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Family Migration Issues in North-East Asia
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Family Migration Issues in North-East Asia

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FOREWORD

This paper is one of 19 background papers which have been prepared for the IOM, 2010 World Migration Report which is entitled the “Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change”. The 2010 report focuses on likely future trends in migration and the capacities that will be required by States, regional and international organizations, civil society and the private sector to manage migration successfully over the coming decades.

Over the next few decades, international migration is likely to transform in scale, reach and complexity, due to growing demographic disparities, the effects of environmental change, new global political and economic dynamics, technological revolutions and social networks.

The 2010 World Migration Report focuses on capacity-building, first because it is good governance to plan for the future, especially during a period of economic downturn when the tendency is to focus on immediate impacts and the short-term period of recovery. Second, capacity-building is widely acknowledged to be an essential component of effective migration management, helping to ensure the orderly and humane management of migration.

Part A of the World Migration Report 2010 focuses on identifying core capacities in key areas of migration management. The aim is not to recommend “one size fits all” policies and practices, but to suggest objectives of migration management policies in each area, to stimulate thinking and provide examples of what States and other actors can do.

Part B of the World Migration Report 2010, provides an overview of the latest global and regional trends in migration. In recognition of the importance of the largest global economic recession since the 1930s, this section has a particular focus on the effects of this crisis on migrants, migration and remittances.

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INTRODUCTION

As Kofman (2004:243) asserts, family migration has been neglected in academic and policy research on international migration, largely as a result of the emphasis in migration studies on the individual, coupled with a heavy economic focus and an assumption that most female migration is for the purpose of seeking employment as a domestic worker. Family migration is therefore treated as a secondary form of migration – subordinate to, and less relevant than, labour migration. However, as occurrences of family migration, particularly family-formation migration, have significantly increased in North-East Asia, it has become a keen subject of scholarly research and of pressing concern to policymakers. The causes, as well as the effects, are numerous and significant, resulting in an alteration in the ethnic composition of previously so-called homogeneous societies. This trend has the potential to be the source of future chain migration and transnationalism; as transnational families and communities begin to emerge in the region, they are likely to further accelerate the rise in international migration. Furthermore, the patterns, processes and impacts of marriage migration are expected to be seen in other Asian countries – including China and India – in the near future. Considering the large populations of China and India, the magnitude of the resulting changes will likely be more pronounced. This paper reviews the causes of, and trends in, family-formation migration in North-East Asia, explores the effects of rising family migration on State policies, highlights gaps in current policies and in international migration research, and recommends proposals for the future.

PRESENTATION OF THE TOPIC

Although labour migration is still significant, family migration constituted on average half of all legal immigration to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in 2005 (OECD, 2007: recited from Honohan, 2009:2). According to Kofman (1999, 2004), family migration can be divided into three categories: 1) family-reunification migration; 2) family-accompanying migration; and 3) family-formation migration. Traditional immigration countries (such as Australia, Canada and the United States) tend to encourage family-reunification and family-accompanying migration in their permanent immigration policies, resulting in these countries experiencing more family migration than any other form of migration. Other countries that prefer temporary guest worker programmes tend to discourage or prohibit family-reunification and family-accompanying migration, except for highly-skilled workers, professionals, investors and some refugees. As a result, family migration is, as a proportion of overall migration, much lower for these countries than is evident in those that were formally considered to be migrant-receiving countries.¹ Examples of countries favouring the latter policies can be found primarily in many European and East Asian countries. If migrant communities have relatively longer histories of migration, as in some European Union (EU) countries, family-reunification and family-formation migration tends to significantly increase. However, the recent labour-importing East Asian countries/regions, such as Japan, Taiwan Province of China and South Korea, have experienced a large influx of marriage migrants.

¹ The proportion varies depending on the country’s position in international migration. The traditional immigration countries, such as Canada and the United States, have more family migration (about 60%). The Western European countries that are based on temporary guest-work programmes have less – around half in France, just under half in Germany, and less than one third in the United Kingdom (OECD, 2007: recited from Honohan, 2009:2).
This paper will focus on family-formation migration (hereinafter referred to as marriage migration) in North-East Asia. Marriage migration is now much more prevalent in East Asia than the other two types of family migration. All three of the North-East Asian countries/regions under examination tend to consider their nations to be ethnically homogeneous, and do not regard themselves as immigration countries/regions, despite the fact that they have had to utilize temporary trainee or guest-worker programmes to alleviate labour shortages since the late 1980s. When they were required to open their doors to foreign-born individuals, North-East Asian governments prohibited family-unification and family-accompanying migration for these temporary, low-skilled workers. Due to these and other limitations in available migration routes, marriage migration became the easiest and cheapest way for labour to migrate to these countries/regions (Lee, 2008a).

