

Appendix

Appendix 1 Proportion of Female Married by Age, 1970-2000

Age	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
15-19	2.8	2.6	1.7	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.7
20-24	42.3	37.2	33.7	27.8	19.5	16.7	10.7
25-29	88.4	86.8	84.9	80.9	77.3	69.9	59.1
30-34	94.6	94.4	94.3	93.3	92.4	91.4	86.9
35-39	92.0	93.2	93.4	93.3	92.8	92.2	90.7
40-44	84.8	88.2	90.1	90.4	90.3	90.1	88.9
45-49	76.8	79.1	83.1	85.9	86.1	86.4	86.1

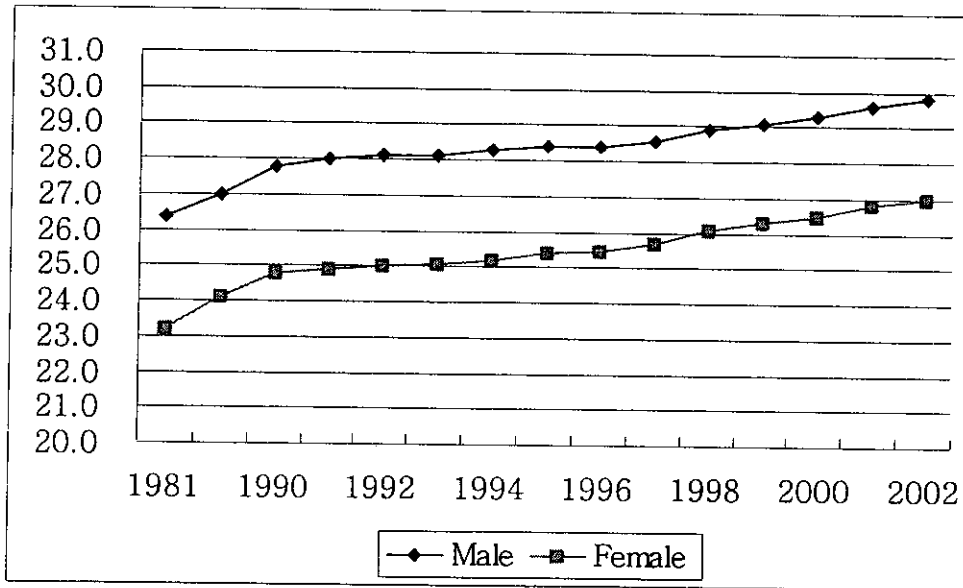
Appendix 2 Proportion of First Birth by Duration of Marriage in Korea, 1992-2001

Duration	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<2 Years	84.1	82.8	81.5	82.9	83.4	82.6	81.0	79.9	77.5	76.5
2-3	12.2	12.5	13.4	12.6	12.2	12.9	14.4	15.1	16.8	17.2
4-5	2.2	2.8	3.1	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.9	3.5	3.9
6-9	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.9
10+	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

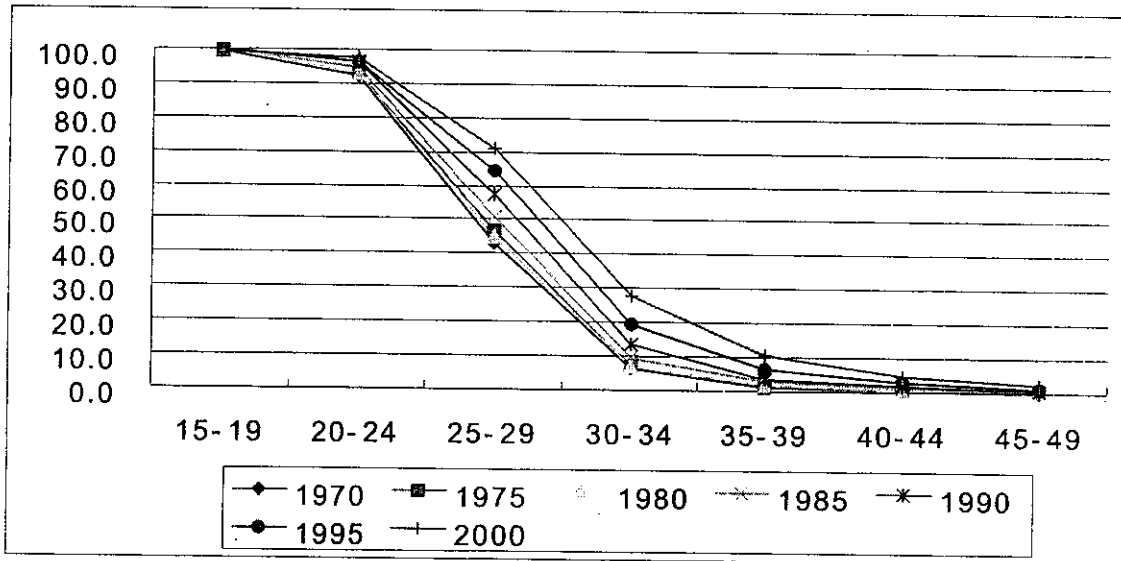
Appendix 3 Trends of Reasons of Divorce, 1992-2001

