

[I realize this paper has already been written, and there isn't time to change it... However, can the families really be called "interracial" when they're mostly between people from neighboring Asian countries? Wouldn't that be inter-ethnic or bicultural? I mean, it's not really about "race". Also, I think that it would make for a more elegant contrast to refer to the gireogi family as "transnational" and the bride-import family as "international", since this paper is about crossing national borders more than about crossing racial borders. Furthermore, the author herself notes that many of the "Chinese" brides are in fact Korean-Chinese, so those would not be interracial families.]

### **The Extension of Globalization into Intimate Life: The Flexible Korean Family in "Economic Crisis"**

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#### *Abstract*

~~This paper will discuss how flexible and vulnerable families are to "economic crisis" under global regulation, presenting the Korea experience of changing core values regarding family reproduction, both during and after the IMF bailout. This paper discusses the flexibility and vulnerability of families experiencing "economic crises" under global regulation, presenting the changes in core values regarding family reproduction in Korea both during and after the IMF bailout. The astonishing speed of change in this short period was more than astonishing to fuel has fueled family crisis debates. In particular, delayed marriages have increased considerably was remarkably delayed, and the fertility rate dropped to an unprecedented level in an unprecedented a very short time. The statistics for this period regarding family formation and values in the period challenges the industrialization thesis for family change and forces a reappraisal of to reappraise the impact of globalization on families in the era of a global capitalist economy.~~

~~Besides the~~ In addition to statistical data, "transnational" families - the so-called gireogi families (wild geese families) and bride import ~~[is this the correct term? Not "mail order brides"?]~~ "interracial families" ~~[how about changing this inset phrase to "the so-called gireogi families (wild geese families) and mail order brides"]~~ and "bride import" families - are brought in to reveal the changing dynamics of changing Korean families in globalization. On the one hand, highly educated parents, ~~with mostly professional and managerial class decide opt~~ to become gireogi families, while on the other, poor and rural families import bring in brides from abroad to continue the family line to reproduce families on the other. Both the former and latter represent the dilemmatic situation of dilemma faced by Korean families under globalization and featuring a the deep impact of global penetration into the family. Both cases also reveal how class polarization under a global capitalist economy produces two-tiered

"international" families. Well-off transnational families sacrifice conjugal relations for the future security of their children, while underprivileged ~~interracial-international~~ families encounter uncertain futures for theirs.

The existence of these different types of global families, ~~these being whether~~ transnational or ~~interracial-international~~, ~~act serves~~ to strip off the veil of the romanticized notion of the strong "East Asian Family". ~~And furthermore~~, the findings raise ~~a the~~ question ~~of~~ how ~~much the family can be~~ flexible and malleable ~~families can be~~ in the ~~face of the~~ "flexible economy" of globalization. We are left to further investigate whether the flexibility ~~of exhibited by~~ Korean families in the IMF bailout represents a particular aspect of ~~the Korean those~~ families, or whether it indicates something ~~more broadly~~ about the position of Korean society within the context of a global capitalist economy.

Keywords: globalization, *gireogi* family, ~~interracial-international~~ marriage, transnational family, IMF bailout, family in economic crisis, birth strike, marriage sabotage

## Introduction

This paper ~~propels our concern directs our attention~~ to the global pressure ~~on the that~~ ~~is coming to bear on intimate life~~ the most intimate aspects of the lives of Koreans, focusing on specific ~~aspects of changing changes to~~ Korean families during the last ~~5-6~~ ~~five to six~~ years, both during and after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout. This paper will explore how flexible and vulnerable families are to "economic crises" under global regulation. ~~As soon Just~~ as Korean society ~~had reached was entering~~ the tunnel of ~~the~~ IMF bailout (1997 - 2001), Korean families ~~erawled were making their way out of the private to into~~ the public sphere, which emerged as the contested terrain not only for family theorists but also for policy makers. Even for ordinary people, ~~the~~ demographic trends such as ~~the~~ abrupt decline ~~of the in~~ birth rate, rapid surge of the divorce rate, and the accelerated aging of society ~~was were~~ cause for grave concern, leaving little room for detached observation or cool indifference. ~~We have been Korean society has~~ awakened to ~~the impact of~~ globalization's ~~impact~~ on intimate and everyday life.

Birth rates dipped to unprecedented levels, well below ~~the short-term~~ replacement rates, ~~in the short period, to causing the coinage of giving rise to new~~ terms such as "birth strike", "marriage sabotage", and "1.17 shock".<sup>1</sup> Skyrocketing ~~rates~~ ~~of~~ divorce and remarriage ~~rates~~ triggered the enactment of the "Healthy Family Act".<sup>2</sup> ~~And~~ low fertility and the aging of the population have even caused concern ~~about~~ ~~over~~ national security.<sup>3</sup> Besides ~~these~~ demographic trends, the increasing rate of ~~living alone householdssingle-person households~~, single-parent families, and unmarried couples living together, ~~or as well as~~ the phenomenon of LAT (~~living apart but together~~) families, fueled debates about a "family crisis" (KWDI 2000, Kim S.

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et al. 2004). Furthermore, "gireogi families"<sup>4</sup> became popular, even for the middle class, while ~~brides were imported from abroad for~~ underprivileged and rural bachelors sought brides from other countries. Accordingly, the family came to stand in the whirlpool-flurry of debates, regarding contesting-the contestation over family values in the post-IMF era.

