Return Migration of young Korean New Zealanders:

Transnational journeys of reunification & estrangement

By

JANE YEONJAE LEE

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Abstract

Since early 2000, the number of long term immigrants to New Zealand deciding to return to their homelands has increased. Simultaneously, Korea has made changes to its residency policy in an attempt to attract 'global talent' back to its shores. The result has been an increase in the number of overseas Koreans returning from their emigration destinations, making a growing contribution to Korean development. The processes driving this movement and the experience(s) of returnees upon re-settlement have received little attention in research. This research focuses on the everyday experiences of the 1.5 generation Korean immigrants of Auckland, New Zealand who permanently returned to Korea between 1999 and 2009. Moreover, the journeys of those returnees who moved back to New Zealand after living in Korea for a short period are deconstructed. Drawing on the theoretical framework of transnationalism, particular attention is given to *how* and *to what* extent transnational connections shape and impact upon their everyday lives. In total, the lives of 40 returnees and nine re-returnees are explored through an ethnographic method including semi-structured interviews and participant observation. A number of general and complex stories of the returnees' decision-making processes which led them to return to Korea are revealed. Their experiences affirm the status of return migrants as minorities in both host and home countries; firstly as Asian immigrants and later as overseas Korean 'Gyopo.' Despite various experiences of alienation and estrangement upon return to Korea, participants were able to make a significant contribution to their individual work places with their skills gained from New Zealand and elsewhere. As they did so, they (re)constructed and (re)negotiated their identities in relation to their sense of 'home' in a myriad of complex ways. The thesis argues that although transnational linkages facilitate movements and allow immigrants to make strategic life choices across borders, longings for home as well as a sense of national identity and belonging remain prevalent among recent Korean New Zealander returnees. While most returnees learn to value and embrace their hybrid identities and find ways to settle permanently in Korea, some eventually move back to New Zealand in the ongoing quest for 'home'.

Key words: Korea, New Zealand, Return Migrants, Home, Identity, Transnationalism

To my late father, Kang Kn Lee

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1. Introduction

I miss my blossoming hometown sat on the mountain valley
Peach blossom, apricot, baby azalea
Colourful arcadia among many other smiling flowers
I miss my old friends and those times on the playground

Flowers blooming, Birds singing, that was my old hometown
Sweet winds blew from the southern green-field
They danced with the leaves of willow trees sitting on the flowing creek
I miss my old friends and those times on the playground
('Spring season of my hometown' by Wonsoo Lee, 1926)

The 'Spring season of my hometown' (*Gohyang Eui Bom*) is the most common children's song in Korea. I remember learning it at primary school at the age of seven. The lyrics of this song were first written as a poem by Wonsoo Lee in 1926 during the Japanese colonial period. The poem depicts the author's longing for past years when Korea was free from Japanese rule. It is about yearning for a sense of 'home', comfort, childhood, and freedom. This song is widely known in Korea today. Every child learns the song at school and the melody is used commonly in movies, media, and other occasions when there needs to be a 'sentimental' atmosphere created. Despite the song being a children's song, it is a sad song – nostalgic for a past that cannot be regained. In many ways, an immigrant's return to their original homeland (or hometown) is associated with this kind of nostalgia. Certainly, in the past, migrants were found to be living under the 'illusion of home'; imagining an eventual return to their original homeland (Anwar, 1979; Brettell, 2003).

1.1 Taking a transnational approach to return migration

Today's international migrants are often referred to as 'transmigrants' (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc, 1992), those who maintain close linkages with their original homeland through

everyday activities across national borders. Indeed, with increased access to internet technology and global networks, today's international migrants can actively engage in everyday conversations with their family and friends back home, and acquire more knowledge of 'the everyday happenings' in their original homeland. Hence, rather than 'imagining to return', transmigrants can easily be involved in their homeland activities and strategically plan and prepare for their return migration (Cassarino, 2004). Yet, does this mean that transnational returnees show less nostalgia? In one sense, the experience of transnationalism helps migrants to sustain their ties to their homeland and national identities (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998). In contrast, some scholars argue that national borders and national identities are becoming less important in today's society because of transnational connectivities (Kivisto and Faist, 2010).

The primary objective of this thesis is to untangle this complex web of relationships between one's sense of 'home' and identity within the broader transnational framework based on an empirical study of Korean New Zealander return migrants. In particular, this study focuses on the narratives of the 1.5 generation immigrants – those who were born overseas and spent their school years in their host society. Most of this study's participants immigrated to New Zealand with their parents in the early 1990s and spent their adolescent years in New Zealand as children migrants. Over the last 10 years, they voluntarily returned to their homeland individually as young adults. A small proportion of them re-returned to New Zealand after their experience in the original home country[1]. For most of them, confusion followed once the thought of return to Korea began. Am I making the right decision? What am I leaving behind and what will my life be like once I return 'home'? Will I fit into the 'traditional' or 'newly changed' Korean society? What will my friends and family think of my decision? Despite their voluntary decision to return, the confusion of being caught between the past, present and future; between Korea and New Zealand always existed.

The study of return migration is a growing research field within international migration studies. In most cases, return migration refers to "the process whereby people return to their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country or region" (King, 2000: 8). Past migration studies have ignored the fact that some immigrants, after residing overseas for a certain period of time, decide to move back to their home countries later in life; or at least they have such thoughts at the back of their minds (King, 2000; Guzzetta, 2004). Within international migration literature, return migration has previously been mentioned as a 'subcomponent' of migration studies

[1] In this study, I refer to them as 're-returnees' - the group of returnees who decided to return to New Zealand after living in Korea for a short period of six months to two years.

(Cassarino, 2004). Yet, return migration has existed ever since international migration began (King, 2000). There were a total of 149,191 overseas Koreans considered to be 'skilled expatriates' who have permanently returned to Korea in 2011 (Park and Kang, 2011). Increasingly, scholars are beginning to document the lives of various kinds of return migrant and are arguing for the importance of research into this particular migratory phase. Studying return migration and returnees gives us a lens through which we can further understand a migrant's 'home' and identities within a transnational framework (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; King and Christou, 2011). Also, return migrants are often regarded as 'national developers', those who can assist in the nation building processes with their overseas skills, in their receiving homeland; hence the return migrants attract particular interest from policy and economic perspectives (Ghosh, 2000; Conway and Potter, 2009).

Informed by these growing theoretical and practical motivations to study return migration, this research explores the transnational lives of 49 Korean New Zealander returnees. This study takes a multi-layered, qualitative approach to understanding the everyday lives of returnees through in-depth interviews, social participation in returnees' lives, and direct and indirect observations. The thesis expands and highlights the complexities of the returnees' experiences of their original homeland. Through the returnees' narratives, the thesis seeks to explore:

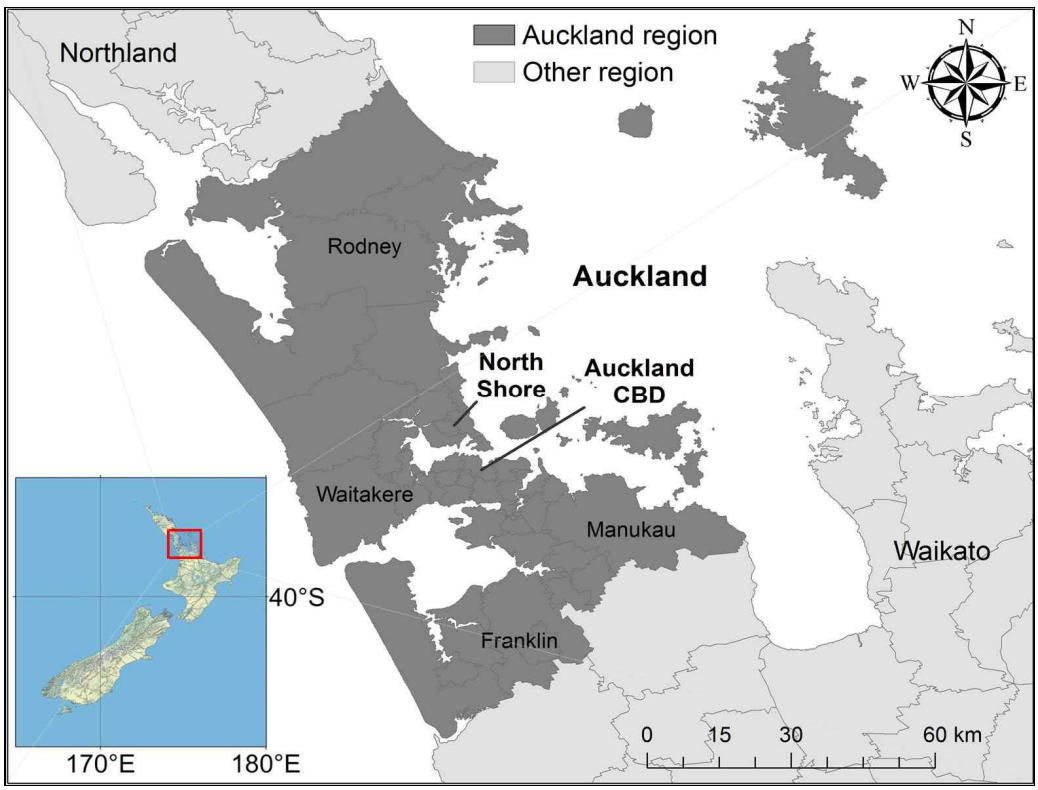
1. why 1.5 generation Korean New Zealander immigrants returned to their original homeland;
2. how they experience their initial return in their individual work spaces, and, from a larger perspective, what kind of impact they are bringing to Korean society; and
3. how they negotiate their national/ethnic identity challenges over the longer period between their return and re-return experiences.

1.2 Korean immigrants in New Zealand

Although this study is about Korean immigrants in New Zealand 'who moved on' to their next destination (in this regard, their original homeland), it is also very much about those who came and lived in New Zealand and also about those who may eventually move back to live in New Zealand. Their return experiences are closely related to their initial migration to New Zealand and the future relations that they hold with their host society.

Koreans are a recent immigrant group compared to other ethnic minorities in New Zealand. They also make up one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the country. In the 2006 (and most recent) census, the Korean population had increased to 30,792 from 19,026 in 2001 and 930 in 1991(Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Koreans are now the third largest Asian ethnic group in New Zealand after the Chinese and Indians. Given its relatively young immigration history, it is not surprising that 94% of all Koreans in New Zealand are either first or 1.5 generation Korean New Zealanders and 87% have resided in New Zealand for less than ten years at the time of the most recent census data (Chang, 2006:6). In terms of geographic concentration, about 70% of the entire New Zealand resident Korean population lives in the largest metropolitan area, Auckland[2] (Friesen, 2008). Within the Auckland region, the most popular locality is the North Shore, constituting over 40% of the entire Korean population in the Auckland area (Hong, 2011; Refer to Figure 1.1).

Figure 1. 1 Map of Auckland region



The Korean language is the second most popular language spoken after English on the North Shore (Hong, 2011). A recent study of Korean immigrant clusters in Auckland indicated that the Korean population is concentrated in the North Shore region because there are many prestigious

[2] Population approx. 1.3 million in 2006

secondary schools in this area (Hong, 2011). This influence reflects the dominant reason for first generation Korean immigrant migration to New Zealand which is to find a better education system for their children (Lidgard and Yoon, 1998).

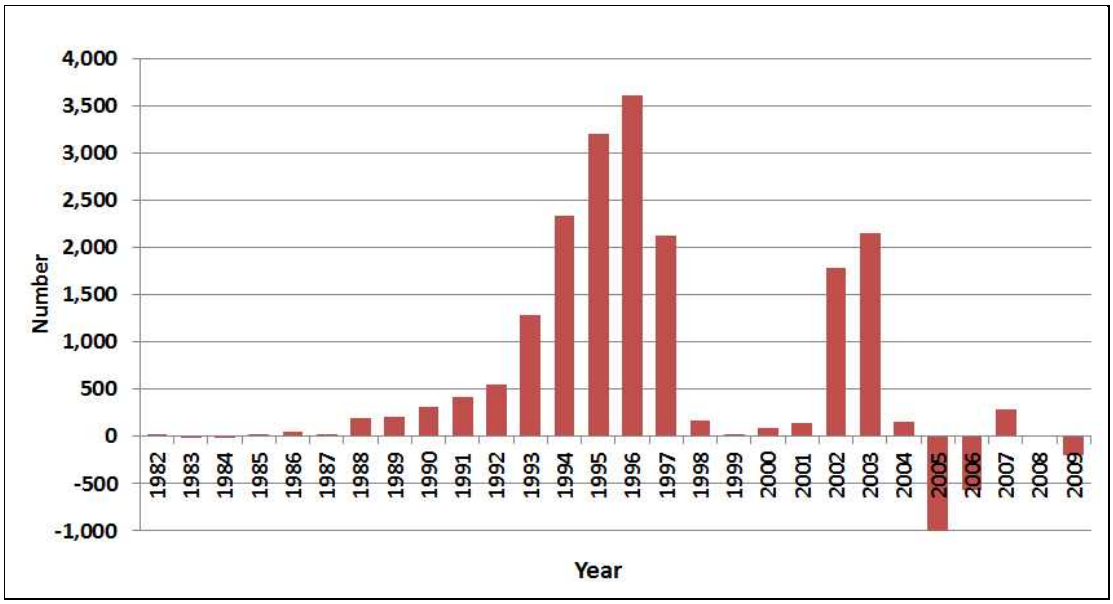
Koreans began to immigrate to New Zealand as part of the 'new wave' in the 1990s, when large numbers of middle-class Koreans left for Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Chang, 2006). In New Zealand, this was facilitated by the government introducing a more open migration policy in 1987 in order to attract more skilled migrants from East Asia for the nation's economic benefit (Bedford et al., 2001). Most of the Korean immigrants came after New Zealand introduced the 'points system' in 1991, where immigrants had to fit certain criteria including higher levels of work experience, income, and education level (Lidgard and Yoon, 1998; Friesen, 2008). Despite Korean immigrants falling into the 'skilled' category, many first generation immigrants could not find employment in New Zealand due to lack of English skills, scant social networks and discrimination (Beal and Sos, 1999; Bedford et al., 2001; Ho, 2002). Unable to find jobs, many were self-employed, owning small businesses such as dairies, restaurants, travel agencies and hair salons (Lidgard, 1996; Hong, 2011). Quite often, studies found that their small businesses were hard to sustain and many lost their financial capital during business crises (Meares et al., 2009). This issue has been discussed in media and academic literature as a common problem for recent Asian migrants (Bedford et al., 2001; Lidgard and Yoon, 1998; Rasanathan et al., 2006). Unable to settle and make ends meet, some Korean families live as 'astronaut' households whereby one parent works from their homeland and sends money to the rest of their family in New Zealand[3] (Ho, 2002; Seo, 2007; Bartley, 2003).

The growth of Korean immigrants started to decrease at the end of the 1990s, and saw a small growth in 2003 before starting to decrease again (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). Figure 1.2 illustrates the net gain of Korean immigrants in New Zealand between 1982 and 2006. As can be seen, net gains of Korean immigrants have been negative since 2005. This does not mean there were no Korean immigrants moving to New Zealand during this period, but rather that out-migration has exceeded in-migration (Refer to Figure 1.2). This follows a similar trend to the Chinese population (Ho, 2002; 2003). In this context, it is speculated that the economic crisis in

[3] This background is important in understanding the study participants' lives. As children of these migrants, they often had to help out with their parents' businesses in order for them to be sustained. Also, a number of the study participants were living in the 'astronaut' family situation. Some of these narratives are illustrated in Chapter Five as one of the common characteristics of their migration experiences.

East Asia in the late 1990s reduced the number of incoming permanent migrants in the years between 1998 and 2001 (Bedford et al., 2001).

Figure 1. 2 Net long term and permanent migration by South Koreans to New Zealand, 1982-2009



(Source: Arrival & Departure data, Statistics NZ, 2010)

Along with this decrease in immigration numbers, a report from the Department of Labour indicates that the numbers of permanent immigrant residents who are leaving for the long term were increasing in the mid-2000s. The study shows that 16% of people approved for permanent residence between 1998 and 2005 had been outside New Zealand for six months or more as of December 2006 (Merwood, 2008: 93). Out of those, 25% of migrants approved at 1998 have been absent for more than six months, which illustrates that the longer the migrants reside in New Zealand, the more likely they are to move away from New Zealand (Merwood, 2008). About 12.5% of Korean immigrants to New Zealand were shown to be away from New Zealand (Merwood, 2008). Out of those who were absent, those in the skilled category have the highest rate of long term absence. This situation could be a reflection of the group's transnational character, as well as and of their available financial and social capital which facilitates moving to another destination. However, there needs to be more research on the exact number of migrants, as well as the causes of emigration and resettlement patterns (Merwood, 2008). Yet, it makes it difficult to measure the exact number of immigrants' out-migration as they may be holding onto two (or more) passports. Previously, Ho (2002) illustrated that we are beginning to see a higher proportion of short term migrants as opposed to 'permanent' long term migrants because most migrants are

either returning to their countries of origin or to a third destination. Certainly, this phenomenon is reflected in the Korean community as well.

The reason New Zealand is losing its long term migrants is scantily researched. Ho (2002) has contended that a large number of local Chinese graduates return to their homeland for better employment benefits and opportunities. First generation immigrants seem to return to their homeland to find jobs and also for retirement. However, more research needs to be carried out if we are to arrive at an understanding of the nuanced complexities underlying the decision of an immigrant to move 'home'.

The increase of return migration is an indication of increasing numbers of 'transnational migrants' as opposed to 'permanent settlers', which implies changes in migration patterns (Ho, 2002; Ip, 2000). Ho (2002) suggests that a new set of migration policies that are more reflective of the recent 'moving' and 'mobile' migrants need to be developed for the future. A number of scholars have emphasised the need to investigate the causes of the move, cultural and economic impacts, and resettlement patterns in the immigrants' receiving homelands to understand the wider societal impacts of return flows (King, 2000; Guzzetta, 2004; Cassarino, 2004). More importantly, return has been seen not just as a policy concern but also a matter of emotions and identity negotiations for those who are involved (Christou, 2006; Tsuda, 2003).

Within New Zealand policy and media discourses, interest in immigrants focuses heavily on economic gains and losses. International migrants are seen as financial entities and contributors to the state's development and there is also an assumption that economic interests are the recent immigrants' foremost concerns in terms of settling in to New Zealand society (Lidgard and Yoon, 1998; Bedford, Ho and Lidgard, 2001; Ho, 2002). Such a focus on money overshadows individual and cultural reasons that may be significant factors shaping immigrants' decisions to either stay or leave the country. From the sending country's perspective, immigrants' return migration becomes an issue because the country loses permanent residents and financial capital. In much of the literature, authors have presumed that it is unrealistic to expect immigrants to show great 'loyalty' to New Zealand as evidenced by the increasing number of short term migrants and astronaut families (Bedford et al., 2001; Ho, 2002; Spoonley et al., 2003). 'Loyalty' is a slippery term. It largely refers to financial and developmental allegiances that immigrants are willing to build with the state. Studies of returnees have illustrated in the past that those who are re-settled in their

homeland may still consider their host society to be their 'home' in the sense of where they feel they belong and where they eventually see themselves retiring (Muggeridge et al., 2006; Seo, 2007; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). The meaning of 'loyalty' needs to be expanded and those immigrants who left their host country should not be considered 'disloyal' (Bedford et al., 2001).

1.3 My personal migration journey

My personal migration journey was significant to this study in terms of shaping its initial research design and the way I analysed my findings. The fact that I was an immigrant myself before becoming a researcher needs to be discussed. In this section, I share my personal migration journey and how this experience fuelled an interest in 'transnational connections', 'home' and 'return'.

I was born in Seoul, Korea. As part of the 'new immigration wave of the 1990s, I immigrated to New Zealand at the age of ten with my parents and my older sister. I lived on the North Shore of Auckland and attended the region's largest high school where there were 100 other Korean students in my year alone. Growing up in New Zealand but in a 'Korean bubble' created a dilemma for me through my teenage years. Am I really living the life of a New Zealander? Or will I ever get the chance to? Indeed, living in the era of a globalised social world, my daily life as a migrant consisted of, among other things, watching Korean TV shows and listening to Korean music. One day, I realised that I was only speaking Korean, both at home and school, because I was surrounded by many other Korean immigrants. Somehow I wanted to challenge myself and live a life that was fully detached from being 'Korean'. When I was 17, I decided to take a 'gap year' and live in North America as an exchange student. During this time, I lived in a small town in Kansas, a town with a population of only 5000 where there was only one Chinese family and the rest were white. In the United States, I decided that I was a New Zealander. Until this time, I hadn't realised how much I had been influenced by New Zealand culture. Being detached from my country of birth for almost 10 years meant that I did not know much about my birth country but more about my current 'homeland', New Zealand. So, after returning to New Zealand and commencing my bachelor's degree in Geography and English, I decided to move to and live in Seoul again for a semester as an exchange student[4]. This time, I wanted to experience my original

[4] This became my first long-term return experience, which I have constantly reflected upon throughout my research process.

culture and regain my sense of Korean identity. My experience tells me that being a 'transmigrant', that is staying connected to the culture of one's original homeland through media, frequent visits and conversing with family and friends back home is a highly symbolic experience. Unless you are physically living in the country, 'transnational connections' can be experienced in a much more abstract sense. In other words, I did not realise of all the 'disconnections' to my own 'homeland' and my identity until I physically located and re-located myself within both nations (and outside of them).

At the outset, I did not want to research migration as I found the subject to be too personal. I did not want to 'navel gaze' (Sultana, 2007) about people whom I know; the stories that are closely related to mine, and my friends and family's. My interest in studying migration initially came from a health geographer's perspective.[5] I became interested in and concerned about first generation Korean immigrants' usage of health care facilities in New Zealand from the perspective of literature on therapeutic landscapes (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 2007) and medical consumption (Kearns and Barnett, 1996). I began to see a large number of Korean immigrants who were not happy with the health care facilities in New Zealand and who were seeking health care in their homeland, South Korea. This eventually led me to read about 'home' and migration, affect, identity and the difficulties minority immigrants face. After completing my honours research, I realised that I had something more to give back to the Korean community, both as a Korean New Zealander and as a geographer. I wanted to research the everyday lives of Korean immigrants in New Zealand. I found that Korean migration is scantily researched within the New Zealand context and that the fact that I was studying my own people gave me more passion for the research I was conducting.

I became interested in the return-flow of Korean immigrants to their original homeland as I started to observe more and more Korean immigrants leaving New Zealand to return to Korea. I heard successful stories of people who returned to Korea and attained highly paid jobs in good companies such as *Samsung*, and became international lawyers. On the other hand, there were people who returned because they could not find jobs in New Zealand, and Korea seemed to be an easy option. There is a common saying among the Korean community that 'if you can't find a job in New Zealand, you can always go to Korea and teach English.' I started to wonder whether

[5] This study can be found in: Lee, J.Y.J, Kearns, R. and Friesen, W. 2010, Seeking affective health care: Korean immigrants' use of homeland medical services, *Health and Place, 16 (2010), 108-115.*

returning to Korea was solely an economic decision. Then in 2008, my sister decided that she wanted to return to Korea for living. It was a difficult decision for her because she was working as a dentist in New Zealand and if she wanted to work in Korea, she had to study for 1-2 years in order to pass the Korean national dentistry examination. To study for the exam, she had to give up employment and study full time because it is considered to be a very difficult test, especially if you have not done schooling in Korea. For her, returning to Korea was not for economic reason, but rather personal and cultural reasons. Being a member of an ethnic minority at school and in New Zealand society in general was something that she was not always comfortable with. After living in New Zealand for more than 13 years, she felt that she 'needed to return home[6].' Based on my personal encounter of a short return experience, and hearing return or return-intention stories of those around me, I wanted to conduct research on the phenomenon of return migration.

1.4 Research Participants: 1.5 generation immigrants

The realisation that I had to place limits on the number and nature of those I wanted to research came early in the research process. The stories between the first generation and 1.5 generation differed significantly because they were returning at different phases of their life-course. Also, their experiences and knowledge of Korea as their homeland were different. As first generation immigrants, they lived more than half of their lives in Korea and were much more socially connected. Yet, as a 1.5 generation immigrant, their idea of 'homeland' was based on their childhood or early teenage life memories, and they had to rely on what they saw in media or what they gained from their holiday visits. Being an insider 1.5 generation myself, and also seeing more and more of my personal friends returning to Korea, I decided to solely examine the experiences of the 1.5 generation.

Narratives of children's migratory experience, the children's perspectives about their parents' lives and themselves, and their changing identities as they grow older and mature in their homeland are significant (Levitt and Waters, 2002). Much of the current discussions on return migration and migration more generally focus either on first or second generation immigrants and pay less attention to those who are 'in-between' – the '1.5 generation' (Bartley and Spoonley, 2008; Bartley, 2003; Min and Kim, 1999; Danico, 2004; Park, 1999).

[6] My sister eventually returned to Korea in 2010. She is currently working in Korea as a dentist. Although she did not participate in my study as an interviewee, she gave me many insights into her everyday living.

There is not a universal definition of who is considered to be a '1.5 generation'. The term is mostly used in order to differentiate those who immigrated as children of their first generation parents, but who were still born overseas. Some scholars only include those who immigrated as teenagers and exclude those who immigrated as young children to be part of the second generation group (Park, 1999). I follow the broader definition used by Bartley and Spoonley (2008: 68) to refer to "children, aged between six and 18 years, who migrate as part of a family unit, but who have experienced at least some of their formative socialisation in the country of origin".

1.5 generation immigrants' migration and settlement experiences are different from their parents as well as from 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants who are born in the host destination. It is also contended that 1.5 generation's strategies are inconsistent from the historical experiences of earlier migrants (Bartley and Spoonley, 2008). The 'in-betweenness' is something that is unique to this generation's experience, and we are constantly reminded of this throughout the empirical narratives in this study. The study participants are also of the generation born mostly in the 1980s and late 1970s, who have experienced the beginning of the internet technology era. I still remember when I first immigrated to New Zealand and the only way to connect with my friends back home was to write and send hand-written letters. It wasn't until I was at high school that the internet became a commonly used form of communication. Similar to my personal experience, the changing form of transnational connections during their life course and experiences are highlighted by the 1.5 generation study participants.

1.5 Research Objectives

The overall objective of this study is *to understand the everyday experiences of the 1.5 generation returnees from a transnational perspective and to investigate how and to what extent transnational connections shape and affect their everyday lives*. In a more practical sense, the thesis also aims to contribute to the growing understanding of transnational migrants as 'human capital'. These migrants are often considered to be 'globally skilled' and able to create significant changes in various parts of the world with their abilities to forge bridges across national borders (Ghosh, 2000; Conway and Potter, 2009). I investigate this particular situation within the context of the receiving homeland. I have designed a set of chronologically ordered research questions to ensure the storyline is explicit and clear. I illustrate where the return experience initiated and changed over the period of pre-return, return, and post-return. Under a number of broader theoretical questions, I want readers to firstly understand 'why did returnees return?', 'how did

they find jobs and experience their work spaces?' and 'how did their sense of identity change over the time of their re-settlement?' There are a number of specific research objectives:

1. To contribute to the theory of transnationalism by achieving a more nuanced understanding of 'small-scale transnationalism' through the particular narratives of 1.5 generation Korean New Zealander returnees. To understand how transnational connections affect and shape returnees' everyday lives.

2. To examine the complexities of Korean New Zealander returnees' decision making processes through a life-history approach. To explore what kinds of 'myths' and imaginings of 'home' the returnees believed in prior to their return, what motivated their move, and what difficulties they found in deciding to return.

3. To identify the extent of how returnee workers are individually acting as 'agents of change' in Korean society among different job sectors. To understand the returnees' individual and collective everyday experiences at work, and to suggest how a positive relationship between return and development can be achieved.

4. To understand the range of internal and external elements that affect the returnees' identity negotiation and challenges over the course of their return and re-return experiences. To examine how much their search for 'home' affects their identities and how identities change and mature over time and space.

5. To investigate further the insider researcher's role within the research process and find ways to improve the researcher/participant relationship. To contribute to existing literatures on ethnographic methodologies.

1.6 Thesis Organisation

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two explains the theoretical framework of the thesis. This chapter illustrates the general overview of the return migration field of study and illustrates the need to find a specified definition of 'return'. Transnationalism theory is introduced as the most important theoretical framework in this study

and is discussed in detail. A number of critiques of transnational approaches are reviewed followed by several refinements for this particular study.

Chapter Three provides a contextual framework within which to understanding Korean New Zealand returnees' journeys. The political and social context of Korea as the receiving homeland is illustrated. I highlight discussion surrounding the Overseas Korean Act of 1999, contention over dual citizenship and the general social reception by the local Korean population. This information contextualises the participants' return journeys and experiences. This chapter provides understanding of the existent political and social borders which often characterise the returnees as 'cultural and national outsiders' despite their ethnic (or national) ties.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology that was used for the thesis. Here, I discuss the importance of the researcher's role in data collecting processes. I illustrate what I mean by 'transnational ethnography' and illustrate step by step how I designed this research, what I did during the field work stage, and I explain how I analysed my data.

Chapter Five is the first results chapter. Here, I examine the motivations of Korean New Zealander returnees. This chapter gives an overview of why the returnees decided to return and first questions the extent of the impact of transnational networks on returnees. Instead of categorising their return reasons, I highlight the complexities of one's decision making processes. I differentiate their returning reasons through long-term and short-term timeframes to illustrate that some of their return intentions developed over a long period of time while other decisions were made quickly upon their tertiary graduation and entering adulthood. Here, I illustrate that while the long-term reasons, such as ethnic minority experiences, were overshadowed by the short term reasons such as finding jobs and wanting a new lifestyle, they presented to be equally important return motivations. I emphasise the importance of undertaking a life-history approach to understanding one's intention to return over their life time.

Chapter Six focuses on the working experiences of returnees. In this chapter, I explore returnees' work experiences in relation to the broader theory of viewing returnees as 'agents of change'. Are they bringing development in their own spaces as shown by policy and media? If so, what kind of 'changes' are they making in Korean society? While I attempt to answer these questions, I illustrate that there has been a markedly small amount of attention paid to exactly how these

'actors of development' experience their work and their role in the society. The narratives of work life in Korea, conflicts and relationships with their co-workers, and their sense of achievement and failure are illustrated.

Chapter Seven is the last and the largest results chapter. In the first half, I illustrate how the returnees and re-returnees develop their sense of minority identity in their homeland based on their 'overseas Korean status' and the differences that they feel. I show a number of tangible and intangible factors that construct Korean New Zealander returnee identities in Korea such as their citizenship status, (physical and emotional) bodies, and their sense of 'home'. In the second half of the chapter, I illustrate how the returnees come to appreciate their minority identities and mature over time to gain a more stable sense of self. They engage in many 'redirected-transnational' activities to stay connected with New Zealand. I argue that the ability to perform their Korean and New Zealand identities becomes important to a stronger sense of self.

Chapter Eight summarises the key thesis findings and illustrates a number of integrated themes. I highlight the importance of taking a small scale transnational approach to understand that transnational experiences are partial and they change over time and space. I also illustrate the ways in which fixed ideas of 'national' are still important in constructing the returnees' hybrid identities. I conclude by humbly identifying the limitations of this study and suggesting the ways in which the work paves the ways for research into the future.

2. A Transnational approach to Return Migration

Transnationalism sets out a rich theoretical context through which we can explore return migration. This particular approach to studying migration no longer sees return as an end to one's migration, but rather as part of a migratory cycle with potential further journeys. Unlike the representations of past migrants who were expected to assimilate fully into their host society but also 'longed to return to their home nation', transnationalism sets out an explicit domain within which to view recent migrants as much more mobile and flexible migrants in choosing their lives and identities through their social, economic, and political linkages across borders (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc, 1994). From a transnational approach, 'return' can no longer be seen from a retrospective perspective. Indeed, transnationalism has been criticised for its 'sloppiness' in that the terminology is too inclusive and broad (Vertovec, 2001; Kivisto, 2001), and that it minimises the importance of national borders (Glick-Schiller et al., 1999).

The primary concern of this thesis is to contribute to the theory of transnationalism and the growing study field of return migration. Firstly, I start by illustrating a number of key patterns of understanding within the growing field of return migration studies that have been essential in shaping the particular concerns of this thesis. Secondly, I show how a transnational approach has been adopted as a significant theoretical framework to my study. The development of the concepts 'transnationalism' and 'transmigrants' will be discussed and critiqued. Finally, I make a number of refinements from the broader theories of transnationalism and propose to signify agency in the 'everyday' experiences and emphasise the political and social context in Korea. Based on my empirical findings, the thesis offers a nuanced understanding of 'how' and 'to what extent' transnational linkages actually impact upon Korean New Zealand returnees' individual lives.

2.1 Return Migration: A growing field

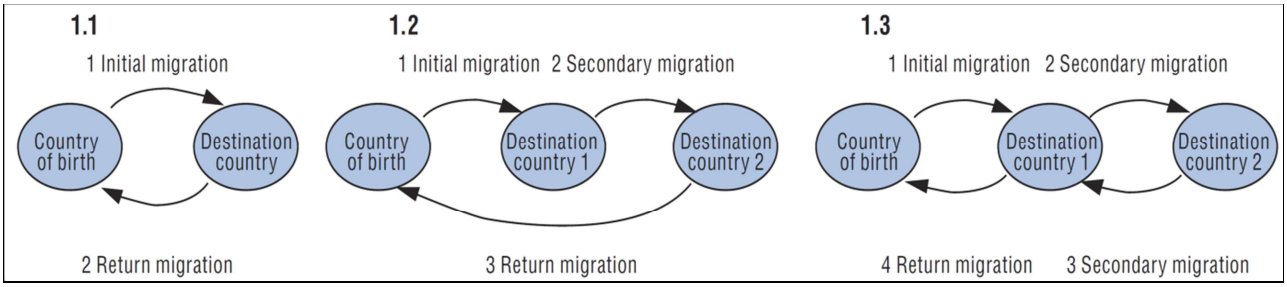
As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, return migration has not been a commonly researched field within migration literatures. Most international migration studies have focused on the 'host society' context and paid less attention to those who returned. From the 1970s, return migration started to become of greater research significance in its own right, and scholars began to categorise, theorise, and critically examine return migration (Cerase, 1967;1974; Bovenkerk, 1974;1981; Rogers, 1984; King, 1978, 1986;1988). Earlier work tended to analyse return migration from a structural perspective, examining what political and economic factors shape return movements. Those studies have generally viewed return as a 'failure of the initial migration' (Cerase, 1974), or a 'closure' of one's migration cycle (Gmelsh, 1980). The study field increased further over the last two decades with contributions from diverse social science disciplines including anthropology, geography and political science. Scholars began to expand the notion of 'return', increasingly employed micro-scale qualitative methodologies, and developed more critical analysis of the diversity of return movements. Today, there are books solely devoted to examining return migration (Ghosh, 2000; Tsuda, 2003a;2009; Conway and Potter, 2008; Christou, 2006a; Sussman, 2011), as well as hundreds of articles and book chapters which examine return issues. Return migration can certainly no longer be treated as the "unwritten chapter in the history of migration" (King, 2000:7), but is still considered to be growing field. In this section, I provide an overview of the different types and patterns of return migration and a number of important theoretical refinements that have been made by various return scholars. These refinements have influenced my study and formed the basis for taking a transnational approach to studying Korean New Zealand return migration.

