

The Transnational Marriage Networks:

The circuit of mobilities, investment, and development
between Vietnam and South Korea

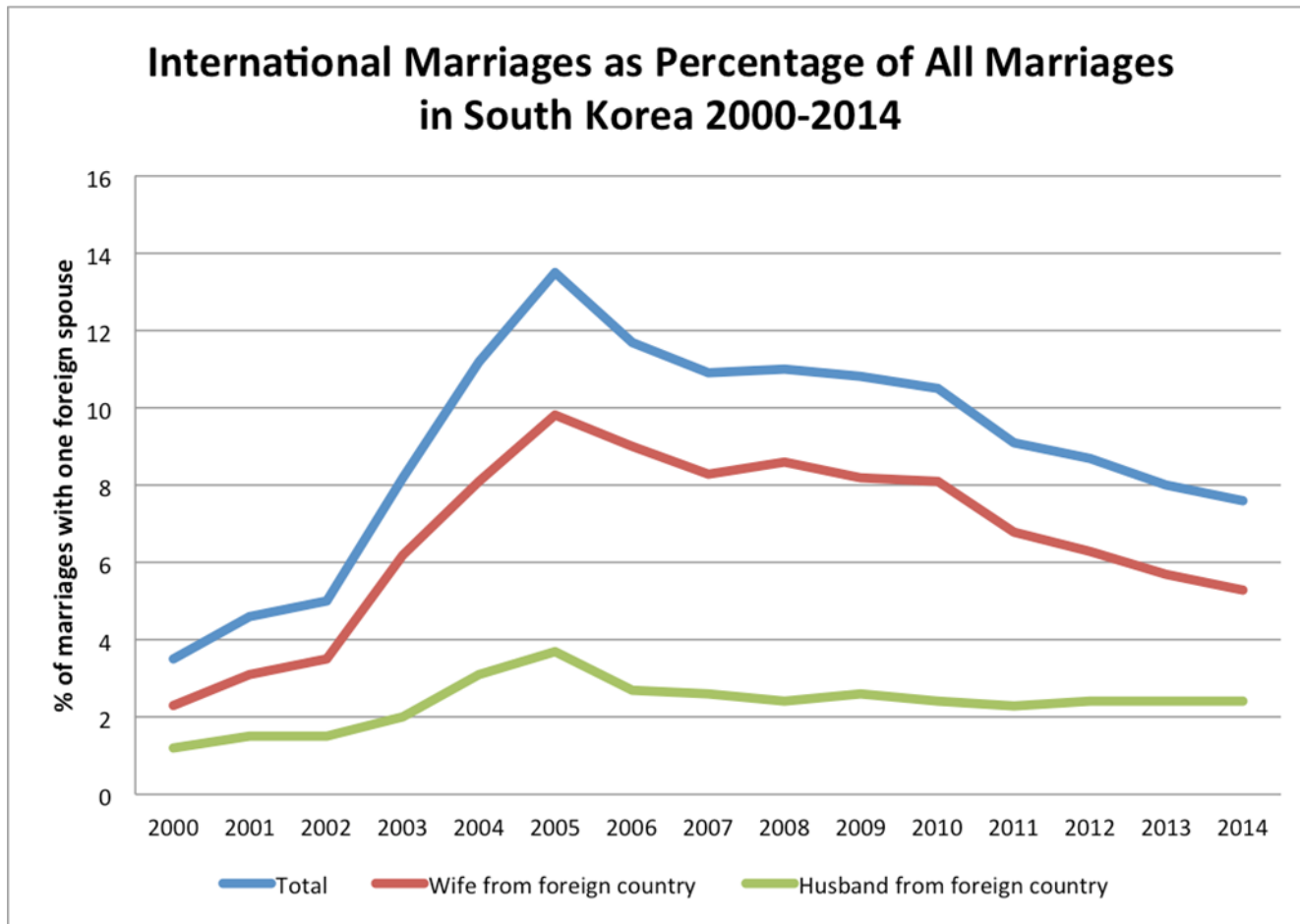
HaeRan Shin and Thi My Hang Bui

Seoul National University

Research Questions

- How have remittances as investment, the regional development, and further mobilities interacted and constituted a circuit?
 - How have Vietnamese marriage migrants come to invest in businesses and real estate in their home country?
 - How has the capital pouring into Vietnam for investment promoted the mobilities of people between Vietnam and South Korea?