Some scholars describe the current situation as a family crisis, while some others call it a diversification of the family (Kim S. et al. 2004, Yi J. 2004a, Yi D. et al. 2001, Byeon et al. 2003). Even the definition of family has become the issue of been hotly debated ds for those in government policy circles (Yi J. 2004b, Yun H. 2004, Byeon et al. 2003). Concerning the low birthrate, some family scholars attribute this to individualization and the weakening of family values, while some others insist that it is, on the contrary, due to a strong conservative family norm (Ham 2002). The latter recommend to reappraising the late marriage phenomenon delayed marriages as reflecting a reflection of the social tension arising between stubborn marriage norms and an the emerging desire for new partnerships. And regarding the declining birthrate, there are different competing positions that interpret this as due to the avoidance or The delay or avoidance of marriage has also been interpreted by some competing positions as causing the decline in the birthrate, rather than due to a the resistance among already married couples to having children itself being seen as a cause (Eun 2003, Jang 2004a). And furthermore, the low birth rate is has been attributed to economic difficulties, job insecurity, and the general uncertainty of the future. Family theorists and policy makers seem defensive and threatened by these drastic changes to the core values of the family, and rather than blaming only industrialization or individualization for this flux, they pursue more relevant pertinent theories.

As is well known, the family is a complex social institution, and household arrangements are determined by multiple factors, including material needs, ideological norms, cultural beliefs, and collective and individual interests. It is a malleable and flexible institution that variably responds variably to external and internal pressures, though urbanization and industrialization used to be easily linked with to family change (Janssens 1993, Seccombe 1992, Hareven and Plakans 1987). Accordingly, shifts in economic arrangements have historically coincided with shifts in family organization. However, the global capitalist economy has been rarely been blamed for shifts in household organizations, at least until some world system theorists demonstrated how families and households have in fact been constructed in the global economy (Wallerstein and Smith 1992a, Smith et al. 1984). Some empirical studies followed to support the assertion that the flexible operation of late capitalism was exceptionally creative in the destruction of rigidities of the household, instead penetrating into the intimacies of family life (Parrenas 2001, Piper and Roces 2003, Chee 2003). In the approach to current changes in Korean families, a few studies started to contextualize them within the rubric of globalization (Cho 2004a, Im 2000, Yi M. 1999).

This paper tries to present the Korean experience of family changes around during the IMF bailout period, contrasted with that of the so-called compressed industrialization period.<sup>5</sup> Besides In addition to statistical data, the issue-topic of

~~currently emerging~~ "transnational" families <sup>6</sup> and ~~bride import~~ "~~interracial~~international" families" ~~are is~~ brought in to reveal the ~~changing~~ dynamics of ~~changing~~ Korean families in the global capitalist economy ~~in order~~. ~~It is~~ to highlight class polarization and the family in a global context. ~~It would~~ This paper reveals the extent ~~to~~ and the ways ~~in which~~ ~~that~~ globalization has invaded the intimate ~~life sphere~~ of the family.

### ~~How The Flexible the Family Is in~~ During and ~~a~~After IMF

"Marriage Sabotage" and "Birth Strikes"

Over the past ~~30-40~~ ~~thirty to forty~~ years, ~~the~~ age at first marriage has risen consistently, with ~~this having been blamed the blame being placed~~ on industrialization and urbanization. ~~However, But~~ the ~~rate of~~ increase ~~in delaying first marriage~~ between 1997 and 2002 was too significant to be explained by industrialization ~~alone~~. As shown in Table 1, for both males and females, first marriage was delayed noticeably during the so-called "IMF period." The ~~first earliest~~ marriage age for females was 23.1 in 1970. ~~It went up~~ ~~This rose~~ to 24.1 in 1980 and 25.4 in 1995. Between 1970 and 1995, ~~it went up to the age at first marriage rose by~~ 2.3 years. ~~However, in a span of only~~ ~~On the other hand, it went up 1.3 years within~~ five years, ~~it rose by 1.3~~, from 25.7 years in 1997 to 27 years in 2002. For males, ~~the age at first marriage age~~ was 27.1 in 1970, 27.3 in 1980, 27.8 in 1990, and 28.4 in 1995. It ~~went up rose~~ 1.3 years over ~~the a~~ quarter century between 1970 and 1995, while it went up 1.2 years ~~over the past 5 years in a five-year period~~, from 28.6 in 1997 to 29.8 in 2002.

Table 1. Age of First Marriage by Males and Females

<del>years</del> sex	1970	1980	1990	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Female	23.1	24.1	24.8	25.4	25.7	26.1	26.3	26.5	26.8	27.0
Male	27.1	27.3	27.8	28.4	28.6	28.9	29.1	29.3	29.6	29.8

Source: KNSO (2003b), relevant years.

The crude marriage rate dropped at a similar speed. The crude marriage rate was 9.2 in 1970, dropping to 8.7 in 1995. On the other hand, it dropped from 8.4 in 1997 to 6.0 in 2002. Over ~~the a~~ quarter century, ~~it dropped by~~ 0.5, while ~~for the past during a five-year period~~ ~~5 years~~, it dropped ~~by~~ 2.4. The decreasing rate of crude marriage for ~~5 five~~ years outpaced that of ~~25 twenty-five~~ years. Between 1997 ~~and~~ -2002, the crude marriage rate ~~has~~ dropped ~~by~~ 0.4-0.3 ~~every each~~ year.

Table 2. Crude Marriage Rate: 1970-2002

	1970	1980	1990	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
crude marriage rate*	9.2	10.6	9.3	8.7	8.4	8	7.7	7	6.7	6.4

Source: KNSO (2003b), relevant years.

\* Note: crude marriage rate = Number of Marriages/Population\*1,000

Naturally, the proportion of unmarried people has consistently increased, over the past 30 years, however, the increase of the proportion of unmarried people between 1995 and 2000, the rate of increase was more drastic than ever.<sup>7</sup> The proportion of the unmarried in the age cohort of 25-29 age group, females the proportion of unmarried women was 11.8 in 1975. It slowly moved up to 14.1 in 1980, 18.4 in 1985 and 22.1 in 1990. Then, it marks the highest increase between from 1995 to 2000, there was a sharp increase from 29.6 in 1995, to 40.1 in 2000. For males in the same age cohort, it showed there was a steep increase from between 1980 up to and 2000, from 45.2 in 1980, 50.7 in 1985, and to 57.3 in 1990. The number stood at 64.4 in 1995, and was recorded at 71 in 2000. In particular, males in the age cohort of 30-34 year age group and females in the age cohort of 25-29 year age group marked showed the most sharp sharpest increase in the numbers of unmarried people between 1995 and 2000. (See Figure 1.)

