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Marriage Mismatches: The marriage decline and restrictions to alternatives in South-Korea

Vos, Anna

Citation

Vos, A. (2022). *Marriage Mismatches: The marriage decline and restrictions to alternatives in South-Korea*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



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Marriage Mismatches: The marriage decline and
restrictions to alternatives in South-Korea

In partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts

Faculty of Humanities

Asian Studies (MA), specialization History, Arts and Cultures of Asia

Leiden, July 1st, 2022

Word count: 12216

Author:
A.L. (Anna) Vos
(S1996983)

Supervisor:
Dr. E (Elmer) Veldkamp

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Introduction

Marriage, and aspirations towards marriage have been drastically changing in South-Korea (hereafter Korea). While in most of its history it was a given that most individuals would marry, current numbers on marriage show a different reality. Many Koreans are postponing marriage or abstaining from it all together. In addition to the marriage decline, less and less children are born, and fertility rates have dropped to worrying numbers. Over the last 20 years marriage rates have decreased by 43% and birth rates by 64% within Seoul (Park, 2021). Postponement of marriage, hence age of marriage, has also risen substantially. While in 2000 age at first marriage was 29.28 for men, and 26.49 for women, in 2021, this has gone up to 33.4 for men and 31.08 for women within Korea (Statista, 2022). In addition, the fertility rate has dropped to a meagre 0,81, which shows a substantial difference with the year 2000, in which it was 1,48 (Yonhap, 2022).

It has been noted that especially amongst women perspectives on marriage have changed, as more Korean women are no longer seeing it is a necessity (Chang & Lee, 2006; Raymo & Park, 2020). This shift among Korea's female population has often been brought into connection with the rising of feminism in the country. More and more women are refraining from marriage, motherhood and family life. The state of gender inequality, high prices of housing and having children and an overall dissatisfaction with the expectations of a 'wife' are at the core of this abstinence. Hence, are alternatives to traditional marriage arising? Some women no longer want to commit themselves to one partner forever or do not have a strong interest in becoming a parent. However, within the current framework of society, many women are forced to choose: dedication to motherhood and family life or individual freedom with better career prospects. This thesis aims to answer the question: Do we see alternatives arising among young Korean women as traditional marriage does not make sense anymore in the current zeitgeist? This research question will be further substantiated by three sub questions. First, how have conceptions of gender and marriage in Korean history influenced women's outlook on marriage? This question wants to uncover how the marriage ideals have changed and shifted throughout time and how they still influence expectations of marriage today. Secondly, what do current statistics and research tells us about the state of marriage in current-day South Korea? To further understand why so many women are refraining from marriage, motherhood and family life now. Lastly, do we see alternatives of traditional marriage arising amongst young South-Korean women?

A better understanding on the current marriage trends in Korea can be cultivated through studying the ever-changing conceptions surrounding marriage and family life. This research will be substantiated by literature research on marriage trends in Korea and through interviews with young Korean women on the topic of marriage and family life. I have chosen this method of data gathering, as I found the individual experience of young women in Korea most valuable in observing how they view marriage. My choice to only interview Korean women, was motivated by prior research which had shown that their ideas and perspectives surrounding marriage had changed more in comparison to their male counterparts (Chang & Lee, 2006). I selected Korean women between the age category from 20 to 32. Based on ongoing surveys deducted from 1990 to 2021 the median age at which Korean females get married is 31.8 (Statista, 2022). Thus, I selected this age category as I was curious about perceptions of those not married yet, but old enough to start thinking about such topics. I paid mind to their sexual orientation as I wanted to focus on the interrelation between a man and women in the context of marriage, and therefore opted for participants identifying as heterosexual (or bisexual). My participants relationship status was important to ascertain none were already married, but also to make sure I had a good balance between women who were single and in a relationship, as I felt that might influence their perception on marriage.

I have conducted a variety of interviews in different formats. Six in-depth interviews were performed on the topics of gender, romantic love and marriage. These interviews were conducted during my exchange in Seoul in 2019. All interviews were conducted physically, and the interview guide can be found in Appendix 1. In Table 1 those who participated are listed.

Name	Age	Sexual Orientation	Relationship status
Ora	20	Heterosexual	In a relationship
Nabi	20	Heterosexual	Single
Chija	21	Heterosexual	Single
Yuna	22	Bisexual	Single
Hae Eun	24	Heterosexual	In a relationship
Seong	26	Pansexual	Single

Table 1: Participants in-depth interviews

In addition, a survey with both closed and open endings was conducted by 10 participants. The survey was divided into the subgenres Perspectives on Marriage, Marriage Alternatives, Division of Task and Family Life, Future of Marriage. This survey had a dual aim of reconfirming prior research and finding novel insights. The section of Perspectives on Marriage reconfirmed findings such as the desire to marry later and familial pressure on marriage. The following sections on Marriage Alternatives, Division of Task and Future of Marriage wanted to seek out in what ways young women want to give shape to their future marriage or long-term partnerships. Some of the participants are acquaintances I made during my exchange in South-Korea, other I have acquired through snowball sampling, and Korean Facebook groups. In Table 1 all those who participated are listed. The full survey can be found in Appendix 2.

Name	Age	Sexual orientation	Relationship status
Seyong	22	Heterosexual	In a relationship
Mee	23	Heterosexual	Single
Jang-mi	23	Heterosexual	Single
Yuna	24	Bisexual	Single
Jieun	25	Heterosexual	Single
Hyejin	26	Heterosexual	Single
Soomin	27	Heterosexual	In a relationship
Jinah	28	Heterosexual	In a relationship
Ji	28	Heterosexual	In a relationship
Ye-rin	29	Heterosexual	In a relationship

Table 2: Participants survey

Participants in my research have been given pseudonyms for their privacy and protection. It is also important to note that Yuna participated in both the in-depth interviews and the survey, and hence is referenced with age 22, for the in-depth interview, and 24, for the survey.

By putting my collected quantitative and qualitative data in connection to the topical research and statistics I aimed at creating a more wholesome pictures of current trends and new alternatives on the topic marriage.

The further structure of this thesis will be as follows: a conceptualisation of marriage both as institution and within Korea will be described in ‘Conceptualisation of marriage’ chapter. The following chapter Changing Ideals will describe how marriage ideals for women have transformed throughout the wake of time. The transformative nature of the institution will be captured at different stops in history. Our first stop is Confucian Korea (1932-1910), followed by the industrialization (1960-1990) and thereafter in media within post-industrialist society (1990-2022). This chapter looks at how conceptions of gender and marriage have changed in light of socio-historical processes. I aim to show that the ideals of such different times have done much in the shaping of individuals expectations of marriage life, but that these often are in disconnect with contemporary times. The following chapter, Current Realities, dives further into what the marriage landscape looks like now. A reflection on statistics and marriage trends from the 21st century will be presented alongside perceptions of young Korean women on the topic of marriage. What does marriage look like in Korea nowadays, and how do young Korean women view marriage? Lastly, the chapter Limited Alternatives will uncover that as our current realities have called for a change of traditional marriage, if there is room for a change to occur. The possibilities and limitations to alternatives and the future of marriage in Korea will be described in this chapter. In my conclusion, I will bring my research to a close and in my limitations will critically reflect upon the research process.