International marriages in South Korea

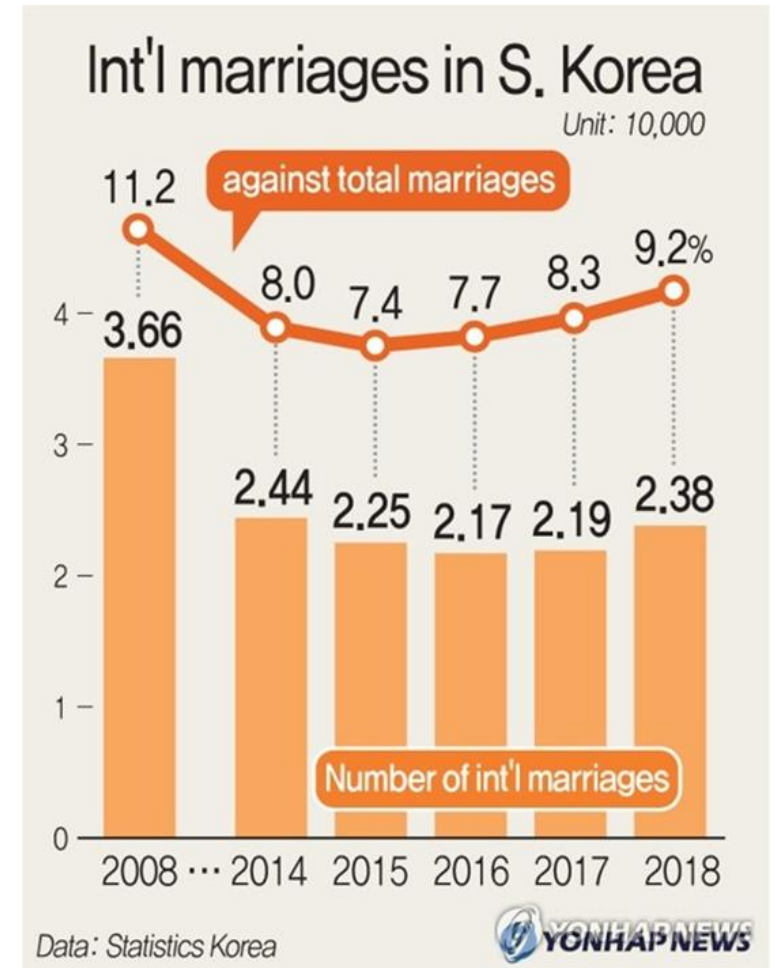


- Gender imbalance
- In 2005, the Korean government's Grand Plan
 - the vision of "a social integration of foreign wives and an attainment of a multicultural society" to attract foreign wives to South Korea
- Arranged marriages

Vietnamese marriage migrant women in South Korea

- Vietnamese women
 - Biggest share of all international marriages, **30%** in 2018 (Chinese – 21.6%, Thai- 6.6%)

“When we married [through a marriage broker] there were 6 couples. The other couples were really fast, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, they quickly said okay [accepting partner for marriage]. All the other people, the other unnis [older females] who were all so pretty, they said okay! And I just...you know.” (Hien Vuthi, resident of 12 years)



Entrepreneurship

- A growing number of marriage migrant women are involved in developing business activities in Vietnam
 - Through their transnational ethnic networks that include their natal family members.
- Businesses
- Real estate investment

Transnational ethnic networks

The personal and professional ties based on shared ethnicity that have been cultivated to minimise obstacles to sending living expense support, investment in real estate, business ownership and management, and international mobilities (Muller and Wehrhahn, 2013; Wong and Ng, 2002; Yeung, 1997)

Previous studies

- Transnational ethnic networks: mainly for ethnic enterprises that migrants run in receiving societies (Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012; Portes, 1999; Wong and Ng, 2002)
- Marriage migrant women's remittances: about effects to individuals and families

Suggestion **The circuit of remittances, development, and mobilities**

- The importance of remittances in development (Faist, 2008; Portes, 2003; Zapata, 2018)
- Linking a new form of transnational ethnic networks to marriage migration
 - The mobilities of people and the flow of capital interact.