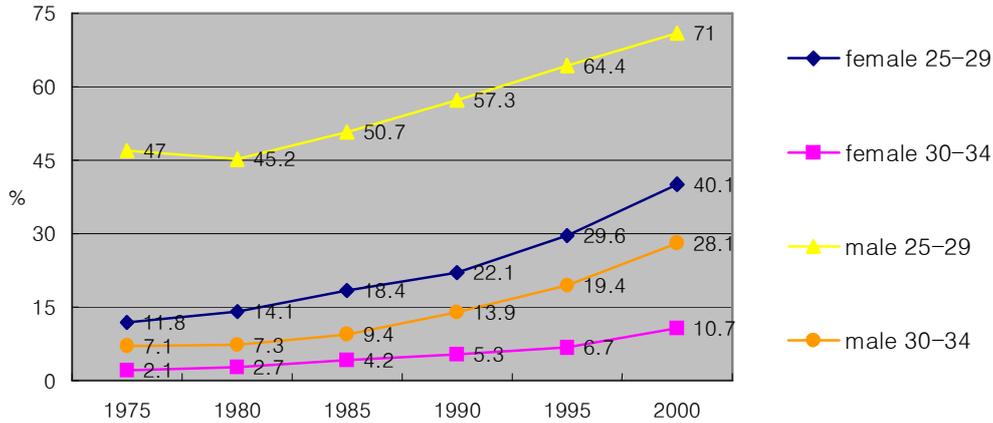
This change does not necessarily imply that delayed marriage was the direct result of the IMF bailout, but it cannot be denied that it was more or less induced by the situation. During the IMF period, employers openly claimed said that it was unavoidable to lay laying off women female workers was unavoidable since they were not the primary breadwinners.<sup>8</sup> Further, pregnant women were highest on the priority list of workers to be laid off, followed by married women. As a result, some women tried to maintain the appearance of being single or postpone official reporting of their marriage registration. The term "IMF cheonyeo" (IMF maiden) was coined to describe this predicament. Even the "Confucian" patriarchal ideology was utilized in order to justify the discharge of women from the labor market in the during this period (Jo 1998). In other words, the local gender system was utilized to maximize its own purposes, the profit of global capital, just as "mobile" global capital cooperated with an "immovable" patriarchy to extend its profit-making potential (Cho 2002b, Yi S. 2004). Moreover, the younger generation, that has been influenced by the social transformations that attending the introduction of an information society, should would likely have different perceptions about of sex, love, dating, marriage and motherhood from than the older generations (Kim H. 2004). They should seek would be more likely to pursue alternative life paths various way to create their lives according to their own perceptions of reality points of view instead of rather than simply following conventional family norms. Living together (before marriage), or cohabitation, has become more is not all that unacceptable for the younger generation (Kim H. 2005). Indeed, it is likely to be regarded as a new way kind of lifestyle for pursuing intimacy without the burden of supporting a family for men and the double burden of housework and breadwinning employment that is often placed on women. The delayed marriage age might reflect such a change of in the younger generations'

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attitudes toward marriage and the family, accelerated by [the IMF economic crisis](#) of IMF.

Figure 1. [The Proportion of Unmarried People by in Age Cohorts by Males and Females and Gender: 1975-2000](#)



Source: Korea National Statistical Office, *In-gu dongtae tonggye yeonbo* (Annual Report on [the Vital Statistics](#)), relevant years.

~~Such a~~ [The](#) lowered marriage rate should be closely tied to the low birth rate ~~in~~ [during](#) the IMF bail-out period. The fertility rate ~~was pulled down~~ [dropped](#) to an unprecedented level in ~~an unprecedented~~ [a remarkably](#) short time. Both the crude birth rate and the total fertility rate ~~have~~ [dropped remarkably](#) between 1997-2002. The total fertility rate in Korea stood at 1.17 in 2002, the lowest among the members of the OECD. Over the past ~~30~~ [thirty](#) years, the crude birth rate and total fertility ~~have~~ [decreased](#), but ~~it~~ [they](#) did not ~~meet~~ [match](#) the rate of decrease ~~that occurred during~~ [in](#) the ~~last 5-6 year~~ [five to six years](#) of the IMF [crisis](#): For example, in 1970 there were 31.2 births for every 1,000 women, which then dropped to 16.0 in 1995. In 1997, ~~it~~ [that number](#) was 14.8. In 2002, it dropped to 10.3. ~~On the other hand,~~ [The](#) fertility rate ~~declined~~ [went down](#) from 4.53 in 1970 to 1.65 in 1995; ~~however,~~ [But](#) the rate of decrease ~~is far more astonishing~~ during the IMF period ~~was far more drastic~~, from 1.54 in 1997 to 1.17 in 2002.

Table 3. Total Fertility Rate and Crude Birth Rate: 1970 - 2002

	1970	1980	1990	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
total fertility rate*	4.53	2.83	1.59	1.65	1.54	1.47	1.42	1.47	1.3	1.17
crude birth rate**	31.2	22.7	15.4	16.0	14.8	13.8	13.2	13.4	11.6	10.3

Source: Korea National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on ~~the~~ Live Births And Deaths Statistics* (Based on Vital [Registration Statistics](#)), 1970-2002

“인구동태통계연보” ???

\* fertility rate = birth per 1000 fertile women

\*\* crude birth rate = birth per 1,000 women

~~Such a~~ The decreasing birth rate reflects changing ~~values~~ attitudes toward birth. In 1991, as much as 90.3% of married women responded that they "had to" have a child. In 1997, ~~it that number~~ dropped to 73.7%. In 2003, ~~Only~~ about half of married women surveyed ~~think~~ considered it "a must" to have a child. (See Table 4.) According to a survey ~~taken~~ conducted in a local city, as ~~much~~ many as one third of all married women ~~do~~ did not mind having a "no child" family (Bak et al. 2004). Before the IMF, the decreasing birthrate could be explained by a decrease ~~of~~ in children-oriented values influenced by family planning and industrialization. However, the birth rate ~~has dramatically~~ decreased dramatically in the IMF era without attendant family planning advocacy.