Conceptualisation of marriage

In order to better understand marriage realities in South-Korea, it is important to take a closer look at the function and concept of marriage. Marriage will be discussed and analysed through an anthropological viewpoint. Thereafter, marriage within the Korean context will be more explicitly discussed.

Marriage and kinship have played a prominent role in many societies worldwide and hence fulfil a multitude of social, cultural and biological functions. Marriage has traditionally been a state in which one has (rightful) access to certain biological desires such as sex and reproduction (Bell, 1997). In other words, marriage functioned as formal threshold for procreation. In addition, marriage has been remarked as a way to form alliance and increase economic security. Through marriage and reproduction two kin groups become interconnected and form a stronger economic unit through their shared resources. These functions of marriage as a rightful place for biological desires and as a way to ensure

economic security aid in an individual's survival. But the institution also goes beyond the individual level and influences much of social life and the structure of a society as a whole.

In anthropological inquiry, marriage and kinship was seen as central in social organization and was therefore key in understanding the inner workings of a culture. But whilst earlier anthropological research saw the separation of marriage and kinship from other aspects of society, Riviere (1971) suggested that marriage 'should not be seen as an isolable relationship but as one aspect of the totality of roles of male and female and as particular consequence of the relationship between these two categories in any given society.' (Riviere, 1971 in Holy, 1996, p. 4). Hence, within the late 20th century, kinship and marriage were more often discussed alongside issues of gender, inequality and the social construction of the self (Holy, 1996). This perspective on marriage sees kinship and gender as mutually constructive: gender roles shape marriage, and marriage shapes gender roles. But as at the categories 'male' and 'female' are variously defined within different societies, the marriage institution is also much depended on the culturally specific gender ideologies. Hence, the inclusion of gender in the study of kinship and marriage is able to better grasp the influence of the institution within the broader society (Kendall, 1996; Molony, Theiss & Choi, 2018).

In South-Korea marriage has always been an important institution. During the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) marriage and family was central in social life and kinship was emphasized as an important contributor to social harmony (Kim, 1993). The union between men and women was even seen as an imperative for the proper functioning of human order (Deuchler, 1977). Women during such times were raised as future wives, mother and daughters-in-law, and were restricted to the domestic sphere (*yin*). Men on the other hand roamed free in the public sphere (*yang*). Patriarchal Confucianism, which was the state ideology at the time, created this strict gender differentiation. However, as Korea underwent a dramatic economic transformation from the 1960s onwards, more women were able to get educated and join the workforce. As industrialization brought on more educational attainment and work prospects for women, gender roles within marriage and family life changed tremendously (Kim, 1992; Kim & Park, 2007). In the latter 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the 'market mismatch' is seen as a result of such changes, as highly educated women seek men of the same education level (or higher), hence many low-educated are not seen as eligible partners. In addition, the high cost of living and having children, the avoidance of family obligations or resistance against oppressive patriarchal structures are also brought into connection with this decline of marriage. (Kendall, 1996; Tai-Hwan, 2007; Raymo & Park, 2015; Cho & LoCascio, 2018; Raymo & Park 2020; Lee, Klein, Wohar & Kim, 2021). A

recurring theme in this research is the that gendered expectations seem to have frozen, and therefore are not reflecting or adapting to contemporary problems. These normative expectations and standards, and how they have shifted and changed in Korean society will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 1 Changing Ideals

In this chapter I want to further describe how conceptions of gender and marriage have changed in light of historical and socio-economic processes, by looking at ideals for marriage ideals for women at certain points in history. First during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), then during industrialization (1960-1990) and thereafter in post-industrialist society (1990-2022), with an explicit focus on portrayals of love and marriage in media. The insights into the changing marriage ideals for women can grant insights into what is still, either implicitly or explicitly, expected today of women as wives. In addition, the collected data from my interviews and surveys, will reconfirm the historical expectations presented in each subchapter.

Confucian ideals

Gender relations and marriage practices have changed much in the last century. The government of the Joseon dynasty which ended in the earliest 20th century held on to Neo-Confucian values (Kim, 1986). Whilst Confucian was already present within Korea prior, it functioned more as a broad philosophy rather than an all-dominant paradigm. In the Joseon era the conservativeness of Confucian values intensified. Women and men were regarded as *yin* (female) and *yang* (male), in which yin was subordinated to yang, which crystallized in the idea that women were meant for the domestic arena whilst men dominated the public domain. The Confucian ideal of filial piety (*hyodo*), meaning one's obedience and allegiance to your parents, was a virtue expected from both son and daughter. However, obedience for women was not only expected in their relationship to their parents. Women were also subjected to The Three Obediences, which entailed obedience to your father before marriage, to your husband during marriage and to your son in widowhood. (Molony, Theiss & Choi, 2018). On top of these expectations, their sexuality was extremely regulated, as they were required to be 'pure and chaste women'. During this time marriages as such had little to do with love or affection; matters of family, money and status were of much more importance. The arranged marriage (*jungmaegyeolhon*) hence was the standard practice to select a suitable partner based on the above-mentioned categories. In much of these practices the husband and

wife in question did not have the ability to get to know each other and often met for the first time during their wedding ceremony (Molony, Theiss & Choi, 2018). In this ideal, a woman would show herself a good daughter and wife by completely embracing her position as obedient and faithful to her husband and any other male counterpart who was deemed her superior. A woman's quality of life was hence solely dependent on the mercy of the man she would marry.

Some research assumes that Korea is still heavily bound by these old traditional values, an assumption which is often critiqued. As Kendall rightfully (1996) poses; 'In so much popular writing on Korea that word has become a reductionist black box that explains all things from economic success to failed democracy' (Kendal, 1997, p.10). Sancho (2020) similarly argues the use of Confucianism as a catch-all word and furthermore that it is 'often summoned to account for diverse and sometimes totally antagonistic standpoints on modern Korean history and society' (p.1). If such an ethnocentric assumption would be true, we could also posit that all European countries who have declared themselves as secular are secretly still ruled by orthodox Christian norms and values in all segments of their social life. Thus, this research aims to represent Korea's Confucian time as a factor which still holds influence throughout its trajectory of time, but not one which still dictates all aspects of society. Recent developments have had far more influence on the transformation on the social conceptions which will be discussed in this research. Through means of this acknowledgment, we can decrease practices of mystification and 'othering' of Korea, while still recognizing some of its remnants.