Reason	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Conflict between Couple	86.2	84.8	83.1	83.0	83.2	82.3	80.7	80.2	74.5	74.0
Economic Reasons	1.9	2.4	2.8	2.9	3.5	4.3	6.6	7.0	10.7	11.6
Health Problem	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.7
Others	10.6	11.6	13.0	13.1	12.3	12.4	11.8	11.9	13.9	13.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

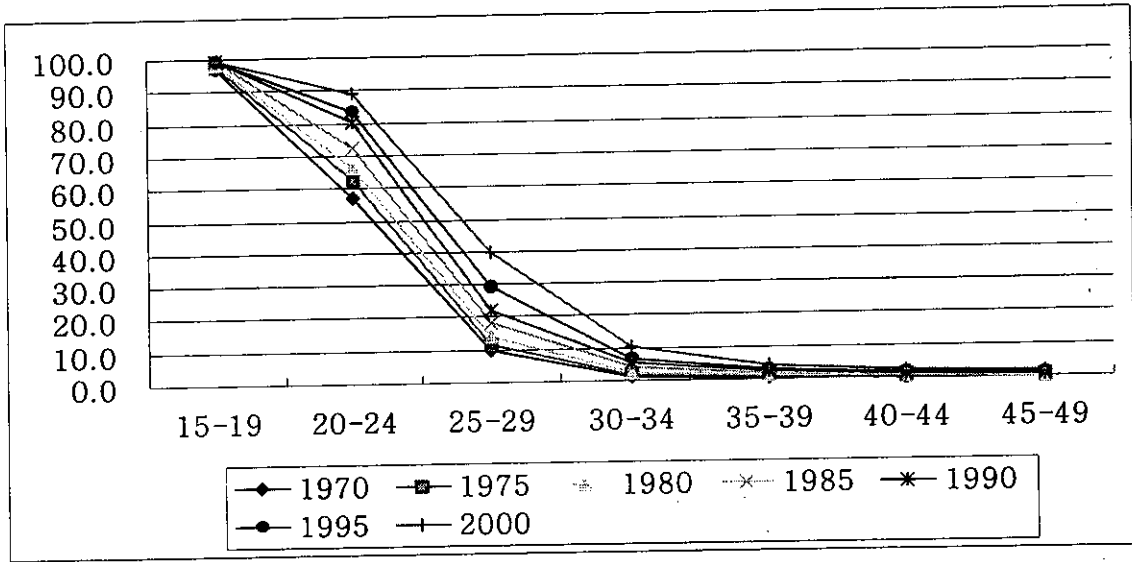
Appendix 4 Singulate Mean Age at Marriage, 1981-2002



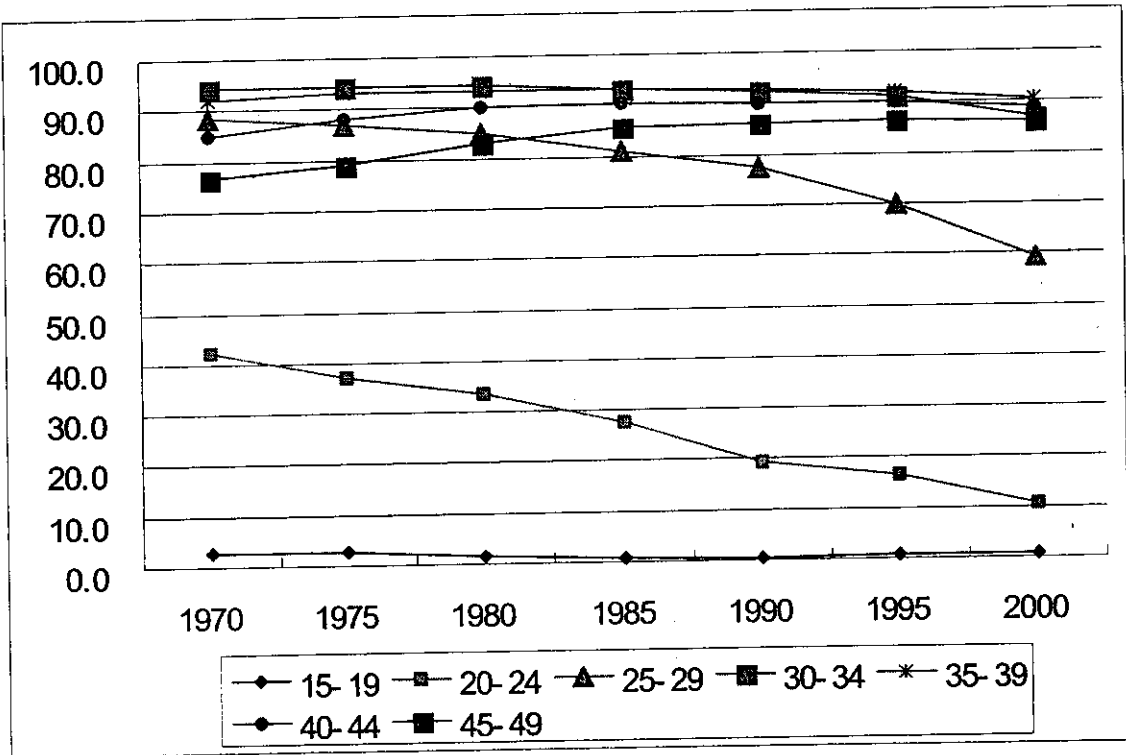
Appendix 5 Proportion of Single for Male by Age in Korea, 1970-2000