According to a survey conducted by the Korean Women's Development Institute (2004), the respondents ~~all women counted the major reasons for attributed the~~ low birth rate to the following reasons: as follows; economic ~~reasons~~ concerns (21%), the financial burden of raising children (19.7%), young peoples' preference about ~~for~~ career development (15.9%), the high cost of educating children (15.8%), lack of social support for dual-income families (9.7%), and preference about ~~for~~ high quality care for children (7.2%). ~~Out of~~ Of these six reasons, three ~~are~~ were directly related to economic ~~burden~~ reasons, while the remaining two ~~reasons are~~ were related to the childcare system. ~~The~~ Only one ~~owes answer pertained~~ owes answer pertained to young people's preference about their ~~for~~ individual career development. The data clearly supports the assertion that the low birth rate ~~falls under~~ fell due to the direct impact of the economic burden imposed by the IMF bailout, further exerts influencing the ~~e~~ on changing family values and vice versa.

Table 4. Married Women's Attitude towards  
The Necessity of Having Children: 1991 - 2000

Year	Must have children	not necessarily			D. K.	Total
		Sub-total	<del>b</del> <u>Better to have children</u>	<del>no</del> <u>Does not matter</u>		
1991	90.3	8.5	-	-	1.2	100.0 (7,448)
1997	73.7	26.0	16.6	9.4	0.3	100.0 (5,409)
2000	58.1	41.5	31.5	10.0	0.5	100.0 (6,363)
2003	54.5	44.9	32.3	12.6	0.6	100.0 (6,593)

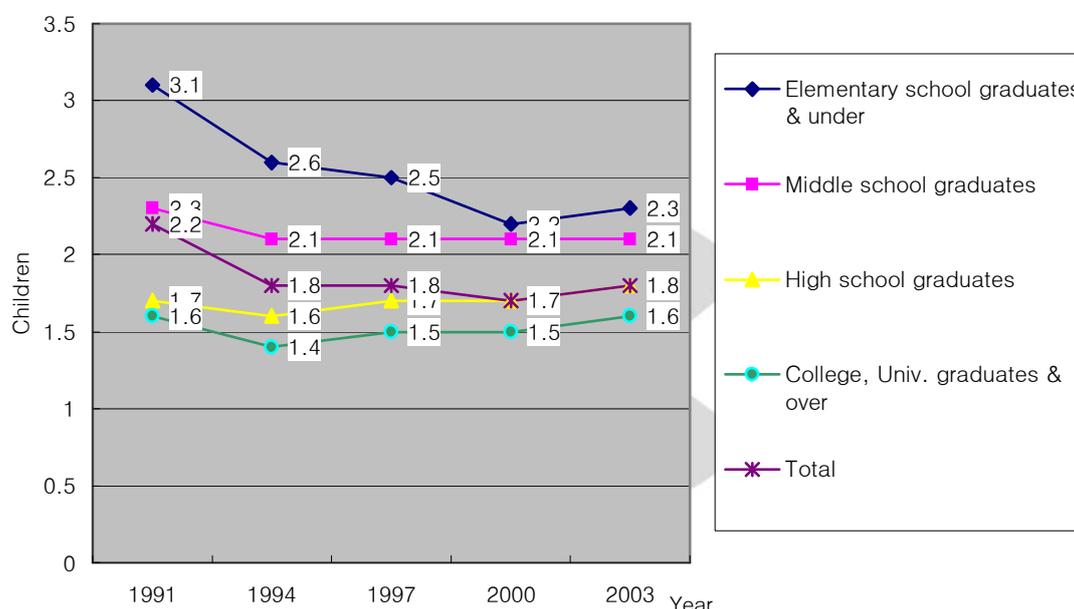
The 1991 data ~~surveyed is from a survey of~~ 15-49 year old married women and used with spouse and asked about only two categories: "must have children" and "~~not necessarily~~ does not matter."

Quoted from Kim S. et al. (2004).

On the other hand, the number of children born per married woman ~~with a spouse has not decreased~~ did not decrease much between 1997 and 2003, though there ~~is~~ was a significant difference in educational background among those surveyed. Middle school

graduates ~~did~~ not show any changes between 1997 and 2003, while elementary school graduates and lower showed ed a sharp drop from 2.5 to 2.2 between 1997 and 2000. ~~It~~ This number recovers/recovered a bit, showing an increase from 2.2 to 2.3 between 2000 and 2003. On the other hand, high school graduates stayed at the same rate of 1.7 and college graduates, at 1.5 between 1997 and 2000. Both college ~~graduates~~ and high school graduates ~~displayed~~ showed an increase in childbirth from 1.5 to 1.6 and 1.7 to 1.8, respectively, between 2000 and 2003. (See Figure 2.) The data implies that the low child birth childbirth rate is not much necessarily due to resistance to having children among married women. It is rather attributed to the abrupt ~~drop~~ rise of in the marriage age during the IMF bailout. The extent, and the manner through which the financial crisis worked to delay marriage should be given further consideration.

Figure 2. Children Born pPer Married Woman with a Spouse



Source: Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, *Jeonguk chulsanryeok mit gajok bojeong siltae josa* (National Family Health & Fertility Survey), 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004.

\* Note: Survey ~~to~~ of Married Women from 15 to 44 Years Old.