Defining and confining return migration

Return migration is generally understood as the movement whereby long term immigrants decide to return to their original homeland or birthplace after a significant period of residence in their overseas destination, regardless of their citizenship (King, 2000). This means that the return migrants could be naturalised overseas citizens returning to their original homeland as foreign nationals. Return can also be part of a complex history of one's migration journeys. The OECD[7] annual report of the International Migration Outlook (2008) showed that one's return migration journey may be more complex than a direct return to one's country of birth (Refer to Figure 2.1).

[7] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Figure 2. 1 Various cases of return migration



(Source: OECD, 2008)

As shown in Figure 2.1, there could be a short or long stay in another destination country before a migrant finally moves back to their original homeland[8]. Until today, 'return' has often been classified as a 'backward' movement and studies only examine the first generation immigrants returning to their place of origin. Often, return is seen as the end to one's migratory journey (King, 2000). Hence, terms such as back-migration, retro-migration or counter-migration have been used in past literatures (Cerase, 1974; Gmelsh, 1980; King, 2000). Those terms certainly suggested that return is a movement towards the 'traditional' and as mentioned in an earlier study, returnees brought changes to the "traditional ways of thinking" in home country (Cerase, 1974:258).

Early anthropologists such as Brettell (2003) and Long and Oxford (2004) problematised the term 'return migration' as it does not apply to the wide variety of return migration movements. Although it is a 'backward' movement, one could certainly be moving 'forward' in terms of finding jobs and improved quality of life (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). Also, voluntary return migration and repatriation (forced return migration) have been distinguished as two fundamentally different movements (Ghosh, 2000). There is confusion over defining what 'return' means because sometimes it connotes something particular, yet it varies through individual and social circumstances and differs geographically and historically (Cassarino, 2004; King, 2000). For the remainder of this chapter, I focus solely on 'voluntary return migration' studies as the two movements are distinct in their return intentions and societal impacts.

[8] Increasingly policy makers are becoming interested in the number of return movements because it is an important practical matter for governmental and immigration policy (Ho and Bedford, 2008; Guzzetta, 2004; Cassarino, 2004; Hugo, 2004). The OECD study argues that this complex history of one's migration journey makes it difficult if not impossible to measure and predict return migration. Due to the complexity of one's migratory history and the number of citizenships that the migrant may possess, it is impossible to measure exactly how many people return and to where. Whether to measure return from the re-entry point of the receiving country or the departure gate of the sending country is a complex matter that hasn't been solved yet in many countries due to their lack of demographic measuring skills (OECD, 2008; Sussaman, 2011; Guzzetta, 2004).

First and foremost, an important distinction needs to be made between a return migration and an 'ancestral' or ethnic return migration. The former involves first generation and the latter involves second or third or fourth generation movements to the ancestral homeland (Tsuda, 2003a; Christou, 2006a). For the first generation immigrants, return means returning to their birthplace - where they spent part of their childhood or adulthood. It can often be a harmonious return (although scholars argue that return can equally be difficult for first generations), and it is returning in the sense of 'going back' to where they are originally from. For the second or third generation immigrants, however return means a new (or imagined) experience, a challenge, and a new beginning. Such 'home coming' movement is not an actual return, but a new migration. It is a 'return' only in the sense that they are returning to their ancestors' ethnic homelands or where they consider their 'home' to be or where they ethnically belong (Tsuda, 2003a; Christou, 2006a).

King (2000) suggests that there are different kinds of return migration, depending on the length of time that the returnees are intending to spend in their home country. Firstly, there are occasional returns, which consist of holiday visits and going back for special occasions such as family weddings or funerals. Secondly, there are seasonal returns, which are mostly dependent on the returnees' seasonal work. Thirdly, there are temporal returns, which take place when the returnees decide to live in their home country for a long period of time with the intention of re-returning back to their host society. Lastly, there are permanent returns, where returnees decide to resettle in their home nation for the rest of their lives (King, 2000). Those who return occasionally or temporally seem to share characteristics of being 'transmigrants' – those who maintain economic and social ties with their homeland (Kivisto, 2001). These are return mobilities that consist of provisional returns and return ideologies (King and Christou, 2011). Those returning temporarily or permanently reflect more widely used definitions of what return migration is.

Although policy literature and demographic studies are more interested in the actual 'return migration', a social science perspective considers the various kinds of 'return' in ideological and temporal senses. These are taken as important 'return experiences' which shape migrants' lives and identities. Scholars call this 'imagined return' (Oxfeld and Long, 2004) or the 'myth of return' (Anwar, 1979), where immigrants spend their life as expatriates and always imagine returning. The 'myth of return' in the case of pioneer Pakistanis in Britain included socioeconomic ideas such as imagining earning lots of money or starting new businesses upon returning home (Anwar, 1979). Bolognani (2007) examines the changes to the 'myth' for younger generation UK-based

Pakistanis, which involves more personal and political reasons and where the homeland is seen as being more spiritual and welcoming. What is important is that even if they may never return, imagining return frames their life as being involved with their country of origin (Anwar, 1979; Oxfeld and Long, 2004). Ni Laoire (2008) argues that desire to return is an enduring theme of diasporic[9] culture. It is rooted in a romantic view of a homeland in which the dream of return plays a significant role in the maintenance of immigrants' national identities. Hence, return in this sense is often chiefly constructed in terms of 'settling back' (Ni Laoire, 2008). However, 'settling back' is often complicated by the notion of culture shock (Ni Laoire, 2008) and exclusions (Tsuda, 2003a). As a result, immigrants often find themselves having to 're-settle in'. These ideas of 'imagining return' are related to the important question of where returnees consider their place of 'home' to be. I return to the topic of 'home' in relation to return later in this chapter.

Brettell (2003) asserts that an analytical distinction should be maintained between goal of return (intention) and actual return (outcome). Brettell (2003) illustrates that a cultural ideology of return in the Portuguese context is somewhat contradictory, yet it plays an important part in the emigrants' intentions and outcomes of return. Most of the Portuguese emigrants between the 1950s and 1970s moved overseas under the illusion that they would earn a higher income from the 'lands of opportunity' in developed countries in Northern Europe. Brettell (2003) claims that Portuguese emigrants maintained links to their homeland and that there had always been 'institutionalised nostalgia' towards their home nation, which eventually led them to return. While there is this diasporic ideology of return, returnees often returned in order to display their wealth through building expensive houses and showing off their trendy French fashion. What is more elusive about their return is that they may not have been as rich as they appeared, but the returnees portrayed themselves to be rich to the locals in order to prove that their initial decision to emigrate was the right choice. Hence, there is an illusion of migration and return. Brettell (2003) calls those illusions the cultural ideology of return – since certain cultures view migration differently depending on their cultural practices and political contexts.

[9] There are three main features which define diaspora. Firstly, it refers to the idea of 'scattering' or forced movement from an earlier homeland. Secondly, there is a strong sense of longing and nostalgia toward a homeland. Thirdly, there is a strong mutual construction of identity which gives an ethnic and cultural bond (Blunt, 2003; Hall, 1990; Clifford, 1994). The idea of 'return' is strongly embedded in many diasporic communities and numerous studies take a 'diasporic approach' to return, examining their ancestral homeland as a 'home'. A diasporic approach to return also views return as an unquestionable movement back to one's 'home' - possibly for a sense of belonging and to 'settle back' (Ni Laoire, 2008) to one's comfortable place. Such discourses of return are problematic because those ideas could create misconceptions and complexities when it comes to defining what 'return' actually means for individuals in a certain context.

Some scholars consider the initial migration phase and explain types of return migration by 'intended' and 'un-intended' acts of movements (Bovenkerk, 1974; King, 2000). 'Intended' return migration characterises temporary immigrants who are more committed to their home country. 'Unintended' movements refer to immigrants who are committed to their host society and whose initial intention was to settle permanently in their host society – hence their return was never intended. Those who intend to return when they first emigrate will eventually return once everything they were looking for overseas is achieved. In contrast, some may end up postponing or concealing their return because they find their families fully integrated and return is seen as unnecessary. There are groups of migrants who do not intend to return when they migrate and aim for permanent settlement in their overseas settings. While some do end up staying, others return. This can be due to structural factors, such as changes in immigration policy or economic developments, or because of individual factors such as homesickness or family circumstances (Bovenkerk, 1974; King, 2000). The theory of intentions and outcomes (Bovemkerk, 1974) illustrates that the decision-making process of return is complicated, being interwoven between intentions and outcomes throughout one's migration journey. This view emphasises the nature of people's movements being full of expected and unexpected events. Further discussion on why returnees return is provided in Chapter Five.

There is a need for a more precise and nuanced vocabulary for different types of return. Within the broad category of voluntary return migration, return can be defined according to the length of stay, return intentions and outcomes, cultural ideologies of return, and where the place of birth or 'home' might be. Although a number of different types and patterns of return have been defined above, there are many other aspects that need to be further interrogated. There are varying types of return migration and return mobilities, and most importantly different 'cultural ideologies' of return (Brettell, 2003) which should be taken as an initial consideration when researching a return phenomenon. It is noteworthy that 'typing' return migration into rigid categories in the first place can lead to a danger of misrepresenting the return story. For instance, even if Korean New Zealander returnees are categorized as 'voluntary return migrants', there are many complicated and interwoven push and pull factors which shape the return movement. Moreover, there are 'un-intended' returns because of personal and family factors which were not really a 'choice' for some returnees.

Return and development

The study focus of returnees as 'agents of change' has been of great interest to return migration scholars (Bovenkerk, 1974; Conway and Potter, 2009; King, 2000; Tsuda, 2010). The most important question is "how can return be made more attractive and sustainable by forging links between return, reintegration, and the development of the country of birth" (Ghosh, 2000:5). In earlier cases, "immigrants were expected to eventually return home, and long-distance nationalism[10] contained a call to come and rebuild the land" (Glick Shiller & Fouron 2001:4). Returnees were expected to bring positive changes back to their homeland, via remittances for example. In the case of 1970s Europe, returnees have occasionally been regarded as the 'dedicated agents of change':

> The image portrayed was one of peasants-turned-innovators who, upon their return, would offer their countrymen the worldview and skills necessary for modernisation. As a result of foreign training, migrants returning to their natal villages could – as dedicated entrepreneurial change agents – wisely invest mind, body, and capital and contribute mightily to the arduous and long haul toward modernisation
>
> (Rhoades, 1978:137)

Such a positive view of return and innovations was apparent, especially in the 'urban to rural' and 'wealthier to poorer nations' contexts where internet technology and global networks were less common from the receiving land's perspective. Hence, a 'foreign training' was regarded as an even more valuable asset. King (2000) also states that returnees who moved back to a less developed homeland made more positive contributions.

A number of studies have attempted to explain the actual impacts of return migration on the receiving country's development and how such a development can be predicted or managed through policy. The 'impacts' have been discussed in two broad forms: first, as financial inputs such as remittances or bringing of goods, and secondly, as human capital (skills and knowledge gained overseas) (Williams and Balaz, 2005). For example, returnees have been regarded as effective farmers after obtaining skills overseas (Oberai and Singh, 1982), good investors in building new businesses (Rhoades, 1978), and transnational professionals with their 'high skills' (Williams, 2005; Zweig, 2006; Conway and Potter, 2009). In order to predict this linkage between return migration and development, Bovenkerk (1974) has evaluated what kind of factors may

[10] Long-distance nationalism is a claim to membership in a political community that stretches beyond the territorial borders of a homeland. It generates an emotional attachment that is strong enough to compel people to political and personal actions that range from displaying a home country flag to deciding to return and die in their homeland (See Glick-Shiller and Fouron, 2001).

affect the extent of positive changes that returnees can bring to their home nation. These factors include:

- Actual numbers of returnees: if the number is too large, it will create unequal distribution of wealth; if it is too small, returnees will have little or no effect.
- Duration of absence: the returnees should have lived overseas for a significant length of time (between ten and 12 years) to be adaptive in both cultures.
- Social class of returnees: the higher the educational and financial status the returnees have, the more positive the impact they are likely to have.
- Preparedness: how well prepared (both financially and socially) the returnees are prior to their return will affect their impact.

Despite predictions of the positive impact of returnees, researchers have also indicated that in reality, changes and development may not necessarily take place with 'great' effects (Rhoades, 1978; Cerase, 1974; Bovenkerk, 1981; Gmelch, 1980). Bovenkerk (1981) and Gmelch (1980) both affirm that the most 'successful' and well-educated immigrants are more likely to settle in their overseas settings, while the less successful migrants are more likely to return. Past studies have highlighterd a pessimistic view on returnees as agents of change given that return movement itself has been perceived as a 'failure' of the initial migration (Ghosh, 2000). Earlier studies also suggested that returnees often found it difficult to adjust to their home nation; hence they were less likely to contribute successfully (Bovenkerk, 1981; Cerase, 1974).

The idea of returnees as 'agents of development' is elaborated in Chapter Six with this study's findings. I illustrate how much Korean New Zealander returnees have contributed to their homeland with their skills developed overseas; hence allowing them to be viewed as 'human capital'. I do this using a micro-scale approach in discussing how individuals make significant contributions to their individual work spaces. Such a discussion is difficult to find in the policy literature where the focus is often the number of returnees and how much monetary contribution they make (Waldorf, 1995; Dustmann, 1996;1997). As similarly argued by others (Conway and Potter, 2007; Jeffery and Murison, 2011; Thieme, 2012), I also illustrate that their working experience is a facet that is often ignored and emphasise the fact that before they are 'human capital', they are also human beings.

Return, 'Home' and Identity

While investigating population trends and socioeconomic benefits/losses of the sending and receiving nations have been major concerns for some scholars (Lidgard, 1994; Waldorf, 1995; Dustmann, 1996;1997; Ghosh, 2000) identity negotiations, emotional experiences and cultural meanings of 'home' became greater interests more recently (Brettell, 2003; Christou, 2003; 2006a; 2006b; 2006c; Tsuda, 2003a; 2003b; 2009; Ni Laoire, 2008; Ley and Kobayashi, 2003).

Theoretically, return migration "challenges, translates, defines, narrates and constructs new meanings of who I am in connection to the where I am" (Christou 2006a:15-16). Indeed, return migration scholars have continued to emphasise return experience as a turning point for the returnees whereby they gain a new sense of identity. Often, there has been mention of being minorities at both ends, first as immigrants in their host society and later as 'returnees' in their original homeland (Kim, 2009a; Tsuda, 2003a; Sussman, 2011). In these studies, 'home' is not just used as a physical place, but as a "site of homeness as a personal space of identification (place belonging)" (Christou, 2006a: 223).

Tsuda (2003a) argues that the gaining of returnees' new minority identities depends strongly on the socioeconomic status of the migrants and the social reception from the original homeland. For instance, Tsuda (2003a) explains that Japanese Brazilian returnees gain negative minority identities when they return to their ethnic homeland because within Japan, Brazilians are conceived to be from a 'poor nation'. On the other hand, Japanese immigrants in Brazil gain positive minority identities because they are from a developed nation. Hence, the Japanese Brazilian returnees' minority identities shift from positive to negative upon their return (Tsuda, 2003a). This is a significant finding because one would expect that immigrants' identities would be regained when they return to their original homeland. The difficult task is to deconstruct processes of identity formations and negotiations of those who are experiencing the challenge of migration. Tsuda (2003a) illustrates in his study that even for second or third generation Japanese immigrants in Brazil, they strongly maintain their Japanese identities because they are proud of their Japanese minority status. Hence it is unfortunate that they cannot gain the sense of reunification when they return. Rather than 'home' being comforting and welcoming, it can be exclusionary and judgmental (Tsuda, 2003a).

Even if we compare this experience to the skilled migration category (migrants who are considered to be 'transnational'), the case is not dissimilar. For instance, Korean American returnees who returned to Korea and gained high skilled jobs based on their overseas degrees and English skills still faced discrimination based on their cultural difference (Kim, 2009a). Despite them being an 'ethnic insider', they were seen as 'cultural outsiders'. Sussam (2011) also illustrates a similar concept of the importance of social reception by the home society. In the case of Hong Kong returnees, there are two different terminologies used to separate the overseas returnees based on their return intention. Those who return solely for economic reasons are called *huiliu* (return flow), while those who return because they consider Hong Kong to be their 'home' are called *huigui* (return to belong) (Sussman, 2011:64). Those who are referred as *huiliu* are expected to eventually move back to their country of destination, making them 'transnational sojourners' (Sussman, 2011). Sussman (2011) further illustrates through her study that Hong Kong reporters and academics continue to make these differences based on the socioeconomic status of their returned expatriates. This constructs certain identities for the returnees with different levels of acceptance and belonging to the home nation. These complicated notions of where one belongs in relation to their 'home' and identity are explored in Chapter Seven. In the next section, I explain how 'transnationalism' provides a useful theoretical framework through which Korean New Zealand return phenomena can be investigated.

2.2 Transnational approach to return migration

Increasingly, return studies are being framed under the theory of transnationalism (Tollefsen and Lindgren, 2006; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Ho, 2008; Seo, 2007). Return migration has been defined as "the return of immigrants to their home country in a form of circular migration that may be better understood through a transnational framework" (King and Newbold, 2008:86). While the diasporic approach to return studies often shows people returning to their homeland to find a sense of belonging under the illusion of 'home' (Ni Laoire, 2008), the transnational approach depicts people moving with greater knowledge and connections across national borders who 'strategically return' to suit their own lifestyle. In saying this, one has to be cautious to not generalise all returnees as 'transnational migrants' or even to generalise the concept of transnationalism. The notion of 'diasporic homecoming instinct' may still strongly exist within the recent transnational returnees, and one has to be careful not to over-emphasise the fluidity and neglect of recent immigrants' desire for national belonging. As Faist has pointed out, the two distinct theoretical

frameworks of diaspora and transnationalism are like 'awkward dance partners' (Faist, 2010:9) as while they are two contrasting concepts, there are many overlapping ideas. I begin this section by discussing the theory of transnationalism before moving onto how the theory has provided a rich conceptual framework to study recent voluntary 'skilled' returnees. I then illustrate the critiques of the transnationalism I am employing and find ways to overcome these critiques.

Transnationalism

In the 1970s and 1980s, the term 'transnationalism' was initially used by economists in a broad sense to describe transnational co-operations (TNCs) developed as a result of globalisation and the growing world's economy (Kivisto, 2001; Bailey, 2001; Sklair, 2001). The term 'transnational' explains the linkages and networks between economic actors at international scale via improved technology and flexible foreign policies (Kivisto, 2001).

It has been almost two decades since social scientists began to use the term 'transnationalism' to explain recent migration processes (Kivisto, 2001; Vertovec, 1999; Bailey, 2001). Scholars began to understand that international migration can "no longer be seen as a one-way process" (Levitt and Waters, 2002:5). Past studies on migration raised questions such as why people move and how do they settle in their host nation, examining the push and pull factors of migration (Pries, 1999; Kivisto, 2001), and these phenomena have been conceptualised under assimilation and cultural pluralism theories (Faist, 2000; Kivisto, 2001). In the 1920s and 1930s, migration research focused either on how migrants adapted themselves through assimilation or socially excluded themselves from host nations by retaining their cultural heritage (Vertovec, 2001; Baines, 2003). On the other hand, transnational theorists raise questions such as "what new transnational social realities are developing in and through the international migration networks?" (Pries, 1999:5) and 'what maintains the international flows?' (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Kivisto, 2001). To provide a general definition of transnationalism, I follow earlier anthropologists' description:

> Process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders.
>
> (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc, 1994:6)

Although movements between homeland and host society have been apparent in past immigration processes (Kivisto, 2001; Faist, 2000; Vertovec, 2001), the theory of transnationalism stresses much more intensified and permanent linkages that are highly characteristic of today's globalising nations (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Pries, 1999; Portes, 1999; Kivisto, 2001). A distinction has been made between transnationalism and transmigrants. While the former refers to the social, economic, political and cultural linkages which exist across national borders, the latter refers to the people who make and maintain those linkages (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992).

Vertovec (1999:449-456) has identified that there are six major aspects of transnationalism: 1) as a social morphology; 2) as diasporic consciousness; 3) as a model of cultural reproduction; 4) as an avenue of capital; 5) as political engagement; and 6) as reconceptualising the notion of place. Indeed the term transnationalism has been employed in a wide variety of social science disciplines and countless empirical studies are contributing to an understanding of recent migration phenomena. Vertovec argues that "we may do better to theorise a typology of transnationalism and the conditions that affect them" (2001:576), because the term has been used to explain too wide a range of processes. He lists four different ways to approach the transnationalism issue which are: 'new' migration, economics, politics, and society and culture (Vertovec, 2003). His articulation of each group of transnational linkages illustrates the different kinds of conditions that affect each type of transnational network. By employing these concepts, the past concepts of assimilation, permanent settlement, definitive return, and national boundaries were challenged.

Indeed, Vertovec's framework provided space to reconceptualise national borders in the "light of globalising processes" (Collins, 2008a:434). In other words, transnational advocates argued that immigrants could retain their ethnic identities across national borders, unlike past immigrants who either fully integrated to their host society or returned to reunite with their ethnic identities. As Kivisto and Faist assert, "the real significance of [transnationalism] is that assimilation and cultural pluralism are inadequate to account for the distinctive character of contemporary immigrants (2011:133)."

A clear distinction can be made between the Koreans who moved to America in the 1960s and 1970s and the Koreans who moved to New Zealand in the mid-1990s. While the former group culturally and politically adapted to the United States and attempted to assimilate to their host society's culture, the Korean immigrants in New Zealand are considered to be 'transmigrants',

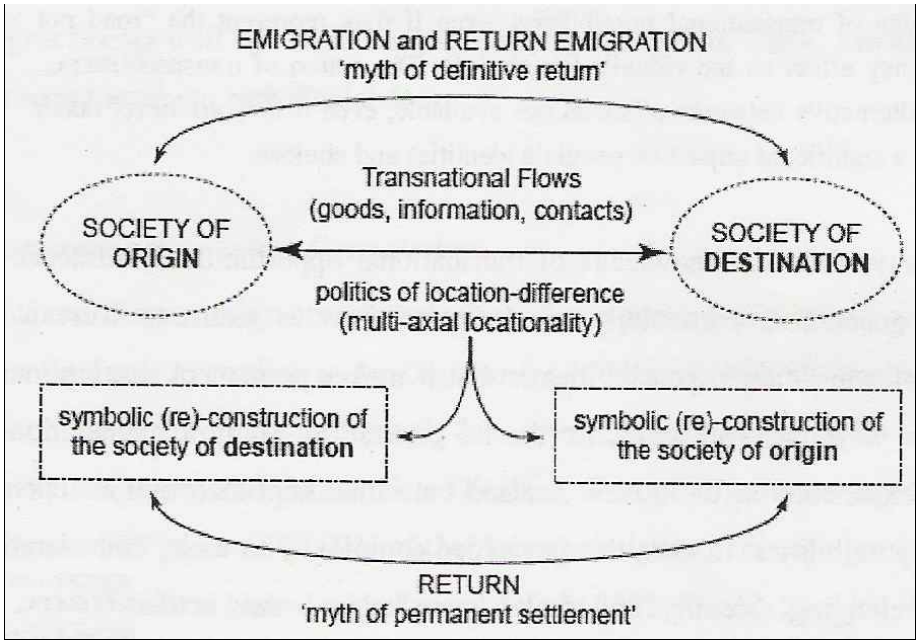
who maintain linkages between their home and host societies (Koo, 2010). This is due partly to the fact that internet and the technologies have advanced greatly over the past two decades and made it possible for immigrants to stay connected to their home society in their everyday lives across national borders. Also, the contexts of global economies and 'multicultural society' within which immigrants are living affect their lives more broadly (Kivisto, 2001; Kim and Won, 2008).

Transnational approach to return migration

Transnationalism sets out a rich theoretical context through which return migration can be explored. The particular approach to studying migration no longer views return as an end to one's migration, but as a part of a migratory cycle in which further journeys are possible. Unlike the past migrants who tended to assimilate fully into their host society, transnationalism proposes recent migrants to be much more mobile and flexible in choosing their lives and identities; they can adapt to more than one nation through their social, economic, and political linkages across borders (Basch, et al., 1994).

Faist (2000) introduced the idea of "transnational social spaces" or what are more commonly known as "transnational social fields" (Faist, 2000; Kivisto, 2001). From this perspective, transnationals started to view immigrants' national identity and belonging to be characterised by some mixture of social, cultural, economic and political relations across borders (Bailey, 2001; Basch et al., 1994). Kivisto and Faist state that "the idea of transnational spaces entail[s] considering the migratory system as a boundary-breaking process in which two (usually) or more nation states are penetrated by and become a part of a singular new social space" (2010:139). Garcia (2006) represents 'transnational social space' in diagrammatic form. As can be seen in Figure 2.2, the model illustrates how a transnational social field or space operates in a 'migration cycle.'

Figure 2. 2 The context of transmigration: The myth of definitive return



(Source: Garcia, 2006:410)

Garcia (2006) describes the ongoing relationships between the society of immigration and society of origin in the diagram. These alternative social networks are sustained by transnational flows that involve exchanges of goods, information and contacts between host and home societies. By doing so, a 'transnational social field' is established in its 'imagined' and abstract nature. Those who are living in this circular life of moving back and forth are aware of the opportunities and availabilities of social and economic entities. Bartly (2003) refers to the alternative opportunities in their homeland as 'simultaneous affective pull of the country of their origin.' This knowledge of transnational opportunities influences the choices within the daily lives of transnationals. Transnationalism can explain a phenomenon in which shared identity groups live in an imagined community and have an awareness of possible opportunities across their cultural groups. The idea of transnational social space across national boundaries reaffirms the 'myth of definitive return':

> Traditionally return is seen as the 'closure' of the migration cycle. But as transnational communities become more widely established and firmly embedded in the cultural geography of world population distribution, notions of "home" and "abroad" become blurred, as do definitions of migration, return, mobility, travel and so on[…] Transnationality replaces the fixedness of emigration and return.
>
> (King, 2000:44-45)

As King (2000) illustrates, taking a transnational approach to return further emphasises the fluidity and complexity of where one's 'home' might be. It challenges the old notion that return is the end to one's migration cycle, but tells us that it could be a part of one's continuous migration journey. From a transnational perspective, returnees return much more well prepared because of their social, economic, and political connections across borders. Thus, they are able to prepare themselves prior to their return:

> According to trasnationalists, returnees prepare their reintegration at home through periodical and regular visits to their home countries. They retain strong links with their home countries and periodically send remittances to their households. […] the regular contacts they maintain with their households in origin countries, as well as the back and forth movements which illustrate transnational mobility, allow their return to be better prepared and organised.
>
> (Cassarino, 2004:262)

There have been a number of studies which convey empirical evidence of recent transnational return migrants. Ley and Kobayashi (2005) illustrate that Hong Kong-Canadian returnees are best conceptualised as transnationals because of their abilities to move between the two nations. Hong Kong Canadian returnees strategically move back to their home country for economic reasons, and later, when they retire, they plan to move back to Canada for lifestyle benefits. For the Hong Kong Canadian returnees, they live in a stretched out transnational social field. Bolognani (2007) also illustrates how younger generation Pakistanis in Britain are well connected to their homeland as they are living in a transnational social field. Through their constant holiday visits to their homeland as well as their cultural connections, they are able to build a more realistic 'myth' about return and make practical decisions about going 'home' (Bolognani, 2007). This knowledge of transnational opportunities influences the choices of daily lives of transnationals. Hence, when it comes to making decisions about returning, it is no longer a 'return of failure', but a precisely decided one according to one's lifestyle choice or a choice of where one wants to be.

From a transnational perspective, return becomes a strategic or a 'privileged' movement because recent immigrants have access to different nations and they are more freely able to move around across borders. Yet, having too many 'choices' can also be a stressful experience (Bartley and Spoonley, 2008), particularly when there is jealousy or discrimination toward their 'privileged' positions (Glick-Shiller and Fouron 2001; C. Kim, 2003; Kim, 2009a). In his study of Korean New Zealand transmigrants, Koo (2010) illustrates that there are 'prices to be paid' for being

transnationals. Although Korean immigrants in New Zealand are highly transnational and they take advantage of their dual citizenship, they also face identity confusions and face discrimination in both societies based on their minority status.

Taking a transitional approach to understanding returnees and migrants in general can give an explicit context to help us to deconstruct recent migration phenomena. However, there have been a number of criticisms of the theory for its 'sloppiness' in terminology, which has been cited as being too inclusive and broad. In the next section, I illustrate a number of critiques of transnationalism theory which are worth noting when studying returnees under the framework.

The critiques of Transnationalism

Firstly, critiques have argued that the theory of transnationalism is nothing new, and the dichotomy of 'past assimilators' and 'present transmigrants' is too rigid (Kivisto, 2001). Although it is clear that the immigrants during the industrial era acculturated, they did so to only a certain degree (Kivisto, 2001). Vertovec (2001) also suggests that transnationalism should not be considered to be a newborn phenomenon but rather one that builds upon a number of preceding ones. Perhaps it is better to differentiate who are (non)transmigrants of the past and present rather than taking the approach of cultural anthropologists by completely excluding past studies and constructing a historical distinction (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992).

Secondly, transnationalism has been critiqued as too broad as it tries to encompass too many concepts under one umbrella of 'transnationalism'. This was highlighted by Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999:219):

> If all or most things that immigrants do are defined as transnationalism, then none is because the term becomes synonymous with the total set of experiences of this population. To be useful, a new term should designate a distinct class of activities or people different from those signified by more familiar concepts.

In another study, Portes (1999) attempts to differentiate between those who are (non)transmigrants of the past and present and argues that the use of the term transnationalism should be limited to those activities that involve continuity of social relationships across national borders over time. This approach emphasises that not all recent immigrants are transnationals. He argues that those with higher income and social capital are more likely to forge transnational linkages (Portes, 1999). Portes brings more refinement to the theory and illustrates transnationalism as an outcome of

various variables such as the amount of engagement of homeland issues for immigrants, and the role of the host society to new comers (Portes, 1999; Kivisto, 2001). The categorisation of different types of transmigrants has also been made in terms of their purpose of immigrating, and/or period of stay (Portes, 1999; Portes et al., 1999).

Even with this articulation of different types of transnationalism, however the theory cannot be fully adaptable as people's circumstances change over time and space. Critiques have argued that transnationalism is temporally and spatially indefinable (Kivisto, 2001). More articulation and refinement of how transantional linkages affect migrants in different space and time have been achieved in recent literatures. Through a case study of Polish migrants, Burell (2003) has illustrated that a migrant's age influences transnational linkages where the second and third generation immigrants' transnational networks are less engaging compared to their parents who are first generation. Burell illustrates that there needs to be a 'small-scale transnationalism' approach as there are different types and forms of transnational experiences even within one migration group. Indeed, transnationalism has been criticised for 'groupist thinking' (Collins, 2006), treating all recent migrants as homogeneous entities based on the notion of shared ethnicities and culture.

Another major criticism of transnationalism is the overemphasis on the 'loss of bordering', or the idea that there has been over emphasis on mobility and fluidity while homeland territory continues to be a powerful influence over transnational migrants' lives and identities (Ong and Nonini, 1997). Even if it was not the intention in the transnational literature, the theory tends to overstress the transnational linkages and depicts recent immigrants as 'highly mobile' and 'transnational'. Ralph and Staeheli argue in their recent review article on home and migration that:

> In the rush to conceptualise novel transnational configurations of people-place relationships, some researchers overemphasise the shifting and mobile meanings that migrants give to home, while underplaying the resilience of its stable, bounded and fixed interpretations.
>
> (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011:517)

As argued by a number of recent transnational scholars, a strong tie to the native country is still important irrespective of transnational connections (Burrell, 2003; Ralph and Staeheli, 2011). More attention needs to be paid to recent immigrants from the standpoint of being immigrants rather than as 'floaters' and 'sojourners' (King and Christou, 2011).

So far, transnationalism has been criticised for its past and present dichotomy (Kivisto, 2001), broadness in its term (Portes, 1999), imprecise spatial and temporal definition (Vertovec, 1999; Kivisto, 2001), and its overemphasis on 'fluidity' (Ralph and Staehhili, 2011). The overall criticism is that transnationalism lacks in specificity and it does little to portray the individual complexities of experiencing transnational linkages across still important borders (Van-Hear, 1998; Boyle et al., 1998; Kivisto, 2001).

2.3 Towards a nuanced understanding of 'transnational' return

Following the strong criticism of transnationalism approaches, there has been a 'second-wave' of transnational research that has been characterised by more refined and detailed case studies to highlight the complexities of many transnational situations:

> Such efforts have included greater consideration of what transnationalism is, where and how it occurs, and perhaps most importantly what effects it has on the people who move, the people who don't, and the broader social, cultural, economic, political and environmental contexts of contemporary experience.
>
> (Collins, 2006:46)

Indeed, as Collins (2006) illustrates, an increasing number of studies have attempted to expand knowledge on the specific details of 'what effects transnationalism has on people' and also how they *don't* in some situations. Transnationalism still provides an important framework to help us think through how people stay connected and not connected through the impact of globalisation and increasing international connections (Kivisto and Faist, 2010). Toward concluding this chapter, I introduce a number of important refinements made in this study to gain a 'small-scale transnationalism' understanding (Burrell, 2003).

Generational gap: The children of migrants

As already mentioned in Chapter One, this study is specifically about the children of the first generation Korean immigrants. The so-called 1.5 generation immigrants receive relatively less attention in the migration literature in general. As mentioned by Bartley and Spoonley (2008), there is 'ambivalence (in-betweenness)' about 1.5 generation immigrants' experiences of transnationalism strategies that are different from their parents and also the second or third generation immigrants. There are many scholars who argue that we need to pay more attention to the children of migrants and transnational studies have tended to focus solely on first generation

immigrants (Levitt and Waters, 2002; King and Christou, 2011). 1.5 generation immigrants are somewhere 'in-between' among the literature of first and second generation immigrants as the term clearly points out. This particular cohort of returnees has a nuanced set of migration experiences and this research contributes to this generational gap within current transnational literature.

