one of the solutions to guarantee the demographic sustainability of the country.

Much policy effort has been made to maintain and streamline the supply of marriage migrants. In the early 2000s when the marriage migration industry first emerged in Korea unfettered by government regulation, there were reports of widespread abuse against migrant women, including human rights violations and deceived or forced marriages (Seol *et al.*, 2005). As a consequence, the governments of sending countries such as the Philippines and Cambodia warned their citizens not to marry Korean men and temporarily halted marriage migration to Korea or sought similar measures. Facing this crisis in ‘bride outsourcing’, the Korean government began to regulate the industry, and in an effort to appease concerns it dispatched government officials (called ‘international marriage migration officers’) to the major sending countries to share information with their governments and to help coordinate the export of marriage migrants to Korea. The Korean government has established an inter-governmental consortium with main marriage migrant sending countries including China, Vietnam and Philippines. Through this overseas collaboration channel, the Korean government operates local marriage migrant consulting services (and call centres) which run information sessions for prospective marriage migrants to educate them about the Korean language, family/care cultures and laws (MOGEF, 2012: 47).<sup>63</sup>

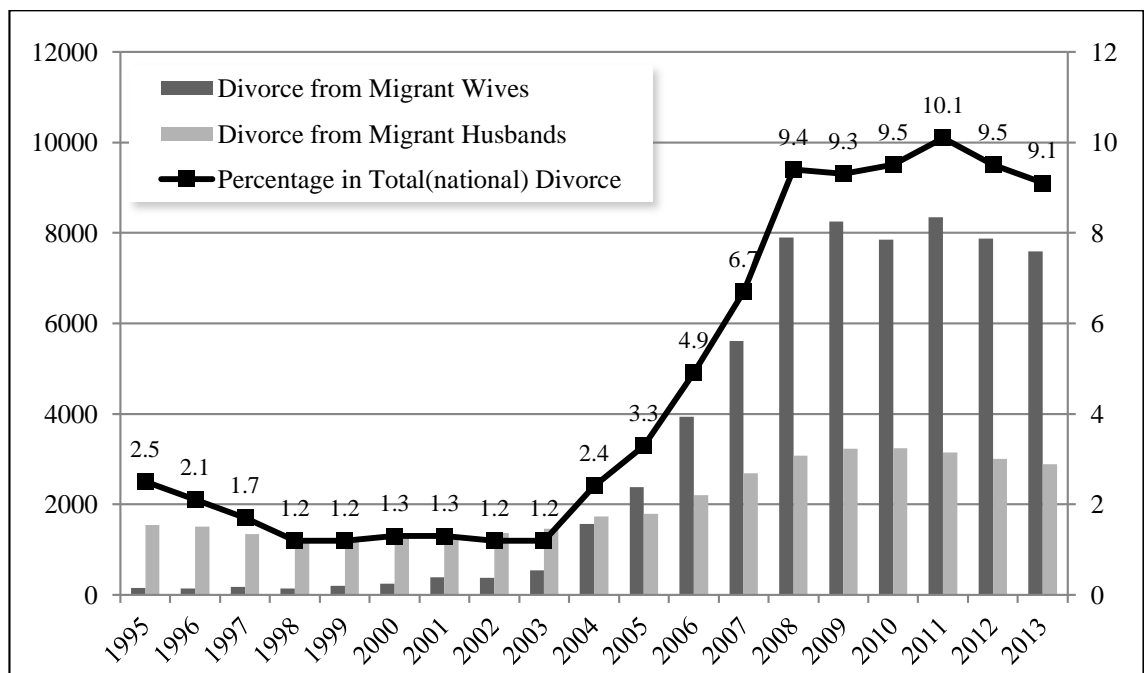
Once migrants arrive in Korea and the legitimacy of the marriage is confirmed, they can enjoy the highest possible level of social inclusion and benefits as migrants. Firstly, accessible language support and various information/advice services are to be provided to help their transition. Marriage migrants are encouraged to attend the official social integration programme and are given various incentives to do so. For example, if they successfully complete the programme, they are exempted from presenting a language proficiency test score when applying for a change from marriage migration visa to a permanent residence visa, and a more simplified procedure is applied to them when they finally attempt to claim citizenship. In sum, the Korean government has amended the nationality law in favour of marriage migrants. Compared to other types of migrants, marriage migrants can obtain citizenship more easily. They have, for example, a much shorter probationary period (two years rather than the more general five years)

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<sup>63</sup> See MOGEF, [http://www.mogef.go.kr/korea/view/policyGuide/policyGuide06\\_04\\_01.jsp](http://www.mogef.go.kr/korea/view/policyGuide/policyGuide06_04_01.jsp)

before they are eligible to claim citizenship, and those with a child are exempt from the written component of the citizenship test.

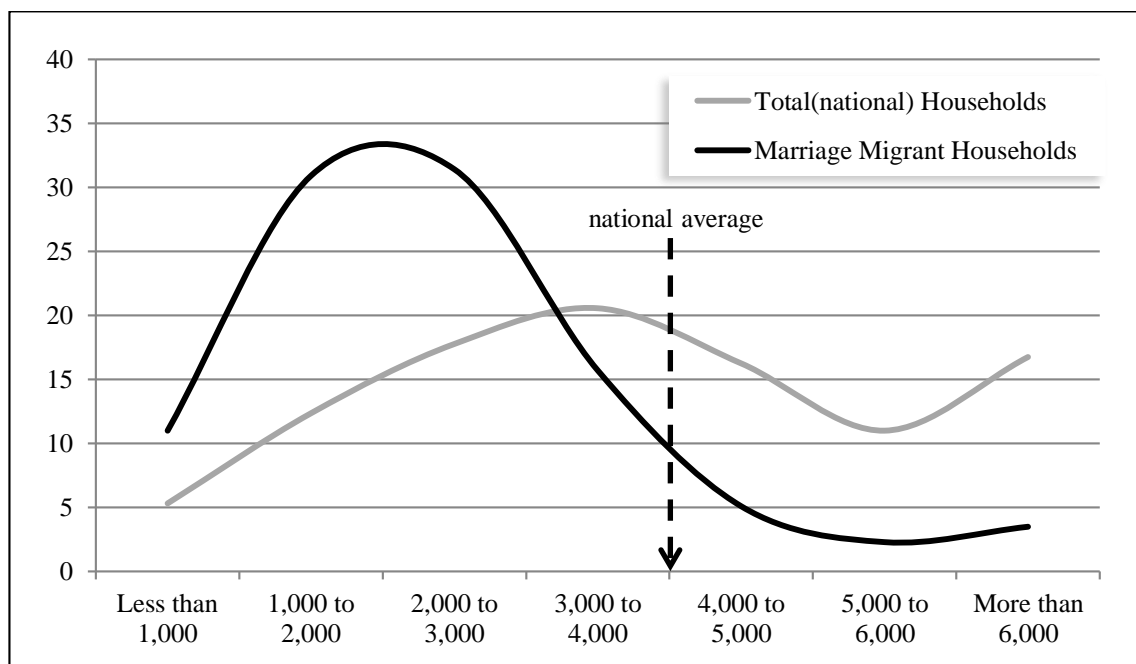
Following admission and initial adjustment, ensuring the stability of families formed through marriage migration is the next key objective of Korea’s multicultural family policy. Sustained marital relations are regarded as a barometer of the successful integration of marriage migrants and a prerequisite for continuing reproduction of members of the society. As the number of international marriages increased in the first decade of the 2000s, so did divorces among such families. Divorce cases in multicultural couples peaked at ten per cent of all national divorces in 2011, and about 73 per cent of those cases were divorces between Korean males and migrant females (refer to Figure 7.1). Although their rate of divorce was not disproportionately high compared to native people, the government saw their divorces (and consequent family breakdowns) indicating the failure of multicultural families (MOGEF, 2012). Maintaining the family is a crucial element in the ‘multicultural family policy’ to realise its policy goals of ‘social reproduction through migrants’. This is why, interestingly enough, the divorces among marriage migrants have served a strong rationale to justify the government’s extensive policy interventions in marriage migrants’ family lives (MOGEF, 2012; MOHW, 2008).