Transformative ideals

Moving up the ladder of time, we observe how Korea undergoes a tremendous transformation from the 1960s onwards. Korea had broken free from the Japanese occupation and a new leader took its place. The Park Chung Hee military regime had made it its core objective for Korea to become a self-sufficient national economy through mainly promoting export-oriented industrialization (Kim & Park, 2007). The governmental body invested enormous amounts of money mostly into manufacturing companies in Korea, and thus came the birth of big economic conglomerates. Prior to this change Korea was mostly an agricultural producer and the fast increase in industry transformed Korea's landscape. In order for this transformation to occur, the Korean work ethic also had to be boosted. The president instilled a responsibility in citizens that working hard was the greatest contribution one could give to Korean society. The first Five Year Economic Development Plan from 1962 had

astounding results; wealth, income and overall health increased. While ethics surrounding work conditions, hours and so on also had its toll on the generation working during the military regime, its transformation was undeniable.

Change never happens in a vacuum and hence, social dynamics transformed alongside economic transformation. The labour-intensive industrialization process led to a rapid incorporation of women into the labour force, at an even faster rate than men (Kim, 1992). Women engaging in economic activities increased from 28 to 49.2 percent and the proportion of women in the labour force increased from 27 to 41.3 percent from 1960-1990 (Economic Planning Board 1960, 1990). The 'working women' living during these decades enjoyed more freedom than their Confucian counterparts as they were able to enter the public arena, but nevertheless, patriarchal dominance remained. 'Late industrialization transforms productive structures and makes women's participation in commodity production possible, yet it marginalizes women through their un-paid, domestic work, as well as their paid labor in the work force' (Beechey, 1987; Beneria and Sen, 1981; Deere, 1979 in Kim, 1992, p.159). Women were expected to be responsible for all domestic work whilst also participating in the labour market, and consequently earned much less than their male counterparts as well. Since Korean men could entertain more skill-intensive and well-paid jobs, most women worked in factories with little growth opportunities and earned over half of their male counterparts in a similar position. Nonetheless, as marriage remained important in a woman's social life, this consequently led to short lived or intermittent work lives. When women married or had a child, they were often expected to re-enter the labour market, and had to continue to carry all domestic labour. In this ideal, women should contribute to society by joining the workforce while simultaneously being responsible for domestic tasks and raising children.

Nari (20) expresses her frustration about this dual pressure on women, which she experiences at home but also during vacation. She mentions how, especially when she is with her grandparents, her brother is never asked to help in the kitchen or that during vacation women are always preparing the food. In addition, she mentions how at rare times when men do cook or clean, this is seen as helping out the women and being a good husband. Seong (26) confirms this expectation as she mentions that even the Korean women that are not housewives and are entertaining jobs, are still doing most of the housework. The expectation of women to have both a job and do most childcare and domestic work can be identified here.

Romantic ideals

The industrialization process gave way for a rise of capitalism and consumer culture in the 1970s, which in turn perpetuated new ideas surrounding love and marriage. Through globalisation and market liberalization, different perceptions on surrounding love and marriage entered Korean society, especially in the form of media entertainment. ‘Romance,’ an exception initially engendered by Western films and novels had flowered in the full-blown consumer culture of contemporary Korea’ (Kendall, 1996, p.109). Korea’s own media industry was not as prominent during those times, and due to the removed local barriers for imported films in the 1990’s, Hollywood films dominated Korea’s media landscape (Yecies, Shim & Goldsmith, 2011). Korean movies and TV lacked comparable entertainment values and adequate funding, hence was not able to keep up with Hollywood production. It was during the Kim Young-San government (1993-1998) which had a more explicit focus on international competitiveness, that Korea’s media production started to increase. Through the investment of *jaebeols* (large economic conglomerates) the Korean media and culture landscape was able to develop and consequently grew a bigger audience both domestically and internationally (Yecies, Shim & Goldsmith, 2011).

During these times Korean dramas started to flourish, and these showed particularly Western, hegemonic portrayals of love instead of Confucian familism (Lin, 2002 in Miyose, 2015). Portrayals of love and marriage which moved away from practices such as family arrangement and focused on individuals experiencing romantic feeling and attraction.

However, as the emphasis on romance is magnified within such media, it perpetuates certain unrealistic expectations of what love and marriage is supposed to be. Nevertheless, unrealistic expectations of love are not only found in Korean media; American rom coms, Spanish telenovelas, and Indian Bollywood films also have romantic narratives devoid of realism. But these in, all likelihood, also influence the perceptions of their consumers. Galician (2004) has distilled the recurring unrealistic representations of love in media into twelve common love myths. The myths themselves are not distinctive for portrayals of love in a specific country and can hence be identified in global media. There are however certain myths that are more prominent in Korea media, as opposed to other media landscapes. These myths are 1) women should look model-like and naturally beautiful 2) the love of a good faithful woman is able to change a man from a ‘beast’ into a prince and 3) if you love each other enough it doesn’t matter that you are completely different. Miyose (2015) who puts the

twelve love myths in connection to Korean drama's also spends significant attention to these three myths and is able to identify them in a range of stories.

As Korean dramas are often highly formulaic, certain patterns, or in other words, love myths can be easily identified. 'Whether tragic or comic in tone, Korean dramas tend to tell simple love stories featuring a scenario where stunningly wealthy and handsome men are unconditionally devoted to one woman' (Lin, 2019, p. 115). The heroines in questions are often poor or low-class, and usually meet their rich male counterpart by chance encounter. *Boys Over Flowers*, *Full House*, *Secret Garden*, and *Coffee Prince* are dramas in which this common trope is found (Ju, 2020). In these dramas both characters, partly due to their respective class position are often completely different. The wealthy man usually portrayed as spoilt, judgemental and a playboy and the poor girl as hardworking, kind and chaste. In most dramas the first encounter between the characters is negative, due to a conflict or friction between the characters values. As the story progresses and the characters get to know each other, we slowly see that through the love of the women the man becomes a more sympathetic and kinder character, and the male counterparts aids the female financially. This enemies to lovers trope clearly perpetuates the love myths mentioned above. Love can overcome (class) difference and love can turn the man from the 'beast' he is into a prince. However, this is on the premise that the female fits a certain ideal. The cross-class love is often only rendered conceivable if the female protagonist excels in feminine virtues such as beauty or chastity (Baldacchino, 2008). The myth that love is only attainable for the main female character if she looks model-like and naturally beautiful (and on top of that should excel in feminine virtues) can be found in these formulaic dramas. Furthermore, these dramas also display a damsel in distress narrative, with the wealthy male and as a saviour through his financial aid, and the female as a poor 'damsel' that is chosen and saved by him.