### *Skyrocketing Divorce and Remarriage Rate: Patrilineage Challenged*

Korean society has witnessed a consistent increase in the divorce rate over ~~30-40~~ the past thirty to forty years; however, the ~~increasing~~ divorce rate saw an astonishing increase between 1997 and 2002 ~~was astonishing~~. (See Table 5.) The divorce rate per marriage and the number of divorces per 100 marriages was 5.9 in 1970, jumping to 23.5 in 1995. Between 1997 ~~to~~ and 2002, it jumped from 31.1 to 54.8. In other words, one-third of marriages ended in divorce in 1997, while one in two marriages ended in divorce ~~as of~~ in 2002. For the years between 1970 ~~to~~ and 1995, the crude divorce rate and the number of divorces per 1,000 ~~population~~ people rose from 0.4 to 1.5. ~~But it went up~~ This number rose again from 2.0 in 1997 to 3.0 in 2002. The rise in the crude divorce rate over the five-~~year~~ periods surpassed s that of the previous twenty-five 25 year periods. Some scholars argue that the increasing divorce rate demonstrates ~~the~~

shifting of that the central axis of the family is shifting from the relationship between parents and their children to that between husbands and wives. Some others believe that there is a considerable lag between the speeds at which husbands change and that of at which wives change. Furthermore, husbands tend to fail to recognize acknowledge that marriage has moved changed from a role-oriented family system to a relationship-oriented family system. Such gaps in perception could can lead to divorce (Ham 2002). But whatever the cause, the increase in divorce increase was drastic considerable in the period between 1997 and -2002.

Table 5. Divorce Rate Trend: 1970-2002

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Crude divorce rate *	0.4	0.5	0.6	1	1.1	1.5	2	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.8	3
Divorce rate per marriage	5.9	10.3	11.4	17.1	18.4	23.5	31.1	32.5	35.9	42.2	47.4	54.8

Note: \* Number of Divorces/Population\*1,000

Source: KNSO, Annual Report on the Vital Statistics, 1986-2004.

In parallel to with the rising divorce rate, the proportion of remarriage has increased noticeably for males and females, though the rising rate for females is was faster than for males. (See Table 6.) For females women, the remarriage rate was 4.1 in 1980, rising to 10 in 1995. For males men, it was 6.4 in 1980, rising to 10 in 1995. From 1997, females' the remarriage rate for women outpaces that of males men, females' remarriage rate increases increasing from 11.3 in 1997 to 17.2 in 2002, while males the rate for men increased from 10.6 in 1997 to 15.4 in 2002. The R remarriage rate in the last 5-6 five to six years has surpassed that over the past 30 thirty years.

The emergence of the binuclear family, composed of remarried couples, represents a somewhat important aspect of changing family values related to patrilineality. The increased frequency of remarriage is both the cause and effect of a revision of traditional notions of family that de-emphasize patrilineal ties. It was not a mere coincidence that the *hojuje* (male family head system) was abolished in 2003.<sup>9</sup> In this period, TV dramas that introduced depictions of remarried family life and remarried heroines were aired, something that was hardly possible before this period.

Table 6. Rate of Remarriage by Sex: 1975 - 2002

	1980	1990	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
female	4.1	7.1	10	11.3	12.5	14	14.5	16.4	17.2
male	6.4	8.4	10	10.6	11.6	12.8	13.1	14.7	15.4

Source: KNSO, Annual Report on the Vital Statistics, relevant years.

The Remarriage pattern according to previous marital status demonstrates a somewhat interesting aspect of the changing state of conjugal relations. Both First marriages for both husbands and wife-wives has slowly decreased over 30-thirty years, while the remarriage rate for both husbands and wife has wives increased rapidly. (See Table 7.) The remarriage for both husband and wife The rate of remarriage rose remarkably in the period between 1997 and 2002. The remarriage rate for both husband and wife has increased by 3.5 to 6.5 between the years 1970 and 1995, but it increased again by 7.3 between 1997 and 11.6 in 2002. More than anything else Above all, the number of couples formed through first marriage for husbands and remarriage for wives increased noticeably during the period between 1997 and 2002-period. On the one hand, couples consisting of remarried husbands with first-time wives constituted-totaled 4.1 in 1970, and decreased to 3.8 in 2002. This change reflects a somewhat drastic challenge toward-to the conventional conception of marriage and remarriage between males and femalesmen and women.

Table 7. Marriage by Previous Marital Status of Husband and Wife in 1970- 2002

year	first marriage (hus.) : first marriage (wife)	Re-marriage (hus.) : first -marriage (wife)	first marriage (hus.) : Re-marriage (wife)	Re-marriage (hus.) : Re-marriage (wife)
1970	91.5	4.1	0.9	3.5
1975	92.6	3.5	0.8	3.0
1980	92.2	3.7	1.2	3.1
1985	90.6	3.6	1.7	4.0
1990	89.3	3.6	2.3	4.7
1995	86.4	3.6	3.6	6.5
1997	85.3	3.4	4.0	7.3
1998	84.0	3.5	4.4	8.1
1999	82.5	3.5	4.7	9.3
2000	82.0	3.5	4.9	9.6
2001	79.7	3.8	5.6	10.9
2002	79.0	3.8	5.6	11.6

Source: KNSO (2003).

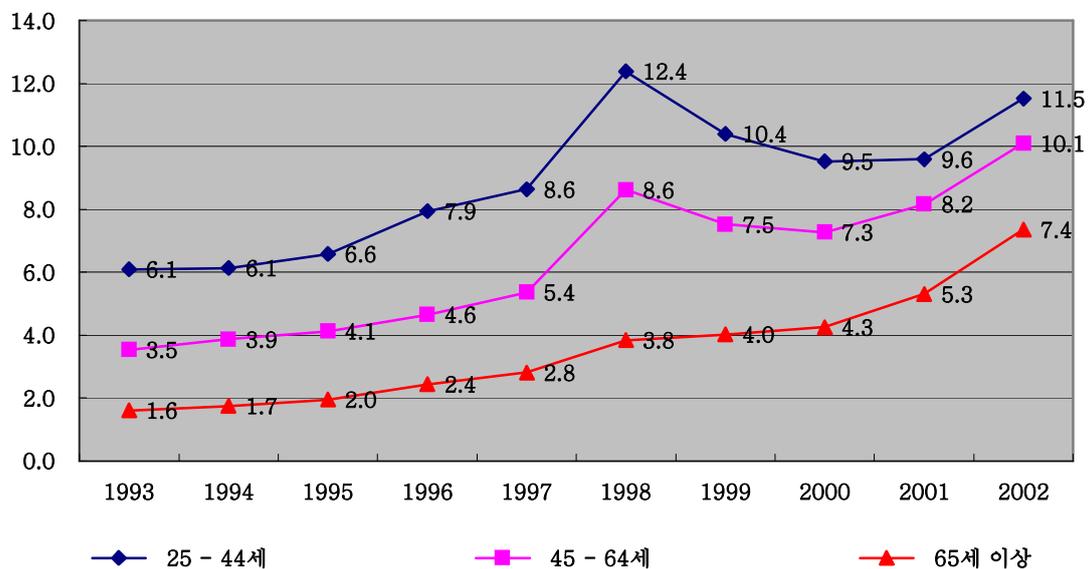
### Who Cares for the Aged?