Within second-generation return migrations, the idea of 'reverse transnationalism' has been proposed as a refined term for transnationalism (King and Christou, 2011). King and Christou (2011) argue that second generation returnees are almost first generation immigrants in their ancestral home society. As part of this, they may engage in transnational activities to keep connected to their country of birth, a phrase the authors refer to as 'reverse transnationalism'. For instance, a study of British Caribbean returnees illustrated the important role of 'those families who are left behind' in the host destination settings and the material and symbolic ties that the returnees engaged in with their families (Reynolds, 2011). While understanding the limitation of this concept, as it only applies to one particular process of transnationalism, this notion of reverse transnationalism also applies to my study participants as is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Temporalities and spatialities of transnationalism

As mentioned above, critics of transnationalism argue that too much focus has been on 'confirming' recent migrants as transnationals and this is also a similar case in return migration studies. In this thesis, I emphasise the temporalities and spatialities of transnational experience. The Korean New Zealander's 'transnational linkages' differ spatially and temporally as is discussed through the empirical findings. For instance, in Chapter Five, I illustrate how their 'transnational linkages' are experienced as teenagers growing up as immigrants in New Zealand. Their 'transnational connections' to their original homeland are similar to what the first generation immigrants experience: staying connected and imagining the symbolic connections to their 'home'. In Chapter Six, I illustrate how these kinds of transnational experiences change when they enter their individual work spaces in Korea. All of a sudden, the transnational returnees realise that they lack social networks and cultural and political connections to Korean society. This realisation illustrates that transnational connectivities are situated in a particular time and space. In Chapter Seven, I emphasise that transnational experiences change again as the returnees settle and live in Korea for longer periods of time. Through these situated understandings of transnational experiences, the complexities of one's transnational linkages are illustrated.

Who is a 'transmigrant'? Taking 'identity' more seriously

One of the reasons why the overemphasis on 'fluidity' in transnationalism is criticised is that it may come into conflict when it comes to defining what it means to be a 'transmigrant'. The most common example is the question of whether having dual citizenship actually gives the migrant dual or transnational identities (Conway, Potter and St Bernard, 2008). This idea is apparent in many other recent transnational studies:

> Although contemporary migrants' practices and identities are multiple and cross territorial and communal boundaries, this does not imply that identification with territorially defined national polities or locales is disappearing.
>
> (Leitner and Ehrkamp, 2006:1618)

In other words, having or being connected economically, socially, culturally, and politically across borders may give them a 'transnational social field', but being a 'transmigrant' depends on how much the migrant feels that they are connected and how much they are willing and able to connect to their transnational elements. One cannot simply refer to immigrants who are connected to more than one nation as 'transmigrants' and apply the concept to their identities and assume that recent immigrants are free of desire to belong to one single nation.

With this in mind, I employ a number of important identity construction theories in this study both in order to emphasise identity as an ongoing internal process (Sarup, 1996) and to demonstrate that identity is also the product of socially and historically constructed discourses (Hall, 1996; Hall and Gay, 1996). These concepts and theories will be elaborated in subsequent chapters. In Chapter Seven, I illustrate that there are a number of internal and external factors which affect the returnees' identity (re)negotiations and (re)constructions. There are many tangible and intangible factors (Knopp, 2004) which shape one's identities. These factors include the migrant's citizenship status (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003), physical and emotional 'bodies' (Longhurst, 2001), sense of 'home' (Christou, 2006), and food (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009; Collins, 2008b). Although these different elements which shaped the returnees' identities were situated within the broader transnational context, as will be conveyed through empirical findings, one's identity construction was much more malleable and circumstantial. Most importantly, one's willingness and ability to adapt to their 'transnational situation' highly affects their transnational identity.

Borders still matter: Importance of context and culture

Lastly, I further emphasise that 'borders still matter' in the everyday experiences of transnational migrants. The term 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) was coined to understand how nationalistic feeling of togetherness is achieved by constant social constructions characterised by nation building processes. These national building processes are termed a 'symbolic system' or 'constructing a common heroic past' in which people of the nation are made to feel patriotic (Anderson, 1999). The feeling of nationalism or patriotism has huge impact on individuals' identity formation (Gruffudd, 1999; Hall, 1997; Sibly, 1995; Cloke, 1999). The issue of national identity is complex in New Zealand particularly because it is a multicultural nation (Ho, 1995; Spoonley et al., 2003; Shaw and Hudson, 2002). This was a key characteristic of New Zealand's 2006 census when confusion arose as people were prompted to tick their ethnicity. Some held stronger national identity ticked the 'other' and wrote down 'New Zealander' which was not provided as an option on the form. This was due to people's confusion between nationality and ethnicity. More importantly, this illustrates the powerful role the ideas of nation plays in constructing a sense of identity.

In the next Chapter, I illustrate that Koreans live in a stronger 'imagined community' than that of New Zealand as they have a solid long pride in their mono-ethnic and mono-cultural national identity (Yoon, 2003). It is argued that the national identity and sentiments toward their land are stronger in Korea because of the nation's hardship over achieving their recent liberation from its colonial past and war. Hence there are 'political borders' as well as 'social borders' in Korea that even exclude its expatriates, which significantly impacts on the daily lives of returnees.

3. Korea and its Diaspora: Political and social context of the returnees' original homeland

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter One, I introduced the Korean immigrants within the host society context of New Zealand. In this chapter, I expand the context of this study from the sending country's perspective to include the receiving country of Korea. Importantly, I expand the understanding of political, economic, and social relationships between Korea and its expatriates. From the sending country's (New Zealand) viewpoint, Korean New Zealander return migration is an indication of a 'loss of long term immigrants', increasing number of 'transnational immigrants' and is also regarded as a 'brain drain'. In contrast, from the receiving country's (Korea) standpoint, the growing number of returning expatriates is demonstrative of stronger linkages between the nation and its Diaspora and a potential 'brain gain'.

In the late 1990s, Korea developed a lenient policy to attract their overseas Korean population in order to build a stronger relationship with its expatriates and to aid the nation's globalisation processes (Park and Chang, 2005). However, not all overseas Koreans were welcomed back to the country. The immigration history of the different diaspora groups, the expatriates' relationship to Korea, and the potential level of assets that they may or may not bring back all impacted upon the policy aimed at overseas Koreans (Park and Chang, 2005; N. Kim, 2008). Depending on different political, economic, social and cultural circumstances, some Korean expatriates are either attracted to return while others would be disadvantaged should they do so. The so-called 'preferential ethnic return' (Skrentny et al., 2007) policy was developed.

Generally speaking, the Korean expatriates who emigrated since the 1960s for personal settlement and economic gain are treated more favourably compared to those who moved prior to this time as

refugees under Japanese colonial rule or as labour migrants (Yoon, 2003). Clearly, the Korean New Zealander immigrants fall into the top of the hierarchy among the various Korean Diaspora groups within this policy difference. However, when it comes to defining what constitutes a national Korean identity, there is still stigma and discrimination toward all overseas Koreans through policy and social discourse.

In this chapter, I illustrate that those overseas Koreans from the 'West' who are the 'preferred' expatriates are still not fully accepted as being Korean and face discrimination for two main reasons. Firstly, Korea does not allow full dual citizenship. Without opening up of the citizenship policy, overseas Korean populations continue to be excluded from the civic national identity[11] of Korea. Secondly, there is a social stigma towards those who moved overseas. Despite the building perception of the overseas Koreans as 'agents of change'; being able to assist in Korea's nation-building processes, returnees cannot escape the discourse of being national traitors – those who once turned their back on their own nation to have better lives (Kim, 1999). The most important and underlying objective of this chapter is to understand why these two 'problems' exist. The contention over dual citizenship policy is a complicated matter that relates to Korea's political and historical borders. Also, the social stigma towards overseas Koreans is not a simple matter of jealousy. Rather, this needs to be understood from the Korean society's standpoint within the context of a rapid industrialisation period after the harsh colonial and post-colonial times.

I begin this chapter by giving an overview of the Korean emigration history and position Korean New Zealanders as a relatively young and 'less impactful' diasporic group. I then explain the development of the 1999 overseas Korean policy which stemmed from Korea's economic crisis. This is followed by current statistical data illustrating the increased level of Korean return migration flow from overseas after the policy development. I illustrate that despite the policy attraction of the overseas Korean population, certain exclusions of overseas Koreans still exist in terms of Korean civic national identity and social discourses. I explain the complexities behind why a complete dual citizenship policy is hard to achieve. In relation to this, I also elucidate why there is social stigma towards those who lived overseas and give examples of how certain discourses are constructed through Korean media. As illustrated in the results chapters of this

[11] Nationalism is a complex phenomenon. In geography, nationalism is conceived as either civic or ethnic. Civic nationalism is concerned with structural, top-down forces that shape nationalism. External functions of government and political relationships with rest of the world, also the state-building processes of political 'rights' and movement shape what it's meant by civic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism is concerned with the cultural and historical heritage that a nation is bound to hold (Gruffudd, 1999).

thesis, these contextual considerations further deepen the understanding of the Korean New Zealanders' often alienated and excluded everyday experiences of return migration.

3.2 Korean Diaspora: A brief history

Korean emigration started as early as the 1860s. One Korean sociologist has carefully categorised Korean emigration history and pointed out that there are four major phases of emigration from Korea (Yoon, 2003). The first phase was between the 1860s and 1910 (before Japanese colonisation). During this period, mostly male workers moved to Russia, China and Hawaii in order to work on farms in order to escape from famine. For example, by 1905, there were over 7000 Korean male workers who moved to Hawaii to work in the sugar cane industry. This was followed by over 1000 Korean women who married those men and formed settlements (Yoon, 2003; Paterson, 1988).

The second phase was between 1910 and 1945, during the Japanese colonial period. Up to 500,000 Koreans were forcefully sent over to Japan and Manchuria to develop their land and aid in Japan's industrialisation processes. This number increased dramatically during the Second World War when more Korean males were conscripted to fight for Japanese military or sent to work in the mining industry. When the war ended, many returned to Korea but the majority still remained in Japan and China, while some fled to North Korea (Yoon, 2003).

The third phase was between 1945 and 1962, when South Korea became a republic and was divided between North and South. After the war, Korea was economically and politically unstable, stimulating Korean emigration. During this period, a large number of Korean orphans from the war were adopted by American families. There was also an increase in the number of inter-marriages between Korean women and American soldiers, and many eventually emigrated to America (Yuh, 2002). Over 6000 Korean males (and a much smaller number of females) also began to emigrate to America, Canada, and Europe in order to study and gain overseas degrees (Yoon, 2003). Most of them eventually settled in America and did not return to Korea (Yu, 1983).

The last phase has been from 1962 until the present. From 1962, South Korea began to interact with a number of foreign immigration destination countries to form collaborative immigration policies. The interest behind this policy development was to send Koreans to the 'West' and

increase the national earning from their remittances. From the mid-1960s, along with the American Immigration Reform Act of 1965, a huge number of Koreans emigrated to America with the hope of achieving 'American dreams' – to earn money and gain an international education. Similarly, the reform of Canadian immigration policy in 1966 stimulated movements to Canada (Kwak and Berry, 2001). Compared with Korean emigration to America and Canada, Australia and New Zealand are the most recent immigration destinations, increasing in the early 1990s. Table 3.1 summarises the history of Korean emigration and the characteristics of each emigration phase.

Table 3. 1 Characteristics of different Korean emigration movements & Diaspora, 1860 – Now

	Phase I	**Phase II**	**Phase III**	**Phase IV**
Time Period	1860~1910	1910~1945	1945~1962	1962~Present
Political Context	Chosun dynasty period	Japanese Colonial Period	Post-colonial Period (Division between S&N)	Industrialisation/ Immigration Policy reforms
Dominant Emigration Destinations	Russia, China, Hawaii	Manchuria, Japan	America, Canada, Europe	America, Canada, Europe, Japan, China, Australia & New Zealand
Emigration Reasons	Labour	Politically forced, Famine	Economic, Education, Social	Economic, Education, Social, Quality of Life
Migrant Types	Labour migrants	Refugees	Economic migrants, Students, Orphans, Marriage migrants	International students, Family immigration, Economic migrants, Entrepreneurs
Skilled Category	Low skilled	Low skilled	Low-Highly skilled	Highly skilled
Formal Title (in Korean)	'Goryojin'	'Chosun jok'	Gyopo/Dongpo	Gyopo

(Source: Borrowed from Yoon, 2003 & Original)

Table 3.1 has been adopted and modified from Yoon's (2003) study about Korean Diaspora. The table illustrates that there has been a significant change over the course of Korean emigration history in terms of what motivated Koreans to emigrate and how political movements and policy developments have shaped those movements. The earlier emigration movements were influenced by famine or by political force whereas the movements after the Korean immigration reform in 1962 were characterised by personal, economic and social factors. Thus, the migrant types changed from being forced labour to skilled immigration.

Among the four broad phases of Korean emigration defined by Yoon (2003), I have modified and updated the most recent phase to encompass the wider characteristics of recent Korean immigrants. Yoon (2003) only briefly mentions that with the decrease of Koreans immigrating to America and Canada after the economic crisis of 1997, there has been an increase in the number of Koreans moving to Australia and New Zealand. As discussed in Chapter One, Korean people have been immigrating to New Zealand from the early 1990s and the number increased dramatically between 1994 and 1996 (with a similar case to Australia). There has also been an increase of Korean entrepreneurs moving to China as a result of seeing the high potential in businesses (S. Kim, 2003). These movements are still recent within the Korean emigration history and not much is documented within the Korean diaspora literature.

The division from the second to the third phase marks the time when Japanese colonial period ended, and also when Korea became divided between North and South. As can be seen in table 3.1, depending on the emigration phases, the Korean expatriates are grouped and termed differently. Those who migrated to Russia in the 19th century are called 'Goryojin' – people of Goryo dynasty. Also, the refugees who settled in China during the Japanese colonial period are called 'Chosun jok' – people of Chosun period. The more recent Korean immigrants who settled overseas after Korea became the Republic of Korea are termed as either 'Dongpo' or 'Gyopo' – both meaning overseas Koreans. The two terms also differ in subtle ways. Usually, Dongpo is used for second generation Koreans and Gyopo is a "South Korea-centered way of referring to overseas Koreans" (Park and Chang, 2005:12) as they have closer relationship to Korea in terms of political and social connections. "Dongpo on the other hand, conveys transnational, ethnic-based connections among Koreans without the role of the state (Park and Chang, 2005:12)." A recent study of Korean people's perception towards Dongpo (overseas Korean) illustrated that while 92% of the Korean population considered Korean Americans to be Dongpo, only 76.8% regarded Korean Chinese (Chosun jok) to be Dongpo (Park and Chang, 2005). Indeed, a number of sociologists and anthropologists have argued that although Korea is ethnically a homogeneous nation-state, its national identity is still far from being inclusive of its culturally and racially mixed overseas population (Koo, 2007; Hong and Chae, 2006).

3.3 The development of overseas Korean policy

It was not until the 'IMF' economic crisis of 1997 that Korea started to seriously consider their overseas Korean population as an asset to the nation building process. Until the overseas Korean policy reform, Korea had stricter rules about dual citizenship. Overseas Koreans who gained their foreign citizenship or permanent residency automatically lost their national residency status and they were not officially Korean citizens anymore. When expatriates wanted to return to Korea, they either had to give up their overseas citizenship or permanent residency upon their return or otherwise be considered as 'illegal stayers.' For this reason, there was a low level of return migration flow and many Korean immigrants tended to stay overseas and not return to their original homeland for living (Park and Chang, 2005; N. Kim, 2008).

The Overseas Korean Act, 1999 & the contention

After the economic crisis, President Kim Yong Sam launched the 'Segehwa' (Globalisation) movement. The movement aimed to make Seoul into a multicultural city and part of a global economy by building stronger connections to foreign markets. Those overseas Koreans with good English skills and international connections were seen as important human capital in order to build the nation[12] (Park and Chang, 2005). The Overseas Korean Act of 1999 was developed implicitly to build stronger relationships between the State and those overseas Korean communities with financial capital and skills (Park and Chang, 2005). In 1997, the 'Overseas Koreans Foundation' was formed for the first time in Korean history in order to focus on policy development and enhance the relationship between the nation and its expatriates. In 1999, the Korean government passed the Overseas Korean Act in order to legally define their overseas Korean population as Korean residents upon their return.

The Act developed a new residency right under the 'F-4 visa' which Korean expatriates could apply for and register as 'overseas Korean domestic residents' (*Geo-seo Sin-go Jeung*). The Foreign National Koreans (FNK) could apply for 'F-4 Visa' and there were two major criteria. The person had to be someone who once held a Korean nationality, but attained foreign citizenship or someone who is 2nd or 3rd generation descendant of those who were once Korean nationals (B. Kim, 2003). The Overseas Korean Nationals (OKN) who were holders of foreign permanent residency were eligible to apply for 'overseas Korean domestic residents' without having to apply for a 'F-4 visa'. The complexity over the 'local rights' are discussed later in this chapter.

[12] More contextual background on Korea's attempt to draw skilled workers from overseas is discussed in Chapter Six.

The 'overseas Korean domestic residency' allowed the overseas Korean returnees to have prolonged stays in Korea and receive almost the same living rights as the local Koreans in areas such as banking, property ownership, medical insurance and pensions (B. Kim, 2003). Importantly, the 'F-4 visa' and 'overseas Korean domestic residency' allowed overseas Koreans to live and work in Korea while being able to hold on to their overseas citizenships or residencies. This new law allowed overseas Koreans to have 'quasi-dual citizenship' rights. This policy change has attracted a large number of overseas Koreans to return to Korea for work and living (S. Lee, 2008; Noh, 2009).

The 'F-4 visa' emphasised a strong 'blood kinship' of their overseas Korean population, and it was not allowed to be applied for by any other foreign ethnic immigrants (Skrentney et al., 2007; Park and Chang, 2005). However, not all ethnic Koreans could apply for the visa. Indeed, the overseas Korean policy had a 'post-1948 criterion', which meant that only those who moved overseas after 1948 could apply for the F-4 visa and be eligible for the local residency benefits (Park and Chang, 2005). The overseas Korean Act was criticised by many politicians and NGO communities who were supporters of all overseas populations. As shown in Table 3.1, this excludes the majority of the overseas Korean population. This decision was made because Korea only became a republic after the Japanese Colonial period ended. Hence the 'Korean nationals' only included those who moved overseas after 1948. More importantly, due to Korea's division between North and South, there is still a strong worry about including their Korean-Chinese (Chosun jok) population:

> China's current and historical relationship with the Korean peninsula in general, and with North Korean in particular, also affects the country's negative reaction to the South Korean government's idea of embracing Korean Chinese
>
> (Park and Chang, 2005:5)

Such exclusion became a hugely contested issue in Korea and still is today. Some critics argue that the closed mind-sets of Koreans to accept their overseas Korean population is not just about who has been away from the state longer or differences in political ideologies. Rather, these mind-sets are based purely on the expatriates' economic and social status and who is considered to be 'highly skilled' or 'low skilled':

> South Korea's specific need for overseas Koreans' labour (both professional and manual), and its perceptions of the relative economic status of the countries that host its diaspora populations, have affected their inclusion/exclusion. Critics argue that "rich cousins" from

> the United States and Japan are included, whereas 'poor cousins' from China and the former Soviet Union are excluded.
>
> (Park and Chang, 2005:7)

The overseas Korean Act generated many debates around 'who is considered to be Korean' and the result was division between the national and ethnic identity of Korea. Some scholars term this an 'ethnic preferential return' policy (Skrentney et al., 2007) which is also common in other countries. Depending on the relationship between the nation and the diaspora and certain criteria such as economic and social status, some expatriates are welcomed while others are not. After much contestation, the Overseas Korean Act was altered in order to include some of the non-national Koreans who moved prior to 1948. However, the policy only accepted the non-national Koreans who have higher income, higher education, and outstanding performances in business or arts (B. Kim, 2003; Park and Chang, 2005; Choi, 2008). This did not solve the problem of including all overseas Koreans and the non-national division still exists today.

Because of the 'post-1948 criterion' issue, much of the debate over Korean national identity and the overseas Korean policy surrounds the expatriates who moved prior to 1948 (J. Lee, 2002; Park and Chang, 2005; Choi, 2008; Kim, 2009b). Those who are eligible to apply for the 'F-4 visa' and those who can legally live in Korea receive less attention in terms of their re-settlement processes and how their overseas Korean residency rights have shaped their lives. In the following sections, I examine the increased number of overseas Koreans in Korea and then illustrate what political and social issues exist within the returned overseas Korean population.

3.4 What about those who actually returned to Korea?

Returnees are often a relatively 'invisible population', not only in media and policy discussions, but also to the local people (Ni Laoire, 2008). Ni Laoire (2008) has illustrated that Irish migrants in Britain are 'invisible' due to their same whiteness and the fact they are English speaking. This concept of 'invisible' applies to the co-ethnic Korean returnees in their homeland and especially for the 1.5 generation and often the 2nd generation as they can speak Korean language fluently and they are 'invisibly' the same ethnicity. There is a colloquial way of referring to those overseas Koreans as 'bananas'- as they are 'yellow' in their physical features, but could be characteristically 'white' inside. Within Korea, particularly because of the major political issue of non-national

Korean Diasporas that I have mentioned, the overseas Korean returnees who actually are living in Korea under the overseas Korean law of 1999 are invisible in the academic and political literatures.

Increasing number of overseas Korean domestic residents

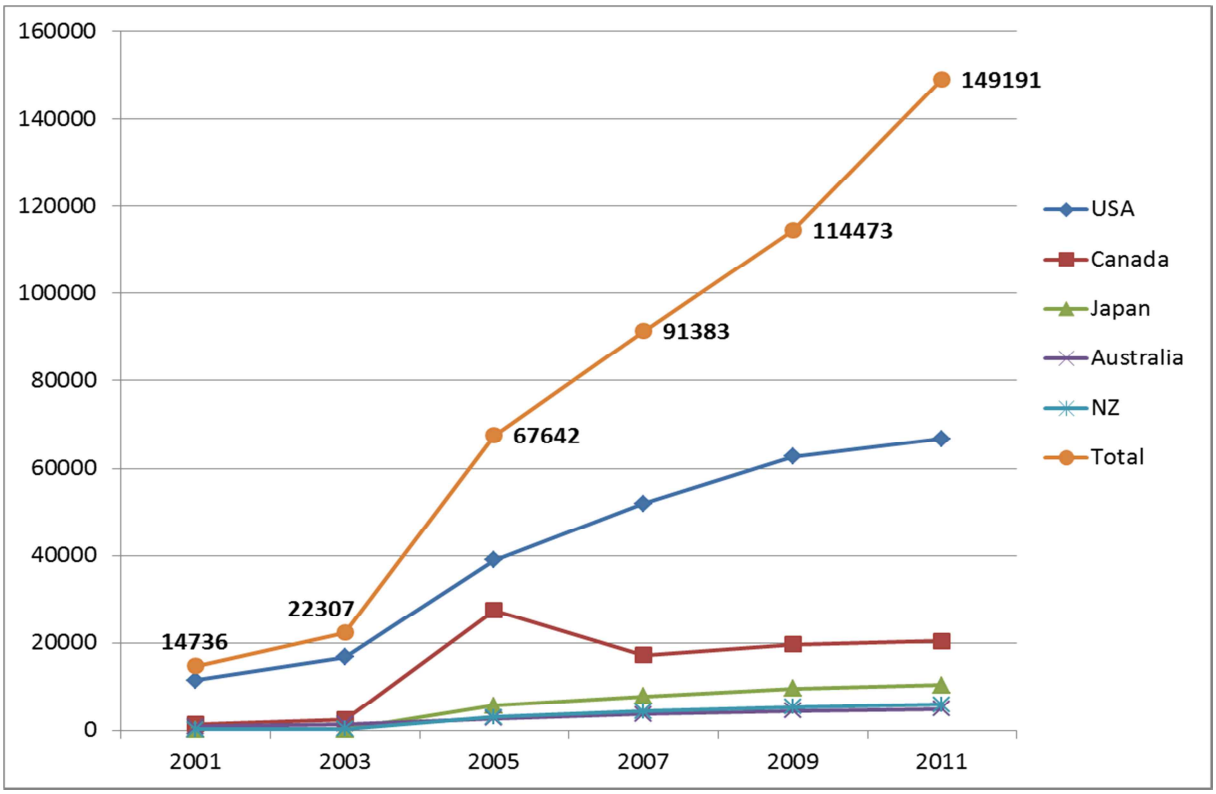
The overseas Korean Act of 1999 attracted a large number of overseas Koreans to return to Korea for work and living. Over the last ten years, the number of overseas Koreans from America, Canada, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand has increased dramatically. The documentation of how many overseas Koreans reside in Korea has been rather misleading in certain literature and news media. It has been around ten years since the Ministry of Public Administration Security (MOPAS) of Korea began to document foreign nationals residing in Korea (Park and Kang, 2011). The annual report from MOPAS only documents the Foreign National Koreans (FNK) who apply for domestic residency and does not include the Overseas Korean Nationals (OKN). For this reason, recent articles and studies have only mentioned the number of FNKs who are currently residing in Korea. For instance, a recent study about return policy of Korea indicated that there were around 18,000 Korean Americans living and working in Korea in 2005 (Skrentny, et al., 2007). This number only indicates the number of FNKs and when the OKN residents are added, there were 39,000 Korean Americans living in Korea in 2005. Another recent news article indicated that there were 83,825 overseas Koreans residing in Korea in 2011 and that there needs to be better accounts of their lives (Kim, 2011). Again, this number is only indicative of the FNKs and when OKNs are added, number of overseas Korean domestic residents rose to 149,191.

The statistical data on OKN domestic residents was found from the annual reports made by the Ministry of Justice in Korea where they document the number of FNKs and OKNs who apply for domestic residencies (Ministry of Justice, 2011). Because OKN domestic residents are not documented in the annual reports of MOPAS, the information is obtained and misleadingly portrayed in current academic and media literature. This is deceptive because the terminology of 'overseas Korean' (Gyopo) is inclusive of both FNK and OKN. While there are a higher number of overseas Korean populations residing in Korea, the number is portrayed as less significant.

It is important to document the entire overseas Korean population and not only the FNKs, because both FNKs and OKNs are living in Korea under the same overseas Korean law of 1999. As already mentioned, the OKNs, who have obtained permanent residency overseas and retained their Korean nationality, still lose their national identity cards and are not eligible to legally live in

Korea as Korean nationals. The OKNs also have to go through the same process of applying for the overseas Korean domestic residency cards and they share the same residency rights as the FNKs. More importantly, there are many more OKNs who have returned to Korea for residency and work. Therefore, it is significant that the OKNs do not become 'invisible' when studying the policy implementations and documenting the lives of overseas Korean returnees. Figure 3.1 illustrates the number of overseas Koreans (FNK and OKN) who reported domestic residence between 2001 and 2011. Annual immigration reports of the past ten years from both the Ministry of Public Administration Security[13] and the Ministry of Justice[14] have been obtained and analysed in order to produce the following graphs.

Figure 3. 1 Overseas Koreans with domestic residence in Korea, 2001~2011 (by country)



(Source: Park and Kang, 2011; Ministry of Justice, 2011; Author's graph)

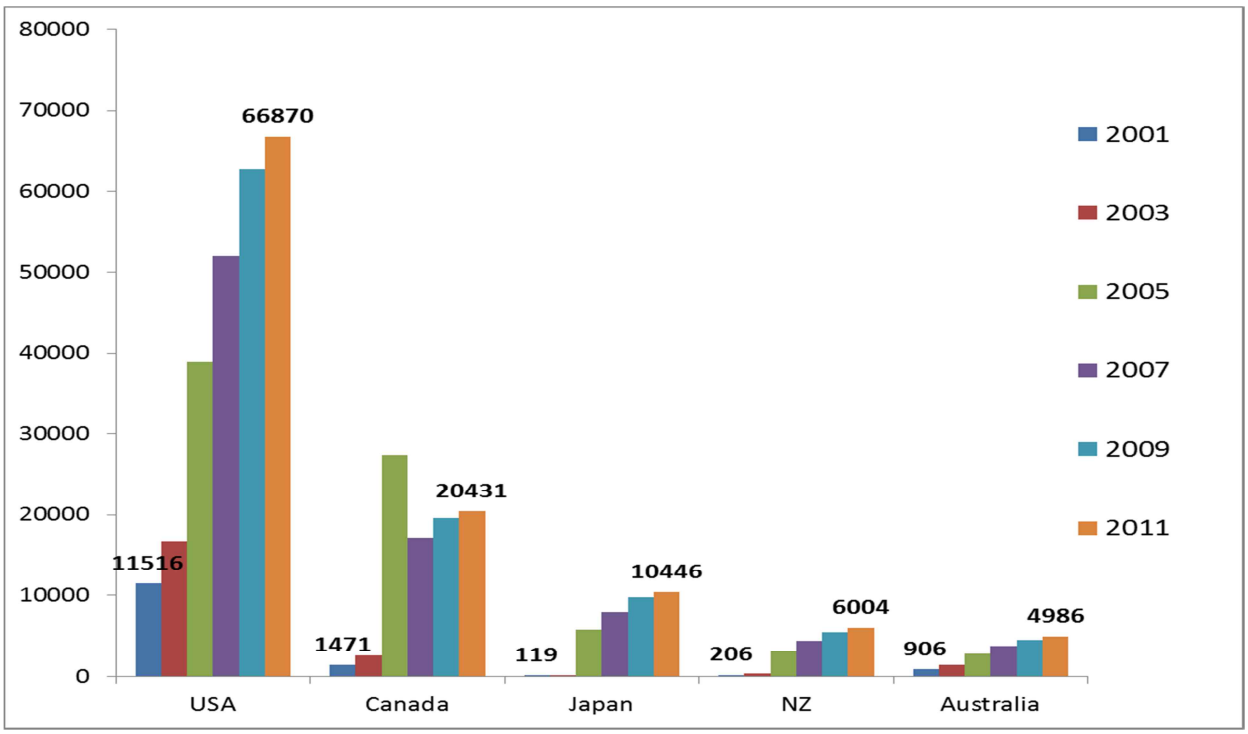
As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the overseas Korean population in Korea increased by ten times over the last ten years. Although not shown in the figure, there were less than 5000 overseas Koreans' in domestic residents in 1997 (Ministry of Justice, 2011). This suggests that the Overseas Korean Act of 1999 helped to attract a large number of returnees from overseas. The number of overseas

[13] www.mopas.go.kr
[14] www.moj.go.kr

Korean's domestic residents increased dramatically in 2005 and this number has doubled over the past five years. This indicates the increasing awareness of the reformed overseas Korean policy, and also the developing Korean economy in general. Indeed, recent articles have illustrated that overseas Koreans now see a 'better future' in their original homeland Korea because there are more job opportunities, and Korea has better living quality (Kim, 2011; Noh, 2009). At the same time, the level of Korean emigration has decreased dramatically and in 2011, there were as little as 753 Koreans who reported their emigration departure (Kang, 2012). In contrast, there are now up to 150,000 overseas Koreans living in Korea. Compared to 1997, the number is 30 times higher. There is a clear trend in Korea that while emigration is decreasing, overseas Koreans' return migration is increasing.

Among the five dominant host countries of the overseas Korean returnees, those who came from the United States are the highest in number while those from Australia are comparatively few. Yet, the increasing rate differed amongst the countries. While the entire overseas Korean population increased by ten times over the past ten years, those from the U.S. increased by six times, Australia by five times and Canada by 14 times. Overseas Koreans from Japan and New Zealand increased the most; Japan by 87 times and New Zealand by 29 times (Refer to Figure 3.2).

Figure 3. 2 Main source countries of overseas Korean returnees, 2001-2011

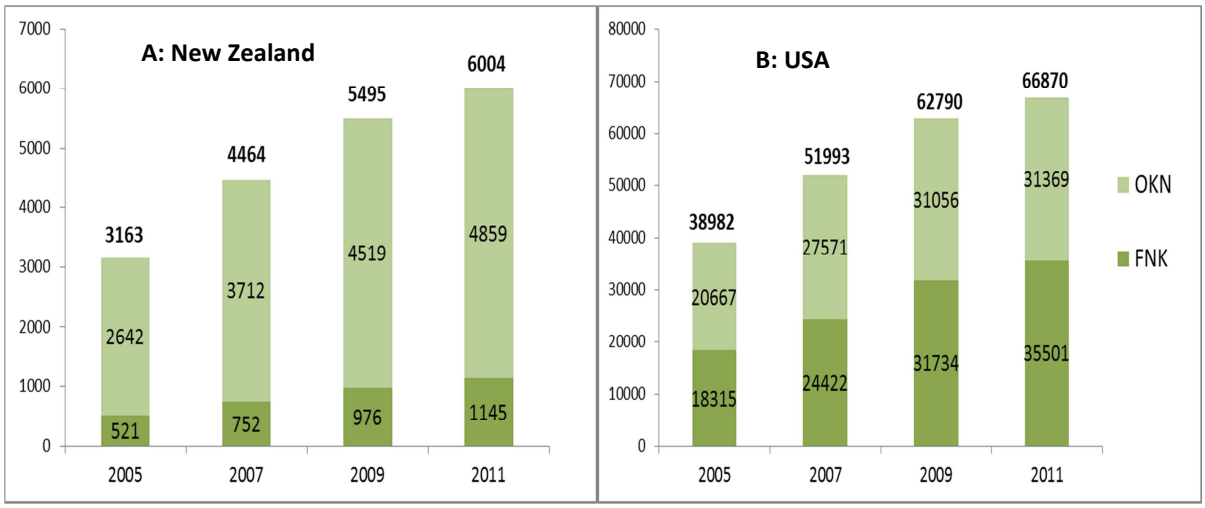


(Source: Park and Kang, 2011; Ministry of Justice, 2011; Author's graph)

In considering the numbers of Korean immigrants residing in different nations, the figure presents an interesting finding. The percentage of the returnees out of their host country's Korean population was measured indicating that New Zealand had the highest proportion. The number of 6004 overseas Korean returnees from New Zealand is around 19% of the entire Korean population from their most recent census data. Even if the number of the overseas Koreans in Korea in 2007 is taken into the measurement, it is still 15% of the entire Korean New Zealand population. Canada ranked the second being 9%, the U.S. and Australia both showed a result of 3% and Japan had the lowest rate of returnees of 1%. This illustrates that Korean immigrants in New Zealand are more likely to return compared to the other overseas Korean groups.

Among the Korean New Zealander returnees, over 80% are OKNs who possess Korean citizenship. There was a marked difference between them and Korean Americans. Figure 3.3 illustrates the number of OKNs and FNKs within the Korean New Zealander and Korean American domestic residents in 2011.

Figure 3. 3 Status of New Zealand and USA overseas Koreans' with domestic residence divided between 'Overseas Korean Nationals' and 'Foreign National Koreans', 2011



(Source: Park and Kang, 2011; Ministry of Justice, 2011; Author's graph)

The figure illustrates that there are proportionately many more OKNs from New Zealand than from America. This indicates the longer emigration history which Korea had with America and that those Koreans who immigrated to the United States in the 1960s and 1970s quickly became naturalised citizens. Also, New Zealand has always allowed dual citizenship from the beginning of Korean emigration history while America has only recently allowed dual citizenship. Thus, out of

the number of OKNs from New Zealand, there could potentially be a certain number of those who may possess New Zealand citizenship, but have not reported it to the Korean government. Also, New Zealand allows almost equal residency rights to its permanent residents hence there are less people who apply for citizenship. This also suggests Korean New Zealander immigrants' stronger national attachment to Korea [as a result of shorter residence away?]. From such statistical data, one can only speculate on what motivated these overseas Koreans to return to Korea. Especially for Korean New Zealander returnees, it is interesting to see that Korea's newest immigration destination country has the highest rate and proportion of return migration. Is it because Korean New Zealanders are more 'transnational' in their migrant character and circumstances? Or is it because there is a smaller job market in New Zealand?[15] But there is no doubt that the rate of overseas Korean return migrants is increasing at a significant rate and that there needs to be further understanding of how these returnees are re-settling in their ethnic homeland. So much focus has been on 'how to pull back' those skilled overseas Koreans in the late 1990s, but not much attention has been paid to the overseas Korean population in Korea once this number started to increase.