Since marriage migrants are the spouses, daughters-in-law and/or mothers of nationals, these countries/regions have proposed “social integration” policies, ostensibly to help them to adapt to their new life. The continuing phenomenon of marriage migration has resulted in the emergence of several important questions: Where and what further policies are needed? Is it possible to manage marriage migration? What are the areas for future research in international migration? What are the likely future trends in marriage migration?

**CURRENT CAPACITIES**

**Patterns of marriage migration in North-East Asia**

Marriage migration in North-East Asia is gender-specific. Over 90 per cent of international marriages are between a foreign-born woman and a native-born man. Figure 1 shows the number of foreign brides in three East Asian countries/regions – Japan, Taiwan Province of China and South Korea – and the fact that Japan experienced rising numbers of this type of migration earlier than the others. The pattern is repeated in Taiwan Province of China and South Korea in large numbers from 1992, with numbers fluctuating as a result of specific policy changes in each country or region (see Lee, 2008a; Bélanger et al., forthcoming).
Recently, the proportion of international marriages as a percentage of all marriages is the highest in Taiwan Province of China (20–32% each year, with 413,000 marriage migrants in 2008), followed by South Korea (11–13% with 150,000 marriage migrants in 2008), and the lowest in Japan (5–6%) (see Table 1). Among these North-East Asian countries/regions, Japan has the most significant ethnic minority and foreign population, due to its colonial past. However, Taiwan Province of China and South Korea have experienced a larger, more recent increase in foreign residents. The result is that, in 2008, there were about 2.2 million (1.7%) foreign residents in Japan, with less than 1 million in Taiwan Province of China (3.4%) and around 1 million in South Korea (2%).

Table 1: Demographic and socioeconomic statistics for North-East Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Taiwan Province of China</th>
<th>S. Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (2009)</td>
<td>128,000,000</td>
<td>23,000,000</td>
<td>48,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per person (2007) (USD)</td>
<td>34,226</td>
<td>16,726</td>
<td>20,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFR (total fertility rate) (2005)</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of aged (65 years &amp; over)</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% (foreign residents) (2008)</td>
<td>1.7% (2,180,000)</td>
<td>3.4% (780,000)</td>
<td>2.0% (970,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% international marriages out of total marriages (2003~2008)</td>
<td>6~5%</td>
<td>32~20%</td>
<td>13~11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Korean Statistical Information Service: [http://www.kosis.kr](http://www.kosis.kr); Itsuko (2008:3)
Marriage migration in North-East Asia began as a rural phenomenon. Rural bachelors, whom local women were reluctant to marry, looked for foreign brides. However, over time, marrying a foreign woman has become a popular option for divorced men with children who wish to remarry, for widowers and even for elderly men (Lee, forthcoming: 70, 82). As a result, this phenomenon can now be seen in urban areas and across all social classes (Chen, 2008:348).

**Causes of marriage migration**

The increase in marriage migration is due to various factors. Firstly, a modernized low-fertility trend with a traditional preference for boys, coupled with the use of ultrasound to detect a fetus’s sex early (with a view to aborting female fetuses), has led to a serious sex ratio imbalance in the population. A higher birth rate of boys was particularly evident in South Korea and, on a lesser scale, in Taiwan Province of China during the 1980s. This phenomenon did not occur in Japan (see figure 2). As a result, it is estimated that, between 2000 and 2021, approximately 1 million South Korean men will struggle to find brides.\(^2\) This estimate is based on the numerical deficit for males and females marrying at 30 and 27 years, respectively – the current mean ages for first marriages in South Korea. This already large number does not include divorced or widowed men, who usually re-marry (unlike divorced/widowed women).