**Figure 7.1: Trend in divorce of marriage migrants in Korea (cases, %)**

Source: Statistics Korea, *Population trend* (2014)

Apart from the challenges posed by being of different ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds, there are other factors that potentially contribute to undermining the stability of multicultural couples in Korea. These are problems commonly associated with the so-called 'male-order bride' industry, and include gaps in age and education level (Chun, 2013; S-k Kim *et al.*, 2010). It is especially true for the couples of female marriage migrants and Korean husbands: female migrant wives are much younger, and some female migrants 'marry down' educationally and socio-economically - a gender pattern not conventional in Korea. A national survey of multicultural families conducted in 2012 (Chun, 2013) reveals that the three most common main reasons for divorce among these couples are 'desertion' (32.8 per cent) (most commonly of the female spouse), 'spousal conflict' (30.9 per cent) and 'economic incompetence of spouse' (10.9 per cent); reasons which are likely to be interlinked. The role of financial tensions in the high rate of marriage failure among multicultural families is not a surprising finding considering that households consisting of marriage migrants are typically economically disadvantaged in Korea. As presented in Figure 7.2, almost 90 per cent of marriage migrant households earn less than the national average monthly income (4,076,876 KRW).



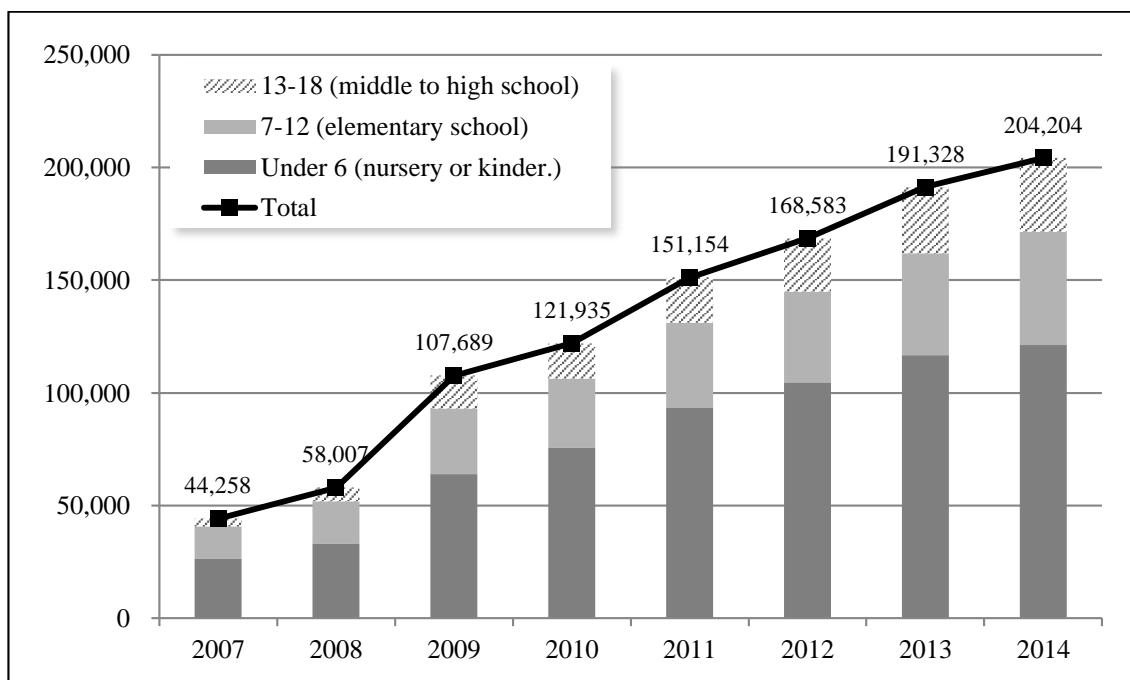
**Figure 7.2: Income (monthly) distribution of marriage migrant households, 2012 (1,000 KRW, %)**

Source: Adapted from Chun (2013: 60)

In an attempt to address the increasing divorce rate among marriage migrant families a policy priority was placed on preventing 'sham' marriages, since the government linked these to spousal desertion. International marriages became subject to a 'genuineness' test prior to the granting of a marriage migrant visa or, further down the line, nationality, and marriage migrants are regularly monitored for continuing cohabitation with their Korean (male) spouse (IPC, 2012a: 46-7). These measures, combined with the introduction of an income threshold for marriage migration and accommodation and language proficiency conditions (refer to Section 5.5.2 in Chapter 5), have been introduced with the aims of increasing the likelihood of successful integration of marriage migrants and optimising the conditions in which international marriage couples can start and maintain a family.

### **7.3.3. Marriage Migrants as Mothers**

The focus on marriage migrants themselves in the early stage of the multicultural family policy has been extended to marriage migrants' roles as parents (mothers) and their children (IPC, 2012a; MOGEF, 2012; MOHW, 2008). The government asserted that "growth in multicultural families can curb the low-fertility and the ageing trend in Korea, especially in rural areas, by increasing the fertility rate" (MOHW, 2008: 8). In this regard, promoting international marriages can have dual benefits: marriage migrants themselves can become additional members of the society *and* they can replenish the population by bearing the next generation. So the Korean government provides a range of health and maternity/infant care services to assist marriage migrants in maternity and childrearing stages (MOGEF, 2012). At first, young children at nursery/kindergarten ages (0 to 6) were a main policy focus. However, as the number of marriage migrant children at school ages (7 to 18) has been increasing, school adaptation and educational performance have become equally important policy issues (Figure 7.3). On the one hand, the government has been concerned that their failure in integration and in school would be a social 'burden' later on, but, on the other hand, the government has valued these children for they have "potential to be global leaders" working for the country (MOHW, 2008: 1), incorporating them into the existing social investment policy frame.



**Figure 7.3: Growth in children of marriage migrants by age cohort in Korea, (person, %)**

*Note:* The figure includes children of both female and male marriage migrants and those already naturalised.

*Source:* Statistics Korea (2015h)

Several measures have been introduced to stabilise marriage migrant families against social risks such as poverty and illness so that marriage migrants can successfully give birth to, care and educate their children in Korea. To begin with, the Korean social security system for low income families began to cover marriage migrant families from 2007 with eligibility dependent on motherhood (parenthood) rather than on citizenship status. Thus, marriage migrants and their children are covered by the contributory health care service regardless of their citizenship status, and other social security benefits are provided to those who are pregnant or have minor children to take care of even before they are granted citizenship (MOHW, 2008: 23-4). Since 2006, the government has been providing marriage migrant mothers (parents) with a temporary emergency cash support to assist with living, medical and accommodation costs in case of crisis (loss of, or separation from, the main breadwinner). In addition, since 2007 the government has protected marriage migrant families through the public assistance programme (the Basic Livelihood Security) regardless of citizenship status. Even when divorced, marriage migrants can benefit from those income supports as long as they are the primary care-givers for young children. Providing tax-funded income maintenance

to migrants who are yet to be naturalised is an unprecedented move in the history of the Korean welfare state. These policies connecting the social rights of marriage migrants to their motherhood (parenthood) status clearly demonstrate that the role of the (female) marriage migrant as mother (parent) is effectively facilitated by the Korean government.

Furthermore, the Korean government has been directly involved in the provision of care for marriage migrant children. Having investigated the care environment for the children of marriage migrants, the Korean government identified that the most common challenge multicultural families encounter when raising children is the financial burden for children's care and education (49.6 per cent) and access to care services (11.2 per cent) (Chun, 2013: 48). In 2008 when the government began implementing its multicultural family policy, only 17 per cent of children in marriage migrant families, a third of the rate of all children, were enrolled in institutional childcare, and affordability issues were reportedly the main reason for the low enrolment rate (MOHW, 2008: 29). The comparatively low childcare enrolment rates among the children of marriage migrants was perceived as problematic by the Korean government because it deprived these children of learning and socialisation opportunities, as well as their (low income) mothers of the opportunity to participate in the labour market. To address this, in 2009 the government began to fully cover institutional childcare fees for marriage migrant families whose income level was lower than 70 per cent of the urban employees' average monthly income regardless of their citizenship status. In 2010, the government decided to expand free institutional childcare to the entire multicultural family population regardless of income level. This was an unusual step given that free institutional childcare was not yet available to the general population of families until 2013, and as such resulted in controversy leading the government to universalise the support to all families with children later on (IPC, 2012a: 18). Added to the financial support for care, the government also provides a range of parenting support (education and consultation) for marriage migrant families: for example, the MOGEF runs a 'Parenting School' for marriage migrants to teach specific information and skills for parenting (MOGEF, 2012: 34).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Apart from social security and care programmes, the multicultural family policy includes education programmes to assist migrant children's general learning and participation in school, which are beyond the focus of this research (refer to Table 7.8).