There are dramas which seem to deviate from this storyline, and focus more on female empowerment, however there is often still a catch in the end. Baldacchino (2008) mentions one of these dramas, namely the drama '*Naeireumeun Gim Sam-Sun*' (My name is Gim Sam-Sun) which aired in 2005. This drama revolves around the female protagonist Sam-Sun who is a loud, fat and aggressive middle-aged women and hence in no way fits this ideal of a beautiful feminine heroine. She worked as a pastry chef at a restaurant, and fakes a relationship with the arrogant owner, with whom she eventually falls in love. One of Baldacchino's (2008) participants was a big fan of the series but also expressed her dissatisfaction for the end of the drama. She felt Sam-Sun's story which was supposed to focus on her independence, but to her disappointment ended with her depending on her boss

boyfriend. The series end perpetuates that the happy end is always found in the promise of (eventual) matrimony with the man. In the soap opera '*Adeulgwattal*' (Son and Daughter), such expectations even defied the creative process. The writer of the show did not want a fairy-tale ending for his main protagonist Hu-Nam, a poor high school teacher. However, due to public pressure in the form of letters and calls to the station, he was forced to make the protagonist marry up (Abelmann, 2003).

Media influences the perceptions of young Korean consumers, on the topics of dating, love and marriage. However, the Korean drama narratives often drown in love myths. All the while, a bigger diversity in Korean drama storylines is arising, and more stories are in resistance to traditional gendered expectations. The Netflix movie *Love and Leashes* (2022) portrays a BDSM relationship with a dominant female and submissive male (Kwak, 2018). The atypical gender dynamic and theme devoid of chastity showcase that the Korean media landscape has been shifting. However, the production of Korean dramas with narrative linked to the common love myths are also still produced, and still do their fair share in influencing women's views on love and marriage.

This focus on romance and love as a basis for marriage could also be derived from my data. When asking my participants if they would marry for love, most of them answered that love would be a requirement for getting married. Ha Eun (21) said: 'In my case I will marry, marry with love and for love, cause I think its kind a very big indication that two people will be faithful to each other.' Yuna (22) said something along similar lines, as she would never marry someone just because they are rational fit; only if she was in love would she want to get married. The desire for love in the official union of two people, seems to have solidified in the minds of many young Koreans.

Chapter 2 Current realities

This chapter will sketch out the marriage realities in Korea to get a better insight into what is behind the current statistics. I will first discuss the decline of marriage by representing the current statistics and trends and ways in which the governments try to combat this decline. Thereafter I will discuss how gender inequality has influenced the outlook on marriage for young Korean women, and what other motivations they have for abstaining from marriage and motherhood. Throughout the chapter insights from my participants will enrich the presented data.

The decline

The decline of marriage and fertility rates are not new phenomena. Decreases already started in the late 20th century but have reached an all-time low last year. About 193,000 couples got married in 2021, which showcased a 9,8% decrease from the year before and is the lowest it has been since the data began to be compiled in 1970 (Yonhap, 2022). In addition, when looking at fertility rates from the 21st century onwards, we see that the fertility rate went down from 1,48 in 2000 to a meagre 0,81 in 2021 (Yonhap, 2022). Social trends of delayed or non-marriage have been brought into connection with the decline. The trends of delayed marriage can also clearly be observed as the average age at first marriage is also rising steadily. In 2000 age at first marriage was 29,28 for men, and 26,49 for women. In 2021, this has gone up to 33.4 for men and 31.08 for women (Statista, 2022). A loophole in this data could be that Koreans are still dating or engaging in long-term partnerships but are just choosing to not formalize their relationship through marriage. However, statistics show that more people are also not in a relationship or have chosen to not date at all. According to the Korean Institute of Health and Social Affairs (KIHSA) 26% of unmarried men and 32% of unmarried women were in a relationship in 2018. Additionally, of those who were not dating, 51% of men and 64% of women said they were choosing to remain single (Jeong, 2019).

Among those that do aspire to marriage there is mismatch in expectations of a future marriage partner, which consequently leads to a ‘marriage market mismatch’:

‘In this “marriage market mismatch” scenario, rapid relative improvements in women’s educational attainment, combined with limited change in normative desires and expectations regarding educational homogamy and female educational hypergamy, make it numerically more difficult for highly educated women (and less-educated men) to find a suitable partner’ (Raymo & Iwasawa 2005 in Raymo & Park, 2020 p.173).

The freezing of normative expectations has made that both women and men can’t find eligible partners. The pool of possible partners hence shrunk for both highly educated women and low-educated men.

One way the government is trying to combat this problem, is to promote international marriage. International marriage was not looked upon favourably in the 1990s, and it was even regarded as a threat to Korea’s homogeneity. But nowadays it is promoted as tool to

(especially) help rural bachelors who are struggling to find a marriage partner, in wake of normative expectations (Juszczyk-Frelkiewicz, 2017). This led to the mail-bride phenomenon, where usually women from less developed countries marry men from a more developed country. While there were high hopes that the rise of international would boost fertility rates in Korea, many studies have already pointed out that international marriage is not a promising policy to increase fertility rates. Several reports have showcased that the number of children was lower among foreign wives in comparison to Korean wives. (Kim, 2018). We also note that international marriage in general has been declining from 2005 onwards, and even hit a sharp decline around 2020. International marriages peaked in 2005, consisting of 13.4% of the total share of marriages but has declined to 7.2% in 2020 (Statista, 2021). The sharp decrease in 2020 has occurred in wake of restrictive measures on travel due to the coronavirus. Some analysts expect the numbers to rise again after the pandemic, as the number of foreigners living in Korea has kept increasing (Kim, 2021). However, as the data have pointed out, the international marriages are not leading to a substantial increase.

Furthermore, it has also proven to be very difficult for foreign wives to integrate into Korean society, partly due to homogeneity of the country's population and therefore not many governmental efforts catered to the needs of the integrating migrants. Worryingly, there have also there have also been many cases of domestic abuse in these international marriages. (Juszczyk-Frelkiewicz, 2017).

Conclusively, the increase international marriage has not made a substantial difference when it is equated with the plummeting fertility numbers. Korean society is aging more and more, and the replacement rates cannot keep up with the sheer numbers of the older generation. What realities have created such a disdain for marriage?