**Figure 2: Sex ratio at birth in North-East Asia, 1981–2008**

\(^2\) Based on the calculations of Poston and Glover, 2005


Secondly, socio-economic improvements, in general – and in women’s status, in particular – have resulted in a higher educational standard and more opportunities in the labour market for women.
Women tend to prefer to marry late or, in some cases, not at all. A prevailing patriarchal society, wherein a new wife becomes subservient to the husband’s family, further discourages women from a union. Eighteen per cent of Taiwanese women and 10 per cent of South Korean women between the ages of 30 and 44 remained single in 2005 – more than five times the number of single women in their respective parents’ generation.3 Almost all women shun potential partners who offer them harsh lifestyles. The result is a kind of domestic marriage crisis, evidenced by a “marriage squeeze” for males with a lower socio-economic status, particularly in rural areas (Jones and Shen, 2008; Lee, 2008a; Bélanger et. al., forthcoming).

Thirdly, care for the elderly in North-East Asia is traditionally the function of daughters-in-law. However, perceptions have changed and fewer women are willing to take on this task. As a result, men view women from overseas (who they hope are willing to accept this role) as preferable brides. Seol et al. (2006:76) showed that South Korean men prefer Vietnamese and Filipino women to Chinese women – perhaps reflecting their view of the former groups as more submissive and thus more likely to serve their new parents-in-law well. When Korean men were asked why they married foreign women, the two most important reasons were: “because they are more submissive and they may serve my parents well (38%)” and “they look most similar to Korean women (37%)”. Those Korean men who married Josunjok (or Korean-Chinese) or Vietnamese women predominantly answered that, “they look most similar to Korean females”. The majority of Korean men who married Filipinos or Vietnamese women gave the reason that they are more submissive and good at serving their parents, compared to women from China and Japan. This shows a tendency among Korean men to seek wives who are prepared to engage in traditional roles and who respect patriarchy. However, they also voiced serious concerns that their foreign wives should look similar to Korean women so that it was not obvious to others that they had married a foreigner and so that their children would look more Korean (Seol, et al., 2006:76).

Fourthly, international marriage has been promoted by some local governments, concerned with a rural exodus and depopulation, and by the emerging matchmaking industries. During the early stages of increasing international marriages, the role of matchmaking agencies was particularly important. However, as ethnic communities and transnational networks became more established, chain migration patterns have become more significant. Therefore, demographic, social, economic, political and institutional factors, along with the development of networks, have led to increases in this migration flow (Bélanger et al., forthcoming).

In migrant-sending countries, the important push factors for marriage migration include a desire to escape rural life, a perceived lack of a future, a wish to start a new life, an opportunity for work outside the home, the need to earn an income, and the need to help the natal family by sending remittances (Bélanger et al., 2009). In addition, an emerging marriage migration culture can create pressure on women to seek international marriage. It is common for successful stories of international marriages to be highly circulated, while stories of failure are generally hidden. At the local level, families with a daughter who has married someone in another country are often perceived as benefiting from remittances, creating a notion of a duty, and a method whereby daughters can help their parents live a more comfortable life. As a result, transnational marriages have become fashionable. When considering which nationality of groom might be most suitable, women tend to make their selection based on their own educational background and class. Thai women marry more European men (Plambech, 2008), while Vietnamese women marry more Taiwanese or Korean men. Among Vietnamese women, the higher-educated tend to marry European or US nationals, while the lower-educated marry Korean or Taiwanese men.

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3 Figures recalculated from official national statistics (Korean Statistical Information Service: [http://www.kosis.kr](http://www.kosis.kr))
State policies

International marriages, like other marriages, are regarded as a private, rather than a State, concern. However, as international marriages brought citizenship and “next generation” issues to the homogeneous and patriarchal East Asian region, States began to intervene in order to control the influx of migrants. The Japanese Government still hesitates to implement any national policies relating to migrant groups, leaving almost all policies at a regional level. However, the Taiwanese and South Korean Governments have begun to implement national social integration policies for migrants.⁴ Since the early 2000s, the Taiwanese and South Korean Governments, alongside local governments in Japan, have promoted the vision of a multicultural society. Implementation of assimilation programmes, such as language programmes, has begun. Depending on each country’s historical, political and social environment, the characteristics of social integration policies vary – from the bottom-up approach in Japan, to the top-down approach in Taiwan Province of China and South Korea. In Japan, the relatively long history of discrimination against older generations of migrant communities (Korean–Japanese), anti-discrimination movements culminating in the Hitachi Employment Discrimination Trial in the 1970s, and the “anti-fingerprinting movement” of the 1980s, have led, at the local level, to “multicultural” programmes (Odagiri, 2009). It remains to be seen which programmes and approaches are the more effective, and further research is required in this area.