The Korean government's intervention has not been limited simply to protecting or caring the migrant children; it has also attempted to enhance parents' social and economic capacity with which they can better raise their children. The government has actively encouraged marriage migrants' labour market participation either by training them or by giving incentives to the companies hiring them (MOGEF, 2012; MOHW, 2008). Social service jobs and *decent* part time jobs have been recommended as "suitable" for them by the government, since many of them are expected to work part-time due to their caring commitment in home (MOGEF, 2012: 38-40). What it implies is that marriage migrants are actively integrated into the recently developing work-home reconciliation policy frame in the Korean care regime (refer to Chapter 6). One official working on this policy in an interview with the author told what the government approach is:

Policy-wise, employment of marriage migrant women is approached in the general labour market policy frame for female workers whose career has been disrupted due to care. .... They [women currently out of the labour market] prefer flexible jobs so many come to find a job in the social service. To promote marriage migrants' employment opportunity in better and stable workplaces, the government runs a paid internship programme for them. It provides a subsidy to participants and hiring companies as long as months. (Interviewee C, 13 January 2014)

#### **7.3.4. Marriage Migrants as Daughters-in-law**

My examination in Chapter 4 has shown that the incidence of international marriages with foreign wives and the subsequent formation of multicultural families are more prevalent in Korea's rural areas than elsewhere in the country. Marrying foreign brides often involves the notion of 'the last resort for marriage' for those who have lower socio-economic status (J Kim *et al.*, 2014: 101). Living in rural areas can be an added factor for seeking out foreign wives in Korea, since the sex ratio among people in typical marriage ages is more heavily skewed towards males than females in rural than in urban areas. Thus, for example, in 2010, the average sex ratio across the age range 20 to 49 was 120.6:100 in rural areas compared with 101.3:100 in urban areas (Statistics Korea, 2011). The higher rate of international marriage in rural areas, however, does not



necessarily mean that marriage migrants are concentrated there; rather, most of them live in cities. As shown in Table 7.9, only 21.5 per cent of marriage migrants are residing in rural areas, which is more or less similar to that of the total population. However, there is a gendered difference in the geographical distribution: about 25 per cent of female marriage migrants live in rural areas, which is a higher proportion than their male counterparts (9 per cent) and the total population (19 per cent).

**Table 7.9: Regional distribution of marriage migrants by sex, 2012 (%)**

Area	Total	Female	Male	National (2010)
Urban	78.5	75.4	90.9	80.9
Rural	21.5	24.6	9.1	19.1

Note: Data includes the naturalised.

Source: Adapted from Chun (2013: 119)

The disproportionate concentration of female marriage migrants in rural areas is related to the heavier dependence on women's care labour and more traditional care/gender norms in rural areas (Castles and Miller, 2009; J Kim *et al.*, 2014). In the Korean context, it means that female marriage migrants are needed not only to be wives and mothers, but also daughters-in-law who can take care of their ageing parents-in-law. Traditionally, although being challenged in recent years, elder care provision in Korea has depended heavily on daughters-in-laws as informal caregivers (Sung, 2003; Um, 2012).

Indeed, the latest (2010) National Census data confirm that multi-generational (3 or more) families are more common among marriage migrant households, especially in rural areas (16 per cent compared to the national average of 6.2 per cent) (Statistics Korea, 2011). A large scale government survey conducted in the similar time point shows similar but more detailed patterns (Table 7.10). Although the most common household pattern of marriage migrants is, as for the Korean population as a whole, the nuclear family including one-person household, a significant number of marriage migrants with or without children, are cohabitating with extended family members. This is especially the case for female marriage migrants: 27.5 per cent of them are living together with their spouse's family members while the corresponding figure among male marriage migrants is only 8.4 per cent (S-k Kim *et al.*, 2010: 331). Another survey

found that about 44 per cent of female marriage migrants live with one or both parents-in-law, and in half of those cases they live with mothers-in-law (Y-k Kim, 2009: 52).

**Table 7.10: Household compositions of ‘multicultural families’ by sex, 2009 (%)**

Household Compositions	Female	Male	Total
Couple with children	36.5	39.1	36.7
Couple only	25.0	41.6	26.3
Couple with children and spouse’ family members	17.2	4.4	16.1
Couple with spouse’s family members	10.3	4.0	9.7
Couple with children and own family members	3.8	2.4	3.7
One person	3.1	5.2	3.3
One person with children	2.8	1.4	2.7
Couple with own family members	1.4	1.8	1.4
Total	100	100	100

Note: ‘Family members’ include brothers, sisters, parent(s) and parent(s)-in-law

Source: S-k Kim *et al.* (2010: 331)

Living together with their Korean husbands’ ageing parents can affect marriage migrant families in terms of care provision. Research has found that those migrant daughters-in-law tend to experience significant physical, emotional and financial strain, which can be exacerbated by language barriers (Y-k Kim, 2009). In 2009 the government intervened to financially assist low-income marriage migrant families living with their parents (either maternal or paternal) through the national social assistance system, which had previously only been available to marriage migrant families with young children. The government also introduced counselling and education programmes to help solve conflicts between typically mothers-in-law and their migrant daughters-in-law. It is interesting to note that compared to the case of childcare, less policy effort has been made specifically aiming to support female marriage migrants’ care roles for adult family members.

As for all Korean households with ageing parents, marriage migrants’ elder care role is less socialised but depends on female family members’ unpaid care labour. The institutional eldercare deficit in rural areas has not been sufficiently addressed even with the Long-Term Care Insurance system. The LTCI is to provide a cash benefit, called ‘family care allowance’, to households in rural or remote areas where no eldercare facilities are available in the vicinity so the recipient has to be looked after by his or her

family members. However, it can hardly meet the eldercare need in marriage migrant families in rural areas because the rule for the cash benefit is very stringent and the benefit level is just nominal. If this situation continues, female marriage migrants will continue to assume multiple care roles as daughters-in-law as well as wives and mothers.

### **7.3.5. Discussion**

The above section examined the reproductive roles of female marriage migrants in Korea and the government policies related to these roles. I have found that female marriage migrants have been sought out to address Korea's reproductive crises at personal, family and national levels. The Korean government has been promoting marriages with foreign brides and their migration into Korea, and has been supporting them with targeted policies so that they can settle well and perform their expected social reproductive roles better. These targeted policies, 'multicultural family' policies, are structured according to the life-course of female marriage migrants in order to meet their specific needs for each stage.

For the best possible start to married life, the Korean government provides orientation, adaptation and integration programmes, and marriage migrants can enjoy a comparatively high level of social protection. While there are no policies explicitly aimed at encouraging marriage migrants to have children, there is targeted support for their maternity and child rearing. Thus, the childcare and child education responsibilities of marriage migrants have been actively socialised, and it is remarkable to see that, at some point, social care provision for the children of multicultural families had been more generous than that for children more generally. In contrast, however, marriage migrants' care labour for elderly parents-in-law (or other adult family members) has not been the receipt of the same level of support.

Despite the Korean government's political rhetoric of a multicultural society, it has always been cautious about migration growth due to a fear of integration failure. This is why the Korean migration regime is characterised in the main by a circulatory labour migration policy combined with a special track for co-ethnic migrants. Marriage migration and the associated policies seem to contradict those policy orientations since marriage migrants are actively supported to settle and their ethnic backgrounds are far

from being homogenous. The Korean government tries to solve this apparent contradiction by subsuming marriage migrants to the notion of *family*. As a family member, marriage migrants become Koreans' wives, mothers and daughters-in-law, and they themselves may become Koreans eventually. By doing so, the Korean society can secure much needed reproductive labour through a seemingly similar system to the 'migrant-in-the-family care model' (Bettio *et al.*, 2006: 272) that has emerged in Southern Europe; however, unlike the Southern European case, migrants in the Korean case are not integrated as paid care workers in the family, but rather as unpaid care-giving family members.

At the same time, the 'Koreanisation' of marriage migrants can effectively reduce the risk of integration failure or ethnic tensions. The government repeatedly emphasises a 'sense of belonging' and 'identity as Koreans', and that this should be a prerequisite for long-term residence rights and social benefits (IPC, 2012a: 19, 40). The process of 'familisation' and 'Koreanisation' of female marriage migrants is well demonstrated in the following episode. A Chinese marriage migrant named Hongyoung Lee was awarded '*Korean Hyoboosang*' in December 2012 with much media coverage, in the recognition of her ten years' dedicated care of her mother-in-law who had suffered a stroke while being an excellent wife and mother at the same time (*Asia Today News*, 2012). The award, '*Hyoboosang*' in Korea is a several-centuries-old traditional way of honouring exemplar daughters-in-law having shown exceptional filial piety. The awarded migrant woman seems to have changed her name to a Korean one and her multiple care roles as a wife, mother and daughter-in-law of a Korean family were publicly complimented in a very Korean way.