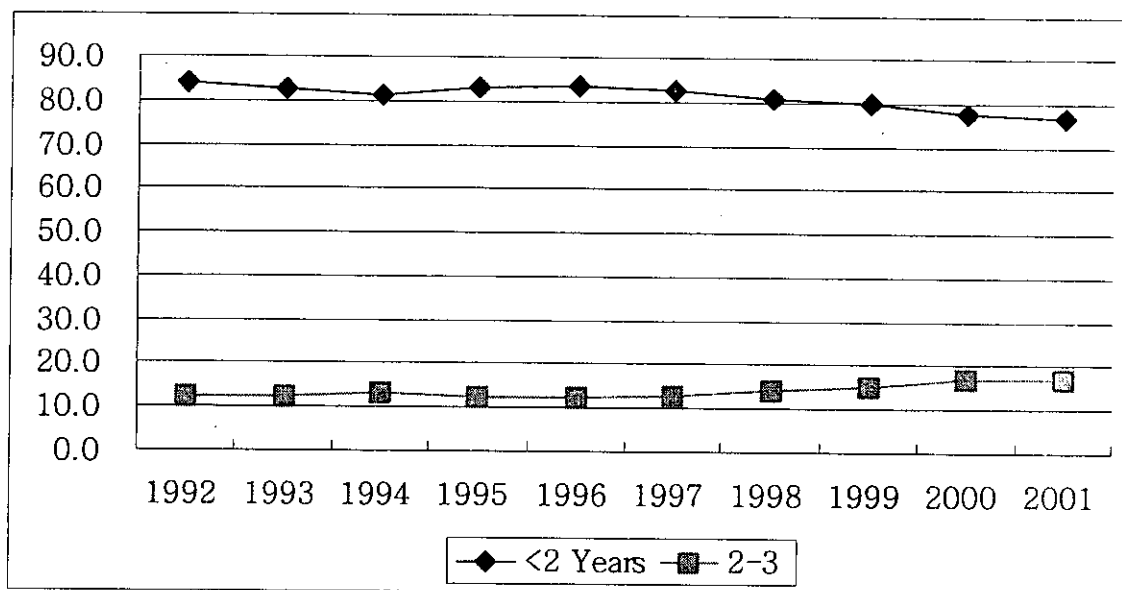
Appendix 6 Proportion of Single for Female by Age in Korea, 1970-2000



Appendix 7 Proportion of Female Married by Age, 1970-2000



Appendix 8 Proportion of First Birth by Duration of Marriage in Korea, 1992-2001



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**The State and Families in South Korea's *Compressed Fertility Transition*:
A Time for Policy Reversal?**

by

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1. Introduction: Compressed Industrialization, Family Life, and Fertility Change
2. Korean Families under *Accidental Pluralism* and *Functional Overloading*
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4. Trends of *Defamiliation*: Reduction, Exit, Deferral, Protest
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**The State and Families in South Korea's *Compressed Fertility Transition*:
A Time for Policy Reversal?**