Despite this, all programmes are similar in content, including free language classes, public health coverage and other support programmes, particularly in Taiwan Province of China and South Korea. In both cases, immigration policies have traditionally been restrictive and the influx of marriage migration has led to the promotion of these social integration policies as a result of “population quality” concerns in Taiwan Province of China and “racial discrimination” concerns in South Korea. However, there is a real gap between the stated goals of the migrant integration policies and the actual situation on the ground.

Gaps in policies

Considering the short time they have been in place, the social integration policies and programmes are impressive and positive, and it is too early to fully evaluate them. However, there are already several visible problems in overall direction and ideology, and in the methods and practices used.

First, the baseline ideology is patriarchal, which means that both governments (South Korea and Taiwan Province of China) view marriage migrants as being primarily wives, daughters-in-law and mothers, ignoring other aspects of their nature. Most programmes are hence oriented towards child care, care of the elderly, and domestic work. The second problematic perspective is that such migrants are seen as beneficiaries who would otherwise be social burdens and, in any respect, are considered to be “inferior others” (Lu, 2008; Wang and Bélanger, 2008). Their potential to be fully engaged citizens is therefore ignored. The net result is that almost all programmes are designed to assimilate migrants into the respective country, erasing their cultural peculiarities in the process (Bélanger et al., forthcoming).

⁴ Since 2002, the Taiwanese Government has proposed several social integration policies and, since 2005, such policies have been prepared in South Korea, under the direction of the former president, Roh Moo Hyun. The Female Marriage Migrant Family Social Integration and Support Policy (2006), the Foreigners in Korea Fundamental Treatment Law (2007) and the Multicultural Families Support Act (2008) have been enacted (Lee, 2008b).
CAPACITY-BUILDING

In this section, discussion will focus on four key areas where further capacity-building is required: 1) future policies; 2) management of marriage migration; 3) future research areas for international migration; and 4) future marriage migration.

Future policies

Regarding the social integration policies for marriage migrants, the effects of a patriarchal ideology must be alleviated in order to correctly view marriage migrants as citizens-to-be. On this basis, a clearer, more methodical, structure for support programmes can follow. For the first stage, language and adjustment education can be provided, as is now the case in both Taiwan Province of China and South Korea. A second stage, aimed at providing migrants with the skills needed to become more independent and empowered, is yet to be developed. For example, job-training courses should be expanded. In addition, it would be better to have more integrated programmes involving other community members, as opposed to the current segregated programmes, which only migrants attend.

However, this policy of assimilation alone is not the best approach and, indeed, it restricts the benefits that can accrue from the presence of a truly transnational community. Some of the benefits of this increasing community are already apparent – such as increases in cross-border economic activity and travel. In defiance of these potential benefits, marriage migrants are encouraged to abandon their original nationality and all ties to their home.

Thirdly, international cooperation is necessary to assist those who fail in their international marriage and wish to return to their country of birth. Although exact figures are not known, the divorce rate among international marriages is increasing (Kim, 2006; Tseng and Komiya, 2010). If runaway and estranged brides are included in the figures, the total number of failed international marriages is likely to be quite high. When these women return to their home country, most of them experience hardship. Some of them have lost their citizenship status, as a result of rules restricting dual nationality, and hence their national entitlements (Bélanger et al., 2009). In such cases, it is not uncommon for women to have to spend large amounts of money in order to regain their former entitlements. These problems could again be avoided if dual nationality were allowed by the host and sending countries. Even if there are no formal problems for the returnee, if a daughter's marriage fails, her family's reputation is often damaged by gossip circulating about the reason for her return. Sending countries’ governments must therefore work to reduce such social discrimination against these returnees.

Finally, current integration policies should be expanded to include other immigrants. Current social integration policies in Taiwan Province of China and South Korea are heavily geared towards marriage migrants, excluding other foreign workers. It would be better to have a clear vision of a multicultural society that included all minorities, regardless of their period of stay.

Management of marriage migration

Matchmaking agencies

Most countries that allow immigration try to manage the influx of migrants. However, as marriage is largely regarded as a private matter, international marriages pose novel problems for governments
trying to regulate them. Nonetheless, since 2007, both the Taiwanese and South Korean Governments have tried to exert some control over marriage agencies, in distinctly different ways.