It is important to note that the roles of marriage migrants are not fixed to the social reproductive sphere; rather, there is increasing mobility between reproductive roles and productive roles. While there is no attempt to facilitate crossing the boundary between labour migration and marriage migration, the Korean government supports migrant wives to 'extend their migrant reproductive labour from domestic spheres to labour markets' (Lan, 2008: 1807). Increasing the labour market participation of female marriage migrants is one of the key objectives in the multicultural family policy package because the government believes that having a paid job can reduce poor migrant families' dependence on the government. So, the government, on the one hand, provides necessary training and education to increase employability, and on the other

hand, it provides universal non-contributory public childcare to marriage migrants even without citizenship to help them maintain work-home balance.

## **7.4. Conclusion**

Some researchers have demanded that analysis of the care-migration nexus using the concept of social reproduction should incorporate more diverse patterns of migration, notably marriage migration, so that we can observe a wider landscape of care activities and configurations around the care work (Kofman, 2012; Lan, 2008). This chapter has been a response to that call. Focusing on the Korean government policies, this chapter has examined how both routes of labour migration and family (marriage) migration are interconnected to two main care areas: childcare and eldercare. In the matrix of migration (regime) and care (regime) emerge two intersecting fields: the intersection of co-ethnic labour migrants in paid care work and the intersection of marriage migrants in unpaid care work.

In the first intersection, I have found that co-ethnic migrant workers are hired in private homes as domestic workers and nannies, and in care facilities as elder care workers. The Korean migration regime privileging co-ethnic migrants is providing new employment chances in the service sector, including care jobs. Due to the increasing tendency of institutionalisation and professionalisation of care work in Korea, co-ethnic migrant workers are concentrated on less-regulated domestic jobs, or working as informal or unprofessional care workers outside of the formal elder care system.

My examination of the second intersection shows that the Korean government has developed special policies targeted to female marriage migrants and their families. These policies are operating with an extensive array of policy areas from migrant-specific policies such as migration, integration and nationality to general social policies e.g. social security and labour market policies. This complicated policy overwrapping reflects the female marriage migrants' unique position in the Korean welfare state: they are not merely migrants but the migrants becoming Koreans and reproducing Koreans socially and biologically. In a word, the whole marriage migrant-related policies are meticulously designed to assist them in performing their roles as wives, mothers and daughters-in-law.

Combined, these two types of care-migration nexus provide what Lan (2008: 1803) called 'parallel solutions' to the care crisis in the Korean society. For Korean families, it means that they can hire migrants to outsource housework and care work, or seek foreign wives to provide unpaid care labour depending on their social and economic status (Wang, 2007). For the Korean government, these are the solutions to deal with care worker demand for the ever expanding social care programmes and, more fundamentally, to reproduce the society itself by replenishing population. It is worth noting that that Korea has been developing these rather unique patterns of care outsourcing strategies without compromising the sense of racial and cultural 'homogeneity' by adopting an extremely ethno-specific labour migration regime and marriage-based family migration/settlement regime presuming the eventual naturalisation.

Along with the highly instrumental migration regime and the persistent adherence to the ideas of ethnically-homogenous nation state and citizenship, the nature of the Korean welfare regime has played an important role. Its productivist approach has been encouraging women to choose to work while the government helps addressing the care gap created by them. So the expansion of social care programmes and growing demand for care workers are inevitable. However, difference has been emerging between childcare and eldercare with regard to the degree to which each area is familialised, marketised and socialised. The strong commitment to social investment prioritises socialising care and education for children, while older people (and eldercare) tend to be less valued. Consequently, unskilled migrant care workers are finding a niche in the private and less regulated domestic work or eldercare area at the bottom of the care profession hierarchy, whereas marriage migrants who live in rural areas with ageing parents-in-law tend to have a particularly heavy care burden due to the lack in alternative (social) care sources around.

Put in perspective, 'care' or the reproductive function of society has been actively redistributed by the government policies not only between the state, the family and the market (Chapter 6), but also between nationals and migrants, and the mode of redistribution has been structured along the axes of gender, ethnicity/race, skill-level and class, while leaving largely untouched the gendered division of labour within the home. It remains to be seen, however, how sustainable the Korean strategies of migration-care combination can be. The largest pool of co-ethnic migrants in China is

quickly draining and the second or third generation of Korean diasporas neither can speak Korean nor maintain cultural similarities. In this situation, co-ethnic migrant workers alone will not be able to meet the demand for domestic workers or elder care workers. In addition, the situation around marriage migrants is quickly changing. Unlike the first wave of marriage migrants in the 1990s, many marriage migrants are settling in major cities as nuclear families, and they are also becoming working mothers. So they are also creating their own care deficits which need addressing by other care resources. That is the reason why it is as much crucial and timely to discuss how care responsibility in Korea is distributed between family members and between genders, as between state, family and the market.





## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **8.1. Introduction**

In this study I have investigated how care, defined as reproductive labour, has been transnationalised through both the migration regime and the care regime in Korea. In doing so, my primary purpose has been to expand knowledge of the intersections of international migration, care and welfare states. While these intersections have attracted increasing attention from social policy scholars, the scope of research has been largely limited to the experiences of western welfare states and aspects of paid-care work. It is a serious lacuna when considering the increasing diversification of global migration patterns, one of which is the emergence of East Asian countries, including Korea, as a new migration pole within Asia. Therefore the study has aimed to contribute to not only broadening the regional application of the migration-care intersection scholarship to East Asia, but also extending the theoretical application to new dimensions of migration - co-ethnic migration and marriage migration.

In this concluding chapter, I first overview how the research questions I raised in the introduction chapter have been addressed by the findings in the empirical chapters, and evaluate the contribution this study makes in respect of the research purpose. On the basis of an assessment of the substantive knowledge yielded by the study, and of the remaining knowledge-gaps, I discuss what can be suggested for Korea's policy fields of care and migration and for future research. Lastly, personal reflection on the research and overall process will follow as an epilogue.

#### **8.2. Findings and Contributions**

The research was designed and conducted in essence by the two theoretical approaches (Chapter 1 and 3). Firstly, I adopted the feminist theorisation of care as a key to

analysing the (trans)formations of the care regime and its complex interplay with the migration regime in Korea. Secondly, I employed an (new) institutionalist approach to analysing such regimes broadly indicated by both formal and informal factors (refer to Table 1.1 in Chapter 1) although the focus lies in the former. Here I summarise how the research findings have addressed the three research questions I raised in the introductory chapter, feeding back to the focal theories.

***What are the characteristics of the migration flows to Korea and the drivers/motivations propelling the flows?***

Korea has rapidly transformed itself from a non-migration country to a migrant-destination country over the last three decades. This transition is a result of the changing political and economic terrain in Asia. Korea has created a severe labour shortage from inside and has given strong incentives for migration from outside thanks to Korea's economic outperformance (thus, inequality in social and economic conditions) within Asia. In addition, political liberalisation throughout the region as well as development of transportation/communication has made international mobility a possible option for a growing number of people.

In Chapter 4, I have found that 'economic motives' of individuals, markets and states of origin and destination were the most significant contributor to the migration growth in Korea. Consequently, migrants for employment have constituted the largest portion in the total migrant stock in Korea. I have also found that the labour migration flow to Korea has been concentrated on the unskilled jobs in the manufacturing, construction, farming/fishing, hospitality and personal service industries which native-born workers tend to avoid if possible. In parallel, family migration, notably marriage migration, has also become an increasingly important migration route to Korea. Growing international marriages reflect, in part, liberalising attitudes toward marriage and family, but they are also driven by practical considerations from both parties involved in the marriage such as desires for livelihood, new life chances or social reproduction.

Most migrants to Korea originate from the economically less developed nearby South and South-east Asian countries. Despite the increasing number of origin countries, China has remained the most important origin country for both labour and marriage migration growth in Korea. It should be highlighted, however, that those Chinese who

share the same Korean ethnicity, called *Joseonjok*, occupy the largest proportion. This ethnic tie as well as geographical and cultural similarities has helped Korean Chinese to dominate the actual migration flow to Korea.

***What are the features of the regimes of migration and care in Korea, and how are they [regimes] interconnected to facilitate migrants' involvement in care in Korea?***

This question has been investigated in two separate chapters, Chapter 5 and 6. To begin with, I have found in Chapter 5 that both the salience of two migration routes - unskilled labour migration and marriage migration and the dominance of co-ethnic migrants are the intended results of the Korean migration regime. The Korean government has developed a multi-faceted migration regime by which migrants are systematically stratified along the axes of skill, ethnicity, gender and class.