Caring for the aged became another problematic site that fueled family crisis debates as the aged population became a larger burden to society. It was clear that individual families could not afford to support aged parents, especially when economic restructuring had severely impacted the family economy. The current generation, the so-called "princes and princesses", who-areor children of family planning, have different ideas about family relations, not only between couples, but also between parents and children. Especially-In particular, it has been noted that the relationship between parents and married sons and daughter has been rapidly changing. The parody of "mother of daughters and mother of sons" became popular around the IMF period.<sup>10</sup>

There have been a number of parodies poking fun at family relations, ~~and that~~ reflecting the changing family values since the mid 90's. At first, the insecurities of men over their arguably diminished status were parodied in 1995. For example, A-one popular theme was "men with guts."<sup>11</sup> Then came the "lover syndrome" in 1996, followed by the "father with a drooping head" in 1997. Parodies featuring the "father with a drooping head" demonstrate the changing state of family relations in economic crisis and the conflicts that often result. The image of a man with his head drooping parodies his sexual impotency; however, it also reflects the insecure status caused by forced early retirement. After the "father with a drooping head" series, the "mother of sons and mother of daughters" parody was popularized around 1998 and 1999. This e "~~mother of son ...~~" parody is not necessarily directly related to economic crisis, but it clearly reflects the dilemma of Korean parents who used to depend on sons in for their aged-lifeold age. Fewer and fewer members of the younger generation ~~came to~~ believe that sons are responsible for caring for their aged parents.

The suicide rate for ~~the aged people~~ over the age of 65 in the period of during the IMF period demonstrates the dismal situation faced by Korean families. The suicide rate ~~has risen rose~~ consistently over ~~the past a period of ten 10~~-years, but it ~~moved up consistently and increased~~ drastically since after 1997. (See Figure 3.) While the suicide rate for the 25-44 age group and ~~that of the~~ 45-64 age group rose moved up between the years 1997 and 1998, and decreased again in 1999, ~~the~~ age cohort suicide rate for people over 65 continued to rise throughout the period between 1997 and -2002.

Figure 3. Suicide Rate by Age Cohort



축제목: 25-44 years old, 45-64 years old, over 65

Source: KNSO, *Samang wonin tonggye yeonbo* (Annual Report on Causes of Death), relevant years.

\*~~The rate counts s~~ Suicide per 1000 deaths, ~~excluding~~ deaths by disease.

## Globalization, Class Polarization, and Korean Families: Two-Tiered "International" Families

After the IMF bailout, "anomalous families" ~~were appeared~~ frequently ~~treated~~ in the media: Some well-off families delivered babies in advanced countries, primarily the United States, in order to gain citizenship,<sup>12</sup> while some globally split families educated their children overseas. Meanwhile, foreign women were brought from poorer countries to Korea to supplement a lack of brides. It is well acknowledged that contemporary global households ~~involve~~ have a different temporal and spatial experiences, depending on their positions in the global capitalist economy. Each country produces different patterns of global families, ~~fitting the generating a~~ "two-tier workforce" ~~into for~~ the global economy that produces transnational families, ~~as well as those of including both~~ low-wage migrant workers and ~~those of~~ professionals and wealthy families (Reich 1991, Wallerstein and Smith 1992a). ~~They~~ These families reveal the way that ~~people are the family was~~ required to mediate unequal levels of economic development (Basch et al. 1994, Glickschiller et al. 1995, Laguerre 1994 모두 참고문헌에 없습니다). Several studies report that the macro processes of globalization prompted the formation of transnational and ~~interracial-international~~ racial households, with the goals of maximizing resources and opportunities in the global economy (Ong 2000, Parrenas 2001, Wallerstein and Smith 1992b). In Korea, Both both Korean-gireogi families and "bride import" families ~~with imported brides~~ may reflect Korea's position in the global capitalist economy. Such families vividly highlight a vivid the routes of global penetration into Korean families.

### *Gireogi Families in and after IMF*

Transnational families or multinational households are appearing in many regions of the world, though the pattern and characteristics of transnational families are different depending on their positions in the world capitalist economy (Wallerstein and Smith 1992a). With English becoming an important source of cultural capital and revealing the unstable economy under globalization, the strong child-centered structure of the Korean family is sliding toward a seasonal family scattered across the globe. The Korean transnational family, the so-called gireogi families, describes a pattern in which the father remains in Korea, while the mother and their elementary or middle school-aged children remain in move to foreign countries (mostly English-speaking) for the sake of the children's education. They are called "gireogi," or "wild geese" families, separated by an ocean, often for years. Most gireogi families emphasize that the parents are making a sacrifice for the sake of the children's education.

Gireogi mothers do not hesitate to point out that "children are more precious than husbands" ~~for their life to them~~ (Cho 2004a). They are willing to sacrifice their conjugal relationships for their children's' bright futures. Gireogi ~~daddies fathers~~, who are mostly often workaholics, also willingly sacrifice their conjugal relations. They work hard in Korea to send money abroad to ~~the their wives and children wife and child~~. They can only look forward to seasonal visits and reunions with their wives and children are anxious to visit their wife and child for seasonal family reunions, possibly 2-3 times a year. A central paradox in the maintenance of Korean gireogi families is the

fact that the achievement of security for the sake of the children goes hand-in-hand with an increase in emotional insecurity between couples, as well as between fathers and children. As ~~they talk about~~ such parents discuss ~~their~~ the sacrifices ~~they make~~ for their children, they eventually reveal their anxiety ~~about~~ over the highly volatile Korean economy, as well as ~~about~~ the uncertain future of their family relations.