Arranged marriage, by a marriage agency, tends to be treated by mainstream media as a form of human trafficking, at worst, and as a commodification of women, at best. In the West, arranged marriages by agency have never been common and arranged marriages in general disappeared during the course of industrialization. In the East, arranged marriages have traditionally been a common practice, typically initiated by local individuals (a neighbour or relatives); due to a high demand for (and short supply of) women, such marriages have promoted a large migration industry. Unscrupulous activities by marriage agencies have been criticized domestically as well as internationally. Several reports (Ko et al., 2005; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2007) criticized some South Korean agencies’ advertisements, which made the following claims: “No Vietnamese Brides Run Away”; “If Your Bride Runs Away, Refund Guaranteed”; and “Disabled, Aged: All Can Marry”. Subsequently, the Korean Government banned such advertisements, and passed a law to monitor and regulate the industry. Since December 2007, international matchmaking agencies must register with respective municipal governments in South Korea. Similarly, as a result of strong feminist advocacy, the Taiwanese Government has prohibited commercial (profit-making) matchmaking agencies since September 2007. The latter response is unlikely to solve the problem and more likely to lead to the trade being pushed underground, where it will go unmonitored, with potentially serious consequences for all involved. A regulatory approach is preferable, with the added requirement that agencies be held legally responsible for providing accurate information to the potential groom and bride.

**Fake marriages**

When managing marriage migration, the issue of fake marriages must also be addressed. In South Korea, bogus marriage became a social issue around 1995 and 1996, when many Josunjok (or Korean–Chinese) women utilized marriage as a labour migration route (Lee, 2008a: 112, 114; Lee et al., 2006: 269, 271). The then government concluded a memorandum with China in 1996, which required the international marriage process between Korea and China to be more complex than it had been before (although these processes were subsequently simplified again, as of 2003). However, this action by the Korean Government only changed the nationalities of incoming foreign brides. Since the early 2000s, Korean Government attention has focused on the low fertility issue and away from bogus marriages. In 2007, the door opened wider than before for Josunjok to lawfully visit and work in South Korea, causing the numbers of international marriages with Josunjok to diminish significantly, which indicates that marriage and labour migration are strongly interrelated.

In 2004, the Taiwanese Government announced a restrictive screening system to prevent bogus marriages. The screening system initially only targeted spouses from Mainland China, but was later extended to include other South-East Asian nationals. It introduced three “gates” of interviews: 1) in an individual’s county of residence (prior to marriage); 2) upon arrival at the border (the first entrance); and 3) after entrance (at the couple’s abode). Due to difficulties in implementation, the extraterritorial gate was cancelled in the final version in March 2004 (Lu, 2008). The underlying reasons for such restrictive measures were the “population quality” concern, or a threat that “inferior others” would lower the population quality by producing inferior children (Lu, 2007, 2008; Wang and Bélinger, 2008). Behind this rhetoric lies the fact that, by 2004, international marriages constituted more than 30 per cent of the total and the screening process was used to reduce these numbers while encouraging higher-educated “economic immigrants”. This screening system did

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6 For more information about the Visit and Employment programme, see Lee, 2008b.
reduce the influx significantly (see figure 1).

It is true that most governments seek to welcome highly educated and/or skilled migrants, and to reduce the influx of poorly educated and/or unskilled migrants, who are viewed as a potential welfare burden. Practically, however, it is complicated and difficult to control the influx of marriage migrants, given that marriage is perceived to be primarily a private concern and governments cannot prevent their citizens from marrying whoever they like. Considering these issues and the strong relationship between marriage migration and labour migration, marriage migration policies should be included within a long-term macro immigration policy, which can be jointly regulated. Perhaps it would be better to screen grooms rather than brides in order to better manage marriage migration. Strengthening of regulations governing the submission of accurate information for matchmaking agencies could also prove beneficial.

**Future research areas in international migration**

Although marriage migration continues to be seen as a private matter, the so-called mail-order brides are often viewed as victims and/or economic opportunists. Governments need to build a more balanced view that depicts these women as strong positive agents within society. Similarly, governments should view migrants as potentially contributory citizens-to-be, rather than a potential welfare burden. Further research is required into the lifestyles and experiences of marriage migrants in order to determine the most appropriate policy approach.