The difficulties of using overseas Korean domestic residency cards

Although the overseas Korean Act aimed at 'legally defining' overseas Koreans as 'Korean nationals' and allowing overseas Koreans to enter the country to live, the policy did not produce easy access to daily facilities for overseas Koreans. This is due to Korea's legal system of national identification cards. The Korean national ID card 'Joomin Deung-rok-Jeung' was formed in 1950 as a system of national identification (Hwang, 2004). By 1970, a law was made that all Korean citizens receive a national number when they are born and that all citizens must apply for the national card when they reach the age of 18 (Hwang, 2004). Figure 3.4 illustrates the presentation and information of a Korean national ID card.

Figure 3. 4 Korean National ID card *(Joomin Deung-rok Jeung)*

[15] Return motivations and associated decision making processes are fully explored and explained in Chapter Five.

Every Korean citizen receives a 13 digit national number which begins with 6 digits that indicates the person's birthday and is followed by 7 extra numbers that either starts with 1 or 2 (1 for male and 2 for female). This 13 digit Korean national number is inserted in their passports and many other important documents and it must be presented for almost every facility as a form of identification. Without the national ID number, it is impossible to access everyday facilities such as banking and hospitals in Korea. As indicated earlier, when a Korean person emigrates to another country, their 13 digit national number automatically becomes ineffective. The only way to gain the national ID number back is to fully give up their overseas citizenship or permanent residency. This strict rule around the Korean national identity number is due to Korea's strict rule against dual citizenship. Specifically for this reason, the overseas Korean domestic residency card was formed in order to give overseas Koreans their own national numbers to facilitate access to everyday facilities and the enjoyment of local benefits (Refer to Table 3.2).

Table 3. 2 The overseas Korean domestic residency (*Geo-seo Sin-go Jeung*): Differences and similarities between FNK and OKN cards

	Foreign National Korean (FNK)'s local residency card	Overseas Korean National (OKN)'s local residency card
Eligibility for application	-Should be eligible to apply for 'F-4' visa: -A person who held Korean nationality and acquires foreign nationality -A person whose either of parents or either of grandparents with Korean nationality who acquires foreign nationality	-A Korean national person who received permanent residency overseas -A Korean national person who moved overseas in order to receive permanent residency
Renewal period	-Has to be renewed every 3 years	-No need for renewal
Local rights and benefits	-Property ownership -Banking -Medical insurance (After 90 days of residence) -Other necessaries	-Property ownership -Banking -Medical insurance -Other necessaries
Physical features of the cards		

Table 3.2, shows the criteria of those who can apply for the two different types of overseas Korean domestic residency. The weakness of the overseas Korean national card is that their 13 digit number is part of a different system to the Korean national ID numbers. The first 6 digits are the same (indicating birthday), but the second part starts with either 5 or 6 (5 for male and 6 for females). There is also a small difference in the identity numbers between FNK and OKN. For FNKs, the second to last number is always 7 and for OKNs, the number is 8. The FNK residency card is called 'Oegook-gookjeok-dongpo Geoso-jeung' and the OKN residency card is called 'Jae-oegookmin Geoso-jeung.' Although the FNK and OKN cards are officially different (one being blue, the other one being red), they are both considered as the 'overseas Korean card' when it comes to identification usage. Both cards have different national numbers which are not recognised as a Korean national number in most places. These cards also indicate where the person's host nation is, explicitly showing that the person is 'Korean American' or 'Korean New Zealander' and not a Korean national.

Although it has been more than ten years since the overseas Korean Act was established, the majority of Korean people are still unaware of the overseas Korean residency cards. A study has indicated that more than 80% of the Korean population are unaware of the term 'Geo-seo Sin-go Jeung' (Park and Chang, 2005). Hence, the overseas Korean residency rights that are given by the Act are not understood by the majority of the population which makes it difficult when it comes to the use of these (Chong et al., 2003; S. Lee, 2008; S. Kim, 2008; Son, 2008; Oh, 2008).

As a result, overseas Korean returnees do not receive the same treatment as local Koreans due to their different number systems (S. Lee, 2008; Park, 2011; Lee, 2010). In the majority of facilities such as banking, hospitals, mobile phone stores, and online stores, the overseas Korean domestic residency card numbers are not accepted as an official form of national identification (S. Lee, 2008; Park, 2011). Indeed, most of the participants in this thesis have indicated the frustration over using their overseas Korean domestic residency cards to access their everyday facilities. For OKN returnees, they had to present their Korean passports as an official form of identification and for FNK returnees; they relied on their 'luck' as some facilities accepted their IDs while others did not. In a sense, the overseas Koreans have only received an 'ethnic card' to enter the country, but not a 'national card' in order to live freely as Korean nationals. The impact of this form of exclusion for their sense of national identity is another issue which is dealt with in Chapter Seven. However, the

fact that the overseas Korean residency card is inefficient in its usage is an issue that needs to be re-examined.

A small change has been made over the past one or two years in large banks such as 'Gookmin bank'[16] where they made a separate section on their online page in order to accept the overseas Korean residency numbers. However, this is only a small change at a certain local level and for the majority of overseas Koreans to benefit fully from their residency status there is still a long way to go. A recent news article reported that the Korean government is attempting to allow the OKNs to renew their Korean national ID numbers if they were to reside in Korea for more than 30 days (Park, 2011). Indeed, this is a fair policy since the OKNs are still holders of Korean citizenship. However, giving Korean national numbers to OKNs only will not solve the problem of accessing facilities for the entire overseas Korean domestic populations.

The complicated issue over national inclusion and exclusion could be solved if Korea was to allow dual citizenship (Kim, 1999; Kim and Kim, 2008; Lee, 2003; Yoon, 2003; I. Yoon, 2008). Indeed, if dual citizenship was accepted, the FNKs could regain (or gain) their Korean citizenship, and receive their national ID numbers and have easy access to their local benefits. However, dual citizenship is another complex matter that has been highly contested in Korea.

The discussion over dual citizenship policy has been present in Korea ever since Korean emigration increased in the 1960s (Lee, 2003). There are those who argue that in order for Korea to become a multicultural/global society and to 'follow the international trend', dual citizenship has to be allowed (S. Kim, 2008; Song, 2008). However, there are many different reasons why dual citizenship is difficult to be practiced in Korea. Firstly, Korea has a pride in their mono-cultural and mono-ethnic national identity and there is a view that dual citizenship will disturb the 'pure national identity' of Korea (Yoon, 2003; Park and Chang, 2005; J. Lee, 2008; Kim, 1999). Korea is still reluctant to accept the non-national Korean Diaspora who emigrated prior to liberalisation. Specifically, there is a general fear of accepting Korean-Chinese refugees and Korean-Russians because of the 'communistic anxiety' (Kim, 1999; Lee, 2003). As discussed earlier in this chapter, in order for Korea to be liberalised, the nation had to be divided due to different political views and this political border remains to the present.

[16] http://www.kbstar.com/

The second reason is a broader issue related to issues of perceived justice (Kim, 1999). Kim (1999) illustrates that there is a 'general hatred' that Koreans hold toward expatriates. However, Kim does not discuss with specific examples why and how these bad feelings emerge. Clearly, there is a strong perception within Korean society that holding dual citizenship is a 'privilege' and by allowing this, it will bring inequality for those who cannot possess dual citizenship. Certain perceptions arise for a number of reasons; the biggest one is related to army conscription. All Korean male citizens have to serve in the national army for two years. Hence, overseas citizenship is regarded as something that male expatriates gain in order to bypass the army conscription, or it is a privilege that overseas Korean males possess (Go, 2010; Chong et al., 2003). Some think that if dual citizenship is allowed, there will be an increase of Korean males gaining overseas citizenships specifically to avoid army conscription, while there is also the alternative argument that dual citizenship will actually encourage all male Koreans (single and dual citizens) to serve in the army (J. Lee, 2008; Go, 2010; Seok, 2008). Nonetheless, it is a difficult matter to solve and the majority of the population still think that there will be a decrease in army attendance upon allowing dual citizenship.

Furthermore, dual citizenship is regarded as unfair for all because those who possess both citizenships are able to benefit from social welfare of both of their countries. For example, Korea has a relatively cheaper health insurance for Korean citizens. As a result, critics argue overseas Koreans will visit Korea just for using health facilities, and then fly back to their host nation to enjoy the 'Western life'. In this way, overseas Koreans become viewed as 'national users' (J. Lee, 2008; Jade, 2008). There is also a view that dual citizens will come and take away the jobs that are available for local Koreans (Jang, 2004; J. Lee, 2008). Koreans generally do not look well upon those who left their national homeland and allowing dual citizenship would upset the majority of local Koreans (Kim, 1999; Lee, 2003; Yoon, 2003).

Social stigma towards overseas Koreans

Media often participate in constructing negative ideas about overseas Koreans through the proliferation of stories on 'un-patriotic' actions taken by well-known faces in politics and top music and movie stars. A phrase such as 'the problem of the first son's dual citizenship' is common to find in newspapers and media among politicians (Park, 2011; Jo, 2011). Stories are told where the children of politicians are found to be dual citizens of Korea and America. Such stories are dramatised by the media indicating that the politicians are 'using national money' to

send their children overseas for studies and making their children's lives more prosperous. For instance, when a Korean politician was criticized in the media for his daughter's dual citizenship, his son was also mentioned in the article for buying an expensive car (Park, 2011).

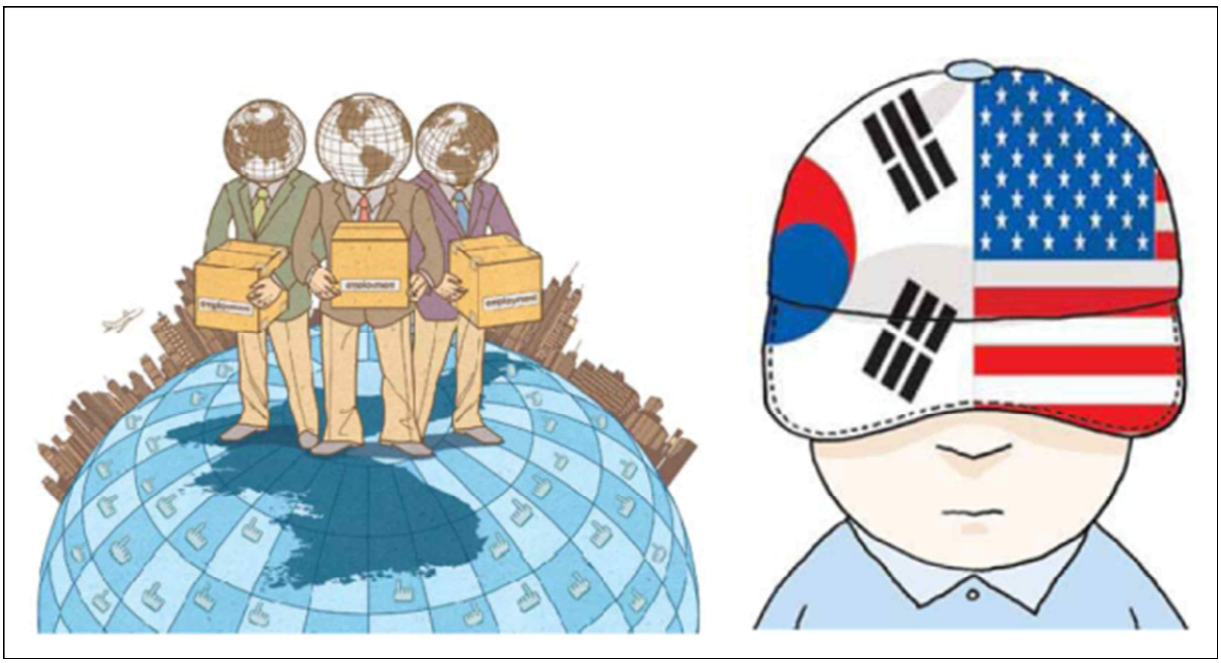
Such portrayals of expatriates are more common to see among top overseas Korean stars. For instance, Jaebeom, a member of a famous Korean boy band, was once forced to leave the country after media displayed his personal blog containing some bad comments about Korean people. Jaebeom was a returnee from America who spent most of his childhood in the United States; hence, it was not unusual for him to hold some negative/different perceptions toward certain parts of Korean culture. Once he was seen by the public as a 'national traitor', he could no longer participate in his band and had to return to America (Jo, 2009).

A more well-known incident happened in 2002 when a famous singer, Seung-Jun Ryu, was accused of obtaining American citizenship to avoid army conscription. Seung-Jun made a decision in 2002 to become an American citizen, which legally allowed him to bypass the army service. However, Seung-Jun originally told the nation that he would go into the army despite his American citizenship; hence, his action of bypassing the army was considered a betrayal. After the Seung-Jun Ryu incident, a new law was inserted into the existing Korean overseas policy that anyone who obtains overseas citizenship specifically to avoid army conscription will not be allowed to re-enter the country permanently (Chosun, 2009). This was a serious action to teach the nation a lesson – in a way, Seung-Jun was the scapegoat. Seung-Jun, who was once the nation's most loved singer, was immediately seen as an illegal immigrant and has not been allowed to return to Korea since (Jung, 2002).

In a recent interview, Seung-Jun stated that he misses his hometown and desperately wants to return to Korea (Chosun, 2009). Yet, the public attitude toward him is still overwhelmingly negative. The hundreds of comments which followed the recent article (Chosun, 2009) were extremely harsh saying that 'he is not a Korean but American', 'he only wants to return because he ran out of money', and that 'he can go and serve in the army if he wants to return to Korea' (Chosun, 2009). The fact that the public is unsympathetic toward him even today illustrates that the media portrayal is not always entirely an exaggeration but a depiction of current feeling towards expatriate Koreans.

Given the proliferation of social media, and through a complex web of historical, cultural and economic interrelationships, two contrasting discourses of 'Gyopo' (overseas Koreans) exist in Korea. The two images in Figure 3.5 are visual representations taken from widely known Korean news media (Lee, 2009; J. Lee, 2008):

Figure 3. 5 Agents of Change or Greedy expatriates?



(Source: Lee, 2009; J. Lee, 2008)

The left picture depicts skilled returnees and overseas Koreans as global talents, highlighting them as valuable members of the society. The high rise buildings in the back imply that they are from well advanced large cities. The globe-head is used as a visual metaphor, alluding to their global mind-sets and valuable skills. As a contrast, the boy on the right conveys undesirable notions that are associated with expatriates. The picture was taken from a newspaper where the problems associated with allowing dual citizenship were being discussed. The picture illustrates a man who seems to be ashamed of having bypassed army conscription. Certainly, these two contrasting discourses of overseas Koreans may not be embedded in the minds of all local Koreans. Yet, as has been discussed, those discourses clearly exist and, as exemplified in the results chapters of this thesis, these discourses have positively and negatively affected the returnees' everyday return experiences.

One may ask, 'why are there so much stigma toward overseas Koreans?' The issue of army conscription applies for a certain age group of male expatriates only (Seok, 2008). Also, the concern of 'taking away benefits' and 'taking away jobs' is just one perspective, but the overseas Koreans may actually be contributing to the nation's globalisation processes – indeed this was the reason why they were attracted to return through policy. Korean people's general stigma toward overseas Koreans may seem like a 'jealousy', arising from admirations toward what they cannot possess. Yet, the conflict between the local Koreans and overseas Korean is not a simple matter of 'jealousy'. Rather, it needs to be understood by taking social and historical factors into account more deeply. One commentary which followed the 2009 article about the singer Seung-Joon Ryu stated:

> Seung-Jun does not realise that Korea is the only nation in the whole world that is still divided between South and North. Our nation should be armed at every second and it is our national duty to be army trained. It is not a choice, but a will. If he does not understand this, he should be punished.
>
> (Translated from one of the commentators in Chosun, 2009)

Indeed, Korea is one of the few developed countries which still holds two year mandatory military service. Attending the army for two years requires a lot of commitment for the soldier and also family and friends. A number of sociological and psychological studies have been conducted to understand what kind of stress each person has to go through over the two to three years of army service, and occasionally, suicides occur due to the stress of army experience (M. Yoon, 2008). Also, the stress for the parents and partners of the soldier is significant and this receives less attention in social literatures (M. Yoon, 2008). This is the reality of life for the majority of Korean males and their loved ones.

It is also important to note that Korea is a nation which recently suffered during its colonial and post-colonial periods (Kim and Won, 2008; C. Kim, 2003). Indeed, Korea went through a dramatic development during the 1970s and 1980s and it has only been around 20 years since Korea could be seen as a developed nation (Kim and Won, 2008). After the Korean War, Korea was one of the poorest nations in the world. Yet, under the authoritarian command of the nation's rulers, the people of Korea worked 'day and night' in order to make industrialisation and modernisation into a reality. Within a short period of 20 years, Seoul became a 'megacity' with high rise buildings and Korea's economy ranked 17th in the world (Kim and Won, 2008). Lee (2003) argues that the suffering and hardship experienced in modernising Korea are not forgotten today and Korean

citizens hold strong sentimental attachments to their nation. As a result, those who emigrated to America ('the land of dreams') during the 1960s and 1970s have become part of the negative discourse as people who 'fled the nation in order to search for better lives' while others stayed to build the land (Lee, 2003).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated a number of important political and social contexts of the study participants' homeland, Korea. A brief history of Korean emigration has been presented in order to illustrate the complex political conditions which developed since Korea's liberalisation. The chapter has shown that within Korean legal national identity construction, those who emigrated prior to Korea's liberalisation are excluded while those who emigrated after are included. The division of Korean national identity was explicitly reaffirmed by the Overseas Korean Act of 1999, where a 'post-1948 criterion' was inserted. For this reason, most of the debates which stemmed from the Overseas Korean Act surround the excluded Korean Diaspora groups.

After illustrating the increasing number of overseas Korean returnee populations, it has been argued that the political and academic literature within Korea needs to pay more attention to those overseas Koreans who actually returned to Korea and who are potentially 'making a contribution to the land'. There are two major concerns which exist for overseas Korean returnees. Firstly, it is the complexities over the 'overseas Korean's domestic residency' rights. Although the overseas Korean Act was developed to give all possible living rights to overseas Koreans, returnees do not receive their full rights because of the differences in their national ID numbers. Without a complete dual citizenship system, this issue will not be resolved, I explained why dual citizenship is hard to achieve and why it is seen as a 'privileged' status. Further, there is certain stigma towards overseas Korean people in general and the consequent stereotypes of overseas Koreans within Korean society, are important to understand because these discourses do affect the returnees' everyday lives.

In the next chapter, I introduce the methods and methodology of this thesis. Following on from some of the arguments that I made in this chapter, I discuss why it is important to take an ethnographic approach and to hear the lived voices. I explain how I designed my study methods and illustrate how I carried out my research.

4. Methodology: Encountering the 'everyday' every day

4.1 Introduction

> *7pm. Waiting. We were supposed to meet at 7, but she just texted me that she is running late. I am waiting for her at her work. This building is huge!! But somehow, this whole place feels very empty. This whole place, the whole city is grey... All the people passing by are all dressed the same and they all look tired....*
>
> (Extract from field notes, 4th March 2009)

The above quote is an extract from my field journal, written while I was waiting for my first interview participant. Such a reflection of the participant's workplace brings back vivid memories about the surrounding, the interview, and my first week of being in Seoul. I was excited, but at the same time extremely nervous about how I was going to make a good impression on my interviewee. Observations and taking field notes do not come naturally, but they are skills that grow through continuous efforts to examine the conditions of research encounters. We are told to examine what we see and take notes because they supposedly will add to our understanding. Field notes such as the one above can often become neglected, simply because there are hundreds of pages of interview transcripts needing to be read and analysed. Yet, such notes can usefully be taken seriously and be used in part of a thematic analysis as 'complementary evidence' (Kearns, 2010).

The process behind knowledge production is highly subjective and it functions as an important determinant of both the research process and the research outcomes. Nevertheless, there are not enough places in which we can converse about *how* fieldwork gets prepared, carried out, analysed, and finally written. This chapter is a place for the privileging of such important matters. This is where my written pages of field notes (that are often about facing difficulties), thoughts of initial

research design, side notes about the interview transcripts, and the final research methods and writings are discussed and evaluated. Throughout doing so, I reflect on aspects of my personal journey throughout the study of young Korean New Zealander return migrants.

In the first part of this chapter, I explain how I began to develop a 'transnational ethnography' in an attempt to expand traditional ethnography approaches and to expose the nature of my ethnographic work. With the methodological context established, I explain my research methods in chronological order. Starting from the early pilot study in 2008, I discuss step by step the methods employed to gather data. In this section, the profile of my study participants and the significance of them is explained. Next, I illustrate how I analysed the data using NVivo and discourse analysis as two interpretive tools. Difficulties associated with analysis such as translating language to culture and negotiating personal politics are discussed.

4.2 Towards developing a transnational ethnography

As the title of this chapter affirms, I was in a position in which I could encounter the everyday lives of Korean immigrants every day throughout my research journey. Firstly, in New Zealand I was living with my sister and mum who have been discussing my sister's return for many years. My sister eventually returned to Korea in early 2010. From her migratory experience, I was able to understand a returnee's decision-making process 'as it was happening', and I could also gain a retrospective understanding from one's early childhood. I could also appreciate the importance of a family's role in a returnee's life as an insider in the 'family of a returnee'. Secondly, I developed close relationships with many of the 40 Korean New Zealander returnees in Korea I interviewed. I was already a close acquaintance of several and I became friends with several more. As a result, after the fieldwork in Korea, I could easily talk to them through phone calls and emails, hear about their news through other mutual acquaintances, and even read their everyday lives through their personal blogs and websites such as in Facebook and Cyworld[17]. Thirdly, being a migrant meant that the topic of Korea and the 'myth of return' (Anwar, 1979) was part of my everyday

[17] 'Facebook' and 'Cyworld' are both online communities that are widely utilised by online users today. 'Facebook' was invented in the U.S. and it is now used worldwide. 'Cyworld' is solely a Korean website where only Korean language is used. In both online communities, individuals can make their own personal space to share their personal interests and daily activities by posting notices, photos, and written notes and diaries. The users can also communicate easily with other users by posting on each other's pages and commenting on each other's photos and posts. A number of articles are being written about both communities as being a significant part of today's changing global world and transnational migrants' everyday lives. See Acquisti and Gross, 2006 for 'Facebook' and Collins, 2010; Hjorth, 2007; Choi, 2006 for 'Cyworld'.

conversations with family and friends. The amount of information, thoughts and reflections became enormous and I felt overwhelmed at some points during my fieldwork process. I could not stop analysing and enquiring into my everyday activities. Gradually, I realised that my study 'site' was not just a single location of Korea[18], but my field location was 'everywhere' (Nast, 1994) across the physical and non-physical spaces I was engaged with. I began to consider my methodological framework as a 'transnational ethnography' and started to seek a more systematic way to document my everyday encounters.

What is ethnography?

What distinguishes ethnography from other qualitative research methods is that it gives emphasis to the 'natural way' of studying and spending extensive time with the participants with the goal of becoming 'immersed' (Rose, 1997) into the researched world. An ethnographic approach is taken more or less "to understand parts of the world as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who actually 'live them out' (Cook and Crang, 1995:4)."

The epistemology of ethnography can be situated under the philosophical umbrella of naturalism (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Wolcott, 1994). Sociologists argue that the naturalistic approach to studying human lives came about in the 1950s in order to react against the development of positivist studies such as surveys and quantification (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). The philosophical background of naturalism is as follows:

> *Naturalism proposes that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its 'natural' state, undisturbed by the researcher. Hence, 'natural', not 'artificial' settings like experiments or formal interviews, should be the primary source of data. Furthermore, the research must be carried out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of the setting. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:6)*

For instance, a health geographer (Parr, 2001), who initially designed formal interviews with those suffering from mental-health problems, gives account of her personal progress towards developing an ethnographic approach:

> *It rapidly became clear that, if I abandoned my quest for interviews, and instead merely 'hung out' at the offices of the group, I might learn much about how people with mental-health*

[18] Initially, my method only considered conducting in-depth interviews with 40 returnees in Korea. Hence, Seoul city in Korea was regarded as my major 'field site'. After the four months of field work in Korea between March and July, 2009, I decided to interview those who returned to New Zealand. See Figure 4.1 for my final research methods.

> *problems organized themselves collectively from the 'inside', and more about the diverse everyday social geographies of deinstitutionalised patients (that is, it was not all a straightforward story of 'marginality' and 'exclusion') (p.183-184)*

As Parr (2001) expresses in her account, more information could be obtained from simply 'hanging out' than through formal interviews. By being part of the study participants' everyday setting, one could start to unfold the complex experiences of marginality and exclusion. Indeed, ethnography often emphasises 'natural' and informal ways of gathering information in 'everyday settings'. By taking an ethnographic approach, the researcher no longer seeks a straightforward narrative, but is concerned to find multiple angles to explore the multifaceted nature of people's life and culture. In most cases, an ethnographic approach includes one or more of the following: participant observation, social participation, informal interviewing, focus group, photographs, videos, diary interviews and other qualitative ways of gathering information (Cook and Crang, 1995).

In the early days of ethnography, it was often conducted in order to understand the 'foreign field' that was not understood closely by the dominant Western culture (Cook and Crang, 1995). Traditionally, ethnographic research was used mainly by anthropologists, and the practice would have been as follows. A researcher goes into a foreign field site with the aim of understanding the 'everyday lives' of the locals. The researcher has probably never lived in that place, hence while he/she gets used to the place, they learn new things about the place and the people who are living and making the place. The researcher will encounter new things, observe, take extensive field notes, and talk to the local people through informal interviews in order to fully understand the everyday lives of the people in a particular culture. More recently, ethnographic methods are being used widely in various contexts. The extent of diversity is reflected in the title of recent conference; 'Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines (CEAD)[19].' The gathering showcased a large range of ethnographic works being done across different disciplines including health, education, psychology, gender, social justice, sports, visual arts, communications, and historical studies.

Ethnographic work is being conducted in various settings by both 'outsider' and 'insider' researchers. Christou (2006a) and Tsuda (2003a), who are both return migration researchers, employ ethnography as their main methodological approaches to examine returnees' everyday

[19] CEAD (Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines) Conference was held at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand in 2010. For more information on the conference, visit: http://cead.org.nz/site/ethnography_conference

lives. Both scholars spent extensive amounts of time with their study participants in their everyday settings of work places and social gatherings. Christou (2006a) argues that her familiarity with her study participants (American Greek returnees) and Greece helped her to carry out her ethnographic research. Being a young female researcher, who shared a similar age and comparable migratory experiences with the study participants, she was able to easily make herself 'one of them' (Christou, 2003). On the other hand, Tsuda (2003a), who studied Japanese Brazilian returnees, discussed his difficulties of being an 'insider' researcher. The hardest thing for Tsuda (2003a) was that he was well educated and socioeconomically 'superior'; hence he was always seen as the 'outsider researcher' by the returnee workers despite his ethnic familiarity.

Reading through various ethnographic methods used by migration researchers, I have come to an understanding that there are both positive and negative sides to carrying out this type of research. It was clear to me that my study was going to follow an ethnographic design. I knew that I wanted to understand the returnees' everyday lives in their 'fullest context'. I did not have a set of hypotheses about my study participants other than a desire to understand their returning narratives as a complex process. Initially, my ethnographic field work was going to be my four months spent in Korea, which were directed by a set of methodological objectives[20]:

- *To live in Korea as a returnee*
- *To immerse myself in Korean culture and gain deeper understanding of the culture*
- *To conduct semi-structured interviews with forty returnees*
- *To spend an extensive amount of time with the returnees in their everyday settings*

All of the above methods were undertaken within the four month period. I did find myself a 'place' in Korean society by becoming a visiting researcher at Seoul National University. I interacted with the local students in my everyday activities and became heavily involved in the university life, 'immersing' myself into the Korean university culture. I recruited 40 Korean New Zealander returnees and conducted semi-structured interviews. Through formally organised events and informal social gatherings, I was able to observe the returnees' everyday lives in their everyday settings. I did not feel that physically living with the returnees in their houses and observing them 'all day long' was an ethically sound procedure, since this would have been too intrusive and impractical. While all of the above methods used in Korea met with the characteristics of ethnography, I gradually realised after returning from my field work that I could not 'switch off'

[20] My research methods will be explained in much more detail under Section 4.3.

my brain simply because I was no longer physically in Korea. I was constantly observing because I had greater knowledge and awareness about the returnees' lives and difficulties. Below, I explain how I began to call my method 'transnational ethnography' and develop a system to document my everyday encounters in returnees' physical and non-physical spaces across borders.

Transnational ethnography

On a Sunday morning of December, 2009, I was having breakfast with my sister. Suddenly she asked me, 'So how do they all fit in? Like do all those returnees have happy lives in Korea?' Without mentioning my participants' names, I started to tell my sister about how some returnees are well settled in while others find it difficult to find jobs and make friends. It was my natural 'scholar's instinct' to ask her straight away, 'So why do you want to return to Korea? I mean, you are earning so much money here... and you could even move to Australia for a new lifestyle... what is it about Korea that makes you want to return??' This was when I realised, that I was actually interviewing my own sister inside our own house at our kitchen table!

Indeed, I could not stop analysing my surroundings every day after I returned to New Zealand from my field trip in Korea. In the beginning, I wanted to switch off the scholar's part of my brain because on many occasions, I was feeling like a spy; listening to my friends' conversations while secretly thinking of how this might be useful to my study. But such a struggle inside me quickly became a passion and I realised that studying my everyday surroundings was actually helping me learn about the people in their most 'natural' setting. All of the initial methods of 'trying to become a returnee' and 'trying to become immersed into Korean culture' were just 'doing what's told' from ethnographic literature. Although carrying out the initial ethnographic work in Korea provided significant information for my research, I was artificially making myself enter the 'field site' of Korea to study the people in that particular location. In reality, their lives are strongly connected to New Zealand, and also to the non-physical world of online communities, where even more critical information could be gained.

One study by an Australian anthropologist (Wilding, 2007) has used the term 'transnational ethnography' and has clearly argued:

> *For ethnography to be applied to transnational contexts, I would suggest that it was first essential that fieldwork be re-imagined so as not to require the ethnographer as 'research*

> *instrument' to be located in a single, other, place – where a group of people were long-term residents – for an extended period of time. (p. 336)*

Indeed, studying the returnees' everyday activities is always situated within the transnational context as their lives are always here and there across borders and beyond to the online communities. Wilding (2007) further illustrates the irony of transnational ethnographers putting emphasis on being at multi-local places, travelling from Brazil to Cuba and to Argentina (Scheper-Hughes, 2004) or travelling back and forth between places to call it a 'transnational' ethnography. Yet, there is a difference between being multi-local and translocal (Wilding, 2007). By being translocal, you are employing a 'transnational' practice from one location to study transnational lives, which can be argued as the most 'natural' way to study transnationals' everyday settings.

Following such a view of my personal encounters, I started to develop my focus of observation from a 'translocal' angle; both in physical and online spaces. Hence, by using the term 'transnational ethnography', one of my main methods became (participatory) observations of Korean immigrants and returnees around me. The table below illustrates the scope and focus of my ethnographic study:

Table 4. 1 Transnational Ethnography: Scope and focus *

Researched spaces	**Scope & Focus**	**Action**
South Korea, Seoul	**Returnees (40)**	**Semi-structured interviews**
	Returnees' communities	Observation/Participation
	Local Korean people	Observation/Participation
	Physical environment/facilities	Observation/Participation
New Zealand, Auckland	**Returned-returnees (9)**	**Semi-structured interviews**
	Korean immigrants' communities	Observation
	Family & Friends	Observation/Participation
	Physical environment/facilities	Observation/Participation
Online spaces	Facebook, Cyworld (15+)	Observation/Participation
	Emails	Observation/Participation
	International phone calls	Observation/Participation
	Other forms of online community	Observation
The researcher	Living as a returnee	Self-Observation
	Living as an immigrant	Self-Observation

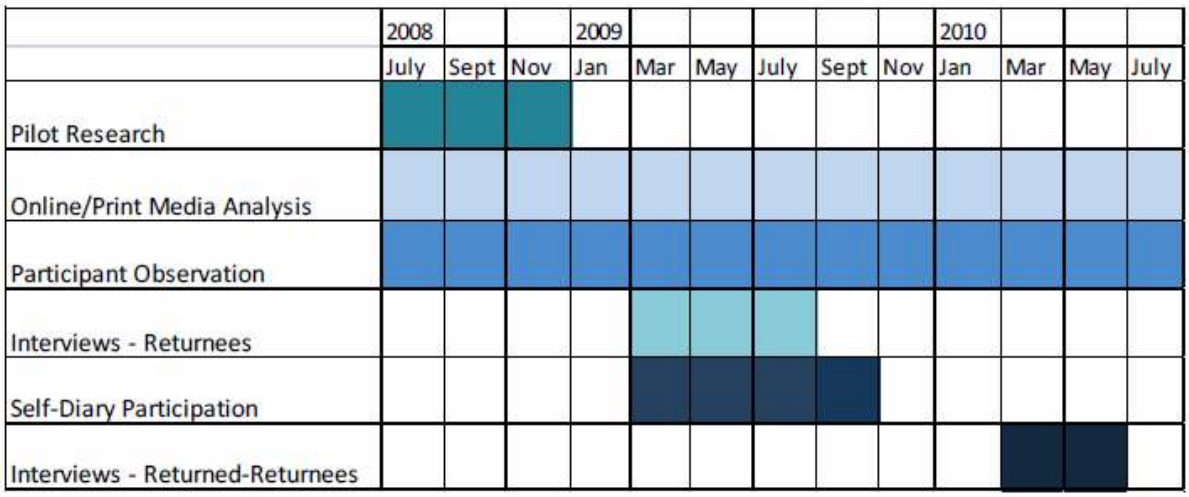
***** Each of the research methods will be discussed in detail under Section 4.4 Research Methods.

As illustrated in Table 4.1, I have observed not only my study participants with whom I have conducted interviews, but also those immigrants and non-immigrants around me. My researched spaces included not only people living in Korea and New Zealand, but also online spaces and, most importantly, myself. The research field was everywhere in my everyday activities, but it was a matter of turning on and off the 'scholarly' switch of my brain. While observing the people around me every day seemed like a logical choice to carry out an ethnographic study, I had to be careful about what I was observing and how I was observing for various ethical reasons. I had to be reflexive and be cautious about the circumstances of my positionality (Refer to Appendix A for elaboration).