Research methods

- 2019 – 2020, participant observations and in-depth interviews
- In-depth interviews with Vietnamese marriage migrant women, who live in South Korea and invest in Vietnam, and Korean husbands
 - Face-to-face interviews
 - Phone Interviews
 - Written interviews through Facebook

Finding 1:

The emergence of the transnational marriage networks

- At the early stage:
 - Sending remittances to improve their parents' lives economically by paying back parents' debts.
 - The biggest motivation of the international marriage.
 - Korean husbands' financial help before their weddings/early years of the marriage.
- Later
 - When their children started going to nurseries, they began joining the job market and actively sending remittances.
 - They started investing in lands and businesses.



Remittances developed into investment

- Restyled as business initiatives in Vietnam
- This transition has been facilitated by the country's rapid economic development.
 - Once simply alleviated poverty in developmental countries (Bakker, 2015)
 - Over time, they become an important resource for economic development in migrants' home country (Faist, 2008).
- The visa policy in South Korea (2011)
 - permits dual nationalities further supported these economic activities by enabling the repeated and temporary mobilities

Purchasing land in Vietnam as future welfare

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Hanoi, Vietnam, with a large body of water in the foreground. A green island with some buildings is visible in the middle ground. The city skyline is visible in the background under a clear sky.

- “Investing in land means that you will never lose money. The price of land is always going up... when my son grows up, I want to retire in Vietnam.” (Vietnamese marriage migrant, 10 October 2019)
- “My wife hangs around with rich Vietnamese friends, real estate agency, and Vietnamese brokers to gain information on real estate... Even if I had to leave my job, we would remain in Vietnam and find a way to manage. Like cultural business or leisure. The Vietnam rush is emerging. It is hard to go back [to Korea], leaving opportunities behind.” (Korean husband, 1 Jan 2020)

Interviewee 5

- has an office in Pusan, and another in her hometown, Hai Duong, which is one-two hours from Hanoi and is well-known for a big number of marriage migrants.
- has someone in the Vietnamese office who helps with the business especially when she is in South Korea.



Running a business in Vietnam



An interviewee's Korean Language and Study Abroad Center in her hometown Hai Duong

The role of social networks

- **Facebook, ethnic associations, and multicultural centres.**
 - Share knowledge and information about businesses.
 - Exchange information about their personal investments.
 - Share information on how to invite their parents to South Korea.
- **Informal trading through Facebook.**
 - Using Facebook to get orders from Vietnamese families, relatives, and friends for Korean products.
 - + Pocket money.
 - + High demand for Korean products that they can access easily.
 - Their pilot practices for their future businesses.

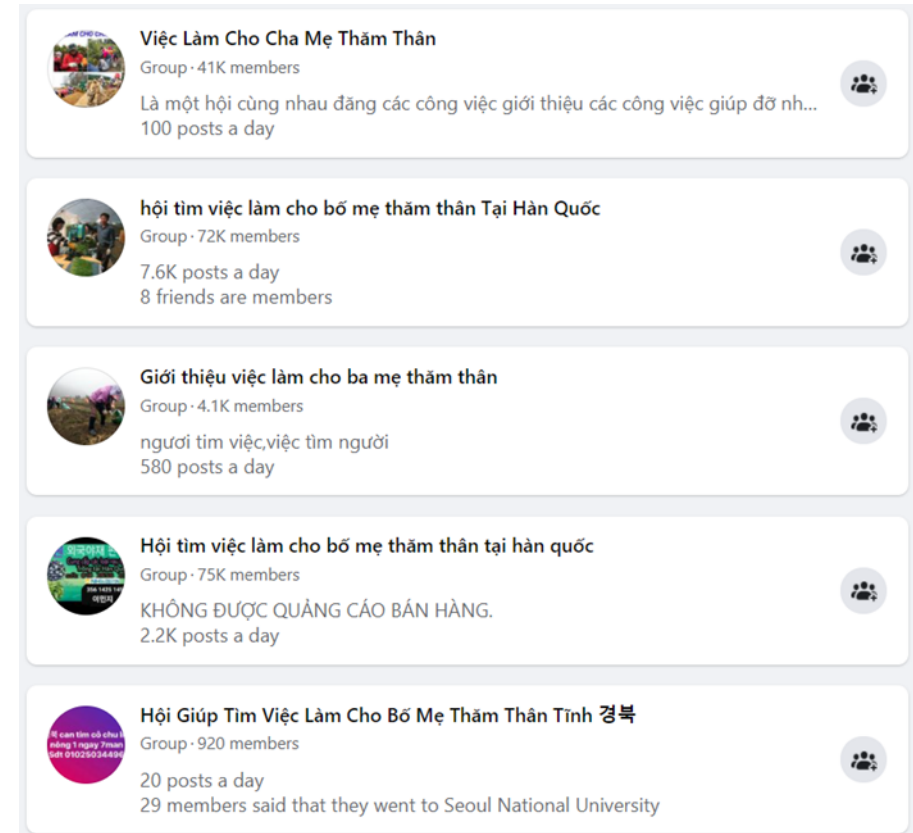
Finding 2.