Rise of the Sampo generation

In 2019 the #NoMarriage hashtag was trending on Twitter, with tweets showcasing reasons for women to refrain from marriage and motherhood. Many tweets emphasized the ways in which marriage is oppressive towards women. The trend was started by a popular YouTuber called Baeck Ha-Na, who has a YouTube channel called Solo-darity, where she posts her reasons for being anti-marriage. More personal freedom, liberation of gendered expectations and the high costs of having children are some of the reasons she puts forth on her social media. "Instead of belonging to someone, I now have a more ambitious future for myself." (Leighton-Dore, 2019). This chapter further dives into the influence of gender inequality on women's outlook on marriage and motherhood and motivations for women to

choose non-marriage. Social trends, videos and research on this topic will be further enriched through insights from my participants to better capture why women are abstaining from marriage and motherhood.

More and more women are fighting the oppressive structures present in Korean society, as can also be seen in other feminist movements within the country. In 2019 Korean women shaved their heads to rebel against the Korea's beauty standard. The initiative was part of the bigger movement called the "Escape the corset movement" in which women wanted to free themselves from the rigid beauty standards by unlacing the metaphorical corset (Edraki, 2019). Many women also protested in the wake of sexual crimes, as an epidemic of voyeurism or 'spycam porn' arose in the late twentieth century (Yi, 2020). Secret cameras would be placed in bathrooms, to spy on women urinating or men would unknowingly film women during sex. Happenings like these have made Korean women feel unsafe and have also made them more weary of entering the dating scene in the wake of such events (Jeong, 2019). Most movements aim at undoing the pressure put on them by through patriarchal standards and expectations. The injustices and motivations can be brought into connection to the rise of the so-called *samposedae* (three-giving-up generation). A generation who are relinquishing dating, marriage and children from their lives (Gifford, 2019). The neologism was further extended as there were more things were added to the list, with the variable number in front indicating the amount of things that are given up on (variable number-*posedae*). The *oposedae* (5) would also give up on employment and home ownership, and the *chilposedae* (7) generation further gave up on interpersonal relationships and hope.

The accumulation of gender injustices and patriarchal dominance can be brought into connection to the marriage and fertility the decline. This generation of women see marriage as a continuation of patriarchal dominance and therefore preach non-marriage in wake of better gender equality.

'Having kids ruins everything-my body, my career, balance of my life', is the answer I got from Hyejin (26) when inquiring her reasons for not wanting to have kids. Marriage and motherhood as undeniably tied to a loss of time and freedom, was recurring theme in my data. Since normative standards dictate that women should carry most responsibility when it comes to the domestic arena, such as taking care of the children and the upkeep of domestic tasks, there is not much individuality left for Korean women (Raymo & Park, 2015). Their daily lives become depended on their interrelationship to their husbands and kids. Hence, careers of Korean women suffer as their work often must be put on hold or substantially diminishes due to pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. But losses do not only occur on the career front. Jinah

(28) said she would be open to marriage, however she had seen many people surrounding her that had regretted marriage and motherhood as their close relationships were lost to childcare and domestic tasks. Close relationships to friends and family also take a hit when women reproduce. Baeck Ha-Na, the YouTuber who started the #NoMarriage trend, emphasizes how that freedom and time can be used for a more ‘ambitious future’ for oneself, and hence appeals to many women who do not want to lose that individuality. (Leighton Dore, 2019).

Besides the ‘losing’ of oneself when becoming a wife or mother, there is also a significant worry over money in the context of marriage and parenthood. Marriage and parenthood come at a cost, and many young Koreans do not feel confident they have the financial means for it. Jinah (28) proclaimed that she would feel burdened financially if she had to raise kids. The high expenses of marriage and family life as reasons for non-marriage is a sentiment more Koreans share. ASIAN BOSS, a YouTube channel which interviews Koreans on the street of Seoul also dedicated a video to questions surrounding marriage in South-Korea. One of the channel’s reporters asked Koreans if they would want to get married and why so many people in Korea are avoiding marriage, to which an interviewee responds: ‘Because there are so many costs attached to having a child, but some people can’t afford those expenses, and newlyweds need to acquire a new home, but the costs associated with getting a new place are pretty hefty’ (ASIAN BOSS, 2019). Not only these high prices, but also the current economic landscape of Korea is consequently making it so that young Koreans are saying no to marriage and are sticking to living with their parents. The combination of cultural norms, high cost of living, housing, education and a weak welfare system led to a late age of young Koreans leaving their parental homes (Raymo & Park, 2015). In addition, the recent economic recession and growing economic inequality further delay this home leaving.

Having to set up a new household, by having to pay a hefty mortgage and possibly high tuition costs for their future children’s education is a hurdle for young Koreans and turns them away from prospects of marriage.

Burdens of high housing costs could be lessened by co-residing with their in-laws or their own extended family, a practice not unfamiliar in Korea (Raymo & Park, 2015). But Korean women have voiced their disinterest in taking care of their in-law’s family if they were co-residing with them. My participant Yuna (24) voices her distaste for such responsibilities as she identifies that marriage turns relationships from a personal matter into a family matter. As the obligations to support aging parents become a shared

responsibility once a couple is wedded. While traditionally care for the elderly was mostly the responsibility of the eldest son, as fertility declined and more women are without brothers, the obligation to support their parents in old age weighs on them as well (Raymo & Park, 2015).

In addition, the current political landscape also does not seem to be in favour for women's rights. The newly elected president Yoon Suk-yeol had pledged during his campaign to abolish the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, which he claims is unfair to men, and is raising the penalty for falsely reporting sex crimes. (Seo & Hollingsworth, 2022). Another reason he wanted to abolish the ministry was because he believes that feminism is the reason for the low birth rate (Rashid, 2022). Even though, he backed down on his plans to abolish the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, he does not seem to want to address the hardships women face in multiple facets of society. Korean women have a distaste for the president reluctance to acknowledge gender inequality, whilst simultaneously wanting to boost fertility and hence promote family life while not wanting to invest into women's rights.

Lastly, the unhealthy performance culture in Korea is also mentioned as reason for women to abstain from motherhood. Some women do not want to raise kids in the competitive environment present within Korean society. Soomin (27) shared that she feels kids in Korea are under too much pressure when it comes to education, as attending universities with a good naming value seem to be more important than what a kid actually wants to study. Ye-rin's (29) perception aligns to such sentiments as she says she didn't want to have a kid at first, but now that she is residing in the Netherlands, she sees a better environment for it.

The accumulation of intensive care of children, heavy domestic task load, high financial burdens, possible co-residence with parents-in-law and a bleak political future, make that more and more women are refraining from marriage and motherhood. Are there alternatives for them to still have a fulfilling long-term partnership?