As some scholars (Sassen, 2002; Ehrenreich and Hochschilds, 2002; Plambech, 2008) have observed, the “global care drain” is an important concept that helps to explain the feminization of migration. However, it leads to the migration of not only nannies and domestic workers, but also of potential wives and mothers. Globalization, coupled with rapidly-changing demographics in some countries, is likely to result in the sustained growth of marriage migration. Further research is required, particularly in the fields of family sociology and international migration.

Recently, scholars have begun to highlight the role of family in international migration, arguing that the decision to migrate is seldom the product of individual decision-making but, rather, closely related to family considerations in terms of timing, processes and methods (Nauck and Settles, 2001; Douglass, 2006; Anam et al., 2008). As transnational communities expand, international migration will accelerate as a result of the desire of family members to diversify locations of production, consumption, education and investment. Future migration research needs to focus particularly on the developing area of transnational migration, whereby families from diverse national or ethnic backgrounds spread their resources across national borders.

**Future marriage migration**

In recent years, the sex ratio imbalance at birth has widened dramatically in China (see figure 2). According to Poston and Glover (2005:179), it is estimated that over 23.5 million surplus Chinese males will be looking for wives between the years of 2000 and 2021. This, they claim, is based on the Chinese mean average age (22) of marriage in 2000. This figure dwarfs the South Korean estimate of about 1 million surplus males looking for wives between 2000 and 2021. As noted earlier, the sex ratio is not the only factor leading to a shortage of suitable partners for marriage; however, considering China’s rapid economic development alongside other social changes, it is likely that China will also experience marriage migration in the near future (Poston and Glover, 2005; Attane, 2006). Boer et al. (2004) claimed that other Asian countries (such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India,

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7 See Special Issue on Migrations and Family Relations in the Asia Pacific Region, Yeoh et al. (ed.) in 2002.
and Pakistan) will, in turn, follow this pattern. Since China and India alone comprise more than 38 per cent of the world’s population, migration numbers are likely to be very large, with significant ramifications both within and beyond Asia. It is therefore imperative that governments adequately prepare for the myriad effects that marriage migration is likely to have in the region and the world.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having examined the patterns and causes of marriage migration within North-East Asia, explored its impact on immigration policies and the gaps in existing policies, and suggested four areas where future capacity-building is required, this paper concludes with a discussion of the deep-rooted ideologies about gender, which contribute to the formation of a patriarchal world view in the region.

The importance of gender issues has been internationally significant since the founding of the United Nations. Many resolutions, such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967), the Platform for Action adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and the Millennium Declaration adopted in September 2000, have been adopted by East Asian countries. However, there is a great deal more to be done.

Gender discrimination is still prevalent within the home and labour markets of Asia. This is possibly why Asian women prefer “hypergamy”, whereby they seek a spouse of equal or higher socio-economic status. Women will thus attempt to gain a socio-economic advantage by marrying someone from a place they perceive as being less discriminatory to their gender. This inequality for women should be the key focus of future government policies in the region. Sufficient laws exist, courtesy of the aforementioned resolutions, in the three East Asian countries/regions that are examined in this paper. New laws are not necessary; however, monitoring and enforcement of the current regulations are a priority, with domestic and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) being best placed to initiate and implement the necessary processes.

Regarding social integration measures, it is necessary to develop a more accurate social integration index, similar to the European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index 2004 and Migrant Integration Policy Index (British Council Brussels, et al., 2005; Niessen et al., 2007). The European indices were designed for migrants in general; therefore, some of its indices – such as family reunion, long-term residence, and access to nationality – are not applicable to marriage migrants. For this reason, a new social inclusion index for marriage migrants must be designed. Based on this new index, “social integration” policies and related programmes in Taiwan Province of China, South Korea and Japan could later be measured. In addition, regular reports on national progress would need to be published to maintain the impetus for change.

More detailed empirical comparative research is also required for North-East Asia and for Asia as a whole. Possible research topics include the following:

- What effect does marriage migration have on receiving and sending societies?
- Will marriage migration reinforce the patriarchal system or help dismantle it?
- What difficulties will the second generation of migrants face in each society and within transnational communities?
- What national and international NGO cooperation is necessary to facilitate the empowerment of marriage migrants and their children?

Based on such empirical and comparative research, best practices and the most appropriate policies on marriage migration could be developed.
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