First of all, the Korean migration regime is characterised by both skill level and ethnicity-specific approaches. The Korean government has made a significant effort to establish a circulatory unskilled labour migration scheme to expedite the supply of affordable foreign labour to the industries suffering from the labour shortages. However, unlike the case for skilled foreign labour, the government has tried to keep the number of unskilled labour migrants in check by placing various restrictions on their entry and residence, settlement and social/political rights. In addition, the Korean government has developed a (labour) migration regime explicitly privileging migrants having the same ethnic origin. It has developed special migration programmes for co-ethnic migrants to grant them easier entry, freer economic activity, longer residence or settlement, and higher social/labour rights. At first, only skilled co-ethnics from rich western countries enjoyed these privileges, but those from China and CIS countries have gradually been subject to these special treatments. One of the most important differences between co-ethnic migrant workers and other migrant workers is that co-ethnic migrant workers are given access to the service sector including care jobs in homes, businesses and facilities.

Secondly, the Korean migration regime is featured with a comprehensive marriage migration policy. In contrast to labour migration policy, ethnicity is not the most visible divide in marriage migration policy, rather gender is. Marriage migration is highly feminised whereas the unskilled labour migration is extremely male dominated. The Korean marriage migration policy, called 'multicultural family policy', aims to support female marriage migrants marrying Korean males. The government intervenes through

the entire life-course of (female) marriage migrants and their families, especially the children, from marriage preparation before arrival to adaption, family forming, bearing/rearing/educating children and social/economic participation after migration to Korea. At some point in the policy development, marriage migrant families enjoyed even higher social rights than nationals.

Thirdly, its pragmatic approaches to different types of migrants are the key to understanding the Korean migration regime. The Korean government has admitted that Korea needs to channel in migrant labour force to fuel the Korean economy even in the future. However, the government wants to avoid possible consequences of migration growth such as a systematic dependence on migrant workers and racial/cultural conflicts between migrants and natives. In this regard, co-ethnic migrants and marriage migrants must have been viable alternatives to opening the door wide to all different migrants. Co-ethnics not only can make affordable migrant workforce, but they also in a better position for adaptation thanks to their linguistic and cultural proximity. Marriage migrants are also in a better position for social integration (or assimilation, ultimately) due to their higher chance of settlement and naturalisation. To sum up, Korea has become a land of migration but it has not been necessarily accompanied by racial/ethnic and cultural diversities to a large extent.

The Korean care regime has also experienced transformation over recent decades. Care has surfaced as a leading social policy agenda especially from the early 2000s. It was mainly because Korea, like other advanced welfare states, was facing the crisis of care resulting from various societal changes, such as population ageing with the low fertility, weakening familial care capacity, and increase in women's (desire for) labour market participation. The Korean government has been more concerned with the decline of social reproduction function of the family, i.e., declining fertility, rather than the care deficit itself. Believing 'socialising care' is a key to reversing the demographic challenges and sustaining the economic vitality of the country, the government has rapidly expanded social care programmes. The Korean government intends to de-familialise care by primarily expanding institutional care for children and older people. As a result, Korea's traditional care regime associated with heavy reliance on the family and women's uncommodified care labour has begun to change. It is evident that the state is assuming more responsibility in financing, providing and regulating care, and the roles of market and family have changed accordingly on the macro-level.

Nonetheless, care division within the family has remained largely unaltered as disproportionately women's role despite the introduction of work-home reconciliation policies, notably various leave arrangements for both parents (including one specifically for fathers).

The Korean government's approach to childcare and eldercare has been different. Childcare has been completely universalised and institutionalised although home-based care is often recommended for very young children. Now Korean families with under school aged children can enjoy enhanced choices from different types of social care provision in cash, service or time (leave). Eldercare has also been collectivised; however, unlike the tax-based childcare system, it has been reformed to a social insurance whose finance depends on the family (premium contribution and user charge). The coverage of the formal eldercare is also limited: despite the increase in eldercare facilities, entitlement for a full long-term institutional care is reserved for those elderly having severe disability or the very poor. So in many cases, family's input in personal care provision as well as in the finance is far more important in the Korean eldercare system than in the childcare system. Besides, the regulations on eldercare institutions and care workers within them are less tight, which in turn allows greater possibility for migrant care workers to get involved in. I have argued that these differences between childcare and eldercare have originated from the different policy frames applied to each. The social investment approach has justified the high allocation of policy resources for children and childcare. Furthermore, socialisation of childcare has been strongly supported as an essential tool to harness women's (potential) labour force in the Korean welfare state's productivist approach. However, older people have given lower priority in both policy approaches, so, as a consequent, the eldercare system has been collectivised to a lesser degree. In addition, despite the recent extensive care reforms, some care areas/jobs have been almost completely out of scope such as private domestic workers, nannies or informal nursing care workers.

***To what extent does the Korean case prove or disprove the 'care transnationalisation' thesis?***

As reviewed in the literature review chapter (Chapter 2), the provision of care has been increasingly transnationalised in Europe and other countries especially through the mechanism of cross-border migration. Outsourcing care to migrants (migrant workers,

typically) has been associated with the increasing tendency of the commodification of care in the context of the welfare state transformation, 'retrenchment' usually. States often arrange both care policies and migration policies in specific ways which facilitate families or institutions to recruit migrant care labour. The migrantisation of care happens at the very intersections of such policies. Korea has shared the same experiences with the European or western countries to a large degree including care crisis deficit resulted from demographic transition and changes in the family and women's participation in paid work, and growing dependence on migrants to fill the deficit. This suggests universality in care-migration nexus beyond the cultural and geographical divides.

However, my examination has also discovered differences. As the care-migration intersection researchers have predicted, what sets the Korean experience apart from those of other countries is the national 'regimes' of care and migration. The Korean welfare state has not only been concerned with the productive system, but also the reproductive system, for both of which the Korean welfare state has been operating its policies beyond the national border. In doing so, Korea has developed a very interesting combination of care outsourcing strategies. To begin with, migrants' involvement in care work is restricted to the bottom of care worker hierarchy (unskilled and unprotected) and to co-ethnic migrants. The Korean care regime reserves skilled and institutional care jobs for native-born care workers. Co-ethnic migrants are encouraged to work as paid-care workers in less regulated care areas such as home-employment or informal personal (nursing) care which native-born workers would avoid. Such migrant care workers are vital in meeting the increasing demand for personal care, but they are effectively excluded from the welfare state. They earn no legal status as workers and 'no worker status' means 'no social protection' let alone social recognition in the Korean welfare state which has a social insurance based social security system. The policy rationale of 'protecting the internal labour market' and strong preference to 'the same culture (appearance, language and custom)' have completely excluded non-ethnic migrant workers from the care sector in Korea.

In addition, if we adopt a broad understanding of care as reproductive labour, marriage migration policy in Korea is also a care outsourcing strategy to secure not only unpaid care work for the family but also the reproduction of human beings. The Korean government supports female marriage migrants to successfully act as wives, mothers

and daughters-in-law, who assume indispensable roles to maintain and regenerate the family, the building unit of social reproduction system of a society. For the government, marriage migrants themselves and their children, are important in replenishing the population. On the family level, female marriage migrants, often as daughters-in-law, complement the limited formal eldercare provision especially in the rural areas. In southern European countries, female migrant domestic/care workers are often working 'like family members' when hired by the family, but in Korea migrants are often assuming care roles by 'becoming family members' through marriage. Development of the marriage migration policy in Korea demonstrates how social norms and cultures regarding family and gender can be translated into actual public programmes. Naming marriage migrants as 'multicultural families' is, I argue, an ultimate compromise between the political ideals of global Korea and the adherence of culturally homogenous Korea. As marriage migrants become 'family', then they are Koreans although they have other racial and cultural backgrounds. So the Korean welfare state has been very inclusive of marriage migrants regardless of their origins even before they acquire citizenship.

The Korean case of care transnationalisation through the intersections of migration and care regimes complements the existing knowledge of care-migration nexus in various ways. I have confirmed that the modality of care transnationalisation is intermediated by the national regimes of migration and care (and the welfare state, more broadly). My study has geographically expanded the intersection research to East Asia and added a new regime type, East Asian (or productivist) welfare state regime into the scholarship. I have shown that the state (government) can function on the transnational level to help secure not only migrant productive workers but also reproductive workers even before the actual migration happens. Furthermore, I have examined how migrants are involved in both childcare and eldercare; both in paid and unpaid forms of care work. In doing so, I have revealed that different policy rationales can be applied to childcare and eldercare, which can, in turn, result in different degrees of care migrantisation. Lastly, I have argued that norms, cultures and historical understanding of nationhood can exert a strong influence on the way in which migrants are involved in care labour and they are included or excluded from the welfare state.