4.3 Research Methods

My fieldwork began in 2008 with a pilot phase in which everyday conversations were carried out with seven returnees in Korea. In 2009, actual interviews were conducted firstly with forty returnees in Korea and then 9 re-returnees were interviewed in New Zealand. Online and print media analysis and participant observation were conducted throughout the entire course of my fieldwork period (See Figure 4.1).

Figure 4. 1 Research Methods, 2008-2010



Pilot research, 2008

By general definition, pilot research is an "abbreviated version of a research project in which the researcher practices or tests procedures to be used in a subsequent full-scale project" (Hay,

2010:383). In my case, it wasn't entirely an exact 'test' because I did not have a full list of interview questions to 'test out'. The exploratory nature of this early work meant that I did not have an exact framework of what I was looking for other than a strong desire to 'explore' the returnees' lives. Hence, I conducted pilot research to get a glimpse into the returnees' lives and to discover matters of importance to help me define my research focus.

Pilot research was conducted between July and November in 2008. In July 2008, I travelled to Korea on my journey to Singapore for a conference on Return Migration. At this time, I spent some time with a number of Korean New Zealander returnees. Mainly for ethical reasons, the returnees I worked with were already established friends and I conducted the research rather informally. Asking them 'how their life was going' was no different to how I would have engaged with them outside the research. None of the conversations with the seven returnees were tape recorded. Instead, I took detailed notes after each meeting. One example of the kinds of field note that I took can be seen in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4. 2 Pilot Research - Field Note

She came to NZ when she was a teenager but she lived in Singapore for several years. She describes her experience of childhood as too destructive. Whenever she made friends at one place, she had to move to another. Because of this, she says that she would like to get married soon and settle at one place. She and her whole family returned to Korea after living in NZ for fifteen years, and it was not an easy decision for everyone. Her parents especially had to think a lot about returning and it was a very hard decision especially for them. She is working as a pharmacy researcher but she does not seem to enjoy her work that much. So far, she lived in Korea for 2 years and she misses NZ very much. She says that she likes to spend time with her co-returnees more because they can understand each other. (10th July, 2008)

Note that my reflections were not overly detailed but rather they were a written summary of the returnees' stories. I wanted to capture how they decided to return, my impression of them, and what stood out most in their experiences. In total, I talked to and studied seven returnees in this pilot phase. A number of common themes emerged after talking with them:

- Various reasons for returning: Personal, economic, family
- Difficulties of finding jobs
- Missing 'home' (New Zealand)
- Missing family and friends back in New Zealand
- Inconvenience of F-4 visa

- Exclusion & marginalisation
- Low living qualities
- Everyday hobbies & activities

All of the above themes allowed me to design my interview questions in a more coherent manner. Although I did not design all of my interview questions according to these themes, as I wanted to conduct semi-structured interviews, I started to read more around the themes to gain better understanding and to be more prepared for the actual interviews. For instance, I wasn't aware of the exact policy around gaining of F-4 visas by returnees until the pilot research was conducted. Hence, it provided me important information in an early phase of my research. Conducting pilot research was useful for various reasons including:

- Further defining key questions
- Careful planning of actual interview questions
- Looking for relevant theories in advance
- Provision of vital information found at early times
- Starting snowball sampling at an early stage
- Feeling comfortable about my study sample
- Practising interview techniques

In-depth interviews, 2009

After the pilot research in 2008, in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 Korean New Zealanders in Korea between March and July, 2009. I conducted interviews in order to understand the complexities of individual's migratory experiences, decision-making processes, and returned experiences in Korea. As Bennett (2002:151) affirms, the key to interviewing is more or less to "expose differences, contradictions and, in short, the complexity of unique experiences". Along with such a methodological aim, I also took a life history approach (Wallace, 1994) in order to collect information from their very initial stage of migrating experience to New Zealand from Korea to gain a holistic understanding.

Recruitment, Sampling, Study participants' information

The recruitment of interview participants was done through a snowball sampling method. I looked for around 40 young Korean New Zealanders (aged between 22 and 35) who returned back to

Korea within the last 10 years. They all needed to be either holders of NZ citizenship or permanent New Zealand residents. This excluded the international students and working visa holders (who are considered to be short term immigrants). I wanted to focus on the young adults (considered as 1.5 generation) rather than first generation Korean immigrants who are 40 years and/or older for three major reasons. Although I have briefly mentioned why I chose 1.5 generation group in Chapter One, I will elaborate on the reasons. Firstly, I wanted to explore identity politics as one of the main themes and I believed that those who immigrated at a young age and went through schools in New Zealand would have different migratory experiences and identity transitions to their parents. Secondly, the 1.5 generation Korean immigrants could be presumed to hold different reasons for returning compared to the 1st generation immigrants. Thirdly, experiences in Korea would be different as most of them will be working in Korea rather than retired or unemployed. Hence, I wanted to give focus to the younger age group rather than examining all Korean New Zealanders as one community.

As mentioned earlier, I was already closely acquainted with many of the returnees. Hence, they were the first point of contact. Around December 2008, I emailed or phoned them and explained my research and that I would like to interview them at some point in 2009. All of them responded positively to my request and told me that they also knew a lot of other returnees in Korea whom they could introduce me to. The second point of contact was my family and friends in New Zealand. I asked almost all of them through phone calls, emails and in person whether they knew any Koreans in New Zealand who had returned to Korea. I was surprised to see that almost all of the people I asked knew at least one or two returnees. When the eligibility to interview was met, I asked them to contact the returnees first and make sure that it was acceptable for the returnees to be contacted by me while I was in Korea. My last point of contact was through a number of community websites. I posted a short notice on various websites asking for anyone interested in participating in my research. The response to this was zero.

By February 2009, I had up to 30 potential interview participants. Only 10 of them were certain to be interviewed as they were my close friends or people I had already contacted through emails. Another 20 were potential participants who I knew names and contact details of that were given to me by my acquaintances. I did not contact them until I was physically in Korea as I did not want to email or call them too many times prior to the interviews. I wanted to contact them closer to the interview dates in order to receive a stronger assurance of their attendance. Lastly, I wanted to call

them while I was in Korea to let them know that I was there and not be a stranger calling them all the way from New Zealand.

I went to Korea in March 2009 to commence my fieldwork. Prior to this point, I used to have nightmares about getting negative responses from all of my contacts. However, this fear soon disappeared when my first interview participant responded to my call very positively. I decided to contact the participants whom I did not know personally first in order to leave the 10 definite participants as my 'back up plans'. For ethical reasons, I only called them during lunch times or after working hours. I made a clear note of who introduced me to whom in order to let the participants know which acquaintance gave me their contact details. I did not have any difficulties in recruiting interview participants as almost all my interview participants knew many other Korean New Zealander returnees and they were willing to introduce them to me or ask for their permission on my behalf. I had many helpful experiences such as my interview participants calling a number of their returnee-friends right after our interview and giving me their contact details straight away. It was a truly 'quick Korean way' of contacting participants. Other than one negative response, I had positive responses from all of the people whom I made contact with and the numbers of potential interview participants grew after each interview.

There seemed to be numerous reasons for such a positive response rate. Firstly, a large number of them were University of Auckland graduates. Hence, when they first heard from me through phone calls or emails, they immediately welcomed the contact. They were curious about my research and who I was. Similarly, the interview participants were happy to hear from someone who was from New Zealand. Some of the participants indicated that it was almost like a phone call from their 'homeland'. Their first response was 'Oh which part of New Zealand are you from?' Importantly, the fact that I was a young female researcher made it easier for many female participants to meet me in person. Lastly, a small number of them also felt that research about Korean New Zealander immigrants was much needed and encouraged me for what I was doing. They were very interested in the research aspect of the interview process and wanted to hear more about my thesis.

I focused more on choosing participants from diverse occupations rather than on gender balance. This was due to my interest in their diverse working experiences and their impacts on various job sectors (I discuss this in Chapter Six). While I was initially seeking 40 interview participants, by

the end of my first 20 interviews, I had up to 70 potential participants on my list. I employed a maximum variation sampling method[21] for the next 20 interviews in order to achieve highest diversity possible across participants' occupations. The age of my interview participants ranged between 24 and 34, mostly around their mid to late 20s. 25 females and 15 male returnees participated. Although I wanted to interview exactly half female and half male, there tended to be a lot more female returnees compared than males (over 70% of the 70 returnees). Table 4.2 illustrates the diversity of the interview participants' occupations.

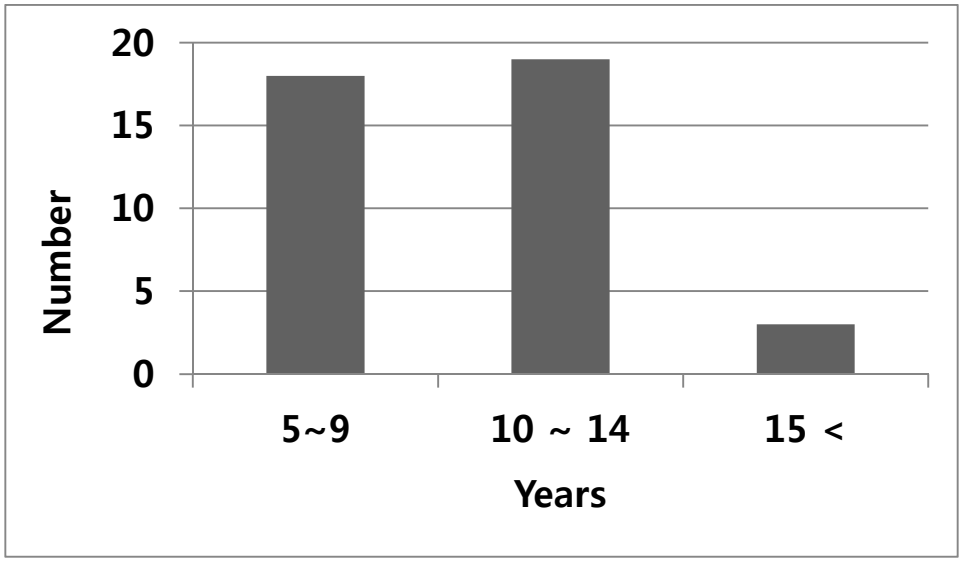
Table 4. 2 Characteristics of employment of research sample

Country of the work's headquarter	**Overseas based firm**	**Korean firm**	**N/A**
Number	13	23	4
Occupations	Accountant, Quality Auditor/Manager, Client service, Media designer, Civil servant at NZ embassy, Marketing manager, Business Analyst, Administration, Computer programmer, Engineer, Technical Sales representatives	Mechanical designer, Solicitor, International lawyer, Airline company, advertisement, Financial derivatives, Lecturer, English teacher, Fund accountant, Designer, Clinical psychologist, Accountant, Analyst, Research assistant	Home-makers, unemployed, Graduate student

Most of the participants lived in New Zealand for more than 10 years. As can be seen in Figure 4.3, only three participants lived in New Zealand for more than 15 years. Those three participants either immigrated to New Zealand at a very young age, or they worked in New Zealand after they graduated from tertiary education, hence lived in New Zealand longer compared to the rest of the participants.

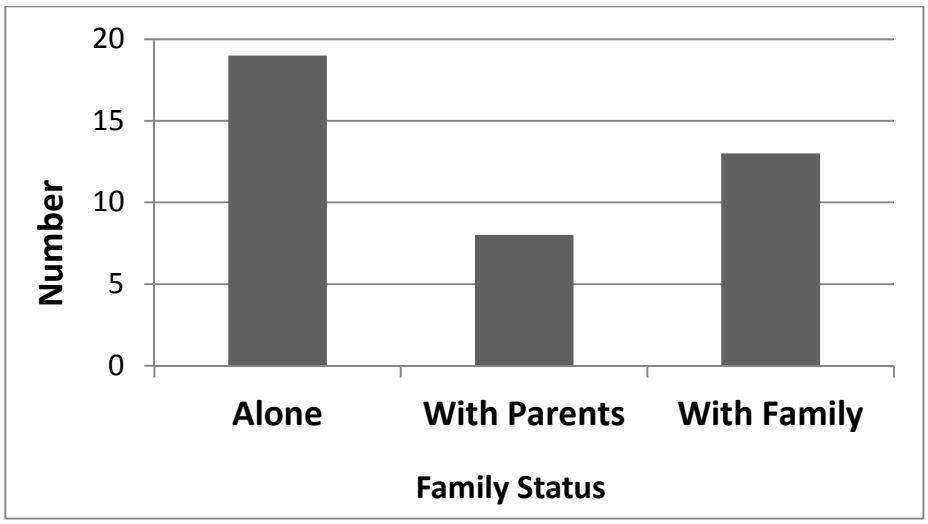
[21] Maximum variation sampling refers to a type of purposeful sampling in which participants are chosen based on their diverse backgrounds within one particular sample. In this sense, their variation depended on the types of occupations that they had since their age, immigration period and time were similar.

Figure 4. 3 Length of stay in New Zealand of research sample



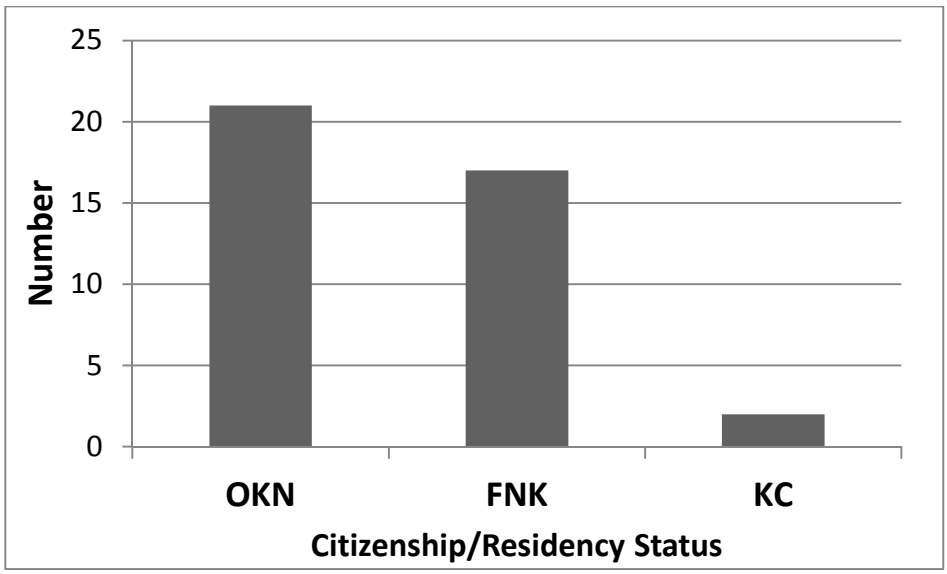
The majority of the participants returned to Korea alone, which means that their parents are still residing in New Zealand. As can be seen in Figure 4.4, 19 participants were living in Korea alone. Only eight of the returnees returned with or after their parents and were living together. The 13 participants in the 'with family' category were living with their extended family members such as counsins and grandparents, or they were married and had their own family. Living status was also very important in terms of their sense of belonging in Korea. Because a majority of the returnees' parents were in New Zealand, it became the main reason for the returnees to travel back to New Zealand and consider New Zealand as their main home.

Figure 4. 4 Living status in Korea of research sample



Most (95%) of the study participants were living in Korea as 'Overseas Koreans', which meant that they still retained their New Zealand citizenship or permenant residency status. Figure 4.5 illustrates their current residency status in Korea. A total of 21 participants were 'Overseas Korean Nationals'which means that they were still Korean nationals (with Korean citizenships) but holders of New Zealand's permanent residency. Fewer (17) participants were 'Foreign National Koreans' which means that they were holders of New Zealand citizenships and no longer Korean nationals. The other two were Korean citizens which means that they no longer held New Zealand citizenship nor residency. Both of the OKN and FNK groups were holders of 'F-4' visas. The fact that there were more OKN compared to FNK among Korean New Zealander returnees parallels with the larger sample which was shown in Chapter Three.

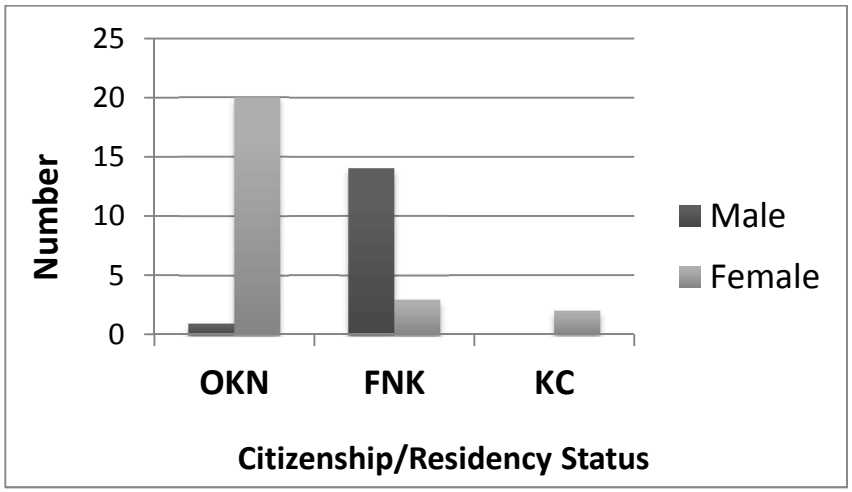
Figure 4. 5 Citizenship/Residency Status in Korea of research sample



(OKN: Overseas Korean National, FNK: Foreign National Korean, KC: Korean Citizen)

An interesting difference was evident when the variable of gender was taken into account . Figure 4.6 illustrates that the majority of females were OKNs while the majority of males were FNKs. The reason for such a noticeable difference between the two genders was that if they were Overseas Korean Nationals (holders of Korean citizenships), the male participants had to be conscripted to serve in the national army for two years. Hence, the majority of the male participants (except one) gave up their Korean citizenships and applied for F-4 visas as Foreign Naitonal Koreans.

Figure 4. 6 Korean Citizenship/Residency Status by Sex of research sample



(OKN: Overseas Korean National, FNK: Foreign National Korean, KC: Korean Citizen)

The majority of the interview participants were single. Only eight of the participants were married. All of the married participants got married after they returned to Korea, which means 100% of the returnees were single or dating at the time of their return. Lastly, all of the interview participants except for two interviewees were living in Seoul at the time of the interview. All of this information about the research participants has been drawn into a single table and can be found under Appendix B. All of the participants' names are pseudonyms.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews through a life-history approach

My interviews were semi-structured. Hence, I had some prepared themes and questions, but questions were altered and more questions were asked according to participants' personal interests and circumstances. At the beginning of each interview, I asked the interview participants to fill out a small form in order to collect some basic information (See Figure 4.7).

Figure 4. 7 Interview questions –structured

Name of the participant: _____ M/F
Date of Birth: _____
Current highest education qualification: _____
Occupation: KOR_____
Date of migration to NZ: _____
Date of returning to Korea: _____
Residency Status in NZ: PR or Citizen
Residency Status in Korea: Citizen or F-4 visa or other _____
Family structure: _____ (Are any of your siblings also a returnee?)
Living status in Korea: Alone/with parents/with siblings
Marital status: Single/Married/Divorced/Widowed

This was important as I could then move straight into the actual interview and if the participant was not talkative, I could ask them questions based on their information, such as 'Oh, so you are working as 'X'. How did you get that job..?'

As I indicated earlier, I wanted to take a life history approach in order to gain a holistic perspective on their return trajectories. If the participant did not start talking without me having to ask any questions (which did happen several times), I started by asking them about their childhood and teenage experiences in New Zealand. There were three parts to my interview as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3 Interview questions/prompts –semi-structured

Stage I: Pre-return phase	Stage II: Return migration	Stage III: Thematic
▪ Reasons for immigrating to NZ ▪ Teenage years in NZ ▪ Good and difficult times	▪ Reasons for returning to Korea ▪ Life in Korea (Work and family) ▪ Connections to NZ ▪ Future plans	▪ Gyopo and Identity ▪ Citizenship ▪ Nationalism ▪ Home ▪ Inclusion & exclusion

Although I did not have any pre-determined order, I made sure that I touched upon all three parts to my interview questions. Interview questions also developed further after the first 15 interviews were carried out. Unexpected themes started to emerge and I began to ask newly created questions. Depending on the character of the interviewee (either talkative or quiet), I had to alter the way I asked questions. Some interviewees talked for a very long time in response to one simple question such as 'So how is life in Korea?' while for some interviewees, such a question could only generate one single answer 'Oh it's alright...' Hence, I had to have some pre-determined questions in order to keep the pace going throughout the entire interview. I also asked some hypothetical questions near the end of the interview such as 'What if you never immigrated in the first place? Would you have done anything differently?' or 'Do you think Korea should allow dual citizenships?' which generated some interesting conversations. I found that hypothetical and debatable questions such as the above generated some excitement among the interview participants. The detailed questions which were used for the returnee interviews can be found in Appendix C.

The duration of the interviews was between one and three hours and they were held at the most convenient place for the interviewee. The time and place of interviews varied according to the interviewees' circumstances. Interview time was constrained to one hour if I had met them during

their lunch break at work, but for other interviewees, a two hour period was most common. Locations included cafes, restaurants, work places, their homes, and my work place at Seoul National University. Being in different settings each time meant that I had to adapt to the environment quickly. In formal settings, such as office spaces at work, I tried to 'ease' the environment and made some jokes to make the interviewee feel that it was just a casual 'conversation'. In casual settings such as cafes and restaurants, which tended to be noisy, I tried to stay in focus and not drift away to other topics and chose a table that was away from any speakers and other possible noises. In personal settings, such as the participant's house, I also tried to stay in focus and not observe too much and intrude on their personal lives. Prior to the interviews, I made sure that I asked participants if they were agreeable with being audio-recorded. I explained to them that all of the information gathered would be kept private and the personal identifications would not be mentioned. The interviewees were given 'Participant Information Sheet' which had information about my research topic and how the interview would be carried out (Refer to Appendix D). They were also given a 'Consent Form' to sign for an agreement to take part in the interview (Refer to Appendix E).

One of the most important interview practices was preparing myself prior to the interviews and making extensive field notes afterwards. For some of the participants, I had already known their occupations and basic background information through the mutual acquaintance who introduced us. Hence, I tried to do some research on their occupations and designed some specific questions accordingly. Also, after each interview, I wrote one to two pages of field notes including my first impression of the person, the interviewee's gestures and facial expressions, their work place or house settings, and the conversations that were carried out when the audio-recorder was not recording (i.e. on our way to the interview place and directly after the interview finished). Sometimes, interviewees started to talk about the most interesting things and shared their personal opinions soon after the recorder was turned off. Hence, writing notes through retrospective memory was critical and they were mostly carried out shortly after I had left the interviewee.

A strong point of connection with the participants was that we are all 1.5 generation immigrants. The participants used terms such as 'as you know' and also told me more personal stories 'off the record'. These really helped me to make connections with them and allowed them to trust me and freely express their feelings to me. Some even said that I was the first person to know any of their inner most feelings. It is contended that "insiders may build trust and develop relationships with

their respondents in ways that outsiders may not be capable." (Palmer, 2001:66). Out of the 40 interviewees, I met three participants for second interviews and 12 participants in subsequent personal and formal gatherings.

Observations at multi-local (transnational) spaces, 2008-2010

An observational method became highly critical in my research project not only to gain 'complementary evidence' (Kearns, 2010), but for its provision of useful and interesting information. Importantly, observational methods allowed me to be self-reflexive. Through various observational methods, I could gain a contextualised and holistic understanding about the returnees' lives.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, some of the returnees were my close friends whom I spend most of my free time with; I visited their houses and we went on a couple of road trips together while I was in Korea. Although in many cases observation is "the outcome of active choice rather than mere exposure" (Kearns, 2010:242), on many occasions, I was simply exposed to the returnees' lives because they were included in my everyday activities outside my research life. Nonetheless, I started to document my experiences with a number of returnees, which I also openly told them. On other occasions, I also observed the returnees' lives from a distance through the online spaces (See Table 4.4; continued to the next page).

Table 4. 4 Different kinds of observations

Observations	Locations, Time	Description
(A) **Individual observation** at informal social gatherings & personal settings	Returnees' houses, cafes, restaurants, bars, shopping malls, researcher's house, streets - March-July, 2009	The researcher's everyday settings. Majority of the observations were not intended. Often notes were taken retrospectively. In some occasions, mobile phone was used to take notes immediately. The researcher was in complete participation. Some photos were taken.
(B) **Event observation** at formally organised social gatherings	The University of Auckland Alumni event in Seoul -22nd May, 2009 YLN (Young Leader's Network) formal dinner in Seoul - 11th June, 2009	The alumni event was an intentionally organised event by the researcher. YLN formal dinner was not organised by the researcher. Both events were attended with the intention to observe with particular themes. Participants and non-participant returnees were spoken to and observed at various levels. I took extensive notes after each event. Some photos were taken.

(C) **Site observation**	Various areas and people around Seoul &Auckland - 2008~2010	A number of facilities and places that were mentioned by the interviewees were observed by the researcher. Additional information was found through internet. Little or no participation.
(D) **Online observation**	Returnees' personal blogs & homepage, email conversation, phone calls - July 2009~ 2010	Fifteen participants' personal blogs such as Facebook and Cyworld were visited once or twice a week over a period of one year. Notes were taken occasionally. In a majority of times, complete observation was carried out with little participation.
(E) **Self observation** (Self-diary participation)	The researcher's personal life in Korea and New Zealand - Mar 2009 ~ 2010	Full participation & some intentional observation. The researcher's 'insider' experiences in Korea and New Zealand were documented in personal journals. This journal is different from 'field notes'.

Table 4.4 illustrates how participant observation was significant in terms of making sense of my interview data and to understand the participants' lives from various angles. Observation 'A' (Individual observation) has provided some highly private information, which I could not have gathered had I not been a family member or a close friend of the participants. Although observations did not happen intentionally in the first place, I took notes when I found something compelling or interesting during conversations. I had quickly noted down ideas on my mobile phone, or wrote them in my field notes as soon as I was able to. Sometimes, I was open about my thoughts and asked the participants to repeat certain information for me. The close relationship that I had was certainly an advantage for this kind of personal observation.

Event observations (Observation 'B') happened twice while I was based in Seoul in 2009. Prior to the fieldwork in Korea, I contacted the University of Auckland's alumni[22] office and asked whether I could organise an alumni event while I was in Korea. They were happy to provide some funding for the event and gave me the key alumni contacts in Seoul. During the process of organising the event, I was able to be in contact with a small number of Korean New Zealander returnees who were happy to help out with organising the event. Through numerous meetings with them, I was able to learn about their lives and migratory stories (and they also became my interview participants). At the event itself, I also met a large number of Korean and non-Korean

[22] The University of Auckland has alumni groups all around the world in large cities across Asia, Europe, Middle East and North America. The group allows the graduates who are living in and outside of New Zealand to stay in touch and network. See: http://www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/alumni/af-alumni-groups-and-contacts

graduates from the University of Auckland. I was invited to attend the YLN[23] formal dinner. At the dinner, I met a group of Korean New Zealander returnees with whom I made contact. At both events, I observed the dynamics of the event, overheard some conversations, and also fully participated in the event. Because I attended both events with the intention to observe, I was more aware of the 'happenings' and remembered the details. The observations were written into descriptions and they were useful in making sense of my data and providing context in my result sections.

Site observation (Observation 'C') was most malleable in its nature. On some occasions, I took a walk along the busy streets in Seoul and remembered the things that were said by my participants about the 'busy lifestyle' in Korea. In contrast, when I returned to New Zealand, I observed the differences in the living environment. I decided to take notes of my feelings (what I could do, see, hear, touch, and smell) toward the different places between Korea and New Zealand. I took pictures of various sites and tried to make sense of them from my own perspective. There were also a number of specific sites that I visited such as the immigration office in Seoul, banks, gym and shopping malls in Korea. I used these facilities as an insider and also observed the difficulties and benefits that were mentioned by the participants. Those notes were valuable in terms of providing a vivid description of the differences between places in Korea and New Zealand.

Online observation (Observation 'D') was the easiest one to do in terms of the time and techniques. However, it was the most difficult one to write about mostly for ethical reasons. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, my online observations mainly involved visiting the personal online blogs of the returnees (i.e. Cyworld & Facebook). The benefit (or irony) of this observation was that I was exposed to some incredibly private stories from a much distanced position. Through the personal journals and pictures that were posted on the participants' blogs, I could understand their happiness and difficulties of living, complexities of the human mind, contrasting information from the interview data, and sometimes it even made me re-think about what the most important thing in life is. While this exercise was significant, I had to be aware of the ethical issues. Hence, I did not

[23]Young Leader's Network (YLN) is a branch network from Asia:NZ Foundation which connects young people from New Zealand to Asia. "The purpose of the network is to create a group of outstanding young ambassadors who can inspire fresh thinking on how to build a more integrated and prosperous future between New Zealand and Asia" (Quote from their website http://www.asianz.org.nz/our-work/young-leaders/about-yln). I became a member of YLN because I received a scholarship from Asia:NZ Foundation.

make many notes about the individual participants, but more or less used the observation as a 'thinking tool' to give me prompts and directions in analysing my interview data. On some occasions, I did ask the participants whether I could use some of the quotes or pictures from their blogs (if it seemed ethical at that time). I had to be critical of what I saw and I tried not to 'romanticise' the participants' lives too much.

The last observational method ('E' - Self-observation) was an experimental method. My initial attempt was to conduct an 'autoethnography' (Butz and Besio, 2009; Ellis and Bochner, 2000), "a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context" (Butz and Besio, 2009:1), which means the boundary between the researcher and the objects of representation becomes blurred and the research subjects obtain a new perspective. I wanted to experiment with this method in a rather small scale form; through my experiences of living in Korea as a returnee. In order to experiment with this method, I had made sure that I was based at an institution while I was in Korea. My experience of living as a visiting researcher at Seoul National University provided a 'social place' for me in Seoul. Through my everyday interactions with the local Korean students, I gained new feelings, experiences of identity negotiations, and I could truly compare myself with other returnees and understand their stories to a greater extent. Although many of my narratives were not explicitly included as quotations as evidence at the end, my personal notes and diaries were highly useful in terms of analysing the interview data.

Media analysis

The main source of media analysis involved print and online newspapers from Korea, New Zealand, Korean communities in New Zealand, and Korean Diaspora around the world. Table 4.5 illustrates the range of the newspapers that were used as search engines.

Table 4. 5 Online and Print newspapers

International (Online)	**Korea (Online)**	**NZ (Print & Online)**
Overseas Korean News (Jae-wae dongpo sinmun)	Chosun, Ohmynews, DongA ilbo, Hangook ilbo	NZ Herald ***Korean community papers*** Goodday news, Korea Herald, Hangook ilbo

The newspapers ranged from local community papers, and national papers to online papers for Korean Diaspora communities. In each of those newspapers, key words such as 'Korean immigrants', 'Korean Diaspora', 'Korean New Zealanders', 'Overseas Koreans' (Gyopo), 'Dual

citizenship' and 'Impact of Gyopo' were used to collect information on the general perception towards Korean New Zealander immigrants. A large number of articles were identified and categorised into different themes. From Korean online newspapers, wide ranging perceptions toward overseas Korean (Gyopo) groups could be gained. Within New Zealand, some general information about Korean communities could be found. An interesting aspect was the perception that Korean immigrants had towards Korean returnees back at home, which could be gained from the local Korean community newspapers. I gathered approximately 40 articles and undertook a textual analysis of the articles, attempting to find a number of common themes. More than half of the articles were in Korean and those had to be translated into English.

Interviews with re-returnees, 2010

In 2010, I conducted nine further interviews with a group of Korean New Zealander returnees who were now living in New Zealand. Hence, this group was termed as the 'returned returnees' or 're-returnees'. I was interested to talk to a number of returned returnees because empirically, there are a large number of them in Auckland. I wanted to find out what made them return back to New Zealand after making such a big step to return to Korea. From the 40 interviews in Korea, it was clear that the returnees' experiences varied hugely according to personal circumstances. For some, return meant a reconnection to their roots and belonging while for others, return did not bring them much happiness. When I was aiming to deeply analyse this idea, it was a logical step to talk to those who decided to return back to New Zealand – hypothesising that they have returned back to New Zealand because they had negative experiences in Korea. I contemplated studying this group in the beginning for various reasons. The main concern was the large amount of data that may be collected without conveying anything different from the 40 previous interviews. Consequently, the study of returned returnees started as an experimental project. I decided to talk to a small number of the participants first and only carry out further interviews if there was anything interesting. The plan was to conduct up to 10 interviews with a closer focus on only a small number of themes. I ended up talking to nine returned-returnees. They were recruited through a snowball sampling method. The critical information about the participants is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6 Participant information of returned-returnees, 2010[24]

Age	Gender	Length of Stay in Korea	Occupation (in Korea)	Marital Status
30	M	2	Mechanical Designer	Single
26	F	2	English teacher	Single
26	M	2	Software Developer	Single
27	F	2	Design Company	Single
25	M	3	Army, Student	Single
25	M	0.5	MA student	Single
24	F	2	MA student	Single
24	M	2	BSc student	Single
26	F	4	Student (English Tec)	Single

As can be seen, most of the participants have lived in Korea for around two years and worked in various kinds of occupations. All of them were singles, which made it easier for them to move between places. All of the participants' parents were living in New Zealand. Their narratives are portrayed in Chapters Six and Seven. The stories about re-returnees were critical in adding comparisons and richness to the current data. Importantly, they added understanding of their post-return experience in New Zealand in terms of narrating their identity negotiations and growth.

4.4 Making sense

The collected data were analysed through various means as illustrated in Table 4.7. As these methods are either self-explanatory or I have already discussed them I move on to focus primarily on the analyses of interview data in the three steps of organising, coding, and writing.

[24] For detailed participant information of re-returnees, refer to Appendix F and for detailed interview questions with re-returnees, refer to Appendix G.