Chang Kyung-Sup

1. Introduction: Compressed Industrialization, Family Life, and Fertility Change

South Korea is entering the 21st century amid a duly expected but still unaccustomed policy concern. South Koreans have intensely yearned for catching up with advanced western countries in economic terms. So far, such a pursuit has been impressively successful despite a recent national financial breakdown of 1997. However, their catching-up has been no less rapid in many non-economic aspects. In particular, the plummeting fertility rate has already made South Koreans a population less reproductive than many western countries. As bluntly shown in their total fertility rate of 1.30 in 2001 (*2001 Annual Report on Live Births and Death Statistics (Based on Vital Registration)*, p.13), the so-called fertility transition of the South Korean population has been so dramatic that it even dwarfs the famous (or infamous?) "induced" fertility transition in China (cf. Chang, 1990). Serious suggestions for a pro-natal social policy are being made and discussed in this society where many remnants of the family planning programs are still in effect. For the burdens of labor shortage and elderly support are predicted to become extremely heavy before too many years. Perhaps, the policy transition from fertility discouragement to fertility encouragement is likely to become another area in which South Koreans are to break the world record in terms of rapidity.

Such a drastic fertility decline, among many more indications of *defamiliation* (see Section 4 of this paper), is quite puzzling if one considers the tenaciously strong attachment of South Koreans to their families in social, economic, and even political life. Despite the explosively rapid economic

transformation and social change in recent several decades, the family-centeredness of South Koreans is known as an enduring trait. During the tumultuous processes of colonization, war, military rule, and industrialization, South Koreans could not turn to the state or communities for material, physical, and psychological protection. Instead, they have coped with various crisis situations, explored new opportunities, and maintained social identities only through familial support and cooperation. The familism of South Koreans, therefore, has been a crucial mechanism for managing rapid social and economic change. Then, why holding back familial procreation so drastically?

In this paper, I will show that the very family-centeredness of South Koreans has been responsible for their internationally unparalleled fertility decline. It is true that there exist many 'usual' factors for fertility decline in South Korea. For instance, the extremely rapid industrialization has drawn rural population to urban factories, offices, shops, and schools, and thereby transformed them into modern proletarian or semi-proletarian classes whose family situation, according to John Caldwell (1982), makes high fertility an irrational option. The speed of urbanization (and, concomitantly, proletarianization) is yet another area in which South Koreans have surpassed all other nations (see Table 1). Besides, the improvement in the educational level and quality of population has been no less drastic. In particular, women's high education has inevitably made their fertility, and sometimes even their marriage, a serious personal sacrifice. These usual factors alone, however, cannot explain South Koreans' plummeting fertility. Nor can equally rapid or serious changes in other family-related aspects of life be explained by them. Divorce, separation, runaway, late marriage, and single life are increasing, all at alarming rates. These are, like shrinking fertility, symptoms of the overburdening of family relations and responsibilities.

The family-centered life of South Koreans does not necessarily presuppose a certain line of common family ideology. On the contrary, as a result of explosively rapid social and economic

transformations and overwhelming western influences (Chang, 1999), the values and norms of South Koreans about family life and relationship are more diverse and complex than those of most other nations. South Koreans have been almost simultaneously exposed to Confucian familism, instrumental familism, affectionate familism, and individualistic familism. Different generations, regions, genders, and educational backgrounds have been responsible for different degrees of accommodation to each of these family ideologies. Consequently, not only the entire society but also each family has to confront, on the one hand, the psychological tension and conflict caused by the maladjustment among contradictory family ideologies and, on the other hand, the functional burden ensuing from the diverse familial roles and responsibilities prescribed in such multiple ideologies.

It seems that the South Korean government, which is considered one of the successful implementers of family planning, has rather exacerbated the psychological and functional difficulties of families. It has been a loud advocate of familism, however, in various contradictory ways. On surface, the successive administrations tried to preserve the Confucian nature of families so that they could rely on familial functions and duties in social support and political control. In reality, however, the ideological and functional demands of the state on private families directly reflected and then reinforced the plural family ideologies of Confucian, instrument, affectionate, and individualist familism. Nevertheless, there has been one coherent feature of the family policy of the state. It has always encouraged private families to fulfill all the functional burdens of feeding, protecting, educating, disciplining, consoling, supporting, and even nursing its citizens without demanding state assistances. This way has fertility decline, along with other tendencies of defamiliation, been facilitated apart from the direct effect of family planning programs. Now, as a population policy turnaround is seriously discussed, any of its prospective pro-natal policies is not likely to become terribly affective unless the multi-faceted and protracted functional dependence of the state on private families is reconsidered.