This case study is arguably the first comprehensive research attempting to analyse the intersections of migration policies and care policies in terms of care

transnationalisation focusing on an East Asian country, here Korea. The existing similar research on the Korean case tends to be characterised by limited scope, either narrowly focused on paid care or one area (eldercare), or neglecting to include marriage migration into the care (reproductive) perspective. Failing to engage with wider welfare state (regime) transformations is another limitation, which diminishes the potential to be compared to the existing intersection research contextualised in the European welfare state regimes. This case study has added one more piece to the puzzle which allows us to grasp a fuller picture than we had before of how welfare states can differ in formulating policies by which care labour is transnationally outsourced and socially divided.

### **8.3. Policy Implications for Korea**

It has been found that the Korean government is socialising care to help plug the care deficit. At the same time it involves extensive transnational care-outsourcing practices. Consequently, the division of reproductive labour has been further complicated in the Korean welfare state as race/ethnicity was added to the conventional axes of gender, class and skills. Those findings would seem to hold some key implications for the current migration and care policies in Korea. The implications are essentially related to the *old* policy rationales vis-à-vis *new* challenges.

First of all, the Korean government has been slow to acknowledge the reproductive roles of migrants. The Korean migration regime has long been preoccupied with securing a productive foreign work force throughout several reforms. So, migrant productive workers have been granted a full recognition of worker status, thus protected and monitored by relevant labour laws and the social security system. In contrast, migrant care workers, as noted earlier, often find themselves outside the formal labour regulations and the social security system. This lack of legal recognition/protection of care workers, the unskilled ones particularly, is not exclusive to migrants. Even native-born unskilled care workers such as domestic workers, nannies or private nursing workers are not covered by labour laws or employment-related social protections. It is often said that Korea has care policies but no ‘care worker’ policies (see Peng, 2010). The absence of a proper legal basis for such workers has made care workers vulnerable



to social risks but also compromised the quality of their care labour in homes or facilities. The Korean government recently announced that it will formalise domestic workers to be a care profession from 2016, and they will be covered by labour laws and welfare benefits.<sup>65</sup> It is a welcome but long overdue reform. However, it remains to be seen how this new legislation will affect the status of migrant domestic workers and nannies.

Secondly, the Korean government has been facing a difficult dilemma whether it should open service sector jobs (including care jobs) to other foreign nationals beside co-ethnics. Apparently, co-ethnic migrants alone cannot meet the demand (S Choi *et al.*, 2013); otherwise the Korean government would not have adopted various incentive measures for them to work in care jobs longer. In addition, the pool of unskilled co-ethnic migrant workers in China is expected to deplete soon as older generations of ethnic Koreans in China have died and younger generations have rapidly been assimilated into mainstream Chinese culture. It is not surprising to see younger ethnic Koreans overseas quickly losing cultural similarities including the Korean language. It may mean that an ethnicity-based migration regime assuming the cultural commonness with the native-born Koreans may not be sustainable. Moreover, as China further develops economically, it is reasonable to assume that someday co-ethnic migrants from China may not be in a position to willingly take care jobs with inferior working conditions in the Korean labour market. Conversely, Korean people may not turn to co-ethnic migrant workers in the future simply because they have the same ethnicity or culture as care preferences are diversifying. It is interesting to see the language difference can be an incentive rather than a hindrance for some Korean families hiring *illegally* Filipina domestic workers/nannies: those parents value the potential that their children learn English from the domestic workers (Donga Ilbo, 2012). It is difficult to imagine if co-ethnic migrant care workers change their position in the care worker hierarchy, who would fill the gap without the entry of other foreign nationals into the service sector.

Thirdly, the policy environment regarding marriage migration is also changing. So far, marriage migrants have enjoyed a comparatively high level of social

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<sup>65</sup> Civil society groups and experts have long requested the Korean government to acknowledge domestic workers' worker status by amending Labour Standard Act and enhance social protection for them. The ILO's adoption of Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) in 2011 must have provided a momentum for this social movement (see Segye Ilbo, 2013), but the Korean government has not yet ratified it.

inclusion/protection through various policy instruments. This is because the international marriages and marriage migrants initially happened in the context of economically and socially less privileged rural bachelors' last hope for family formation and reproduction, which was politically supported. However, as their number was increasing, so was the input of policy resource, and such 'special treatment' began to be questioned. Furthermore, as the industrialisation of the society continued, the rural population has diminished, and urban work/life and nuclear family have become a norm. As a consequence, the stereotype of marriage migration/migrants is becoming outdated. In fact, more and more marriage migrants are now marrying salaried workers and forming an unclear family in cities (Chun, 2013). The social and economic lives of marriage migrants and their families will become ever more similar to the native-born citizen. So, the policy approach viewing marriage migrants a special group or simply 'beneficiaries' of the welfare state will gradually lose its legitimacy. The migration and welfare policies should be ready to acknowledge marriage migrants are becoming 'active agents'. So a recommendation is to develop a more integrative and simplified policy frame in which different types of migrants are subject to similar, if not equal, treatments rather than constantly segregating and stratifying migrants by enacting numerous 'special acts'.

#### **8.4. Suggestions for Future Research**

Comprehensive as it is, this study is not without limitations. Such limitations of the current research invite, at the same time, new agendas for future research. The limitations basically come from its research purpose and design. First of all, it is a policy study. Despite the profound interest in 'care workers', this study does not deal with migrants' 'experiences' of care labour due to its focus on 'policies'. Policy research should be complemented by research on lived experiences not least because it is often the case that policy intentions and goals are modified in the implementation process, often yielding unexpected outcomes. Evidence on how and under what conditions migrants (of either female or male; paid or unpaid) are actually performing care labour in different care settings and of different nature can verify my propositions on the policy level interactions.

Secondly, linked to the first point, the current research predominantly focuses on explaining observable and relatively recent policy development on the government level. Consequently, the research has not spared enough room for examining the (often hidden) dimension of ‘political negotiation and struggle’ among various stakeholders such as trade unions or advocacy groups operating on the different levels as Williams (2010) suggested for the analysis of care and migration regimes (refer back to Table 1.1). As the history of (im)migration continues in Korea, such political dimension will become increasingly important in explaining the policy making.<sup>66</sup>

Thirdly, the current study only deals with one end of migration, in other words, the policies of the destination country. Intergovernmental cooperation and interaction are an influential factor in the care transnationalisation process. In the example of marriage migration, sending countries cooperate with the destination country (Korea) in finding, educating and arranging the marriage and migration. It will be very interesting to research how policies are connected cross the border, just as the personal links of care have been researched in the frame of ‘global care chains’.

Lastly, it is a single-country case study, claiming that this study geographically extends the intersection research to East Asia. There are other emerging migration destination countries in East Asia such as Hong-Kong and Taiwan. Throughout the thesis, I have tended to treat Korea as an exemplar country of the East Asian welfare regime. However, there are significant differences between East Asian countries in the characteristics of their care and migration regimes (Chan *et al.*, 2011; Le *et al.*, 2014; Martin, 2009; Ochiai, 2009; Soma *et al.*, 2011; Yamanaka and Piper, 2005). Additional in-depth cases studies of each of these countries are prerequisites before systematic comparative research eventually can reveal the fuller picture of migration-care intersection in the East Asian new (im)migration countries.