*Gireogi* families appeared in Korea with the advent of the *seggyewha*, or --globalization, policy around the late 1990's.<sup>13</sup> ~~Initially~~ the beginning, only a few well-off families could afford to be *gireogi* families. In recent years, ~~it~~ the pattern has spread to less well-off classes. Though, we do not have exact information ~~about~~ on the total number of *gireogi* families, it is acknowledged that ~~this~~ e-number of ~~gireogi families~~ has increased after the IMF bailout.<sup>14</sup> Breadwinner fathers who have felt the sting of enforced retirement, the bitter side of the capitalist economy, and ~~a~~ wifewives who ~~anticipate~~ has to witness a ~~dismal~~ futures, ~~sought~~ a seek more secure forms of capital for their children. Investing in their children's overseas educations ~~seemed~~ is believed to be the surest way to survive in ~~a~~ the world market. As they feel more anxious and nervous over ~~an~~ the uncertain future ~~in~~ a of the shaky Korean economy, educated parents, mostly from professional and managerial class families, ~~decided~~ choose to become *gireogi* families. ~~It~~ This decision represents the weak and insecure position of the Korean white-collar class in the world capitalist economy.<sup>15</sup>

No one would insist that *gireogi* families stemmed solely from economic restructuring in globalization. Rather, they resulted from the conscious and unconscious reworking of the priorities and values of Korean families. *Gireogi* families can be ~~featured~~ considered as a creative response to and adoptive strategies for a "flexible" economy (Cho 2004a). The persisting cultural value of familism assists with the formation of transnational households as much as structural forces of globalization propel it. The formation of these Korean transnational households that depend on the persisting cultural values of (patriarchal) familism, which is instrumental for the prosperous family, represents the position of the semi-periphery in a world capitalist economy (Yi M. 1999).

#### *Brides Import Families.*

~~Importing~~ The "importation" of brides from abroad ~~compose~~ represents another aspect of the ~~dilemmatic situation of dilemma facing~~ Korean families in globalization. At first, international matchmaking programs were the importation of brides was initiated by local governments to help ~~unpopular~~ rural men find ~~a~~ marriage partners, but later this was commercialized into a kind of ~~interracial~~ international marriage market. According to the Ministry of Justice, the number of foreigners living with Korean spouses reached around 75,000 at the end of 2003. Among the total number of foreign spouses, ~~females~~ women accounted for more than 90 percent. By nationality, most were from Asian countries. Chinese women, including Korean Chinese, accounted for the majority of the foreign spouses, followed by Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipina~~es~~ and Mongolians. At first, Matching matching poor Korean ~~rural~~ men living in rural areas with women from poorer countries may have sounded like an romantic and efficient, and perhaps romantic, solution to ~~make~~ creating new families ~~at first~~, but ~~it~~ raises lots

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~~of many~~ issues ~~have arisen~~ from ~~these interracial-internationalracial~~ marriages. As of 2005, ~~27.2% of rural marriages as much as 11.7% of total marriages counts consisted of~~ Korean men and foreign women, ~~representing as many as 11.7% of all marriages total and further as much as 27.2% of rural marriages does.~~ ~~It was already predicted that brides could not but be imported as~~ ~~Because~~ the sex ratio ~~was~~ ~~has been~~ highly skewed due to a cultural preference for sons, with the sex ratio approaching about 110 in 1970's, ~~it was already predicted that brides would eventually have to come from other countries.~~

In 1970, the sex ratio stood at 109.5, ~~peaked at 116.5 in 1990,~~ and ~~it remained returned again to 109.5 about the same~~ through 2002. ~~It even peaked at 116.5 in 1990.~~ This ~~distortion of the~~ sex ratio distortion typically begins with the ~~birth of a second~~ child. ~~The evidence suggests that many women take steps, such as aborting pregnancies if the fetus has been determined to be female, in order to ensure the birth of a son. It is not hard to see that mothers whose second pregnancies resulted in sons had clear intentions of ensuring that they had sons.~~ For example, in 1990, the sex ratio among firstborns was 108.5. For ~~the second births,~~ it was, 117.0; ~~the third births,~~ 188.8; ~~with the figure at fourth and above, standing at~~ 209.2. In 1995 ~~the sex ratio~~ among firstborns ~~was,~~ ~~the ratio is~~ close to the normal figure of 105.9. But for the second child, the ratio increased to 111.7; ~~for the third child, the ratio of~~ 177.2; ~~and for the fourth, it was~~ 203.9 (KNSO 2003b).

It should be noted that international marriages ~~for between~~ Korean men and foreign women fluctuates depending on the economic situation, while that of Korean women and foreign men ~~is do~~ not. As shown in Figure 4, ~~interracial-internationalracial~~ marriage was on ~~the~~ increase up to 1996, but dropped in 1997 before rapidly sliding in 1999. It then slowly started to recover in 2000 and soared ~~up to a point~~ higher than ever in 2003. The direct impact of the “economic crisis” on ~~interracial interracialinternational~~ marriage ~~also~~ demonstrates how flexible the making of the family can be under globalization. The increase ~~in ing rate of interracial-interracial international~~ marriages, especially between Korean men and foreign women, after the IMF shows that the family is the very site where internal factors such as patriarchal ideology and external factors, such as global capital, encounter each other in complex ways (Yun H. 2005, Kim J. 2004).