2. Korean Families under *Accidental Pluralism* and *Functional Overloading*

The existence of diverse family ideologies in a family does not necessarily constitute a social problem. It could rather serve a valuable resource for producing lively family culture. However, the emergence of the diverse family ideologies in South Korean society has been an accidental outcome of rapid macro social, cultural, and economic changes. Thus, the family ideologies of South Koreans reflect a sort of *accidental pluralism*. Originally, pluralism is a political philosophy of Western democracy for pursuing a progressive coexistence of different or competing social elements on the basis of mutual tolerance and recognition. The diverse family ideologies of South Koreans are not based upon pluralism as a progressive principle of social and familial integration. Their diversity in family ideology is the result of individual experiences of a long and abrupt series of historical incidents and social transformations including colonial rule, war, Westernization, industrialization, urbanization, commercialization, informatization as well as traditional revival. Although some of these processes have been voluntarily pursued, the overall nature of the ideological transformation of South Korean families is far from harmonious or stable.¹

In the following, let me briefly explain the characteristics and backgrounds of each family ideology and the functions and responsibilities it attaches to families.² The kernel of Confucian familism consists of the modern inheritance of the traditional family values and norms of the Chosun

¹ Besides the explosive and complex social changes, the rapid lengthening of life expectancy has facilitated the plurality of family ideologies. That is, the family ideologies emphasized by old generations, such as Confucian familism and instrumental familism, have extended social life spans thanks to the impressive expansion of old age (Chang, 2001b). Simultaneously, affectionate familism and individualistic familism have rapidly spread among middle agers and youth, so that South Korea has become an arena for the coexistence of family ideologies of traditional, modern, Asian, and Western origins.

² This part of the paper is summarized from my earlier article, "Compressed Modernity and Korean Family: Accidental Pluralism in Family Ideology" (*Journal of Asian-Pacific Studies*, September 2001, pp.31-39).

era (Choe, 1991). This family ideology, centered on the moral hierarchy and support relationship between different genders and generations, still exerts the most dominant influence in cotemporary South Korea. Despite various significant symptoms of weakening and deterioration, its influence on the relationship between parents and children and between husband and wife is critical.

There are two historical factors that make the influence of Confucian familism pervasive but problematic: first, Confucianism, including its family ideology, was a limited class phenomenon monopolized by *yangban* aristocracy and, second, its modern sustenance has not been in par with the nature of macro social change. As the Confucian family rituals and relationships required heavy cultural and material resources unbearable for ordinary and lowly classes, it enabled learned and landed aristocracy to legitimate their morally coated class domination. Interestingly, Confucian familism was universalized society-wide after the traditional class system was dissolved in the nineteenth century. This trend reflected the aspiration of previously ordinary and lowly people for assimilating the exclusive class culture of their old day masters (Kim, 2001). Besides, after colonial devastation and war, Confucianism was utilized in promoting social integration and stability on the basis of familial unity. As the state and local communities were in disarray due to repeated political and military conflicts, private families were entrusted with full responsibility for protecting and controlling individuals.

Instrumental familism is a sort of life philosophy that has evolved out of various family-reliant survival strategies of South Koreans in the turbulent twentieth century. As the dissolution of the traditional order, the successive colonial rule by Japan and the United States, and the Korean War destructed stable state governance and communal order, South Koreans had to turn to their families alone for personal protection and social achievement (Chang, 1997b). Even after the initiation of full-fledged industrialization, South Koreans have developed and managed their industrial system in a

family-reliant manner. For instance, the formation of educated and skilled labor force has been possible not because of active governmental and corporate investment in human capital but because of ordinary citizens' excessive zeal in their own and their childrens' education. A majority of the widespread small-scale commercial and industrial operations are family-funded and/or family-staffed ventures. *Chaebol*, the largest business organizations, are also family-controlled both in ownership and management (Cho, 1991).

South Koreans have mobilized their family resources and kin networks for their social advancement, material achievement, and even political success. A good family is one that can meet such social, economic, or political needs of its members. That is, they came to develop an ideology that the family has to function as an instrument for its members' social competition for status, wealth, and power. If a family fails to serve that purpose, it becomes an embarrassing evidence of inferiority. As an inevitable cost of instrumental familism, many South Korean families tend to sacrifice normal domestic life for the sake of their members' success and achievement in society. As family relationship is confirmed not through harmonious and gentle domestic interaction but through strategic support for social competition, home has been reduced to an empty shell. On the other hand, the mobilization of family resources and kin networks often infringes upon fair social, economic, and political order by nurturing corruption, speculation, and collusion in various areas of society (Chang, 1997c).

Affectionate familism was originally established as the psychological protective function of the family was emphasized in the process of capitalist industrialization in the Western countries (Shorter, 1975). The emergence of large-scale industrial capitalism in which production was fulfilled in big factories and management in big offices resulted in the economic and social demise of many bourgeois entrepreneurs who used to depend on familial economic organizations. This trend triggered social effort for reestablishing the family as an arena for emotional protection of people (Zaretsky, 1973). They

began to expect the family to provide psychological buffers against rampant suppression, exploitation, and alienation in industrial society. Women were supposed to harbor the emotional integrity of the family. Afterwards, the prohibition of child labor and the protection of maternity made children and women stay home, and the improved income level of male proletarian breadwinners stabilized the material condition of domestic life. These trends facilitated the spread of affectionate familism as a family culture of middle class proletariat.