Chapter 3 Limited Alternatives

This chapter will discuss the possibilities for alternatives for traditional marriage and family life to arise. The perceptions, wants and desires my participants have when it comes to giving shape to their future partnership will be described here. Insights from participants will be complemented by research, articles and media to identify if these sentiments are shared in the broader Korean society. First will be discussed what 'traditional' aspects of marriage have

still been deemed as desirable for my participants. Thereafter will be discussed what practices or desires are novel, and restrictions they face in the social arena. Lastly, we will look at what participants themselves see as ‘the future of marriage’. Do they themselves think marriage cease to exist, or do they think the institution, or some form of it, will stay apparent in Korean society?

Marriage as a necessary evil

While traditional forms of marriage have been declining heavily, there are still aspects of the institution which my participants deemed as something desirable. When looking at motivations for my participants to want to engage in marriage, I could identify certain fears and desires which stood at the core of such decisions. Even though these desires are not exclusively fulfilled through ‘marriage’, I notice an obvious entanglement with marriage becoming synonymous for certain fulfilment.

The desire to live with another often stands at the core as a reason to marry. This desire was often seen as a means to an end to escape the fear of loneliness. Multiple participants have said something along the lines of ‘I don’t want to live alone’ or ‘life is too long to live without a partner’. The inescapable fear of living alone for long periods of time, is connected to the desire to marry. This makes sense in Korean society, as it is still seen as inappropriate for unmarried couples to live together (Ock, 2021). This shows that for many Koreans, the only way to ensure they won’t live alone, is to marry a partner. This paradox also explains the reactions of my participants to certain alternative types of marriage which would obstruct the possibility to live together. When I asked my participants if they wanted to engage in a LAT (Living apart together) relationship, all of them answered they want to live together with their partner. In addition, when posited with the question if people wanted to be legally married, have a partnership agreement or remain together without any formal arrangement, 80% of my participants chose for legally married. Once more, the argument of the societal expectations and pressure to be legally married arose. The answers to both the desired living arrangement and the extent to which Koreans want to formalize their relationship perpetuate this idea that marriage in a way is a necessary evil to be able to live with a partner.

Another desire which arose in my data was described by Yuna (24) as ‘a desire to possess the other’, points to Korean women’s desire to be in a monogamous relationship. When asking my participants on a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent they would want their relationship to be open or closed, the majority opted for closed, to mostly closed. Only two of my participants shared interest in (trying) an open relationship. Such numbers align to a survey

done amongst 142 Korean students which showed that 64.8% of them had never heard of polyamory (Park, 2016). And although half of the participants proclaimed they would understand if a friend would come out as a polyamorist, only 10.6% said they would be open to practicing it in their own relationship. Polyamory is relatively unknown and by the majority and deemed as a practice they would not want to engage in. Be as it may, practices are not necessarily commonplace around the world, and are only relatively higher in for example the US (Moors, Gesselman & Garcia, 2021). Nevertheless, we can conclude the dispositions of young Koreans match traditional values on partnership and marriage.

When looking at non-traditional dispositions towards marriage which seem to arise, two points stood out. Traditional marriage has always been seen as choosing a partner for life. However, when asking my participants if they expected to be with one partner forever many did not think so. Sentiments such ‘Life is too long’ ‘I just think this is very unlikely’ to ‘It’s ideal to not be divorced, but if necessary, I would divorce and get a new one’ were shared. These participants showcase that many no longer expect to be with one partner forever. We can note that amongst younger Korean women, even though it is not regarded as desirable, divorce is seen as a viable option in case of marriage turmoil.

Secondly, Mason, Tsuya & Choe (1998) which pose that the postponement of marriage represents a weak interest in becoming a parent also seemed to match my collected data. Many spoke out about not wanting kids due motherhood being so demanding within Korean society. The loss of individuality signifying that women who have children will have no time left for their own ambition, hobbies or social life, was mentioned several times. The high costs and financial burden of children was also posited as a reason to relinquish parenting. Interestingly, both participants that wanted children and those that didn’t were able to posit the negative sides of motherhood in Korea. Once again showing that Korean women are highly aware of the sacrifice they will be making when having children. So while some of my participants still desired to have children, a substantial amount rejected this traditional expectation of marriage.

Restrictions to alternatives

While I had expected to identify more alternatives to traditional marriage, I was easily confronted with the reality that several factors are standing in the way of the formation or flourishing of new forms of marriage. Social norms surrounding living together do not grant much space for women to live together with their partner while not married, even though more of the younger generation do not see this as necessary. A 2020 poll amongst 1500 Koreans

showed that 85.1 % of those in their 20s would accept cohabitation. But whilst the younger generation is opening up to the idea of cohabitation, the same poll showed that only 43% in the 70s segment was accepting of cohabitation without marriage. All the while governments are also trying to create an environment where cohabitation is more accepted, but right now cohabitation remains frowned upon (Ock, 2021).

Economic recession and rising economic inequality are also constraining to marriage and family life, as many Korean individuals do not have the financial means to support both themselves and future children. The government is actively trying to combat this problem by providing a monthly bonus of 300,000 won (275 euro) to all infants born in 2022 (Saijd, 2020), in addition to the already existing subsidies for parents. The government is already granting a monthly allowance of 100,000 won for each child under 7, a 600 000 won congratulatory allowance for each pregnant women and more flexibility in parental leave as couples with a 12-month-old can receive up to 3 million won in monthly salary when taking a 3-month leave (Yonhap News Agency, 2020). Whilst these subsidiary measures have already been in place for the last several years, they have so far not increased births. If the recently announced incentives will be able to motivate young Koreans to marriage or procreate, is still in the unforeseen future.

The current expectations of division of labour within marriage and parenthood are also a restricting factor in the rise of alternatives. While many of participants mentioned that when it came to raising a child and domestic tasks, they would want to share the responsibilities equally with their partner, that is not the reality right now. It is still the norm for women be solely responsible for childcare and domestic tasks (McDonald, 2013). Such renouncing of such tasks among men can be identified in recent statistics showing that only two percent of fathers take up leave as there is a ‘huge chasm between the policy developments encouraging fathers’ uptake of leave and strong cultural pressure that prevent them from taking it up’ (Byun & Won, 2020 in Lee, 2022, p.1).

In addition, when it comes to a couple depending on aid of others in terms of childcare, there is much criticism on childcare services. In a study conducted by the Gender Equality and Family over 75% of parents believed that the family should be the sole caregiver for the child (MOGEF, 2016). In case parental care was not possibly, more than 80% preferred extended family as an alternative. The distrust of formal care, due to stories of child abuse at care facilities, is a driver for this strong preference for the extended family as supplementary caregivers (Lee, 2022). But there is an ‘overall structural incompatibility between employment and childcare that dual-earner couples face in raising a young child without

support from extended families' (Lee, 2022). All the while the government is working on increasing the quality of the free ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care), to make such services more attractive to (future) parents, but the child abuse allegations and strong preference for familial support have created a reluctance to use such services. Several accounts of abuse at childcare centres have surfaced in the last couple of years. One example of such cases was at a day-care centre in Incheon for disabled children where staff members were beating the children, pulling their hair and leaving them unattended (Bahk, 2021). Many Koreans were outraged over the abuse and the follow-up measures did not embody the severity of the situation.