**Figure 4. International Marriage Trend: 1995-2003**



### Korean Families in Flux

~~It is said that~~ Korean families ~~have~~ changed rapidly in structure, function, and relations ~~in during~~ the period of compressed industrialization. But the speed of family change during the short period of the IMF bailout ~~is recognized as was~~ beyond astonishing. In particular, family values and norms regarding childbirth, marriage, conjugal relations, and divorce ~~have~~ changed abruptly. The Korea experience has witnessed the fact that the family is not only vulnerable to economic crisis but is also flexible and malleable, raising ~~a the~~ question ~~of just~~ how ~~much far~~ the family can ~~bend flexible~~ in the "flexible economy" of globalization. We are left to further investigate whether the flexibility of Korean families is a specific aspect of Korean families or ~~if~~ it is common to other societies in similar situations.

In the era of globalization, individuals as well as governments develop "a flexible notion of citizenship,"<sup>16</sup> and the family should be the site ~~to that~~ both links and ramifies flexible citizenship. As a result, the two-~~tiered~~ global economy produces two-tiered "international" families in Korea. One is seen in ~~the~~ well-to-do transnational families seeking future security by sacrificing marital relations, while the other manifests as ~~the interracial-interracial~~ international marriages of underprivileged classes seeking marital relations and facing ~~an~~ insecure futures for their ~~mixed blood offspring~~ multi-ethnic children. The Korean family of the two different types of global families, both transnational and ~~interracially-interracial~~ internationally married, strip off the veil of the romanticized "East Asian Family" that boasts an unbreakable bond and strong solidarity. They also refute the image of the Confucian East Asian family ~~which that defines puts~~ men ~~to be~~ in charge of both wealth and mobility, while women are localized in domestic situations or workplaces commanded by men. It is interesting to see that the global flexibility of the Korean family proceeds on the advocacy of traditional family values and strengths on ~~the~~ one hand, and on the breaking of ~~the~~ long-~~conserved-held~~ "one-race, one nation" ideology on the other hand. ~~And also~~

Furthermore, the Korea experience of the family-in-flux under global pressures confirms that the family is a historically created institution, which reflects and mediates class relations ~~more than anything else~~ in the global capitalist economy. It demands our further attention to see what results class polarization accelerated by globalization ~~would lead to~~ will have in the formation of Korean families and vice versa.

#### Footnotes

1. The birth rate was recorded as low as 1.17 in 2002. The news media labeled it the "1.17 shock". This is an ironic situation since Korea has been hailed as one of the most successful countries in family planning in the past decades. Family planning campaigns have advertised the benefits of having fewer children ("Two is enough", "One is OK") until the population control policy came to an end in 1996, right before the IMF bailout.
2. The Healthy Family Act was enacted in 2003 for the purpose of "the maintenance and development of healthy families." It aims to support overcoming family dissolution and crisis. Feminist groups criticize the act, which rest on the conventional ideology of nuclear family.
3. The mass media is bombarded with messages of "low birth rate, no future for the nation." or "Population decrease marks the beginning of the downfall of the nation." etc.
4. *Gireogi gajok* (wild-geese family) connotes the **lonely and** seasonal family in which the husband has been left in Korea while the wife goes overseas for the sake of the children's education.
5. In the just three to four decades between the 1960's-1990's, Korean society has undergone the same stages of industrialization that Western societies took one or two centuries to pass through, such that this period has come to be labeled "compressed industrialization" or a "compressed development" period.
6. Transnational families or households here refers to families whose core members are located in at least two nation-states, as Parrenas defines them in her study (Parrenas 2001, 80).
7. The proportion of the unmarried is collected every five-years, **however** the annual data between 1997-2002 is not available.
8. Newspapers, broadcast, and television programmers were eager to start a "campaign to restore the husband." *Gi* (energy or self-esteem), or to be more exact, the male breadwinner's *gi*, which had been damaged due to unemployment and other economic stressors. The case of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) offers a good example of how global capital works with alongside the local ideology of the male breadwinner. The NACF, one of the largest public enterprises in Korea, identified 762 working couples throughout their various branches, and asked them to choose which spouse would have to leave their job as soon if the NACF was forced to "restructure". The case of the NACF was merely one example. There were many other public and private firms that forced female employees to leave the workplace under different pretenses such as "honorable retirement" or "early retirement with incentives" during this period. (For details, see Cho 2002b).
9. The abolition of the *hojuje* (**family head system**) has been sought after for more than 50 years, but aborted several times before finally passing through the National Assembly in 2003.
10. The parody goes as follows: The mother of two daughters would die the flight as they competed to invite her to come to their house, while the mother of two sons would die on the road as they let their mother wander outside between the two sons' house. **And the mother of one son would die in the attic as she has no one to call on , etc.**
11. The parody goes: A man would have to have a strong gut to ask for breakfast in his 20s; he would need the same to ask his wife where she is going in his 30's, etc.
12. Reported that more than 5,000 pregnant women go out to give birth in the United States every year. (*Hankook Ilbo*, 27 May 2002).
13. The Kim Young-sam government (1993-1998) formally adopted the *segvewha* (globalization) policy in 1994. The administration adopted globalization as its catch phrase, which signified the new liberal economic globalization in Korea.
14. We do not have exact numbers, although it is known that at least more than 5,000 families are estimated to be *gireogi* families as of 2002, **if half of school kids in high-schools studying**

overseas are actually kids of *gireogi* families [해외유학중인 고등학교 이하 학생들의 절반은 기러기가족 아이들이라고 할 때,]. According to the Ministry of Education and Human Capital, 3,464 primary school kids, 3,301 middle school, and 3,367 high school students are studying abroad as of 2002. They have not decreased during IMF period. For example, the number of primary school children studying abroad decreased only in 1997 and 1998, right after the IMF. But it recovered at an increasing pace from 1999 and experienced a record-fast increase thereafter.

15. It is reported that white-collar workers experienced the most severe polarization during the IMF period (*Dong-a Il bo*, 2005).
16. "Flexible citizenship" refers to the cultural logic of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induces subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions. Such logic and practices are produced within particular structures of meaning surrounding family, gender, nationality, class mobility, and social power (Ong 1999, 6).

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