Table 4. 7 Types of analysis

Data →	**Analysis** →	**Output/Results**
Pilot Research (20 Pages of written notes)	Notes critically read Recurring themes highlighted	Ideas for interview questions
Interview Data (Transcripts of 90 hours of interviews with returnees and returned-returnees)	Discourse Analysis NVivo Categorisation Statistical Analysis Transcripts read repeatedly	Quotations conveying themes Case study results Graphs Tables, Diagrams, Pictures
Field notes (72 Pages of field notes)	Notes critically read Important ideas highlighted	Descriptions of sites Descriptions of participants
Observation A, B, C, D (66 Pages of field notes & Pictures)	Discourse Analysis Important ideas highlighted	Descriptions of sites Descriptions of participants Complementary evidence Pictures, Tables
Observation E (40 Pages of self-diary & Pictures)	Discourse Analysis Important ideas highlighted Diaries read repeatedly	Quotations conveying themes Complementary evidence Pictures, Diagram

1st step: Content Analysis of Interview Data using 'NVivo'

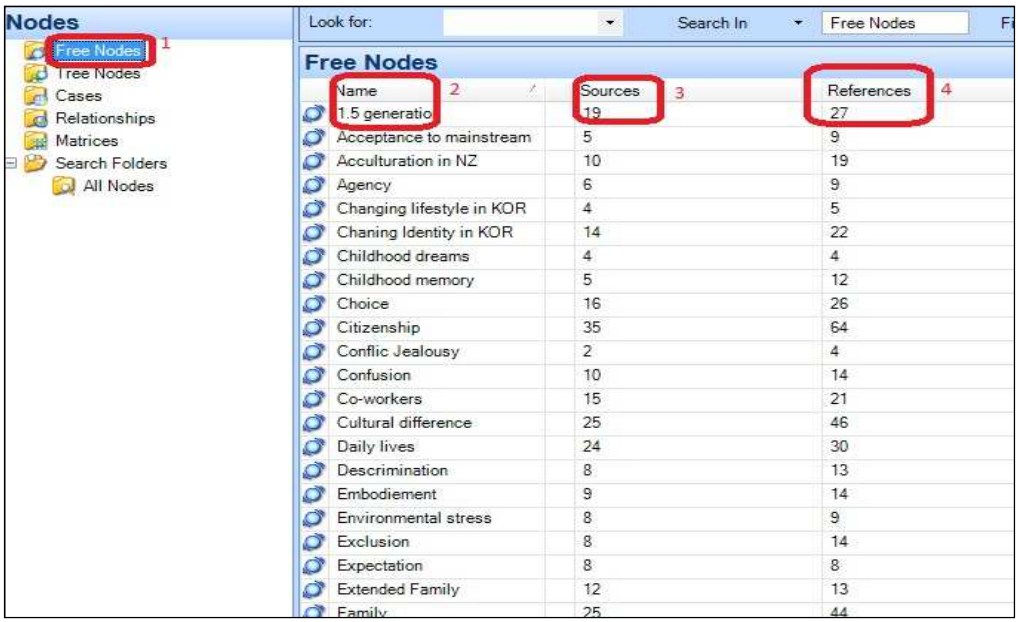
A total of 49 interviews were all transcribed using software called 'Express scribe'[25]. Over a period of three months, I fully transcribed the 40 interviews with returnees, and partially transcribed the nine interviews with re-returnees (the balance was written as bullet points). A number of themes started to emerge while I was transcribing, which I noted on the transcripts. Once I had transcribed all of the interviews, I retained them in a folder with hand-written and typed field notes aligned in the order that the interviews were taken. Although the interviews were coded using the 'NVivo' software, I did go back to the printed version of the transcripts and notes in order to read my initial thoughts and impressions about the participants, gain complementary information, achieve deeper understanding for some case study participants, and sometimes to read the transcripts from a 'fresh mind'.

In my first stage of dealing with the data, I simply coded the transcripts and sorted them into certain themes that emerged. "Coding is intended to make the analysis more systematic and to build up an interpretation through a series of stages, avoiding the temptation of jumping to premature conclusions" (Jackson, 2001:202). 'NVivo' was used for the majority of the coding and

[25] Express Scribe is a professional software package which is specifically designed for easy transcribing. The software allows easy playbacks with key controls on key board or foot pedal, speed control at any pace, and many more functions. See http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html

categorising of interview data. It was a useful tool for dealing with such an extensive amount of information; I had over 200 pages of transcripts which were impossible to cut and paste into themes and to see the crossing themes, parallels, and relationships through different variables. Using NVivo software, I was able to thematically code the transcripts and also organise the information in numerous logical and systematic ways. I was also able to easily quantify some of the data. In most cases, the interviews were coded using 'Free Nodes' (See Figure 4.8). Interviews were coded by predetermined themes that were listed after the transcriptions, but more ideas emerged after coding 10-15 interviewees. Hence, I went back to the initial transcripts and coded the earlier ones again.

Figure 4. 8 Coding in Free Nodes (Flowing themes)



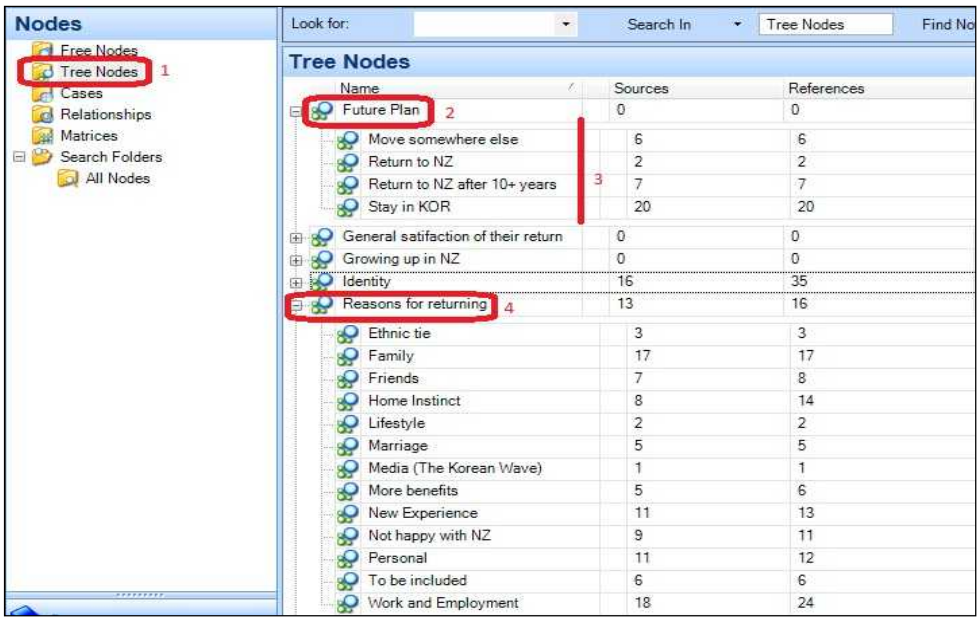
(Key: **1** – Flowing themes, **2** - Theme, **3** -No. of participants, **4** - No. of times been coded)

As evident in Figure 4.8, the coded parts of transcripts as quotations were grouped into particular themes as 'Free Nodes'. As I was coding, I also checked the number of references and sources. When you double click on the sources, you could find out which participants have conveyed the themes, and in some cases, I remembered others who had talked about similar things but were not included in the node. Through such practices, I was constantly checking over the nodes and making sure that I went through each participant's transcripts thoroughly.

Some of the themes were more usefully categorised as groups. Hence, I coded those ideas under 'Tree Node'. As can be seen in Figure 4.9, I made a main theme and listed down supplementary themes (the branches of the main idea) and coded transcripts accordingly. This was a useful way to

see a clear system running through the themes. I could also make diagrams using the tree nodes, which made useful visual maps of those themes.

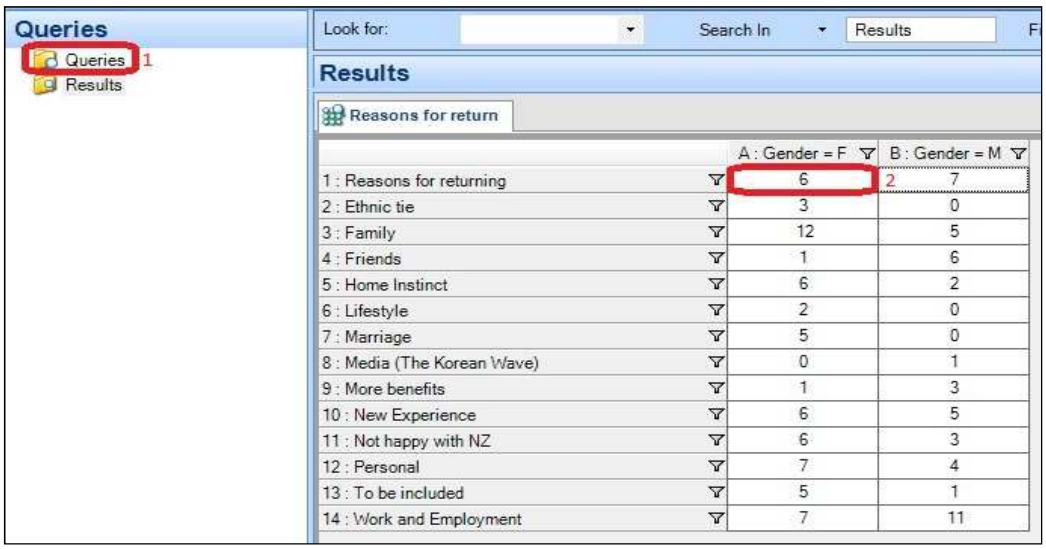
Figure 4. 9 Coding in Tree Nodes (Categorised themes)



(Key: **1** – Categorised themes, **2&4** – Main theme, **3** –Supplementary theme)

Although my main approach in analysis was qualitative, I also quantified some of the qualitative data (coded themes), which was useful for gaining a broad sense of the data and seeing the relationships between themes and important variables (See Figure 4.10).

Figure 4. 10 Queries on Nodes (Coded themes)



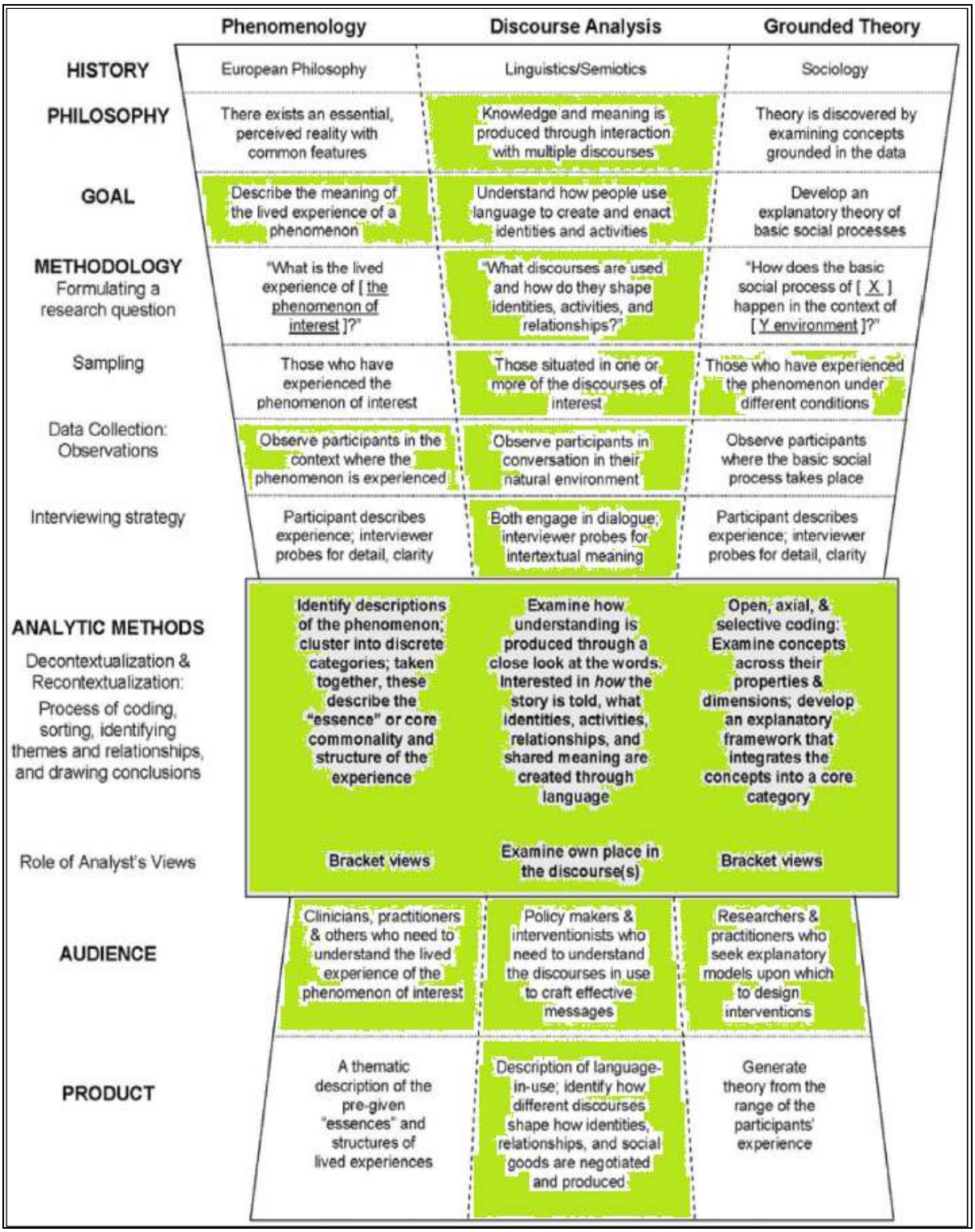
(Key: **1** – Questions, relationships with variables, **2** – Quantity by variable)

Figure 4.10 illustrates an example of quantification of qualitative data. The numbers of coded themes for 'Reasons for return' have been quantified and the difference between sexes can be seen. The advantage of this quantification tool was that you could easily go back to the qualitative data of quotations by simply clicking on the number (Key no.2 in Figure 4.10). In this way, I could easily move between the 'bigger' and the 'smaller' pictures of the participants. Using the various tools from NVivo, field notes, and transcripts, I started to note down the important themes into a diagram and put them into different order – and eventually they were categorised into different chapters.

2nd step: Discourse Analysis

Although NVivo was a good tool for coding, categorising, and quantifying the data; it was not a tool which did 'the job' for me. I employed discourse analysis to analyse my interview data. There is not a single definition or use of discourse analysis. Although discourse analysis originates from a linguistic approach (Brown and Yule, 1983), social scientists also employ the practice by emphasising the significance of context which affects the oral texts (Wood and Kroger, 2000; Hannam, 2002; Van Dijk, 2009; Waitt, 2010; Hammersley, 2003). Within geography, discourse analysis is often described as an interpretive tool to determine the 'rule' or the 'structure' which governs particular oral, written and visual texts (Waitt, 2010). In other words, "rather than letting the words speak simply for themselves, discourse analysis treats texts as mediated cultural products which are part of wider systems of knowledge which may set the limits for, or discipline, everyday life" (Hannam, 2003:195). It is difficult to explain how discourse analysis is different from other forms of qualitative analysis such as grounded theory which also attempts to seek a 'de-contextual' understanding. Figure 4.11 is a conceptual diagram from Starks and Trinidad (2007) which illustrates the differences and similarities between discourse analysis and other analytical approaches. The highlighted parts of the figure indicate my personal integrative usage of the three forms of qualitative analyses (Refer to Figure 4.11).

Figure 4. 11 Discourse analysis



(Source: Starks and Trinidad, 2007:1373)

The authors argue that the main differences between those three qualitative analyses lie not in their analytic phase, but in their philosophical and product phases (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). The boundaries between them are unclear and this was reflected in my own research employing all of

the three types of discourse analysis. Yet, my analytical approach mostly aligns with that of discourse analysis. It is argued that discourse analysis places "greater emphasis on variability (both within and between persons) than do other methods of qualitative analysis" (Wood and Kroger, 2000:28). Indeed, my research objective was not to make a grand theorisation on Korean New Zealander's return migration, but to illustrate the complexities of their lives and depict their narratives as they are. By conducting discourse analysis, I not only looked for 'what' they said, but focussed on 'how' that oral text has been produced through a shared sociological, historical and cultural understanding. I looked for connotations in their narratives and attempted to 'de-contextualise' their norms, values and perceptions.

3rd step: The writing process

The writing part of the thesis was challenging. I had to be 'self-reflexive' and I have encompassed so many different kinds of materials (ranging from interviews, pictures, written notes, and secondary data) which have been strategically put into a certain order to convey my arguments along the way. 'Arguing' was also something that was hard to achieve in the beginning as I was focused on 'describing' and 'analysing' the participants' lives in vivid ways. At times, I lost focus of exactly what I was trying to argue.

Bondi (2004) talks about the irony behind academic authority. There are contradictions when it comes to reflexive writing because we are problematising our way of thinking and subjective understandings, yet we still have to speak in strong voices and argue clearly as academics. This was the most difficult aspect of my writing process as I was trying very hard not to generalise, yet there were certain things that had to be or overemphasised in order to fit into my argument. Indeed, I was always contemplating whether I was simply representing my data or 're'-presenting (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2001). Was I changing any of the data to make it fit what I wanted to say? I tried hard to stay away from 're'-presentation, and simply just represent narratives and stay true to participants' stories.

In writing this thesis, I had to encompass various materials that were written in two different languages. The interviews were also mostly conducted in Korean, which made translation one of the most important tasks during my analysing and writing process. There are certain words that cannot be translated fully into either language because of cultural connotations and discourses that

are not matching. Hence, I did not translate certain sentences word for word, but instead tried to write them in the most natural way to generate the exact same (cultural) meanings.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated the initial research design, my research methods, and how I attempted to make sense of my data and material to produce my written thesis. I showed that taking a 'transnational ethnography' approach to study the participants was not the initial design of this project. Deciding to study their online spaces and engage with their everyday activities more actively came from my personal realisation of 'already being in my study field' in my everyday encounters. Hence, the research developed further to document the returnees' lives not only through interviews, but through observing their lives more actively. The research methods in this study mainly involved semi-structured interviews with 40 returnees in 2009, and later with 9 re-returnees in New Zealand. Observations of their lives were conducted in direct and indirect ways which ranged from spending time with the participants in personal settings, occasional events such as the University of Auckland alumni event, and also indirectly through their online communities. As discussed, I was heavily involved in the research participants' lives and was aware of the role of my positionality. I attempted to reflect on my role as the observer. During my analysis and writing process, I attempted to develop a more critically distanced analysis in which my personal knowledge and subjectivities had minimal impact on my findings.

The following chapter is the first results chapter of this thesis. I explain why the study participants decided to return Korea. I emphasise the complexity behind their decision making processes and why it was important to hear their life-histories in order to understand their return intentions.

5. The myth of 'Home': The complexities of return migrants' decision making processes

5.1 Introduction: Why do people return?

This chapter closely examines the complexities of the Korean New Zealander returnees' decision-making processes through a life history approach. I investigate what 'myths of home' the returnees believed prior to their return, what motivated their move, and what difficulties they experienced in both the decision making process and the actual relocation. Making a choice to return to one's home nation can be difficult, especially after a significant length of time residing overseas. Living as a migrant, one can become deeply attached or detached from various personal spaces and places and the boundary between one's 'home' and 'host' nation can become blurred. This means that returnees' decisions to 'return home' may not always be related to longing for reunification with their culture and people, but often they carry worries of moving to a new place and having to re-settle. Making a choice to return to one's home nation takes courage, strong motivation, and a willingness to take action.

Why return to somewhere old? In a more traditional sense, return represented "an individual act through which individual misery was to be resolved or some old dream recaptured" (Dorso quoted in Cerase, 1974). In other words, people returned because their life in their host society was unsuccessful; return was a result of the failure of the initial migration. Cerase (1974) once expressed a strong view that return happens due to a 'failed' integration into the host society. In 18th century Italy, Southern Italian emigrants (among the many other immigrant groups) usually moved to the United States without any money, in the hopes of becoming successful. Hence,

returning to their home nation was seen as the result of failure. Rogers (1984) had a similar view of seeing return as a failure of the initial migration. He illustrated different possible reasons for returning. These include changes in home country, awareness of being needed in home nation, family or patriotic reasons, changes in receiving country and disappointment over not achieving goals in the host society.

Cerase and Rogers both put emphasis on the structural factors which impact on return intentions. Such a notion is also strongly related to the neoclassical economic view. In examining the wage differentials between receiving and sending countries, one must consider the expectation of higher earnings in the host society (Cassarino, 2004). Indeed, Cerase's (1974) interest mainly surrounds how much money returnees have earned in the host society and how much monetary and social benefit they are going to bring back to the home nation. He sees returnees as solely economic entities.

King's (2000) four categories of return intentions moved away from this economic approach, instead categorising returning intentions into four broad but interrelated categories of economic, social, family and political oriented. Economic reasons may be that the financial gain in the host society is not significant, migrants are looking for business investment in their home country or there are better employment opportunities in their home nation. Social reasons may include difficulties of integration into a host society due to discrimination and cultural differences, or return may be accompanied by more positive factors such as a patriotic desire to help their home society. Family oriented reasons can include marriage and looking after children or parents. Political reasons mainly include forced policies which may divide the immigrants from their nation or indirect policy changes that bring benefits to emigrants. King (2000) suggests that within a voluntary return migration context, social and family reasons have stronger impacts on decisions to return than economic and political reasons. Adda et al (2006) share a comparable view that while first migrations are usually determined by economic reasons, a re-migration to one's home nation is decided more because of complex social and personal reasons.

King (2000) argues that large and impersonal surveys are inadequate tools to help us understand emigrants' reasons for returning because their decision-making processes are complex, multi-layered, and sometimes unexpected. Indeed, a number of recent studies have found qualitative analyses more appropriate for understanding the complicated decision making processes of

returnees (King, 2000; Oxfeld and Long, 2004; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Christou 2006a; 2006b; Ni Laoire, 2008; Wiles, 2008; Tsuda 2003a). In a study of second generation Greek-American returnees, it was found that Greek Americans return to Greece for two major reasons. Firstly, for personal motives such as searching for ancestral roots, and, secondly, for professional reasons such as finding suitable jobs or gaining higher education. Although their decisions to return are all driven by personal desire, their decision is influenced by their first generation parents who have raised them inside the Greek 'bubble' and raised them in a Greek-way of living. These parents taught their children that returning to Greece meant returning to their final resting place (Christou and King, 2006; Christou, 2006a).

As discussed in Chapter Two, return can be seen as a diasporic home coming instinct (Oxfeld and Long, 2004) or as a strategic movement for better economic and social opportunities (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). Both theories of diaspora and transnationalism are useful analytical tools to understand why returnees return, yet I have not categorized my study participants' return intention as a 'diasporic homecoming instinct' or a 'strategic transnational return'. Returnees desired to have strong ethnic ties to their Korean roots and, despite their 'prosperous' positions as transnational migrants, their yearnings for belonging and a sense of 'home' were strong. It was clear that there was a mixture of diasporic and transnational elements which shaped their return motivations. What seemed to be important was to understand their return intentions as a long-term process through examining and listening to their life history. This included information about their experiences of living as an immigrant and the small and large incidents that happened along the way which directly and indirectly affected their return decisions.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, I give a general picture of the study participants' return intentions. The participants' reasons for returning have been grouped under certain themes. The purpose of this is to provide a quick glimpse of the participants' intentions before moving onto the in-depth illustrations of selected individuals' narratives. Secondly, I discuss return intentions in two broad categories: 'short-term' and 'long-term'. In discussing 'long-term' reasons for return, I refer to factors that built up over a long period of time since the participants were child-immigrants in New Zealand. I differentiate those from the 'short-term' reasons, which built up over a short period of time – usually between six months to two years – prior to their return. I argue that taking a life history approach to return migration is significant in showing this life-long experience of decision making processes. More importantly, I argue that

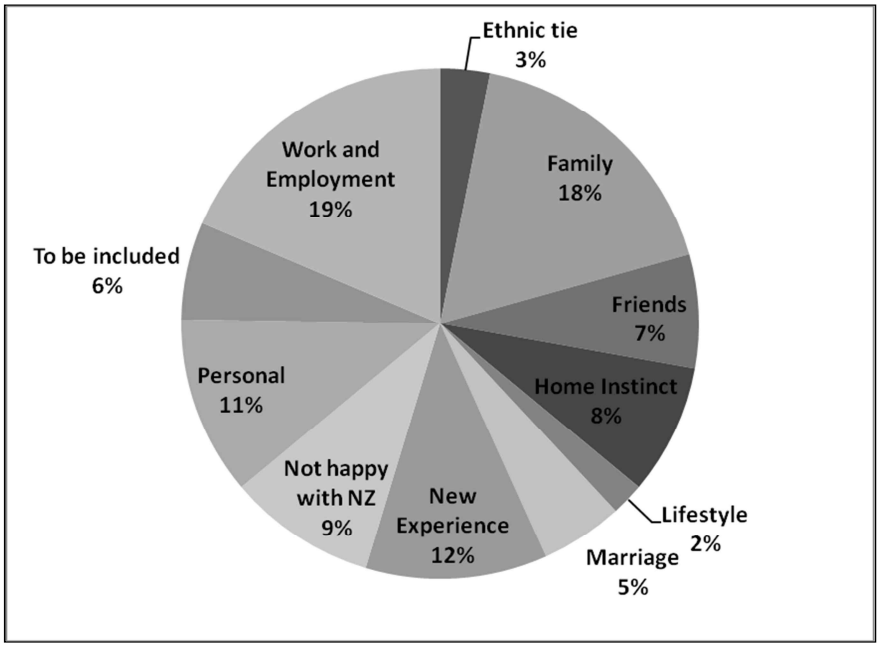
long-term reasons can often be hidden as they were only mentioned by a smaller number of the participants. However, the long term seems equally significant and provides further (personal-historical) explanations of short term intentions. The third section of the chapter discusses the 'outliers'. In Section 5.5, two chosen returnees share their stories of returning by unforeseen circumstances of health and religion. I call their stories 'outliers' not in the sense of being any less significant, but because they are special cases that were not common among the rest of the participants. Through a discourse analysis approach, I emphasise the variables rather than a grand theory in order to convey that returnees' decision-making processes are multiple and complex in nature. To conclude, I attempt to make meaningful sense of the return intentions discussed.

5.2 A general glimpse

Figure 5.1 gives a general picture of various motivations for the participants' return migration. The graph is a representation of the first interview data from 40 returnees[26]. Their return motivations included various individual and structural factors such as employment, family, and searching for better quality of life. The pie graph indicates the total number of times that each theme was covered by the participants. Each participant usually had more than one reason for returning. For those who struggled to choose the main reason for their return migration, I asked them to choose their top three out of their numerous reasons in order to examine their overall reasons first. I then asked the participants to further explain other 'complementary' reasons for returning, which I explore in later sections. The graph indicates the top reasons only (Total number of coded themes = 115; Total number of participants = 40).

[26] The nine interview participants who had returned to New Zealand after their return experience in Korea are not included in this graph as their stories were somewhat different. Their cases are fully discussed in Chapter Seven.

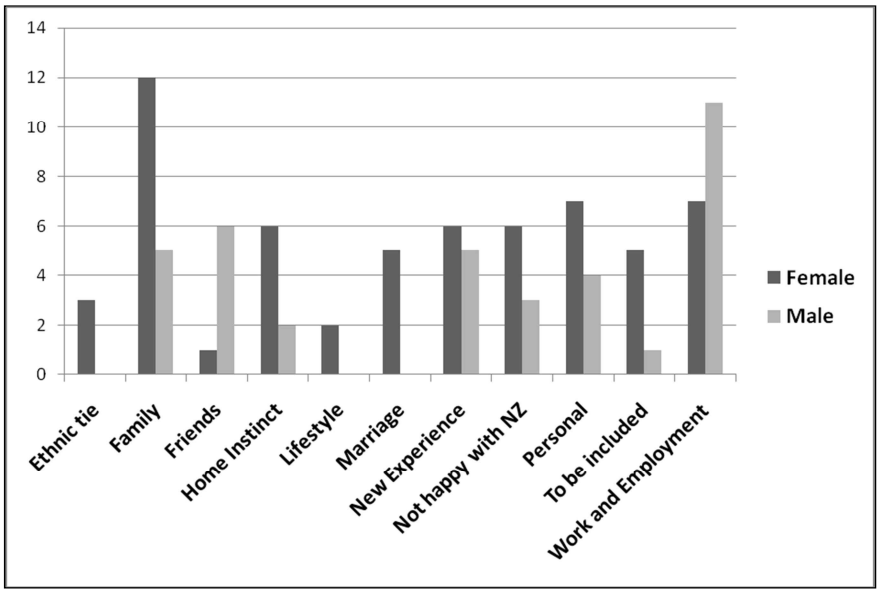
Figure 5. 1 Main reasons for return migration (total responses)



Work and employment had the highest rate of 19% of responses. New Zealand was seen as a difficult location to find a job and Korea was perceived as having a bigger market with more opportunities. Family was another prominent reason for returning, which included reasons such as parents and siblings also having returned, having close and extended family members in Korea who offered jobs, and being influenced by their parents' suggestion. Personal reasons (11%) included factors such as having had a religious belief, car accident, problem with friends in New Zealand, and health issues. Not being happy with their life in New Zealand (9%) and wanting to have a new experience in Korea (12%) were also factors. Those who returned mainly because they were unhappy with living in New Zealand for various reasons also tended to long for a new experience in Korea. 'Homing instinct' (8%) correlated with the theme of 'to be included' (6%). By 'to be included', I mean to be included in the mainstream society. Those who had a strong desire to be with their own ethnicity were more strongly attached to their home country and felt that Korea was their home. A small proportion (5%) of the participants also said that marriage (i.e. to seek their future spouse) was their main reason to return. Although only a few of the participants indicated this as a 'main reason', more participants conveyed their desire to find their future spouses in Korea later in the interviews. 'Ethnic ties' (3%) formed a very small percentage of the whole, though clearly mattered for some participants.

The difference between genders was an interesting divide. As can be seen in Figure 5.2, the main differences were related to work and employment, family, marriage, ethnic ties, and friends. The graph suggests that females are more likely to return to Korea for family, marriage, and ethnic-ties related reasons, while male participants are more likely to be influenced by employment and friends.

Figure 5. 2 Main reasons for return migration by gender



These sample results are not intended to suggest any 'truth' about the participants or to be representative of the Korean New Zealander returnee population, but they do provide an overview of the study participants' experience. While quantifying qualitative information is still a contested method (Chi, 1997), it is useful for the purpose of undertaking a content analysis of the data. The information illustrated in the graphs is biased and is bound to be subjective because: a) the interviewees were answering the question in an interview setting, and b) they were also asked to confine their answer. This quantitative information is also limited because it does nothing to uncover the reasons behind different motivations to return. Indeed, a complex set of personal and emotional determinants are driving the patterns we see in fig.5.2 and 5.2. This kind of in-depth understanding can only be gained through qualitative data. From here, I present and interpret the actual narratives of the participants and in doing so, I uncover their feelings of anxiety and excitement over the course of their decision-making processes.

5.3 The short term reasons: Changes in life-cycle patterns

Some of the participants had started to consider returning to Korea during life course changes – most commonly, prior to their university graduation. I have called these short-term reasons because their return decision-making processes developed over a short period of time (usually between six months and two years). The prominent short term reasons include employment, looking for a change in lifestyle, marriage, seeing family and friends also returning, and 'homing instinct'. Clearly, all of these reasons were part of their changing life course patterns in which their thoughts and visions began to change as they were starting to enter 'adulthood'.

Following money, justice, and an 'easy route'

Most of those who said that they returned to Korea for employment (19%) indicated that they did attempt to look for a job in New Zealand to begin with. A number of those participants showed contempt for the New Zealand job market for the perceived 'fact' that it is harder for Asian people to be employed in New Zealand. Some even believed that 'your application doesn't get read if your surname is an Asian one.' A common perception like this is not easy to prove as a 'fact', but it was something that was experienced strongly enough by the participants to push them to seek jobs in Korea instead. Reymonds (2010) illustrates that second generation British Caribbean returnees also faced a similar disadvantage when finding jobs in Britain. She suggests a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, the second-generation Caribbean migrants had limited social networks because their parents didn't succeed when they first immigrated. Secondly, it was hard for them to get through the society as 'black'.

By seeing their Kiwi friends with the same degrees acquiring jobs, they felt alienated at times and felt that there was discrimination in the job market:

> *I did my honours degree in commerce… Well, as you know or as you would have heard, if you looked at our class, about 80% of the students were Asians… but when you hear the news of who got employed first, it was the Kiwi people. It's not because their grades were any higher. I know that people don't get employed based purely on their grades…but I just knew that there was a strong pattern of who gets the job first…*
>
> (Damon Kim, M, 29)

Despite this perception, Damon still wanted to try to find a job in New Zealand because he wanted

to live close to his parents. However, after trying many times, he felt there was not a place for him in the New Zealand job market. He moved to Australia because it was closer to New Zealand than Korea and he believed that there was a bigger job market. However, he still failed to find employment:

> *I tried my best. I had my honours degree; I received extra certificates, which were required in the commerce industry. I gave out my CVs to heaps of different companies… but I just couldn't be employed. I got through the first stages, but I always failed after the interviews. Even if my English was good enough to communicate, I guess I couldn't compare to those Australians and New Zealanders who could crack jokes. During that time, I decided to put out my CV to a Korean company, and I was employed straight away. It was a pretty damn good offer as well. So I told myself, why not? I tried my best and this seemed like the path that I should take. So I don't regret much for returning because I tried my best in New Zealand to find a job.*

Damon was one of several participants who didn't want to leave New Zealand, but felt they had to because they couldn't find work. However, return wasn't purely for the job. Going back to Korea also meant that he felt more accepted. As he went through his 'undeserved' job seeking experience in New Zealand and Australia, Damon felt a sudden change in his status in Korean society. Such feelings of acceptance and respect also persuaded him to return.

Jerrod Han (M, 29) shared a similar story. Jerrod has a master's degree in finance, and also wanted to work in New Zealand but after his internship experience he decided to seek a job in Korea:

> *Well, the main reason for coming to Korea was to find a job really. I wanted to work in the financial industry market because I majored in finances with a master's degree. To start with, New Zealand doesn't offer that many jobs compared to other countries… and being a 1.5 generation, it meant it was going to be even harder for me. I mean, Korea for example… if there were a Vietnamese person and a Korean person who both graduated Seoul National University; both applying for the same job… Who would get the job? Someone who can eat Kimchi and share the same culture will get it. It's a fact that you can't avoid.*

> *I did start an internship in a company in New Zealand, but I felt some racism inside the company, those people at higher level didn't even talk to me…and you saw them laughing and talking with other Kiwi interns… Why couldn't I be like them? So gradually…I felt even more anxious to get out and find a job in Korea. Although this is just my opinion…I think I came here (Korea) because I couldn't go through that 'wall'. I felt that there are limitations for yellow people to go any higher.*

Jerrod felt that it was not worth trying to find employment in New Zealand after his internship experience. He explained that, at first, he had accepted the 'fact' that it was harder to find a job as an Asian person. Yet, his experience at the internship reaffirmed to him that Asian immigrants could not pass through the 'wall'. The word 'wall' was used as a metaphor by many of the participants to describe certain kinds of barriers between the Korean immigrants and the Kiwi society. This could be an internal wall which is built inside the immigrants by having negative or passive attitudes to start with, but some walls were felt externally through expressions of discrimination and racism. Jerrod, who couldn't go over the 'wall', decided to return to Korea to look for a job.