In South Korea, rapid industrialization and economic growth allowed a speedy expansion of middle class workers who accepted affectionate familism as a main family ideology. Also, as most of the highly educated women remained home after marriage, they were exposed and accustomed to Western affectionate familism disseminated by mass media. When affectionate familism is compared with Confucian familism, the former concurs with the latter on its emphasis on women's domestic status and homemaker role but differs from the latter on its emphasis on the emotional union between parents and unmarried children excluding elderly grandparents. When affectionate familism is compared with instrumental familism, the former differs from the latter on its emphasis on the quality of domestic life as the core standard of a good family. These differences of affectionate familism from Confucian and instrumental familism often lead to intergenerational and spousal conflict.

Individualistic familism in South Korea is hinged upon two social trends, namely, social democratization nurturing the development of individuality in regards to women and youth and commercialization of domestic life amid the rapid expansion of consumer capitalism. While individualist familism was initiated in the West, it has spread rapidly into South Korean society under the compressed processes of economic growth, democratization, Westernization, and even economic and cultural globalization.

Both in the West and in South Korea, the status of women has fundamentally altered due to the intense feminist critique of women's role in the nuclear family of middle class as emotional protector and provider and also the increased participation of women in labor markets under constant economic restructuring and destabilization of family income sources (Chang, 1998). Under these circumstances developed a growing awareness of the need for gender-equitable role and status arrangements both at home and in society. Furthermore, more and more women consider marriage merely one of the compromisable options in life, and postpone it very late or even avoid it altogether.

On the other hand, modern families and homes have become the target of unlimited attack by commercial capital as individual taste and preference are touted as for every familial matter -- from wedding to daily life. Money does it all for commercialized home life as it can purchase various electronic equipments, home video movie, instant meal, and even delivery party cuisine. This deterioration of family culture has a particularly spoiling effect on youth, who are often described by mass media and academia as an asocial and unspiritual new generation indulged in commercial consumption (Ju, 1994). For many of them, the utility of the family consists mainly in the provision of commercial goods or money for purchasing them. Since even the adult generation is increasingly immersed in commercialized daily life, they cannot exercise strict moral pressure on the similar attitude of youth.

3. The Functions and Dysfunctions of the State

The South Korean state, despite its proud success in family planning, has rather exacerbated the psychological and functional difficulties of families. Many administrators and politicians have loudly advocated familism, however, in various contradictory ways. In general, most administrations officially attempted to preserve the Confucian nature of South Korean families so as to utilize familial functions

and duties for the social support and political control of population (Chang, 1997a). However, actual state policies have been fairly complex and inconsistent. The ideological and functional demands of the state on private families directly reflected and then reinforced the plural family ideologies of Confucian, instrument, affectionate, and individualist familism.

Here are some examples. The state has adopted a (non-)welfare policy on the basis of Confucian family support norms; its educational and economic policies have demanded that instrumentalist private families would mobilize most of the financial and human resources required for the formation of the so-called human capital; its labor policy has incorporated a largely western view of the modern affectionate family in which breadwinning man and housewife occupy "separate spheres"; it advanced a new affectionate value in children as a family planning policy; its recent consumption and media policies are extolling youth, not to mention women, as independent cultural consumer; it is currently trying to practice a sort of "state feminism" by assisting and cooperating with various feminist movements for rescuing the individuality of women. It is interesting that all these directly and indirectly family-related policies have been devised and implemented without an overarching policy framework or coordinating organizational body.

Nevertheless, there exists one coherent feature of these family-related policies. The South Korean state has never stopped encouraging and sometimes forcing private families to fulfill all the functional burdens of feeding, protecting, educating, disciplining, consoling, supporting, and even nursing its citizens in its behalf. It is in this way that the state can afford to excessively skimp on social policy expenses while spending lavishly on economic and military projects (Table 2). All in all, the state has helped intensify the functional overloading of private families, and thereby accelerated fertility decline, among other tendencies of defamiliation, apart from the direct effect of family planning programs. Now, as the necessity for policy turnabout is seriously discussed concerning population, its prospective pro-

natal policies will critically require a reconsideration of the multi-faceted and protracted functional dependence of the state on private families.