Interestingly, we see that while the government is providing more and more services, incentives and bonuses they just cannot go up against the rigid and stubborn social norms and expectations surrounding marriage and family life with Korea. The seemingly immovable ideals have hence put Korean women in a position to opt for extremes:

‘...gender-asymmetric division of labor within marriage is thought to present unmarried women with an either-or choice between marriage and motherhood or career and other individual pursuits. The increasing tendency for women to choose the latter is seen as evidence of the declining desirability of marriages characterized by gender-based specialization’ (Raymo & Park, 2020, p.172).

Women either join the Sampo generation and relinquish marriage, dating and family life altogether or dedicate their life to being a wife and mother. The one or the other choice is what we also see in the marriage numbers, but what would need to happen in Korean society for marriage to again become desirable again?

Future of marriage

‘I think it is ceasing’, was Soomin’s (27) answer to my question if traditional marriage will eventually cease to exist. Not all my participants agreed with this statement, and most believed that some sort of form of the institution will likely remain. But it is clear that some aspects of it might be adamant at changing, as many Korean women do not want to enter a traditional marriage anymore. My participants answer several questions on what they believe will be the future of marriage in Korea, and what changes they would want to see in society on the topic of marriage and family life.

Answers about the desired change in society already showcased what changes might be necessary for women to want to engage in marriage and motherhood again. Ye-rin (29) expresses her desire for Korean people to have a more open mind and that taboos of bringing children to day-care is one of them. Better quality day-care services and a normalisation of bringing children to day-care could give women (and men) more freedom to exercise their career and parenting. This would also lessen the burden they would have to put on extended family as well.

Furthermore, Soomin (27) and Ye-rin (29) also find the Korean society is not a healthy environment for a child, due to the high pressure and competitive nature on the topic of education. The overwhelming pressure for young people to get into name value universities and high stature jobs, is something they would not want to put their children through. Ye-rin (29), who's currently living in the Netherlands, also added that she sees a better environment for raising children in the Netherlands as opposed to Korea. If such pressures on children would lessen, women might feel more open to procreating, as they feel their children would live a more pleasant life. In addition, Ji (28) adds two other reasons she does not want to raise children in this current day and age: global warming and the weak welfare system in Korea. Whilst her first reason is one of a global scale, and not specifically experienced only in Korea, it does match the argument of not wanting to raise children in a certain environment or state of crisis. The weak welfare system in Korea also makes having children might be a risk, as there is no safety net to aid in times of need. The negative effects of this weak welfare state are already experienced by much of the older generation in Korea. As many Korean parents had spent so much money on their children's education, they now lack the saving to sustain themselves in the latter part of their lives, leading to much elderly living in relative poverty (McCurry, 2017). Whilst the younger generation traditionally held much responsibility in taking care of their elderly, in the already aged society, the burden of taking care of them is already becoming too big for Korean children. Consequently, state interventions to increase the quality of Korea's welfare system, might grants young Korean the stability and safety to want to procreate, without having to fear relative poverty in their prospective future.

Social norms about women having to do most domestic work and childcare would also need to change. Almost all my participants wanted the division of tasks such as financial support, domestic work and childcare to be split equally between husband and wife. A normalisation of this equal distribution will consequently also grant women more space to exercise freedom for their individual goals besides their responsibilities as a wife or mother.

All in all, it seems alternatives to marriage have not gotten the space to develop, or are under development as we are speaking, but cannot be captured yet in official or academic accounts. However, what can be denounced from this research is that if marriage and motherhood would have to be made more attractive to women, much must change in the social and political arena. Equal distribution of tasks, normalisation of the use of day-care, a better welfare system and a healthier work and education environment will make marriage and motherhood something that can co-exists with women's life goals which are not of a maternal nature. The current financial incentives from the government might do its fair share in increasing marriage and fertility numbers, but these results cannot be predicted. Based on this research however, I believe that as long as traditional normative standards still reign supreme, even more young Korean women will relinquish marriage and motherhood from their lives.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed at identifying if alternatives to marriage were arising in the wake of declining marriage (and fertility) numbers in Korea. Through analysing marriage ideals and expectations of the past, capturing the current state of affairs, and analysing young Korean women's stance on marriage, a better understanding of the future of marriage in Korea was the goal. Economic regression, rigid normative standards and the unhealthy societal pressure have restricted the rise of alternatives to marriage and hence the institution is adamant at changing as Korea's marriage and fertility numbers have risen to this all-time low.

Young Korean women find themselves in the crossfires between their wants and desires for their futures and the normative pressures and restrictions limiting those. Both literature research, interviews and news articles indicated that entertaining both a career and motherhood has become an impossible equation for young Korean women and is leading to the either-or scenario. Marriage ideals have changed, and will continue to change, but so far not granted much room for alternatives.

Changing ideals were demonstrated in the wake of sociohistorical developments to show how these conceptions still influence expectations of marriage and family life today. Confucian, transformative and media ideals have all intermixed and cannot be upheld in current framework of society. The current reality in which these ideals exist have led to the continuous aging in Korean society as normative expectations are lagging behind on the social developments that have taken place, especially on the ground of gender equality. As alternatives are needed in order for the marriage and fertility decline to be combatted, we see

that the economic landscape, competitive educational environment and rigid social norms are preventing such changes. Normalisation of the use of day-care, a more equal division of tasks within a marriage, and less pressure on young Koreans could aid in marriage and motherhood becoming more attractive for young Korean women. Then new forms marriage will finally start to flourish.

I would redirect further research to also take a look at different demographic groups within Korean society. It would be interesting for further research to gain more insights on perceptions of LGBTQ community within Korea on the topic long term partnerships. As you cannot legally marriage when you are of the same sex, gay couples have to find other ways to coexist. If it was legally possible, would they want to marry? And as there is less gendered division of roles in such a partnership due to both partners being the same sex, what would their marriage look like. In addition, it might also be interesting to look at perceptions of bi-women and their considerations for their future. How do they see their future differently with a male or female partner?