It is important to note that 'getting employed' is not a simple matter; it is about acquiring the kind of job that returnees wanted and also receiving more acceptance and respect in job markets. Stephen Baek (M, 32) offered insight into how much better respected they were in Korea compared to working in New Zealand:

> *When I was looking for jobs in Korea, I realized that my English becomes a highly valued skill in Korea... Whereas... It becomes a barrier in New Zealand because my mother language is Korean after all… I mean, I initially found a job in New Zealand at (X) and they would only put me on to their Korean team and give me really boring and crappy jobs like only dealing with Korean customers who weren't even on our contract. I hated it… I mean, I majored in computer science and I really wanted to use this skill. So that's when I started looking for jobs in Korea... Luckily, I got a job as a computer programmer (in Korea) and now I am in charge of our firm's important global projects because I have the English ability to do so.*

Indeed, a number of other participants also stated that having English as a skill served as a significant asset to gaining a job in Korea. Because Stephen was now in charge of important projects for his company, he had a stronger sense of achievement and he felt satisfied with his daily tasks at work.

As discussed by Stephen and other participants, Korean New Zealander returnees certainly felt more valued in the Korean job market than in New Zealand. On top of Korea having a much bigger job market, further analysis suggests that perhaps those who couldn't find jobs in New Zealand were lacking in an extensive 'social network'. A number of participants explained how much easier it was for them to find jobs in Korea because their parents or their extended families had connections that helped them in their job search:

> *My father had some connections in the design industry (in Korea), so he got me an internship to start with. After working as an intern for two months, I could get a job straight after my experience.* (May Seo, F, 29)

> *I couldn't imagine myself working in Korea because I didn't know where to begin. But my uncle had many connections with the people working in pharmaceutical industries, so he suggested one company for me to apply to. Although I had to do the actual work of filling out my application form, taking the tests, and going through the interview process to get the job, if he hadn't got me to apply for the job, I wouldn't even have known that there was a job vacancy.* (Helen Park, M, 26)

> *My friend from New Zealand was already working in Korea back then, and he told me that there was a job vacancy in his company. So when I applied, I got the job straight away. I think my friend helped me a little because he told the boss how 'good' I was… (Laughs)* (Paul Jo, M, 28)

May, Helen and Paul all decided to return to Korea after their family and friends suggested they work there. They all had thought about applying for jobs in New Zealand, but since it seemed easier to secure a job in Korea, they decided to follow that route. In recognising this, following their occupation was not a simple matter:

> *I think everyone wants to be successful in their lives… but you know it's really hard to become successful in New Zealand because there is a limit... So I think those who want to become successful return to Korea. Don't you think..? But then again, I have to say there are people who get really good jobs (in NZ)… and I would have loved to stay in New Zealand if I got paid as much as I get paid here (in Korea). So you could say, those who fail to get a real good job in NZ come here too… I still don't know whether I have made the best decision because I always miss New Zealand, but I can't let go of my job here.*
>
> (Erin Park, F, 26)

The above quotation illustrates that the question of whether or not Erin made the right decision to return still remains after living in Korea for many years. Although she has a good job in Korea with a high salary she wonders whether she could have gained a better job in New Zealand and been able to enjoy the kind of lifestyle that she wants had she tried harder. Unsatisfied with her life in Korea, Erin eventually returned to New Zealand after living as a returnee in Korea for four years. Such a migratory trajectory illustrates how difficult it can be for 1.5 generation immigrants to make the decision to return to Korea and to be convinced of their own choices.

Just like OE: Seeking a new experience

> *Although I said earlier that my primary reason was to find a job in Korea, it was more that I wanted to go somewhere else… somewhere different where I could start a new life.*
>
> (Christine Jeon, F, 32)

As illustrated by Christine, searching for a new experience played a significant role in their decision making processes of some participants. Korea seemed to be an attractive destination to gain a new experience because they could also find out more about their cultural roots at the same time; many participants emphasised that they didn't get to 'experience Korea as an adult.' Overseas Experience, commonly known as the 'OE', is an activity frequently undertaken by young Kiwis in their 20s (Duncan, 2010). There seemed to be a parallel between the out-migration of the young Kiwi population and the return migration of the young Korean New Zealanders.

Taylin Kim (M, 31) wanted to try a life in Korea before he got any older, when he would have to settle in one place with his family. He chose Seoul because he really enjoys the city:

> *I wanted to go to Korea while I was younger. During my first job in New Zealand, I suddenly realized that if I got any older, it would be harder for me to move somewhere different to try out new things. You know, like if you get married and have kids and stuff; it will be harder for you to spend time for yourself right? So when I first decided to return to Korea, it was more of a curiosity… to find out what kind of country Korea is… it was just like an OE really. I just wanted leave my life in New Zealand and try a new life in Korea as an adult. Besides, my life in New Zealand was becoming so repetitive and boring…*

When I asked him why he chose Korea particularly and not somewhere else he answered:

> *Well, I did have the rest of my family living in Korea back then, so part of me also wanted to live with them before I settled somewhere permanently. Also, I wanted to really just have fun in Seoul city. I love Seoul. It's the most fun city you can ever live in.*

The view that Taylin held of Seoul was shared by many of the participants. Seoul is generally perceived as a vibrant city, with shopping malls and other shops open until very late at night, great entertainment and night life, lots of places to eat and hang out and with more people to meet. For a group of young adults, Seoul was busy and fast compared to the 'slow-paced' lifestyle in New Zealand. While some other participants didn't like the 'fast paced' lifestyle of Seoul, other participants returned for the satisfaction of it.

'My biological clock is ticking!'

Finding the right employment and seeking new experiences were not always reasons revealed by the interviewees. Finding their future spouse was another significant factor which motivated the participants to return to Korea. New Zealand was generally considered to have a 'small marriage market', where there were not enough Korean men[27] to choose from.

Sunny Kim (F, 31) had never imagined herself moving to Korea because she always thought that return meant a 'failure'. However, when she finished a PhD degree and was looking for a job, she realized that she was getting older and she really wanted to meet someone:

[27] I am using gender specific language in this section because only the female participants that I interviewed considered marriage a return intention.

> *I used to think that those who failed to settle in New Zealand returned to Korea… I've seen so many (Korean) people returning to Korea without even trying… and what do they do? They become English teachers in Korea because that's all they can do, not because it's what they always wanted to do. It seemed like they were giving up their dreams so easily… So for that reason, I never wanted to return to Korea… but one day after graduating from my PhD degree, I realized… life is not all about becoming 'successful'… I started to realize that I needed to find someone. My biological clock was ticking pretty much… (Laughs) I wanted to get married and have kids. And not many days after that, I got in touch with this guy that I met on an overseas trip, and he was living in Korea back then. Somehow I just instantly made my decision that I want to return to Korea and meet this guy. It was a crazy decision I made, but I don't regret it. I secured myself a good job, a good life, and a husband-to-be.*

Sunny's decision to return was an instant one. She never thought that she would ever return to Korea because she had a strong belief that she wanted to become successful in New Zealand. However, realising that she wanted to get married and start a new life, she followed her instinct to meet the person in Korea.

More commonly, some of the female participants stated that they specifically wanted to marry Korean men. Hence, coming to a place where there is a 'bigger marriage market' and where they could 'marry within' seemed to be a logical choice:

> *I don't want to marry a white guy… I never did even though I grew up in NZ since I was six. So really, part of the reason to return was to marry a Korean man.*
>
> (Tara Hong, F, 26)

Part of the desire to meet their future spouse in Korea was not only because there were more Korean men to choose from, but because there would be more chances of meeting someone new:

> *I thought that I would never meet my future husband if I stayed in this same circle of people all the time.…You know New Zealand (Korean) boys… they are all the same… you either already know them or can easily find out who they dated before you even get to know*

> *that person. And they probably do the same with my personal history, too. And you also see your friends dating their friend's ex-boyfriends and I find all that too disturbing... It's too small. So I didn't want to date anyone in New Zealand and find someone here. I was getting so lonely back then…*
>
> (Alicia Choi, F, 27)

For Alicia, her Korean circle of friends in Auckland was getting too small. It was becoming harder for her to meet someone new who was not connected to either her or her friends. Longing for a change in lifestyle and to find a 'marriageable' guy, she decided to return to Korea, leaving her close friends and family behind.

Homing instinct? 'Because I am Korean'

Some participants said that they simply wanted to return because they are Korean. Hence, as soon as they graduated from university, they bought their plane tickets and returned to Korea. I attempted to understand their behavior by questioning whether they had any negative feelings toward New Zealand society, or a strong sense of Korean identity, but it was almost like an 'instinct' that was hard to explain. They simply moved because they wanted to live in Korea 'because they were Korean':

> *I was just waiting for my graduation day… I just wanted to live in Korea so badly. So after my last semester, I went to Korea with a one way ticket.*

When asked what made this instinct so strong, Fraser replied:

> *(Long pause…) I don't know really… why I wanted to return so badly… I just had this strong feeling that I needed to live in Korea because I am Korean. I made my decision to return so easily, I knew that my actual life existed in Korea.*
>
> (Fraser Shim, M, 29)

For Fraser, his life in New Zealand was not a real one, but one that was still in his 'host' setting. His 'actual life' had to be lived in Korea because this is where he felt he belonged. For Fraser, he lived all his life in New Zealand as a sojourner, who would eventually return to his homeland, the 'center of the world' (Tuan, 1977) to him.

Claire Kim (F, 32) explained her 'homing instinct' as a personality factor. Even though she was a young child when she first moved to New Zealand, she did not integrate into New Zealand because she wanted to retain her strong Korean identity:

> *I think it's a personality thing really… I was never open to fully immersing myself into New Zealand culture. I mean, how could I suddenly become a Kiwi person just because I was living there when I spent my last twelve years in Korea as a Korean person? Even when I went through all the schooling in New Zealand, I've always had the idea of returning to my own country at the back of my mind. I always imagined that I would eventually return to Korea. So, right after I graduated university, I just went to Korea without thinking too much about it.*

For Claire, returning to Korea meant getting her true identity back. De Botton (2008) argues that being at 'home' means where you can be true to yourself and practice your full sense of identity. 'Home' is a place where you can act without thinking and where you don't have to worry about what others think of you. For Claire, Korea was her 'home' and New Zealand was always her 'host' land, where she was only living as a minority.

Towards a complex picture of return migration

So far, a partial picture of short term motives has been illustrated. They included reasons such as employment, seeking new experiences, marriage, and home instinct. All of these reasons were clearly part of the participants' life course changes in which they were looking for different ways to enter into adulthood. Finding jobs in Korea and gaining a new experience seemed to be an attractive choice when it was difficult to gain employment and life seemed to be repetitive in New Zealand. Marriage was a gender-specific reason in this study where only women participants saw finding their future spouse as a significant reason to return. 'Home instinct' was something that was difficult to explain because participants simply said that they wanted to return to Korea because they were Korean.

The decision-making processes behind return migration are complex. Although all of the narratives in this section suggest that thoughts of return began prior to university graduation, one cannot avoid considering aspects of life history that are bound to have an impact on return-

decisions. In the following section, I discuss the 'long-term' reasons behind return migration, in which participants recall their childhood and teenage years of building up thoughts about returning.

5.4 The long-term reasons: Growing up as minority Korean teenagers

After a number of (deconstructive) readings of the participants' narratives, it became clear that many of the returnees planned or thought about returning over a long period of time. Examining long-term return intentions can provide broader understandings of an individual's life-long decision-making processes. It can determine returnees' 'return-preparedness' (Cassarino, 2004), shed light upon unconscious reasons, and, perhaps most importantly, explain the connections between the initial migration and return migration.

A large number of participants' stories suggest that they had difficult experiences of being minorities in New Zealand society when they were teenagers and this gradually led them to 'romanticise' their homeland (Ni Laoire, 2008). Through their romanticising of Korea, they imagine or hope that their sense of belonging could be achieved in Korea. Narratives of estrangement lay behind other mundane accounts of transnational life in which they had repeated holiday visits to Korea and close experiences of Korean culture in their everyday activities. From a different light, this also affected and framed their everyday lives in which they were attracted to the idea of moving back to Korea. It is certain that various kinds of 'myths of home' emerged in the returnees' minds over a long period of time. In this section, I explain those particular experiences and attempt to understand the gradual decision making processes that developed over long periods.

'Living as a minority kid was difficult'

Depending on an individual's personality, the difficulties of living as a minority teenager would have had different impacts on their lives. For instance, getting an apple thrown at you just because you are an Asian kid at school could have eventually been forgotten by someone who has a buoyant personality, yet it may have been experienced as a trauma for a person more sensitive in character. A number of participants recalled their teenage lives as being somewhat difficult, which eventually led them to return to Korea. Not 'fitting into' the mainstream society was not always the main problem, but they remembered the stressful moments when their differences were ignored or not respected.

For Justine Lee (F, 31), her difficult experience as a minority began prior to her migration to New Zealand in 1994. The idea of immigrating to New Zealand was something that she was not ready for. Unlike other migrant children who were too young to think about the consequences of migration and passively followed their parents, Justine was already aged 16, had had many friends in Korea and knew what she wanted to do when she went to university. However, she was forced to move to New Zealand:

> *My father just told me one day that we are moving to New Zealand. I was devastated. I had a guy that I really liked at school, and my dream was to go to Yonsei University to major in Piano. I told my father that I was not going, and he pretty much just forced me. My parents didn't give up on me and told me every single day that we were moving to New Zealand. I hated it…*

When questioned about her experiences of New Zealand life Justine replied:

> *When I first went to school in New Zealand, I was not open to making friends. My English was very poor. The kids at school didn't like me. I couldn't make friends with Korean kids either because they also didn't like me. They thought I was from a really posh side of Korea because I was good at playing piano and went straight into senior class. I kind of sensed that this one Korean girl was really jealous of me because she couldn't get into the senior class but I did straight away. Somehow rumors grew among the Korean kids that I was really snobbish… and they came and bullied me and bitched at me. My high school years in New Zealand were like hell. I didn't enjoy anything, I had no friends… and at lunch, I used to eat my sandwich alone which was wet by my tears.*

Justine's life changed dramatically after she moved to New Zealand. Compared to her satisfactory life in Korea where she had many friends and a hope to achieve, she no longer could enjoy her life. Justine could not make friends at school firstly because she was too shy and embarrassed of her poor English, and, secondly, because she was bullied by other Korean kids at school. Perhaps she started her school in New Zealand with a negative attitude as she was forced to enter Kiwi society. Whatever the dominant reasons may be, Justine was affected negatively by her schooling in New Zealand and she was ready to leave the country once she finished university. Justine did mention that she enjoyed her time at university, but because she grew up constantly reminding herself that

she will one day eventually return to Korea, she instantly decided to return once the time came. For Justine, return meant 'getting her happy life back' in Korea. It was a healing thought for Justine to know that she had a place where she belonged throughout the tough years of high school.

Unlike Justine who arrived in New Zealand already a teenager, which made it harder for her to settle, Tara Hong (F, 25) came to New Zealand when she was six years old. Despite the age difference, Tara also faced the same problem of not being able to fit in at her school. She also wasn't able to make friends with either Korean or New Zealand kids:

> *When I first entered school in 1990, there were no Korean people at all, but I still faced a lot of racism. I was six years old and couldn't speak any English…but I understood when kids were swearing at me… I couldn't say anything back… I used to get into many fights with those kids. I remember those days and it still really hurts…*

Tara tried hard to learn English and she made some Kiwi friends. However, when she entered intermediate school[28] that was when her real 'people problem' began for her. Tara started to make Korean friends and she was confused because she couldn't belong to any groups:

> *I realized that I could no longer make good friends with the Kiwi girls because we had too many differences…back then we were like 11 and 12…and that's when the girls started to talk about relationships and they tried to please boys at school…I realized that they didn't want to take me out on double dates because I was Asian. I mean yeah, I was short, didn't have beautiful big eyes… kids were still teasing me that I had Chinese eyes…So I started to feel alienated again from my good (Kiwi) friends from primary school… So I kept my distance from my Kiwi friends and started to hang out with Korean kids…I got to know some newly- arrived Korean kids in class…What they did during lunch time looked more fun. They were playing Korean card games and things like skipping rope, but I actually didn't know how to play those Korean games. So I used to just sit down and watch the Korean girls play the game. I was really not sure who to hang out with at that moment so each day, I switched who I hung out with between Korean friends and Kiwi friends. Then one day, my Korean friends came to me and told me off for changing friends…! I know it's really stupid when I think about it now. Why couldn't I have as many friends as I wanted to,*

[28] New Zealand terminology for junior high school

> *right? But back then, being young teenagers, you had to really choose one group that you hung out with – well, especially between Korean and Kiwi kids I suppose…I think there was almost jealousy towards me because I had Kiwi friends but they didn't. So, by the time I went to high school, I didn't really have any close friends. I felt that Kiwi friends were no longer friendly to me. Then all the Korean kids thought that I was weird because they told me that I was like a Kiwi person... I was so stressed… I changed my school a number of times but my search for a good group of friends failed until my third school where I made some really good Korean friends.*

Tara grew up learning New Zealand cultural norms and she had, to a great extent, become a New Zealander culturally. So, by the time Tara went to her intermediate school in 1996, she had already lived in New Zealand for six years, was fluent in English, and was used to Kiwi culture and customs. As discussed in Chapter One, Korean immigrant numbers rose dramatically from 1994 to 1996 (Chang, 2006). Tara was different from all of the newly arrived migrant kids, who could not speak English well, yet she was still treated like an 'Asian kid' by her Kiwi friends because no matter how 'white' she was inside, she was 'yellow' outside. Tara never enjoyed her high school years in New Zealand, and the confusion of her identity continued as she entered university. Tara did not have close friends at university either; she spent most of her free time alone, or with the person that she was dating. Her loneliness, isolation, and confusion did not go away but grew over the period of her migratory phase in New Zealand:

> *By the time I graduated university, I was already so distanced from everyone. My only few friends from high school were living in Korea or somewhere else. I really had had enough of all the people problems and racism… I was ready to leave the country. I've always told myself that I will leave this country once I graduate and that's what my father told me, too. I have always been close to my father, hence it was not a hard decision for me to make.*

Tara lived in a typical 'astronaut family' situation (Ho and Bedford, 2008; Bartley, 2003), where her father lived in Korea for financial purposes while the rest of the family lived in New Zealand. Tara was very close to her father, which also made it easier for her to decide to be reunited with him. While her return intention was a combined one, her experience of isolation as a migrant child was the main reason that caused her to return.

Subtle realisation of 'inferiority' and difference

Feeling isolated does not necessarily come from being explicitly bullied and excluded. Many of the participants stated that they felt like outsiders on some occasions due to their 'inferior' position to mainstream society. The sense of being 'inferior' is a product of mainstream ignorance of returnees' culture and/or subtle gestures that constantly reminded them that they were 'different'. Often, the subtle realisation of their inferiority was gained among the people that they were close to. As a result, the feeling of exclusion was even more severe and distracting.

Erica (F, 29), who had a bubbly personality, said that it was difficult for her to retain her Korean identity when she was growing up in New Zealand. Often, she wanted to deny the fact that she was Korean because she was embarrassed by negative stereotypes of Korean people:

> *On the surface, I was probably seen as someone who was fully integrated into Kiwi society. I had many Kiwi friends, and I hung out with them all the time. But I always had identity issues… like… I was never 100% of anything…I always felt out of place. I often wanted to deny my Korean identity… to be honest; I was embarrassed to be Korean because I didn't like the negative perceptions that Kiwi people had of Korean people. So even if I always possessed a lot of 'Koreanness' in myself, I didn't want to show it and I was always troubled by it… so after I graduated university, I naturally wanted to try a life in Korean society.*

I asked Erica why she was embarrassed by her Korean identity. She could not explain fully why she wanted to hide her Korean identity, but she said perhaps it was the stereotypical image of economically less privileged Asian immigrants. Or it could have been the Korean students at her school who weren't doing well and causing trouble. Erica further explained that since she was the only child in her family, she didn't want to disappoint her parents; hence she had to perform well at school. Her parents expected her to make Kiwi friends and learn English more quickly. For various reasons, despite her desire to make Korean friends, Erica forced herself to hang out with New Zealand friends only. Erica had no problem making Kiwi friends and performing well at school. She was involved in a number of extracurricular activities, received good grades, and she integrated well with other New Zealand friends. However, she never felt comfortable about emphasising her Korean identity to others and she tried harder to 'blend in' by hiding her 'Koreanness'. On some occasions, she even denied her Korean identity and told her friends'

parents that she was Chinese. When Erica went to university, she felt that it was too late for her to make Korean friends because she had only made Kiwi friends at school. The feeling of isolation continued inside her and she regretted her teenage years of denying her Koreanness. Hence, after she graduated from university, she made the decision to go and live in Korea in search of her Korean identity.

Unlike Erica who performed well at school, many participants stated how difficult it was for them to receive good grades because of the language barrier. The feeling of inferiority started immediately after they began in New Zealand schools because many Korean children went to school a year below their actual age because of their poor language skills. Some participants ended up choosing a study subject that did not require an extensive amount of English ability despite what their subject interests were. Grace Kim (F, 28), who is now working as an English teacher in Korea, explained how her life path changed upon immigrating to New Zealand:

> *I had always wanted to become a lawyer when I lived in Korea. But when I moved to New Zealand, it took me quite some time to learn English, and I ended up not getting good marks in my final examination. So I ended up studying Accounting at university, which I couldn't pass either because I couldn't really understand the lectures. So I ended up majoring in Mathematics, which I didn't even like but it was really the only subject that I could pass without having to worry about understanding English. After I graduated, there wasn't any kind of job that I really wanted to do in New Zealand, and I've always wanted to live in Korea… so I've decided to return. It feels as though what I'm doing now is ironic because I'm teaching English because this is what I can do for work. I was not really interested in doing any kind of job that has to do with mathematics, so here I am. I feel that had I stayed in Korea, I would have been better off. The English barrier was a big issue for me.*

Grace almost lost her sense of control over her own life once she moved to New Zealand because of the language barrier. She was 12, but it was still difficult for her to learn English. Grace explained that she never enjoyed school in New Zealand because she wanted to study English but she couldn't because she was afraid of failing. Throughout her high school years, she felt 'dumb' compared to those kids who were doing well at school. But now she realises that she was not dumb, but simply not developed in language-learning ability. A language barrier acted as a strong

obstacle for her studying what she wanted to and for her taking active control over her life. Grace never felt happy with her achievement in New Zealand. She grew up feeling 'dumb' and 'inferior', so she decided to return to Korea.

Those who had leadership roles at school in Korea found it harder to be satisfied with their performance in New Zealand schools. Edward Gwak (M, 28) said that it was difficult for him to be satisfied at school because he couldn't play out his active role as a school leader. He used to be the head of his school in Korea before he immigrated, but when he came to New Zealand, he had to be a passive person at school:

> *When I first started going to school in New Zealand, I was really stressed because I wanted to be the same me. You know, I had always been the class president in Korea, but when I came to New Zealand, I was nobody. I was just an Asian kid who had to follow others and always ask for help…*
>
> *…I'm still jealous of those (Korean) kids who were fully integrated into Kiwi society. I think back then, I had negative attitudes toward everything. I wasn't happy with where I was. So I just told myself that I didn't like rugby…cricket… I used to just tell myself and others that I didn't like Kiwi sports and I just instantly drew a wall between myself and them. And as time passed, I couldn't go over the wall.*

Edward's desire to be included in the mainstream was one of his major reasons for returning to Korea. He further stated that he used to envision himself living in Korea. He felt that if he was living in Korea, then he would have had so many more friends and he would have been part of the mainstream. In other words, he could have been 'the cool kid at school'. His longing for that role and sense of belonging grew stronger as he entered university:

> *I think I always had this fantasy about living in Korea. I know that I didn't go to the university in Korea, but I heard what the university life is like in Korea… I used to think that in Korea, I could probably be more active, like I used to be… I could probably work better with others, get into various clubs at university…and that vision of living in Korea grew slowly… I mean, if I was more active in New Zealand, I could probably do that too. I did make a Korean study group at our university, but it just wasn't the same. I was always*

> *longing for the closeness of my own ethnic people. I wanted to be part of the mainstream and really just be who I am and show what I can do…*

Edward continued his story about how much he wanted to be part of the 'mainstream', and how he felt alienated at times during his teenage years in New Zealand. Having no sense of pride or achievement was not a good feeling for him. Edward's search for his life in Korea meant that he constantly looked for jobs in that country through internet sites, and whenever he visited Korea on holiday. So, when Edward was offered a job in Korea, he left his master's degree unfinished and flew straight back.

Many difficulties of being a minority involve matters of 'identity uncertainty'. Identity development is most critical in the adolescent period because this phase of one's life course involves puberty and entering wider society (Erikson, 1997). A previous study has examined internal and external factors (cultural differences, language difficulties, sensitivity to criticism, shyness and anxiety about the future) that help or impede Korean adolescents' adjustment in New Zealand (Kim, 2007). A parallel could be drawn between the study and the narratives in this section. As exemplified in the accounts so far, the participants' most critical years were affected by feelings of alienation that come with the experience of being part of a minority group. Importantly, this affected their decision to eventually return to Korea in search of a sense of comfort in their identity.

The downsides of a 'tight' Korean community

Despite all the positive impacts of having a close ethnic community within a host society, such as giving social support and retaining their original identities, the 'closeness' of these communities can also have important downsides. By being 'too close' to one another, one's social network can become limited to one circle of friends. Alicia Choi (F, 26) explained that her friends from her high school were her university friends, which made it harder for her to meet new people as she got older:

> *I have been thinking about returning to Korea for a long time because I was growing out of my friends. It is not that I didn't like my (Korean) friends in New Zealand, I mean you know that they were all my best friends…I pretty much grew up with them… and so back then, I never thought about making new friends because I was so comfortable just hanging*

> *out with them. Then something hit me one day that I really needed to get out of this same old lifestyle and meet some new people…*

Alicia eventually felt dissatisfied being too comfortable in her small Korean community and tired by her repetitive lifestyle. The things that she did with her friends were always the same. She felt that she was living in an overly small and closed community. This feeling grew during her university years and continued throughout. It was time for her to 'move on'.

A small number of participants indicated that the gossip, dislike, jealousy and competition within the Korean community was one of the main things they did not like about living in New Zealand through their teenage years, and that this eventually motivated them to move away from Auckland. Jerrod Han (M, 29) explains how much he disliked the gossip among the Korean community in Auckland:

> *Seriously… living in New Zealand can be quite stressful. I mean Auckland is so small… When I went to school, there were so many things to think about…like other people's eyes and what kind of information gets spread about you. I gained this really bad habit from living in New Zealand; I've become cautious of people because I had some really bad experiences with (Korean) people talking about my life… I mean, I can only think of like three people in Auckland who would keep my secrets and not gossip about me.*

Jerrod explained that living in a small Korean community in Auckland meant that everyone knew each other or they were all connected to each other. For Jerrod, his experiences with the Korean community brought more negative than positive effects. He felt that he did not receive any support or help, but only observed people hurting each other's feelings and being nosey. He was unhappy to be living in the Korean community and when he ended the relationship with his girlfriend, he decided to leave New Zealand and start a fresh life in Korea. He said that 'everything that built up inside me told me to leave New Zealand.'

Janet Park (F, 26) had a similar experience. Over her university life, Janet became tired of 'the people problem' within the Korean student community. She ended up losing faith in her good friends and when she was hurt, she felt it was too late for her to make more friends:

> *I was living alone when I was at university and I'd become attached to my friends, I was pretty much spending most of my time with them…but when all those problems began, I had nowhere else to go. So what happened was… I had a really bad break up, and not long after that, my really good friend started going out with my ex-boyfriend. And soon after that my friend spread really bad stories about me to all of our mutual friends. I was so hurt by this incident, for a long time… I was lonely and disappointed by everything that had happened. I lived my four years at university waiting to graduate and leave the country.*

Janet never wanted to return to Korea as she used to like living in New Zealand. This was one of the reasons for her to attend university in New Zealand while all of her family returned. Ever since the incident, she felt that she could not gain her life back. She did not feel like making new friends again because 'everyone probably knew about [her] bad break-up.' It was an embarrassing thought for her to make new friends and she wanted to go somewhere else. Janet said 'it was pretty much an escape' from all the problems. Korea was her last option as she wanted to try living in Australia or Singapore, but her parents suggested she return and live with them.

Living across (trans)national boundaries

Frequent holiday trips to Korea were a common feature in participants' lives. While some never visited Korea until the day that they returned, many participants were privileged to visit their family and friends more than once during the course of their migratory phase. Jasmine Lee (F, 30) explained that going to Korea was one of the most exciting memories of her teenage years in New Zealand:

> *My grandpa and grandma both lived in Korea so I went and visited them once a year… as you know, going to Korea was pretty much what you looked forward to throughout the whole year and it was the coolest thing to do. I went shopping and visited various cool places around Seoul city… I think I could live in New Zealand and deal with all the stress because I knew that I was going to Korea at the end of the year. It was something that just kept me going…*

The kind of lifestyle that Jasmine had, almost living in two countries at the same time, was common among children who lived in 'astronaut families'. On other occasions, parents simply sent their children back to Korea every holiday so that they could retain their Korean identity. Jasmine

explained that whenever she came back from her visit to Korea, all of her Korean friends at school envied her.

By living as transnationals, these participants had a better understanding of what life in Korea may be like. Helen Park (F, 26) explained how all the Korean kids used to admire the Korean culture when they were growing up because it was something that they could not have:

> *You know the Korean video shops and book shops… those were our favorite hang-outs… we used to go there every day after school, reading Korean books and manga[29] and we used to hire all the Korean drama series and watch them in the weekends… I used to find the kinds of clothes that I wanted on internet shopping sites and my grandma used to send them to me… I think I was so obsessed with wearing Korean stuff, listening to Korean music, and also watching Korean TV series because it was something that I could not have as a Korean. It is natural to want something you are far away from, I think…*

What really made these participants' everyday lives transnational was the Korean culture that they shared through the internet, receiving gifts from Korea, listening to Korean music, and watching Korean TV series. Through their transnational practices, these participants did not become more 'Kiwi' but reinforced their 'Koreanness'. This resulted in their stronger sense of Korean identity and imagining their 'home' to be Korea. A number of other participants have shared this vision of Korea. It evoked their true desire to be Korean and most importantly, reaffirmed their 'Koreanness':

> *When I lived in New Zealand, I used to watch many Korean dramas…and I used to wonder what my life would be like if I lived in Korea…* (Paul Jo, M, 30)

> *I always watched Korean dramas and Korean TV shows and admired their lifestyle, fashion and just what they have…* (Alicia Choi, F, 26)

The knowledge of transnational opportunities influences the daily life choices of transnationals (Bartley, 2003). It has been argued that transnational immigrants return to their homeland because they are living in a transnational social field where they can make strategic decisions to suit their

[29] Korean cartoon books; term originally Japanese

lives. Bolognani (2007) also illustrates how younger generation Pakistanis in Britain are well connected to their homeland, as they are living in a transnational social field. Through their constant holiday visits to their homeland and cultural connections, they are able to build a more realistic 'myth' about return and make practical decisions about returning home (Bolognani, 2007). Indeed, the participants shared this experience and by staying close to their Korean culture through transnational linkages, they could practice, imagine and retain their Korean identities.

'Myth' of 'home'

'Myth of home' or 'myth of return' refers to immigrants' longings and imaginings of home where the idea of return frames their lives as expatriates (Anwar, 1979; Oxfeld and Long, 2004; Ni Laoire, 2008). It was clear that, through the participants' various childhood memories and experiences, they have gradually built up numerous 'myths' about Korea. In Table 5.1, I summarize 'myths' of Korea as homeland. Although they have not been mentioned in the narratives so far, I have also included some negative visions of homeland – the worries participants had prior to returning.

Table 5. 1 'Myth' of home

Romanticisation	Strategic vision	Worry & anxiety
Sense of belonging Stronger identity Fun and happy lifestyle Reunification with family and friends Being accepted	Easy employment Will meet more people More opportunities More benefits	Being 'different' Closed minds of Koreans Traditional society Not being accepted Too busy and competitive

Some had an overly romanticized view of their homeland, believing that once they moved to Korea, they would achieve a stronger sense of self, belonging and unity with their friends and family. Those were the returnees who had wanted to go back to Korea ever since they moved to New Zealand and had a stronger attachment to their homeland. In the middle, there were participants who did not have strong attachments, yet had a strategic vision that their homeland would bring them more opportunities. At the other extreme, there are those who were worried and had negative views of Korea. They have been reading news about the 'scary political world' of Korea. They also held a view that Korea is a competitive place. All of these worries and hopes contributed to the returnees' decision making processes, and mediated the returnees' definitive

choice. Most returnees held more than one of these visions and romanticisations of their homeland, therefore making it more difficult to arrive at decisions.

5.5 Emotional return? Returning beyond the sense of self-control

Often, returnees said 'I'd never have imagined myself returning to Korea' because they were satisfied with their lives in New Zealand. However, various internal and external factors affected their lives, and eventually led them to return to Korea. Those stories included factors such as health, religion, family and matters of personality. I have chosen two of the participants' stories in order to illustrate that, on some occasions, return migration involves factors beyond one's control. These individual stories are demonstrative of the many complex reasons determining return and add something new to past theories of return intention.

Health motivated return: 'New Zealand almost killed me!'

Tanya (F, 28) was one participant who was very excited to share her story with me. When I first met her, the first thing she said to me was 'oh… I have so much to tell you!' Tanya immigrated to New Zealand in 1994, during the early years of increased Korean immigration to New Zealand. Tanya was one of those 'lucky kids' who did not face any racism or discrimination at her schools in New Zealand. Having grown up in a generally happy family, she mostly recalled the good times of her teenage years in New Zealand. She had a very lively personality, and was willing to share her stories with me. Her initial answer to the question of return motivation was that Korea was a fun country to live in:

> *I used to think Seoul was such a fun city to live in. To be honest, I didn't think that I would ever move to Korea until I graduated university. I used to come to Korea during school holidays and I loved all the shopping malls, cheap clothes, just everything about Seoul. But that was it really. Korea used to be a place just for holidaying, but I enjoyed my life in New Zealand, so I never thought about living in Korea for good. Actually, before I graduated, I even did a couple of job interviews in New Zealand.*

When I asked her what the actual reason was for returning to Korea the tone of her voice slowly changed:

Well… the reason… well, this is what really made me never want to live in New Zealand again. I don't like talking about this memory, but I guess I need to tell you the truth because this is for your research. Well, that incident happened during my last semester at university. I was living alone back then because both of my parents were living in Korea. One day, I went to see my GP and he told me that I needed surgery on my left ear because it was full of water. Well, you know that eardrums are a very sensitive part of your body and you need to take extra care of them… but back then, I didn't really know and my GP took it pretty casually, too, and he did the surgery. The worst thing was… the surgery didn't go well. My doctor told me that my ear was in a really bad state, so he couldn't cure my ear. I mean, he could have done a scan first, but he just wrecked my ears. I thought that I should go and see a specialist, but my doctor told me to take a rest for few days and see what happens. That's what all the New Zealand doctors say! Well, that almost killed me… the first day after the surgery, I was bleeding all night. I was so scared.