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<sup>66</sup> After some ten year-long attempt, the Migrants' Trade Union (MTU) in Korea was just legalised on 20 August 2015, following a Supreme Court ruling recognising its legitimacy (*Korea Times*, [http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/113\\_185345.html](http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/08/113_185345.html), accessed on 22 August 2015)

## **8.5. Epilogue**

For welfare states, international migration and migrants can be unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable issues. It could not be more true than in the case of the Korean welfare state. Policy-wise, migration and migrants have been simply instrumentalised under the economic policy. Meanwhile, migration researchers have not actively engaged with social policy researchers, and social policy researchers, in turn, have failed to stage migration/migrant-issues on the wider discussion of the welfare state. Lack of recognition of the relationship between the migration policy and the care (welfare) policy both on the policy level and the academic level has posed a significant challenge to my research. I have developed ‘eyes’ to see the intersections between the two policy areas from the existing literature, but the whole process of the research has been persuading both myself and others (officials and academics alike) of such intersections operating in Korea. After all, I have become increasingly convinced of the importance of the research on intersections. From my personal experience of having been a migrant with a young child, I have earned some insights on how migrants’ life chances and wellbeing can be moulded by the very combinations of migration and care policies. I hope this piece of research helps migration and migrants to become an integral research agenda to social policy and welfare state research in Korea and, ultimately, contribute to Korea’s becoming a better welfare state for every member of society including migrants.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 3.1: List of key policy documents

Title [Korean]	Year	Ministry
A Road to Productive Welfare for a new Millennium [새천년을 향한 생산적 복지의 길]	1999	Office of the President
Vision 2030 [비전 2030]	2006	The Government (joint taskforce)
The 1 <sup>st</sup> Basic Plan for the Low Fertility/Ageing Society: 2006-2010. [제 1 차 저출산고령사회 기본계획(2006-10)]	2005	The Government
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Basic Plan for the Low Fertility/Ageing Society: 2011-2015 [제 2 차 저출산고령사회 기본계획(2011-15)]	2010	The Government
The 1 <sup>st</sup> Basic Plan for Immigration Policy: 2008-2012 [제 1 차 외국인정책기본계획(2008-12)]	2008	Ministry of Justice
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Basic Plan for Immigration Policy: 2013-2017 [제 2 차 외국인정책기본계획(2013-17)]	2012	Ministry of Justice
Assistant Measures for Multicultural Families across their Life-cycle. [다문화가족 생애주기별 맞춤형 지원 강화대책]	2008	Ministry of Health and Welfare*
The 1 <sup>st</sup> Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy: 2010-2012 [제 1 차 다문화가족정책 기본계획 2010-12]	2009	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy: 2013-2017 [제 2 차 다문화가족정책 기본계획 2013-17]	2012	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
Saessak Plan 2006 - 2010 [제 1 차 중장기 보육계획 (새싹플랜) (2006-2010)]	2006	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
Aisarang Plan 2009 – 2012 [아이사랑플랜 (2009-2012)]	2009	Ministry of Health and Welfare
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Childcare Mid to Long-term Policy Plan 2013 - 2017 [제 2 차 중장기보육 기본계획 (2013~2017)]	2013	Ministry of Health and Welfare

*Note:* \*‘Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs’ at that time.

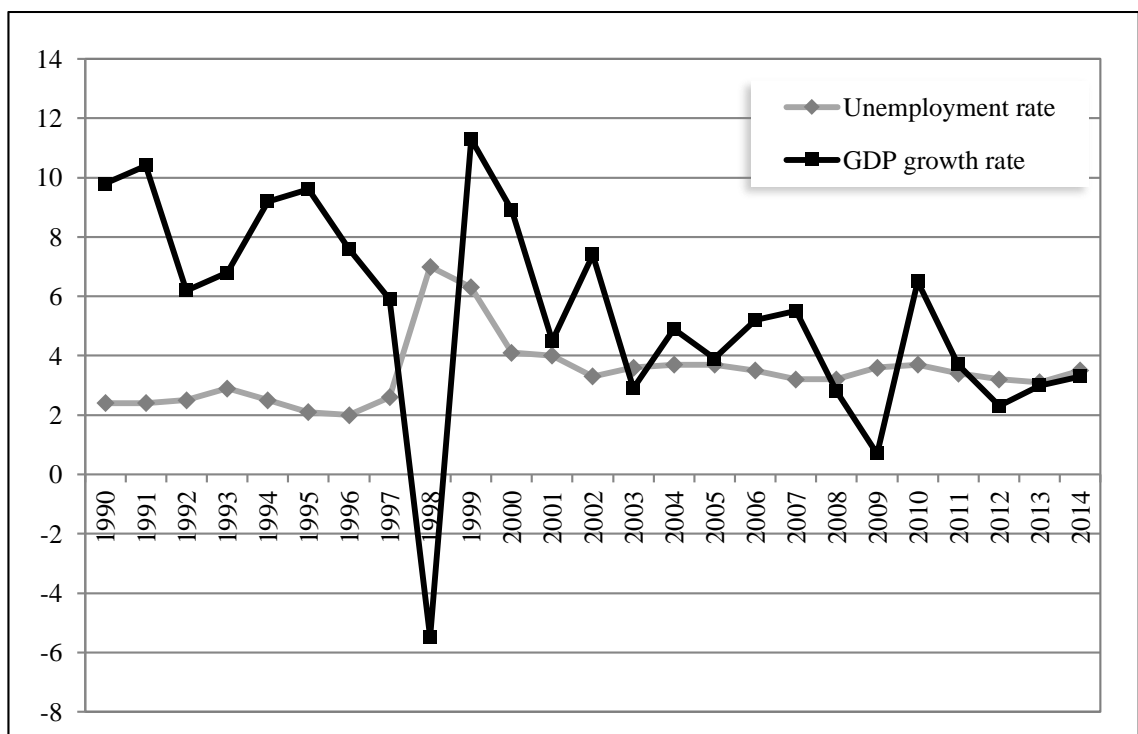
### Appendix 6.1: Total social expenditure in selected countries as percentage of GDP (%)

Country	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2014
Korea	n/a	2.8	3.2	4.8	6.5	9	10.4
France	25.8	24.9	29	28.4	29.6	31.7	31.9
Germany	22.2	21.4	25.9	26.2	27	26.8	25.8
Greece	16.1	16.5	17.4	19.2	21.1	24.2	24
Italy	20.8	21.4	21.7	23.3	24.9	27.8	28.6
Japan	11.1	11.1	14.1	16.3	18.4	22.1	n/a
Norway	17.5	21.9	22.9	20.8	21.1	22.4	22
Sweden	28.2	28.5	31.8	28.2	28.7	27.9	28.1
UK	19.2	16.3	19.2	18.4	20.2	22.8	21.7
US	12.8	13.1	15	14.2	15.5	19.3	19.2
OECD total	17	17.5	19.3	18.6	19.4	21.7	21.6

Note: The 2014 data is an estimate by OECD.

Source: OECD, *SOCX*, [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=SOCX\\_AGG](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=SOCX_AGG) (accessed on 15 May 2015)

### Appendix 6.2: Trend in the unemployment rate and the GDP growth rate in Korea (%)



Source: e-National Index, <http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/PotalMain.do> (accessed on 20 May 2015)

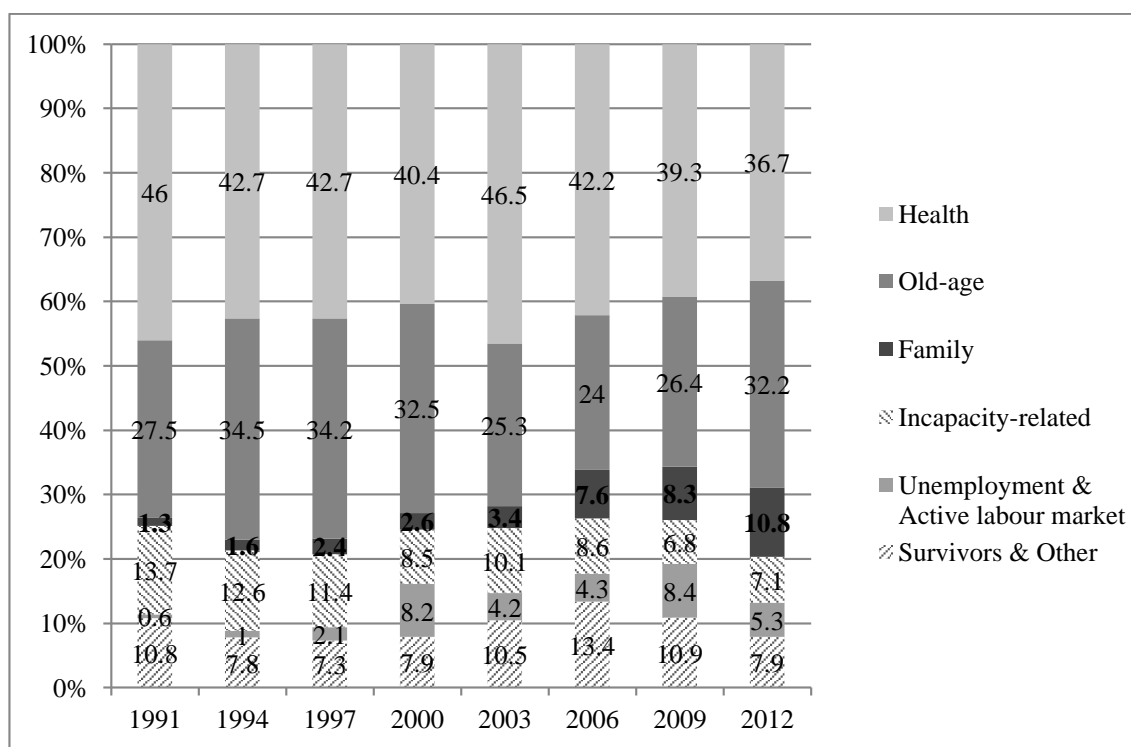
**Appendix 6.3: Percentage of those aged 65 or above of the total population, selected countries and years (%)**