Mobilities and transnational marriage networks

- The women's marriage migration promoted further mobilities of mainly their parents and siblings.
 - Some of their parents visit South Korea approximately three to four years after their marriage with **visiting visas**.
 - Childcare for their grandchildren and household work.
 - Job-searching in South Korea when their grandchildren started being in nurseries .

Mobilizing further mobilities and temporary stays

- Vietnamese women could sponsor their parents or sisters to enter South Korea to assist with childcare, which often resulted in their sisters settling in to find jobs or marry a Korean man themselves.
- Groups/Pages posting job for parents.



The screenshot displays five Facebook group listings, each with a profile picture, title, member count, and activity information:

- Việc Làm Cho Cha Mẹ Thăm Thân**
Group · 41K members
Là một hội cùng nhau đăng các công việc giới thiệu các công việc giúp đỡ nh...
100 posts a day
- hội tìm việc làm cho bố mẹ thăm thân Tại Hàn Quốc**
Group · 72K members
7.6K posts a day
8 friends are members
- Giới thiệu việc làm cho ba mẹ thăm thân**
Group · 4.1K members
người tìm việc,việc tìm người
580 posts a day
- Hội tìm việc làm cho bố mẹ thăm thân tại hàn quốc**
Group · 75K members
KHÔNG ĐƯỢC QUẢNG CÁO BÁN HÀNG.
2.2K posts a day
- Hội Giúp Tìm Việc Làm Cho Bố Mẹ Thăm Thân Tỉnh 경북**
Group · 920 members
20 posts a day
29 members said that they went to Seoul National University

