

ONE BED, TWO DREAMS: FEMALE MIGRATION, CONSERVATIVE NORMS AND FOREIGN BRIDES IN SOUTH KOREA

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Abstract

In this paper I empirically show that the import of brides from less developed countries is the response of men to a marriage squeeze brought by female internal migration. In the setting of South Korea I investigate how female internal migration affects the marriage market through the demand for foreign brides, which is reinforced by men's conservatism on gender norms. I show a way in which men cope with the scarcity of women at marriage age, by importing brides from less developed countries, hence increasing international migration. To obtain causal identification, I use a two-way fixed effect model and an enclave instrument based on past internal migration. I exploit the geographic variation in family conservatism of Korean males in the empirical analysis and I find that the effect of female out-migration on the demand for foreign brides concentrates in areas with higher presence of men who share conservative values concerning gender roles within the family and the society. Finally, I investigate the implications for fertility rates and I find that the negative effect of female out-migration on fertility is partially offset by the increase in the number of international marriages.

Keywords: Migration, International Marriages, Fertility, Gender.

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