4. Trends of *Defamiliation*: Reduction, Exit, Deferral, Protest

As South Koreans have accidentally stumbled into many dissimilar family ideologies, their everyday life is beset by the complex, often mutually contradictory roles and responsibilities prescribed in such ideologies. Besides, the disharmony and contradiction among the diverse family ideologies impose various psychological difficulties on the family life and relationship of South Koreans on top of the burdens and pains each of the family ideologies causes separately. The state, with its loud but inconsistent advocacy of familism, has rather exacerbated the psychological and functional difficulties of families. While using private families as core instrument for various social policies, no administration has seriously tried to share the heavy material, not to mention psychological, burdens of them. Stress and fatigue are inevitably endemic in the family life of almost all South Koreans, so that various efforts to *protect themselves from family burdens* constitute a visible tendency of *defamiliation*. The plummeting fertility is not the only serious symptom of defamiliation, but a host of other symptoms, such as divorce, separation, runaway, late marriage, and single life, are also increasing in alarming degrees.

First, a renewed process of fertility decline has been observed since the 1990s. After marking one of the most dramatic fertility transitions in human history between the mid 1960s and the early 1980s, South Koreans' fertility came to be stabilized from the mid 1980s and even recovered slightly in the early 1990s. Perhaps, the favorable economic conditions in these years may have allowed them to afford more children. However, another round of sustained fertility decline has taken place thereafter (see Table 3). As the industrialization and concomitant urbanization of South Korea had largely

matured by then, the proletarianization thesis does not provide a sufficient explanation for it. This trend has been the most salient among women in their twentieth. Whether hesitating to marry, postponing childbearing or even planning a marriage without children, young women (and young men) have become more and more timid about the burden of family construction and maintenance as intensified by diverse family ideologies and responsibilities.

South Koreans' breathtakingly fast fertility transition has a severely skewed shape along the gender line. Adapting to the proletarian life conditions of modern industries and cities, South Koreans unhesitatingly gave up the traditional high fertility norm, but not shedding timeworn son preference. On the contrary, they shrewdly noticed – and even colluded for – the patriarchal structure of capitalist industry and authoritarian politics, and did their best to ensure the birth of at least one son. As the likelihood of having at least one son seriously decreased due to the self-induced limitation of fertility, the gender detection and abortion of female fetuses became rampant. The medical profession found lucrative business in this social trend, whereas the state lacked a serious will to penalize either doctors or people for the illegal, not to mention immoral, practices. Thereby developed a population with one of the most distorted sex structures in the world. As shown in Table 4, such *strategic* procreation behavior has been kept by Confucian and instrumentalist South Koreans well into the 1990s.

The intense attempt to downsize family organization has been made upward as well. The traditional norm of serving cohabiting old parents (and parents-in-law) has become either practically infeasible or personally unacceptable for most young married couples. In fact, a clear majority of the middle-aged and even older parents themselves would not hope to live together with married children in their old age (Choi, 1992). As a general social norm, an overwhelming majority of South Koreans, including young ones, regard old-age support as a filial duty. But their individual fulfillment of filial piety is quite another thing. Trying to remain sympathetic about children's extremely burdensome

situations in own family life, their parents would not blame too much for not providing the same kind of filial service as had been provided by themselves in the past.

Even after trying hard to minimize the burdens of bearing and rearing children and serving elder parents, more and more contemporary South Koreans still remain uneasy about their marriage. Divorce, besides separation and runaway, has been on the increase among all age groups. In particular, young couples in rapidly increasing numbers would not mind terminating their marriages within an extremely short time, whereas old people consider *hwanghonihon* (dusk divorce) in gradually increasing numbers. Most of these relatively new types of divorces tend to be caused by “personality factors” as well as by “broken commitments”. These tendencies turned noticeably strong since the mid 1990s. If the rapidly increasing cases of divorces are juxtaposed with the decreasing numbers of marriages (see Table 5), South Koreans’ move away from family organization does seem quite serious. The Confucian stigmatization of divorcees seems to fall short of intimidating numerous apparently individualist and/or affectionist South Koreans away from marriage-breaking.

Proportional to the increase of marriage-breaking is the increase of marriage deferral, in particular, among women. The disheartening stories of family burdens, conflicts, and dissolutions seem to induce more and more women hesitant about marriage, in particular when they acquire a more than sufficient economic capacity for self-support mainly thanks to the expansion of service industries. Their high educational levels enable them to undertake whatever jobs newly created if arbitrary barriers of gender discrimination are checked. A new term, *bihonyeoseong* (non-marrying women), has been coined to describe the single women for whom marriage is just a matter of personal choice (Wu, 2001). To them, *mihonyeoseong* (unmarried, or yet-to-marry, women) is a personally insulting and socially incorrect misnomer. Most of these women do not detest marriage or family, but their marriage, if at all, must be personally gratifying.