Inviting parents and sisters

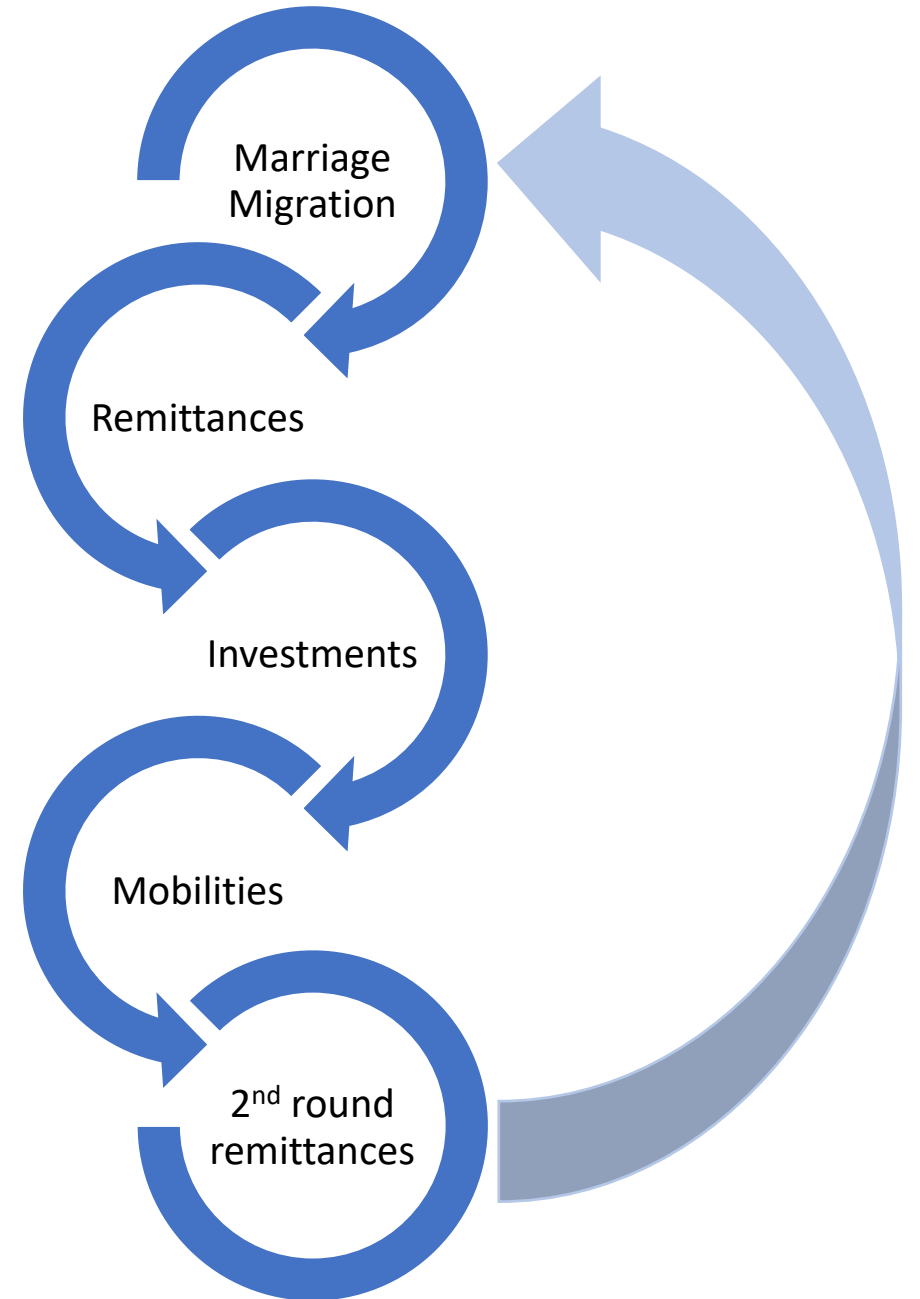
- Helping parents get jobs in South Korea.

“Since my parents-in-law helped me in taking care of the kids, I was able to work outside (at a private hospital). However, I still invited my mother to South Korea so she could work...The main reason I invited my mother to South Korea, was to help her to work and save her own money.”
(Marriage migrant women, 24 Sep 2020)

- The parents send their own remittances home.
- More recently, many marriage migrant women are taking an active role and introducing other Vietnamese women to their prospective Korean husband.

Conclusion

- The extended circuit of networks, investment, and mobility by marriage migration.
- Dynamics of the marriage-migration-development nexus.



References

- Bakker, M. (2015). Discursive representations and policy mobility: how migrant remittances became a 'development tool'. *Global Networks*, 15(1), 21-42.
- Bærenholdt, Jørgen Ole. 2013. "Governmobility: The powers of mobility." *Mobilities* 8 (1): 20-34.
- Faist, T. (2008). Migrants as transnational development agents: an inquiry into the newest round of the migration–development nexus. *Population, space and place*, 14(1), 21-42.
- Katila, S., & Wahlbeck, Ö. (2012). The role of (transnational) social capital in the start-up processes of immigrant businesses: The case of Chinese and Turkish restaurant businesses in Finland. *International small business journal*, 30(3), 294-309.
- Müller, A., & Wehrhahn, R. (2013). Transnational business networks of African intermediaries in China: Practices of networking and the role of experiential knowledge. *DIE ERDE—Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin*, 144(1), 82-97.
- Portes, A. (1999). Conclusion: Towards a new world-the origins and effects of transnational activities. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 22(2), 463-477.
- Portes, A. (2003). Conclusion: Theoretical convergencies and empirical evidence in the study of immigrant transnationalism. *International migration review*, 37(3), 874-892.
- Wong, L. L., & Ng, M. (2002). The emergence of small transnational enterprise in Vancouver: The case of Chinese entrepreneur immigrants. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26(3), 508-530.
- Yeung, H. W. C. (1997). Business networks and transnational corporations: A study of Hong Kong firms in the ASEAN region. *Economic Geography*, 73(1), 1-25.
- Zapata, G. P. (2018). Transnational migration, remittances and the financialization of housing in Colombia. *Housing Studies*, 33(3), 343-360.

Thank you!

