

ABSTRACT

The problem of care crisis in South Korea has long persisted since late 1990s as its total fertility rate and marriage rate continue to plummet. Its long-term economic survival is threatened as the number of its productive population continues to decline, leading to a shrinking workforce and increased public social security spending. Some of the main causes of the care crisis originate from Korean women's growing reluctance of marriage and childbirth due to their rise in socioeconomic status and Korea's persisting discriminative and oppressive conditions towards women. As a result, the phenomenon of rural bachelors, a demographic of unmarried men above the average age of marriage in the rural areas, has increased significantly. Marriage migration from international marriage between Korean men and foreign women, particularly women from underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds, has become more prevalent in Korea. However, despite the state's intentional establishment of policies and frameworks to cater towards marriage migrant women, they continue to experience oppression within the structure of marriage migration. This study aims to research how Korean women and marriage migrant women's oppression are established and maintained in the structure of capitalist patriarchal Korean state and society. Using the socialist feminism theoretical framework, it highlights the ways in which Korean women and marriage migrant women are socialised into becoming central social reproductive actors to continue reproducing Korea's population and maintaining Korean patriarchal values through their unpaid labour.