It should be pointed out that, before embarking upon various acts of defamiliation, most South Koreans earnestly endeavor to explain their difficulties and pains and voice their complaints, however, only to privately related ones. They rarely bring or disclose the troubles out of family and kin organizations. Inside the family and kin organizations, unfortunately, rarely exists a sufficiently liberal atmosphere for democratic discussion and understanding. As a consequence, so many families are plagued by psychological distress, emotional abuse, and even physical violence. Domestic violence has become a major target for public monitoring, policing, and penalizing (Korea Criminal Policy Institute, 1992). Needless to say, family violence easily results in separation, runaway, and divorce.

In the same milieu, South Koreans are not quite accustomed to making a social issue of their familial burdens and distresses. Their preoccupation with family matters tends to prevent them from realizing and demanding the political responsibilities of the state to feed, protect, educate, support, and nurse its citizens in terms of "citizenship rights" (cf. Marshall, 1964). Nor can conservative bureaucrats and incompetent politicians devise a serious welfare state scheme in order to relieve the functionally and emotionally overburdened families. Still indignant about the irresponsible political situation and disturbing social atmosphere, many young and middle-aged South Koreans have instead opted to relocate their families to more family-friendly societies such as Canada and New Zealand (Chang, 2002). Although many of the immigrants still lead fairly family-centered life and experience similar functional burdens in their destinations, they want to voice a clear message of protest against the troublesome situations of family life induced by the inconsiderate state and society by leaving them behind.

5. Prospect: A Time for Policy Reversal?

The remarkable improvement in South Koreans' material life conditions and their plummeting fertility, both the direct consequences of the rapid industrialization of South Korea, triggered another

swift social transformation, i.e., population aging. By all indications, the South Korean population is aging at a speed unparalleled by other aging human populations. Another expression of population aging, of course, is the shrinking of population in “productive ages”. As younger population in decreasing numbers have to provide for older population in increasing numbers, the social and economic burden of population aging is going to get heavier and heavier. Although population aging has never been a matter of arbitrary social or political choice in any country, many governments are trying to slow down the process by encouraging fertility recovery. In South Korea where many remnants of the family planning programs are still in effect, serious suggestions for a pro-natal social policy are now being made and discussed. It is quite likely that the policy transition from fertility control to fertility promotion will become another area in which South Korea is to record the highest rapidity.

By 2030, as shown in Table 7, the age structure of the productive population in South Korea is going to change such that those aged fifty years or higher will account for one third of the working-age people with their absolute number almost doubling for the preceding three decades. By contrast, young people aged fifteen to twenty-five will gradually decrease both their proportion and number. More serious is that those aged twenty-five to forty-nine, the core working age group, will significantly shrink in their proportion and number, threatening the main manpower basis of the South Korean economy. It is quite clear that the human resources of old workers should be tapped in more active and creative ways. If such prospective shortage of the main manpower is to be shunned, fertility recovery is needed right now.

The rapid extension of South Koreans’ life expectancy has taken place almost simultaneously with their fertility transition. It took less than thirty years for South Korean women to extend their life expectancy by more than twenty years (see Table 8). The trend was a little less dramatic for men, but

they also enjoyed a remarkable elongation of life. During the same period, the Japanese population also went through a sustained process of life extension, but their leads over South Korean women and men decreased gradually. The sustained lengthening of life and plummeting fertility have inevitably magnified the dependency ratio between working-age population and retired population (see Table 9). After marking the ten percent level in the first year of the twenty-first century, its rise will be accelerated further and further so as to become almost thirty percent in three decades. By contrast, the youth dependency ratio is going to decline, though at decelerating rates, so as to match the elderly dependency ratio somewhere between 2020 and 2030.

The well-known reluctance of the South Korean state to provide social welfare requires its people to deal with old age primarily as a family matter. In this context, filial piety became a political virtue. However, the shrinking fertility and gender imbalances (i.e., too many boys for girls in schools, marriage markets, etc.) tend to critically destabilize the basic conditions for the family-supported old age, in particular, among rural and poor classes. Even among better-off classes, a prolonged parenthood for sheltering even adult children against unstable economic situations is often responsible for the delay or failure in the financial and emotional preparation for independent old age. For both poor and fortunate classes, neither their one or two sons nor their daughters-in-law are very likely to understand the genuine filial piety as was practiced by parents, grandparents, etc. Therefore, fertility recovery is not going to be an effective solution to old-age support at the private level although it is going to strengthen the economic basis of the nation and thus allow the state to prepare better social security measures.

At this point, it is not very clear whether South Korea must or will establish a major pro-natal social policy regime. The problems of population aging and labor shortage in South Korea will be as remarkable as the earlier fertility decline and other symptoms of defamiliation. But fertility recovery alone, while even this does not appear quite feasible, is not going to solve the matters significantly. The