Another interesting angle for research on marriage and family in Korea would be to have a more explicit focus on international marriage. What perceptions do Koreans have of those who marry foreigners. Have these practices become more widely accepted as it is necessary to fight the decline or are many marriage migrants still under scrutiny within society? There have also been many cases of domestic abuse in international marriages in Korea when a foreign wife marries a native Korean man. How come these numbers are so high? As the percentage of foreigners is still quite low, there are often not many programmes of efforts who aid foreigners to integrate into Korean society. As these foreign wives are experiencing trouble integrating and are hence more dependent on their Korean husbands, they are unable to find proper help within a domestic abuse situation. Would more forthcoming integrative efforts from the government aid the wellbeing of these foreign wives?

Young Korean women find themselves in the crossfires between their wants and desires for their futures and the normative pressures and restrictions limiting those. Both literature research, interviews and news articles indicated that entertaining both a career and motherhood has become an impossible equation for young Korean women and is leading to the either-or scenario. Marriage ideals have changed, and will continue to change, but so far not granted much room for alternatives.

Limitations

This research was substantiated by a variety of sources: statistics, research articles, interviews, surveys, news articles and videos. The broad scope of collected data tried to create a more thorough understanding of the marriage realities in Korea. Furthermore, the integration of a historical perspective on the marriage institution also further deepened the understanding of the marriage mismatch in the current Korean society. But the empirical results reported in this thesis should be considered in light of some limitations as well.

Besides the first round of qualitative interviews, most research was performed within the Netherlands. Having been present in Korea would have aided this research, as I would have had access to more (diverse) participants. In addition, residence in Korea might have also aided in the finding of novel insights. It is possible that alternatives for marriage are arising, only these have not been documented yet in online sources. But as this research was conducted (mostly) online, I was restricted to certain pools or participants and online data.

A recurring theme in more cross cultural research, is knowledge being lost in translation. As this research was performed in English, and my participants were all native Koreans, they had to share their experiences in a second language. Some of the finer intricacies within arguments or answers might have not survived the translation to English. In addition, some questions within the survey were answered in Hangul, and as my Korean was not sufficient enough to translate these on my own I needed to use additional translation tools. Due to the lack of phrase identification, results are not always completely reliable. Fortunately, due to an open line of communication with participants I had the possibility to consult them in case an answer was unclear.

Lastly, this research aimed at finding the alternatives that were arising in opposition to traditional marriage, but as the collected data mostly reconfirmed traditional dispositions on marriage, there is a lesser degree of novelty. Hence, this research did not add the new insights to the current academic framework it hoped to bring. However, the data also gave rise to a more critical look at the Korean society and why these alternatives have not been given the space to arrive, and what might be necessary for new forms of marriage and family life to flourish.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide qualitative interviews

Main themes	Questions	Supporting questions
Love	• Are you in love or have you been in love before? • Do you think romantic love is necessary to live a happy or fulfilled life? • How do you show someone you love them in a romantic relationship? • Do you think loving someone is a rational or emotional choice?	• Have you ever had a crush? • Were you in a relationship? • Did you like being in love? • Do you find love from friendship in family fulfilling? Or do you desire romantic love?
Marriage	• Do you think marriage is about love? • Do you want to get married? • Will you marry for love?	• What motivates you to get married? • Do you think marriage is necessary for a happy or fulfilled life?
Gender	• Is there a difference between men and women and if so, what is the difference? • What do you envy most about the opposite sex? • What do you think is the hardest part about being the opposite sex? • Do you feel there is inequality between men and women? If so, where do you think its most prevalent?	• Besides physical attributes, would you say women and men are different? And if so, in what ways? • Are you jealous of certain things the opposite sex is able to do? • What would you find difficult if you were the opposite sex?
Societal expectations	• Do you think heterosexual man and women can be friends? • Do you think the mandatory military service for men influences their view on women?	• When Korean men are secluded from society and women for two years, do you think this positively or negatively influences their view on women?

Appendix 2

Survey Marriage and its Alternatives	
Introductory text	Marriage still plays a big role in many societies worldwide. However, perspectives on marriage and what it's supposed to look like, have been changing. I am curious to hear from you what your outlook is on marriage and how you want to create your long-term partnership.
Section 1: Required information	
	Name
	Age
	What is your relationship status? ☐ Single ☐ In a relationship ☐ Engaged ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Other
	What is your sexual orientation? ☐ Heterosexual ☐ Homosexual ☐ Bisexual ☐ Other
	Do you consider yourself a feminist?

	○ Yes ○ No ○ Other
Section 2: Perspectives on Marriage	
Introductory text	In case you are married or engaged; please consider most questions from a perspective in which you were not yet. For example, do you want to get married = have you always wanted to get married or Do you feel pressure to marry = did you feel pressure to marry?
Q1: Do you want to get married? ○ Yes ○ No ○ Maybe	
Q2: Please elaborate on your reasons for either wanting, not wanting or being unsure about getting married? Why do you feel this way?	
Q3: If you want to get married, what would be your preferred age to get married?	
Q4: Do you feel pressure to get married? 1 Yes, very much – 5 No, not at all	
Q5: If yes, where do you feel the most pressure from? ○ Society ○ Family ○ Friends ○ Other	

Q6: Can you give an example of a moment you felt this pressure?	
Section 3: Marriage Alternatives	
Introductory text	Describe what your preferred partnership would look like.
Q6: How open would you want your partnership to be? 1 Monogamous – 5 Polyamorous	
Q6: Please elaborate why you chose the answer in the question above	
Q7: How would you want to co-exist with your partner? ☐ Living together ☐ Living apart (LAT) ☐ Dual living (with another couple) ☐ Other	
Q8: Please elaborate why you chose this answer in the question above/	
Q9: What would you want your marital status to be? ☐ Legally married ☐ Domestic partnership ☐ Unofficially married ☐ Other	
Q10: Please elaborate on why you chose this answer in the question above.	
Q11: Do you expect to be with one partner forever? ☐ Yes	

○ No ○ Other
Q12: Please elaborate on why you chose the answer in the question above?
Section 4: Division of Task and Family Life
Q13: What would be your preferred division of roles in a partnership when it comes to domestic tasks?
Q14: What would be your preferred division of roles in a partnership when it comes to financial support?
Q15: Do you want to have kids ○ Yes ○ No ○ Maybe
Q16: Please elaborate on your reasons for either wanting, not wanting or not being sure about having kids? Why do you feel this way?
Q17: If you want kids, what would be your preferred division of roles when it comes to raising your kids with your partner?
Section 5: Future of Marriage
Q18: What changes would you want to see in society when it comes to matters of marriage and family life?
Q19: Do you think traditional marriage will cease to exist eventually? Please elaborate.

Q20: What do you think will be the future of long-term relationships?

Section 6: Ending Remarks

May I use your name and age in my research?

- ☐ Yes, both
- ☐ Only my age