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Social Integration in International Marriages Between Russian Women and Korean Men in Urban South Korea

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Abstract

This thesis explores the everyday social integration experiences of Russian women married to Korean men and living in urban South Korea. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Everyday Multiculturalism and Multicultural Space-Making, the study investigates how cultural differences are negotiated in daily life through practices such as language use, food preparation, parenting, household routines, and everyday social interactions. The research aims to uncover how these women navigate between adaptation and cultural preservation, while also examining the influence of gender, family dynamics, and institutional structures on their integration trajectories. Using a qualitative research design, the study employed semi-structured, in-depth interviews and participant observations with Russian wives residing in Seoul, Suwon, and Incheon. The data were analyzed thematically to identify recurrent patterns, challenges, and strategies of adjustment. The findings reveal that these women actively shape their domestic, neighborhood, and digital environments to maintain cultural continuity while adapting to Korean norms. Their experiences illustrate that integration is not a linear process but a relational one, emerging through everyday negotiations with spouses, in-laws, and local communities. Overall, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of multicultural family life in South Korea, highlighting how non-Asian marriage migrants construct hybrid spaces of belonging and challenging policy-driven models that overlook their specific needs and experiences.

Keywords: Everyday Multiculturalism; Multicultural Space-Making; Marriage Migrants; Identity