Country	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
Japan	7.1	7.9	9.1	10.3	12.1	14.6	17.4	20.2	23.0	25.1
Germany	13.2	14.5	15.5	14.8	15.3	16.1	17.2	19.2	21.0	21.3
Italy	11.1	12.2	13.3	13.1	14.9	16.7	18.2	19.8	20.4	20.8
France	12.9	13.5	13.9	12.9	14.0	15.2	16.1	16.5	16.9	n/a
UK	13.0	14.1	15.0	15.2	15.7	15.8	15.8	15.5	16.0	17.0
Canada	8.0	8.5	9.4	10.3	11.3	12.0	12.6	13.1	14.2	15.3
Australia	8.3	8.7	9.6	10.3	11.1	11.9	12.4	12.9	13.6	14.4
US	9.8	10.5	11.3	11.9	12.5	12.7	12.4	12.4	13.1	14.1
Russia	7.7	8.9	10.2	9.7	10.0	11.9	12.4	13.9	12.8	13.0
<b>Korea</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>12.2</b>
Turkey	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.4	5.5	6.7	6.7	7.1	7.6
Brazil	n/a	n/a	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.9	5.4	6.8	6.8	8.9
Mexico	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.7	5.7	6.2	6.5

Source: OECD, *Elderly population (indicator)*. <https://data.oecd.org/pop/elderly-population.htm> (accessed on 14 May 2015)

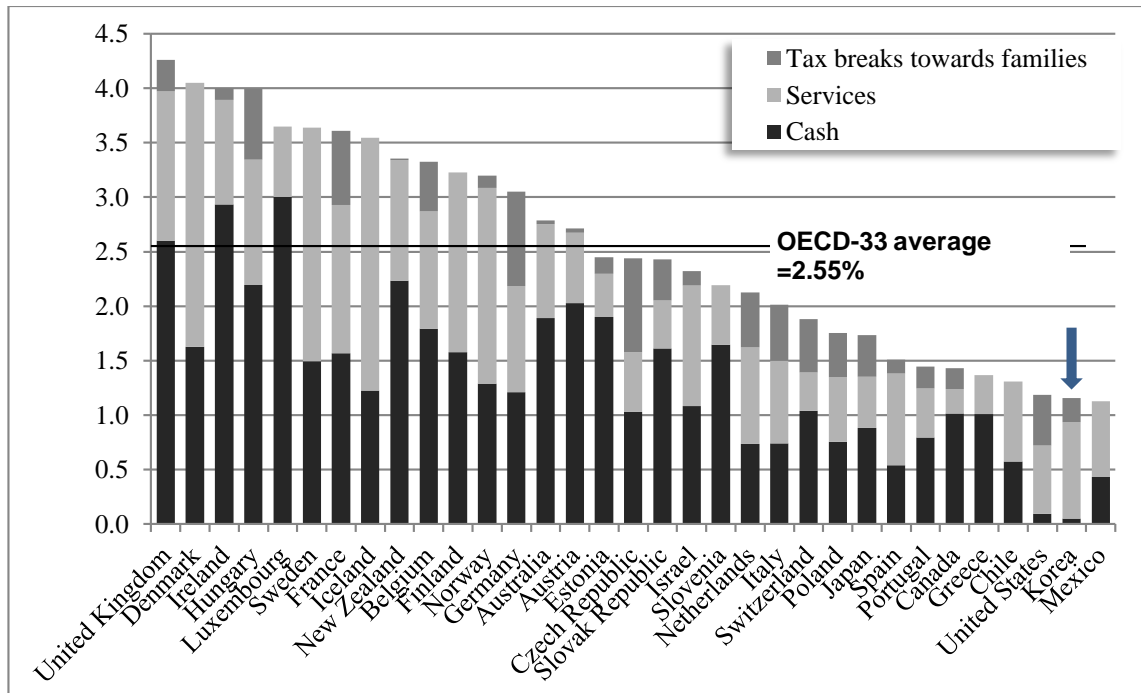
Note: Ordered from the highest by the 2010 entries

**Appendix 6.4: Public spending by area in Korea as percentage of GDP (%)**



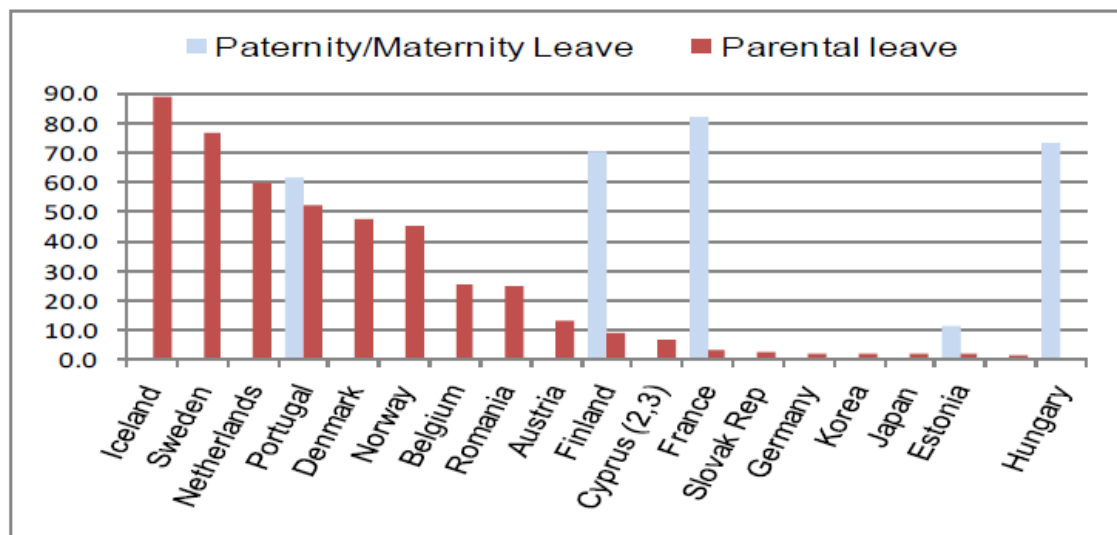
Source: MOHW (2014b)

**Appendix 6.5: Public spending on family benefits in cash, services and tax measures, in per cent of GDP, 2011**



Source: OECD, *SOCX*, [www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm](http://www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm) (accessed on 7 May 2015)

**Appendix 6.6: Ratio of Fathers to Mothers using their entitlement to leave, 2011**



1 year 2007 for Japan.

2 Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

3 Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Sources: European Labour Force Survey 2011 for European countries; Data from Family Database questionnaire sent to countries on parental leave for Japan.

Source: OECD, [http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2\\_2\\_Use\\_of\\_leave\\_benefits\\_by\\_mothers\\_and\\_fathers\\_Aug2014.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2_2_Use_of_leave_benefits_by_mothers_and_fathers_Aug2014.pdf) (accessed on 18 May 2015)



**Appendix 7.1: Division of care work between parents and migrant domestic workers (%)**

Activity	Parents	Mainly parents	Equally shared	Mainly domestic workers	Domestic workers	Other	Total
Feeding	5.0	18.5	37.8	31.3	6.9	0.4	100
Playing	8.5	22.0	45.6	19.7	3.9	0.4	100
Caring when ill	15.4	29.3	34.7	16.2	4.2	0.0	100
Helping with study	39.0	25.9	19.7	10.0	5.0	0.4	100
Pick-up	12.7	14.7	23.9	27.0	20.5	1.2	100
Bathing	11.6	13.5	30.5	30.9	13.5	0.0	100
Sleeping	37.1	18.9	22.8	13.5	6.9	0.8	100
Cooking for children	13.9	13.1	29.7	27.0	14.7	1.5	100
Cooking for family	17.4	20.1	23.2	23.2	14.3	1.9	100
Other domestic work	7.7	12.7	21.6	28.6	29.0	0.4	100

*Note:* Total n=259

*Source:* Y-k Choi (2014: 264)



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