Tanya explained that by the time she went back to her GP, she could no longer trust him. Although her GP told her that she needed another surgery immediately, she did not want to be examined by any other doctors in New Zealand. She felt that it was her GP's fault in the first place to make her ears to become worse. She decided to seek help from her parents in Korea. Both of Tanya's parents felt that she should be cured in Korea by an ear-specialist:

We searched for the best ear specialist and the doctor explained what the problem was with my ears. He told me that I had very thin eardrums and they needed special care which required a long time. Basically, I needed constant ear check-ups throughout the rest of my life. I thought… well, if I need to see a doctor constantly, I can't go back to New Zealand because I don't' want to risk it again. Who would I trust in New Zealand really…? I mean when I talked to my doctors in Korea about what happened in New Zealand, they told me that it would have been really risky to have an operation when I had lost so much weight, and it could have killed me. New Zealand almost killed me! It hurts my brain to think about it. I really don't like the New Zealand health system. GPs try to do too many big things when they don't know anything. They should really have sent me to an ear specialist in the first place. Anyways, after the incident, I never really wanted to go back to New Zealand. When I went back to New Zealand for my graduation ceremony, it reminded me of those

> *times when I was ill, and I didn't like it. I don't want to go back to New Zealand and it is really sad because I feel like I have lost my second home… like… a part of me is gone.*

Tanya didn't feel safe living in New Zealand anymore because she felt that it would be too risky for her health. She wanted to be able to trust her doctors and the only way to have the benefit of a good health system was to return to Korea. This example echoes an earlier study showing that Korean immigrants often return to (visit) their homeland for medical care because they want to be cured in a more comfortable (and comforting) setting (Lee et al., 2010). Tanya needed regular health check-ups, which meant that it was better for her to live in Korea for a long time. Despite her original plan to graduate and work in New Zealand, she had to return to Korea for her own sense of comfort and security.

A message from God

Jonathan Yoon (M, 29) was another participant who had an interesting motivation for returning to Korea. When I asked him to share his story his initial response was that it wasn't his own will:

> *The process of my return is quite interesting… My parents were firstly against my move back to Korea. You know the kind of 'American dream' that Korean parents can have… they also wanted me to settle in Kiwi society and become successful. I could have done a masters or a PhD degree, or become a doctor like they wanted …I had been living in New Zealand for ten years without any problem. I had many friends and followers. I had a beautiful fiancée. I knew what my life was going to be like. But I had to; I just had to return, leaving all of these things. Everyone asked me why I had to give up on everything and return to Korea. They didn't realize that I didn't make the decision on my own.*

When I asked him to share the details motivating his return he said:

> *Well, it's a very personal story. Quite a dramatic story, actually… I mean, people in Korea still ask me why I came back. Nobody can understand why I came to Korea. I don't usually tell this story to anyone because this is a very religious and personal….um… well… the key word of my life at that moment was a 'mission'. It was a mission that I had to do for God.*

Having no religious belief myself, I was not quite sure what he meant by a 'mission': Upon asking him to elaborate he said:

> *Well, back then… I was not quite sure what the mission was. I used to wonder what could be the best thing that I can do for our Korean community in New Zealand. So I prayed to God every day. I prayed to him to tell me what I should do in my life. One day while I was praying to God, I fell asleep, and then suddenly I saw a map in my dream. It was a world map. There was a picture of New Zealand, and right beside there was Australia…. ……and there was Korea, and somehow, there was a light shining from New Zealand to Korea. It was a huge linear light pointing towards Korea. The light kept on shining towards Korea, and suddenly a rainbow was shining over Korea. I thought that was a beautiful image and I just kept on watching it. Then there was a long brick wall, which suddenly collapsed. Behind the collapsed wall, God was standing with a sign saying 'The republic of Korea' It was very obscure… When I woke up from the dream, I was not sure what my mission was. But I knew that the dream was a true one. God was directing me to move to Korea. I was not sure of anything. I didn't know what I was meant to do in Korea, but I couldn't be surer about my decision to move to Korea.*

Jonathan, who had a strong belief in God, found his dream to be a significant sign that he had to follow. He went back to Korea not long after the dream in order to find out what he wanted to do. He eventually decided to study theology at a Korean university. After living in Korea for a couple of years, he eventually found out what his 'mission' was. He had a few more epiphanies in Korea, and then he knew that his mission from God was to study theology in Korea, learn more about Korean culture and norms, and eventually return to New Zealand and teach the Korean community about their own culture and religious beliefs. He finally found his mission in life; what he could do for the Korean community in New Zealand. His fiancée followed him to Korea and found a job, as well.

More recent studies have examined the impact of religion in our everyday lives (Hopkins, 2007; Taylor, Brodsky, 2000). Indeed, this is one of the key aspects of many people's lives that have not had much scholarly attention. As Thrift's (1996)'s 'non-representational theory' illustrates, religion can be considered one of the 'intangible things' affecting our lives. In Jonathan's case, a

message from God gave him the most important and definite reason to return to Korea. Despite it being an example very much in the minority, this story should not be hidden.

5.6 Conclusion

In order to move from a big picture to the detail of the narratives, I started this chapter with a graph to give an overview of the participants' return intentions. I found a number of leading factors in return motivations among the participants such as employment (19%), family (18%), and seeking new experience (12%). Interestingly, when I discussed these top three reasons further in sections 5.3 and 5.4, 'employment' and 'seeking new experience' fell under the short term intentions, and 'family' was also not visible as a major motivation among the narratives. Family influence such as parents' suggestions and family connections were apparent as supplementary factors, which helped the participants to finalise their decisions. Clearly, their searching for a stronger sense of self, to belong to the mainstream and finding 'home', were elements that made the returnees start thinking about return.

The purpose of this chapter was not only to depict what motivated the participants to return to Korea, but also to illustrate their decision-making processes and the complex emotions that were involved. In order to illustrate their decision-making processes, I discussed their return motivations in the two broad time frames of 'short term' and 'long term'. Using life history as a way to understand their return decision-making process was useful and significant. Some migrants have thought about returning over a long period of time while for others, the thought of return came about more quickly when they were transitioning into adulthood.

The major characteristic of the short-term reasons was the decision to return being made during a significant phase of their life course; the beginning of their adulthood. These returnees went back because they were looking for a change or development in their lives. The changes included looking for jobs, seeking new experience, marriage (Suro, 1996; Bovenkerk, 1974), and wanting to learn more about their original culture. Despite some of the positive aspirations to return, some participants shared experiences of discrimination in the New Zealand job market – which were the push factors from New Zealand's side. While the short term reasons could be understood in a rather simple manner of being associated with their changing life-cycle patterns, this is not enough to understand what really initiated their attraction to Korea.

By taking a life-history approach, a closer examination of their return motivations could be gained from their childhood to teenage years. I have argued that the most sensitive identity development phases of participants' lives were sometimes affected by their minority status in their host society. Through the difficult experiences of growing up as Asian kids in New Zealand, they slowly acquired a sense of alienation and felt inferior to the mainstream. Also affected by their transnational linkages to their homeland, they gradually developed 'myths of home' (Oxfeld and Long, 2004; Anwar, 1979) believing that living in Seoul would be better. Most importantly, they romanticized their homeland; imagining that they could find their sense of belonging once they returned. Whether or not their 'myth' was just their imagination or whether they really achieved their expectations remains a question. This is discussed in the following chapters.

A 'sense of achievement' was a theme that ran through the majority of the narratives. Participants' decision making processes involved anxieties partially because of their parents' as well as their home society's expectations of them. Since the participants were aware of their parents' reasons for immigrating to New Zealand in the first place – for their education – they were pressured to learn English at a fast pace and become 'successful' in their host society. Indeed, several scholars have asserted that immigrants return because they either fail or succeed in their initial migration in the host society (Rogers, 1984; Cerase, 1967; Ghosh, 2000). Being seen as a 'failure' or someone who 'succeeded' once they returned home was something that was stressful for the participants. For these reasons, they either reassured me that they did the right thing by saying 'I think I made the right decision'; 'I tried my best in New Zealand', or they expressed doubt about their decision.

In most cases, the desire to be successful and happy pushed the returnees to choose Korea as their final destination. However, occasionally their return was decided by unforeseen events that were beyond their control (Knopp, 2004). I have illustrated this situation by way of the trajectories of Tanya and Jonathan whose life stories were somewhat different from the other participants. Tanya's reason for returning was associated with more negative experiences with her healthcare in New Zealand, while Jonathan simply felt destined to return. However, despite their senses of having no control over events, both of them did not seem to regret their decisions.

Through the ethnographic study of Korean New Zealander return migrants, a complex but vivid picture emerges of their motivations to return. For most people, it was a movement to find their

sense of belonging and comfort, while for others; it was a strategically motivated passage to bring economic and social benefits. For all participants, return was a decision that involved a lot of emotions. They had to juggle between the two homelands, leave some family and friends behind to be reunited with others. It was about searching for home and identities. Their return-motivations were certainly not a simple matter of 'returning home' (despite a few exceptions), but were triggered by a great deal of difficulties, anxieties, and hopes.

In the next chapter, I discuss the returnees' working experiences. Korean New Zealanders are often regarded as the 'agents of change', those who can bring valuable skills from overseas to help the receiving home nation's development. I discuss the significant role that the returnees play in this process. More importantly, I take a closer examination of their everyday working narratives in order to understand their emotions and feelings experienced at work.

6. Returnees in the workforce: A qualitative understanding of return and development [30]

6.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, a large number of Korean New Zealanders have returned to their homeland for a variety of reasons, but usually this has included seeking better employment opportunities. To benefit national market globalisation, Korea has also tried to attract skilled overseas Koreans by political and social means. Korean media and academic literature however, mostly focus on Korean Americans and actual foreign investors when naming those contributing to Korea's economic globalisation. Moreover, there is a tendency in economic literature to focus largely on the 'money exchange' rather than what actually happens on a local level and how returnees experience their work life back in Korea.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the social and cultural implications of the increasing numbers of Korean New Zealander returnee workers in Korean society. Moreover, the chapter closely examines the returnees' everyday working experiences in this context. As stated in Chapter Five, one of the returnees' main and supplementary motivations for returning to Korea has been to find 'high'[31] quality employment. Hence, this chapter also illustrates various outcomes of that particular intention. Even if employment were not the main reason for participants to return to Korea, their work life frequently determined their sense of belonging in Korean society and, consequently, their level of happiness in their homeland. The theoretical aim of this chapter is to

[30] This chapter is partially based upon a publication by the author - Lee, J.Y.J. (2011) 'A trajectory perspective towards return migration and development: The case of young Korean New Zealander returnees', In Frank, R., Hoare, J., Kollner, P. and Pares, S. (Eds) *Korea: Politics, Economy and Society*, 2011, 233-256.

[31] High quality employment means different things in different contexts and cultures. For the Korean New Zealander returnee interviewees, 'high' quality refers specifically to professional jobs or occupations with top-level incomes. Such discourse around 'high quality employment' affected the returnees' sense of achievement when finding jobs in Korea.

find a balance between the individual/ethnographic narratives of working experiences and the 'scaled up' (Conway and Potter, 2007) discussions of social and economic impacts and perceptions of returnees as 'human capital'. The chapter addresses a number of key questions:

- *To what extent are returnee workers individually acting as 'agents of change' in Korean society among different job sectors?*
- *What are the returnees' individual and collective everyday experiences at work?*
- *How do their work experiences affect their sense of identity and belonging?*
- *How can a qualitative understanding of their working experiences assist in enhancing the positive relationship between return and development?*

I begin this chapter by laying out a theoretical framework of what it means to discuss returnees as 'agents of change'. I emphasise that greater engagement in a trajectory perspective is needed in order to understand the complex process of return migrants' impacts as human capital. I go on to discuss the politics of Korean job markets where the search for 'global talent' has stabilised over the past ten to 15 years. In this context, I illustrate how individuals have made significant contributions at their different work places as 'agents of change'. I then move on to the everyday experiences of returnee Koreans at work in more general settings. To conclude this chapter, I illustrate the different structural and agency factors which can either enhance or prevent the returnees' positive contributions as agents of development.

Findings in this chapter are primarily drawn from my interview data sets of 40 returnees (in Korea, 2009), and nine returned-returnees (in New Zealand, 2010). As discussed in Chapter Four, I took an ethnographic approach to understand the individuals' working trajectories when documenting participants' lived experiences of working in Korea. The themes ranged from initial job seeking processes, adaptations to their working environments, their relationships with co-workers, their own perception of their values in Korean society, and their sense of belonging at work. Some narratives involved struggles and alienation; while others told positive stories of achievement and contribution. The returnees have established themselves in various occupations in Korea. As can be seen in Table 6.1, both international and local categories have similar occupational types, but I divided them on the premise of having different working environments, types of co-workers, and work ethics. The 'Others' category designates jobs in which English skills were not a significant factor in returnee job acquisition.

Table 6. 1 Types of employment of research sample [32]

Local Firms (18)	**Education (7)**
Mechanical/Computer Engineer (3) Finance & Marketing (5) International Lawyer (1) Management/Administrative work (4) Computer/Graphic Designer (4)	English teacher at institutions (4) English teacher at local schools (2) Professor (1)
International Firms (12)	**Others (11)**
Mechanical/Computer Engineer (2) Finance & Marketing (4) International Lawyer (1) Management/Administrative work (3) Computer/Graphic Designer (1) Researcher (1)	Civil Servant (2) NGO (1) Graduate Student (4) Clinical Psychologist Intern (1) Homemakers (3)

6.2 Returnees as 'agents of change'

As discussed in Chapter Two, the question of how returnees can contribute to the development of the receiving homeland has existed for a long time (Bovenkerk, 1974; Gmelsh, 1980; Ghosh, 2000). Scholars have also noticed that recent changes in the nature of immigration have meant that transnational and highly skilled immigrants are now actively choosing to return to their home nations to suit their own life strategy – moving away from 'failed' ideas about return (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Zweig, 2006; Conway and Potter, 2009). Although the actual impact of returnees on local societies depends on how advanced they are in their careers, or how culturally adaptive they can be, the 'transnational presence' of returnees is expected to be more meaningful and influential in today's society (Conway and Potter, 2009). For instance, Caribbean transnational return migrants are seen as human agents, where one returnee may bring changes to local farm management (Conway and Potter, 2007). St Bernard (2005) has illustrated that overseas returnees to Puerto Rico have not only been highly educated overseas, but also had good local connections and knowledge, which enhanced their critical role in local development. A Chinese return migration case study indicates that within the academic workforce, overseas Chinese scholars are highly valued in universities because they are believed to be more successful in publications and international research collaborations (Zweig, 2006). More recently, Jones (2011: 436) has argued that Bolivian returnees are more likely to participate in economic life, therefore contributing more

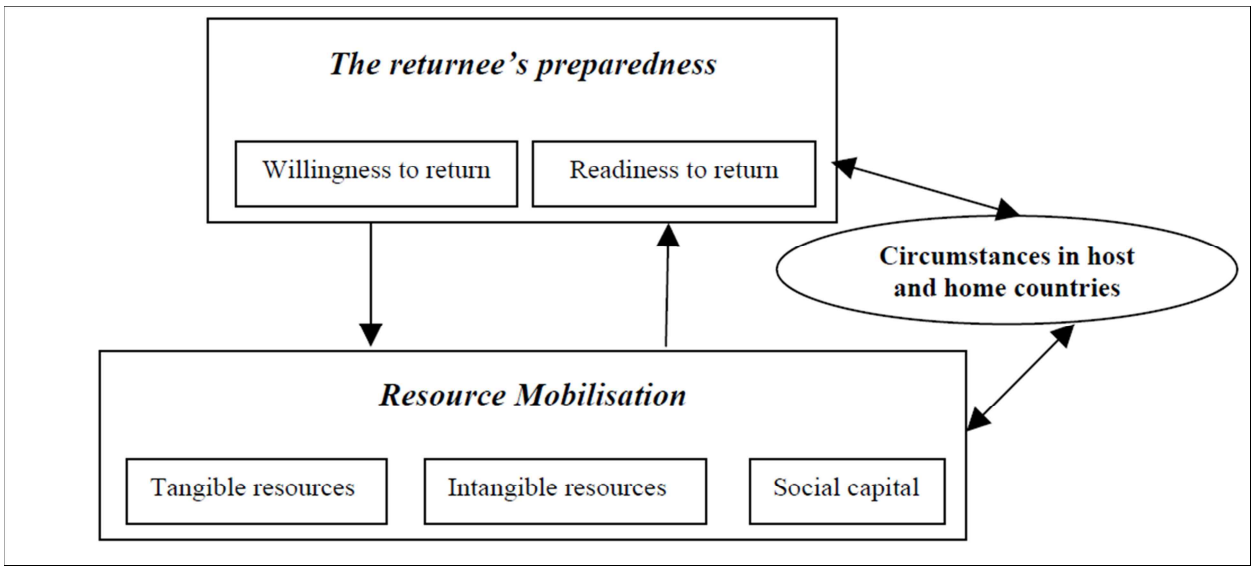
[32] The total number of 47 jobs also includes some of the participants' past working experiences in Korea as some of them recently changed their jobs.

to national economic growth than "non- migrants (who lack the resources to do so) or active migrants (who lack the commitment)". There is definitely more attention being paid to returnees that are able to contribute positively to their home environment with their overseas skills.

More recently, the idea of 'return migration policy' has been discussed in a variety of scholarly and policy literature in the interest of sustaining and enhancing the connections between return and development (Ghosh, 2000; King, 2000; Black and Gent, 2004; 2006). Indeed, return migration policy is discussed mostly in terms of attracting more favorable expatriates and excluding the unfavorable overseas co-ethnics (Skrentny et al., 2007). Only a small amount of 'return migration policy' actually talks about a policy that is aimed at helping the returnees' re-settle (Cassarino, 2004). King (2000) has pointed out that in order for 'sustainable return development' to be achieved, there needs to be a correct policy in place to attract the needed skills to the right industries. It is not simply the 'pulling back' of skilled returnees that will stimulate positive development; the answer comes more precisely from knowing 'who' returns and 'how' the home nation can help them to settle.

Cassarino (2004) affirms that there needs to be a good balance between 'return preparedness' and 'resource mobilisation' in order for returnees to make a positive contribution to the homeland's development (See Figure 6.1):

Figure 6. 1 A model of Return preparedness



(Source: Cassarino, 2004:271)

As shown in Figure 6. 1, Cassarino (2004) defines 'returnee's preparedness' in two different ways: their willingness to return and their readiness to return. A return migration needs to be made for one's own cause rather than a forced reason and the returnee should be ready in many ways. In order for the returnee to be 'ready', he/she should have as many resources as possible. The 'tangible' resources refer to their actual financial gains from overseas; 'intangible' resources are their personal skills, and lastly 'social capital' means accumulated social networks. The diagram highlights that the returnees' preparedness and resource mobilisation largely depend on the different circumstances of host and home settings. Cassarino (2004) affirms that, in order for this good relationship to be maintained, the home nation needs to develop a good 'return policy' to help their returnees' settle. Since returning is seen as a natural 'home-coming instinct', the returnees are expected to settle well by themselves because, in a literal sense, they have 'returned' to their home nation. This is why a 'return policy' which aims to help co-ethnic returnees is uncommon. Although this theoretical diagram attempts to draw a universal return context and open new discussions for policy development, it seems to be too simplistic. There is a need for more empirical studies to investigate the specific elements and processes inside the arrows of the diagram and inside the boxes.

Significance of qualitative understanding

The problem with treating humans as either financial or social capital is that this perspective tends to analyse the human input from a structural perspective, and fails to closely examine personal and social circumstances and experiences. As Block (1990:75) states, "it is not actual human beings who are an input into the production process, but one of their characteristics – their capacity to work." On a similar note, Williams (2005) also illustrates that while returnees' impacts have been examined at various scales and in numerous forms, their 'total human capital' has been oversimplified. 'Total human capital' not only includes diversity between socioeconomic status and occupational positions, but also social and interpersonal skills (Williams, 2005).

From a human geographer's perspective, the lived experiences of 'agents of change' are more significant (Conway and Potter, 2007). As King (2000) states, despite the discussion of returnees as national developers, the returnees themselves may not be returning with the idea of helping their nations. Importantly, we must not forget to ask "What about the perspectives of returnees themselves?" (Jeffery and Murison, 2011:132). One ethnographic study about Senegalese returnees from Italy suggests that the demand for them to be a 'useful resource' negatively affects

the returnees' experiences (Sinatti, 2011). Ho (2011) argues that a qualitative perspective of skilled migration is needed to understand the practical and emotional challenges faced by highly skilled middling transnationals. In order to understand the complex relationship between return and development, and to examine how to maintain sustainability; we need more qualitative studies and attention must be brought to workers' voices.

6.3 The national search for 'global talent'

Korea has experienced rapid industrialisation from the 1970s, which led to globalization in the late 1980s (Paquin, 2000; Duk, 2002; Kim, 2010). The president in 1993, Kim Young-sam, accelerated this process by initiating the 'Internationalisation Movement' in Korea, affirming 'Segehwa' (globalisation) as the key to developing the nation (Duk, 2002; Shin, 2000). With South Korea's admittance to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Korean markets became even more globalised, sending and receiving goods and services from all over the world. Korea however, did face some difficulties in its initial phase of globalization: the 'IMF crisis' of 1997 meant huge economic debts to their overseas business partners (Duk, 2002; Shin, 2000). The IMF crisis brought tragedy into the lives of many Koreans. Korea's unemployment rate rose four times and numbers of homeless people tripled (Paquin, 2000). More and more politicians and economists strived for a re-development of Korean firms and effective globalization to take place (Shin, 2000). As a result, Korea's search for 'global talents' had to become even more significant if Korean markets were to become globalised effectively (Lee and Oh, 2009; Jeon, 2009).

The search for 'high' and 'global' skills as human capital is not a new phenomenon and is certainly not a Korea-specific trend either (Brown et al., 2001; Foster, 2008). Global talent is a common term used to refer to a 'highly' skilled worker who can compete in international markets (Lee and Oh, 2009), part of the 'global knowledge wars' (Brown et al., 2001:9). In other words, a 'talent strategy' – seeking global talents – is now considered to be more important than marketing or financial plans (Foster, 2008). For instance, two out of five companies in China found it difficult to fill their senior-management positions with particular global talents such as English skills (Foster, 2008). Non-immigration countries are increasingly changing their immigration policy to be more lenient towards talented foreigners and overseas co-ethnics (Kuptsch and Fong, 2006).

In Korea, the search for 'global talent' is now moving faster than ever. "English is seen as closely tied to the economic survival of South Korea within the context of globalisation. Koreans place great importance on English, even though the society remains highly monolingual" (Jeon, 2009:232). Studies have further argued that to be considered a 'global talent', a person not only needs to speak multiple languages, but must also be culturally adaptive and open-minded (Lee and Oh, 2009). Lee (2009) further argues that the reason Korean firms search for 'global talents' from all around the world is for their creativity, ability to work in overseas settings for local Korean companies, and their different ways of analysing tasks (Brown et al., 2001). A well-known trading and building company called 'STX Group' hires workers from overseas through their webpage. In 2009, the company received applications from 14 different countries including U.S.A., Russia, Germany, France, and New Zealand (Lee, 2009). In order to attract overseas workers more efficiently, STX interview their overseas applicants through online communications using phones and video. *Samsung* and *Hyundai*[33] have been developing many strategies to attract and hire global talents for many years. Both companies not only advertise their job vacancies to international universities, but they also search for international Korean students with high grades in their second and third years at leading universities (Lee, 2009). They believe that they need to contact those students at an early age and attract them for internships in order to not lose talented people from overseas (Lee, 2009).

Despite the increasing number of 'talented' foreign workers in Korea, there have been cases where these workers could not fit into Korean working styles and eventually decided to quit (Lee, 2009). To address this situation, companies have organised a number of programs to maintain their global talents, and also train local Korean workers to work well with foreign workers (Lee and Oh, 2009). An IT company called SK in Korea even developed a project called 'Global talent management' (GTM) in order to work harder to appoint global talents and also maintain their high performance at work. The 'Global Talent Program' (GTP) is now a common strategy in Korean companies where a group of talented workers spend 2-3 weeks at a camp or workshop, learning English skills, gaining cultural understanding, and other possible skills and knowledge to enhance their performances at work (Baek, 2011; Lee, 2009). Recently, Samsung introduced the 'Cultural Awareness Program' (CAP) to train their foreign workers to understand the culture of Korea (Yoon, 2011).

[33] Both are Korea's large automobile companies, now also making other electronics and appliances. Both companies also produce a large amount of Korea's income through international exportations.

The Korean government's effort to draw back their expatriates is tied to this larger process of Korea's economic globalisation. Anxious for new generations of overseas Koreans to invest their positive attributes back into the nation, the Korean government developed a more lenient policy towards them (as discussed in Chapter Three). In many ways, the 1.5 generation Korean diaspora should be considered more capable of building and sustaining international collaborations for Korea because of their advanced cultural competence. Conway and Potter's (2009) book *Return Migration of the Next Generations: 21st Century Transnational Mobility* illustrates such phenomena through a number of different case studies where the new (1.5 and 2nd or 3rd) generations of immigrants have been recently performing as skillful agents of developers back in their home nations. Waters (2011) argues that unlike the first generation immigrants in most host society contexts, who didn't integrate well and took over the 3D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs, their children are far more successful in their educational and work performance.

6.4 Returnees' impacts as 'agents of change'

> *I think returnees bring many benefits to our company… not to mention the kinds of international networks that we are creating… but I think in general, returnees bring back something valuable to the society. Things are changing rapidly these days and Korea is becoming a global society. I feel that returnees have great role in this process. For instance at our work, I found that returnee workers are much more creative compared to local Korean employees.*
>
> (Kyle Oh, M, 30)

Returnees were asked to reflect on their own performance at work and explain whether they felt that they were making contributions as 'agents of change' in Korean society through their work. While some returnees stated that they never thought about this topic at all, some felt that they were making minor to significant contributions with their specific personalities and skills gained from overseas. Kyle Oh (30, M) who is working as a graphic designer in Korea said that it is important to have overseas Korean employees like himself in his company. He explained that his employers like to hire overseas Koreans because they tend to think 'outside of the box' and their work tends to be more creative and innovative. In this section, I discuss how the returnees have individually acted as 'agents of change' in their personal work settings.

Enhancing the level of communication between workers

A number of returnees explained that, unlike the local Korean workers who tend to be more submissive and obedient, returnees were willing to take the risk and attempt to communicate rather than to always follow their bosses. Alicia Choi (F, 26) who worked at a Korean financial company explained how her different personality brought positive impacts to her work:

> *People don't tend to say anything back to a higher up person even if they think that the boss is wrong, but I usually say things back… I couldn't when I first started working because I wanted to just follow the 'Korean way'…then I realised, if nobody says anything to our managers, it's going to cause a lack of communication and lack of productive work outputs.*

When asked to explain more specifically with an example Alicia replied:

> *There was an incident one time during a meeting… the general manager kept suggesting something that was completely out of context and we all knew that he was wrong because we have been working on the project for months… but no one dared to saying anything to him right? So I kindly told him that he actually misunderstood and suggested something different. So… the meeting went well in the end. (Laughs) If it weren't for me, we would have had to just follow what he said and produce something that would not have been worthwhile to the company.*

While Alicia's co-workers did not attempt to do anything about the miscommunication between lower and higher status workers, Alicia wanted to make a change and didn't want to be passive like everyone else. Because Alicia was better at communicating her ideas to her boss, things did flow better at certain times. Alicia further explained that although she could have come across as a 'rude' person, she did not worry. She felt that she could get away with saying things up front because there was an assumption among the local Korean workers that she was different from everyone else. Hence, while it was not a 'normal' thing for a local Korean worker to say things back to their boss, it was acceptable for Alicia because she was from overseas. Similarly, Helen Park (F, 26), who worked at a pharmaceutical company, conveyed the significant role that she had at her job:

> *My role, as a corporate auditor, requires me to interact with internal stakeholders including the senior management and I get challenged by them from time to time. But I have never feared or tried to avoid interactions with them, but rather went proactively to seek potential conflicts and achieve a win-win situation with senior managers. I am proud of being a Korean and also proud of being a Kiwi in that I was able to combine an Asian work ethic with open minded, flexible thinking, and professional leadership skills which I gained during my school years in NZ.*

With stronger personalities and leadership skills, returnees were making important changes by enhancing communication between management and workers.

Language and culture: Helping international collaborations

On a similar note, Korean New Zealander returnees act as skillful international collaborators at work. As discussed in earlier sections, there are numerous multi-national firms in Korea that are seeking global talents to promote and maintain international collaborations. A large number of the participants indicated that they definitely filled this demand for global skills with their bilingual and bi-cultural abilities. Those returnees explained that the fact that they could speak English was a big plus on many occasions from writing reports in English, organising international meetings, to enhancing cultural understanding and collaboration. Edward Gwak (M, 29) who worked for a marketing company explained that, as a returnee, he could fulfill his job requirements much better than the local Korean workers:

> *I work for a foreign company, so I tend to work together with people from different countries…and the fact that I'm from New Zealand really helps. For example, when I first meet someone at a work meeting I can easily relate to another person from overseas… so I can generate stronger team-work. Sometimes there can be miscommunications between local Korean workers and foreign workers, so I help them to understand each other. Also, my manager sends me on overseas work trips a lot because he knows that I can do a much better job interacting with foreign people. In terms of sharing my knowledge, when we talk about other markets and consumer's behavior, I can bring in examples from New Zealand, Australia, and so on… and being able to make those comparisons between different cultures is a big plus in our company because it is all about international networks these days.*

Edward seemed to be a highly valued member at his work. He not only maintained a good working environment with the mixture of Korean and foreign workers as a 'cultural mediator', he also went to many overseas meetings and worked well with the foreign investors. Edward further explained that it was not just his English skills that made him more desirable to be an international collaborator, but it was his wider and lived understandings of 'Western culture'. Similarly, technical sales representative Eric Ham (29, M) believes that he was in a better position to globalise their company compared to local Korean workers:

> *I really think that people like us (returnees) should be placed in many different companies in order for Korean firms to be globalised smoothly. For instance, you can learn to be a 'global leader' in theory, but when it comes to real circumstances, I've seen so many Korean people not being able to speak English properly to the foreign collaborators. On the other side, whenever I go on an overseas business trip, I am able to interact well with others because I can speak English and I can also easily relate to them. Through much better communication, I am able to do a task much more effectively. I am not trying to say that I am any smarter or better qualified than local Korean workers, but I am saying that I work more naturally in a global setting.*

Eric explained that because he was working well, he was put in charge of many international projects, which helped him to be promoted at work. Although he realised that his position at work could be seen as a 'threat' to other co-workers, Eric believes that with his overseas experience, he is valuable to his company.

Such a contribution as 'collaborators' can also be seen in governmental jobs. Michael Lee (28, M) returned to Korea and started working for the New Zealand embassy in the education sector. He explained that because he is a 1.5 generation person, he understood both Korean and New Zealand cultures which was an advantage in his job:

> *I know that there are plenty of other people out there who have better working experiences than me. However, with my cultural and social understandings of both countries, I have been making many changes to the education policy between Korea and New Zealand.*

It seemed that while the number of Korean New Zealander returnees may be smaller compared to Korean Americans or Korean Canadians, they equally brought valuable skills back to Korean society in various forms and levels. Perhaps the 1.5 generation returnees were most valuable: as Bovenkerk (1981) argues, they lived at their overseas setting for 'just the right amount of time' to be culturally adaptive to both Korean and New Zealand cultures. Unlike the second or third generation returnees, they showed greater enthusiasm and loyalty toward the development of their homeland. Accounts so far illustrate that returnees as a group of skilled workers are not only valued for their English skills, but for their ability to work innovatively, having cultural awareness, and being 'open-minded' (Lee and Oh, 2009).

Teaching influence as Korean 'non-native' English teachers

The 'English Education' sector was an important employment area best suited to returnees. A number of returnees either worked in English institutions, or at local primary schools as foreign English teachers. Korea, like many other Asian countries, became highly interested in hiring 'native-speaking English teachers' in the 1990s – commonly referred to as NSETs (Jeon and Lee, 2006). The rise of native English teachers in Korea is part of the globalisation process (Jeon and Lee, 2006; Jeon, 2009). "In Korea, English is seen as the most powerful language, and native English speakers are positioned as superior while non-native English teachers are positioned as inferior" (Jeon, 2009:237). Yet, as non-native (returnee) English teachers, they had their own particular skills and qualities.

A study indicated that the foreign English teachers felt that despite their 'superior position' as native English speakers, they often felt like they were just 'performing monkeys' and did not have a valuable impact on improving students' English ability (Jeon, 2009). This idea is indeed relevant to the teaching performance of returnee English teachers because, often, the returnee teachers held superior positions at schools and institutions. For instance, a number of returnee English teachers stated that because they could speak Korean as well, they were able to communicate with the students' parents to give feedback on a child's progress. Hence, they could perform the overall teaching role rather than just being the 'performing monkeys' of teaching dance and songs in English. Michelle Jo (F, 25) illustrated that the returnee teachers can do multiple tasks at work because they can also speak Korean:

> *Because I am bilingual, my boss gives me extra administrative jobs such as consulting with parents and writing reports. Then I am actually employed as 'native speaking' teacher, so I get paid the same amount as what other English teachers receive.*

Michelle, with her New Zealand nationality, was employed as a native speaking teacher under the work contract, yet her task involved more than what other foreign English teachers did. Although Michelle did not enjoy having too many tasks at work, she eventually became the head English teacher and took over a managerial role as well. Such an experience has been shared by a number of other returnees working as English teachers. Furthermore, as Korea New Zealander English teachers, these returnees were also able to give advice to students and their parents about studying and living overseas:

> *There are a number of parents who want to send their children overseas to study English, so I give them advice sometimes. Some of them (the parents) know that I am from New Zealand, so they ask me about New Zealand's education system and lifestyle and what to do on their arrival in New Zealand and so on… They feel that my advice is more trustworthy than information found from various websites because I am actually from there. As a co-ethnic Korean, I am a lot more approachable than talking to a foreign teacher, who may be able to explain a few things, but not from an immigrant's and Korean's perspective.* (Grace Kim F, 29)

It was indicated that returnee English teachers had higher cultural competency for Korea and were better positioned to be not only English 'trainers' but also as overall mentors for the students and parents. David Kim (26, M) who is working as an English teacher at a local primary school explained that he is different from the rest of his foreign co-workers. David argued that he is different from American or Canadian (foreign ethnic) English teachers because he has a stronger ethnic tie to Koreans and is genuinely more interested in the students' performance:

> *I feel that those English teachers from America or Canada just come to Korea to earn money and experience Korean culture, not because they particularly enjoy teaching or they like kids. But because I'm Korean, I care about the students more and teach with more concern for each student. I feel that the kids are like my nephews and nieces. And because I*

also talk to the students' parents, I know some of the student's personal problems or family issues which I take into consideration when I'm teaching.

The returnees working in the English teaching industry also explained that when they were teaching students who were in middle school or older, it was highly useful to be able to explain things in Korean as well as in English. There are certain English words that are not translatable, just as there are some Korean words that cannot be fully translated into English. Hence, being able to sometimes switch languages enabled enhanced understandings for students who were learning at a young age or for those who were very poor in English. As 'true' bilinguals who lived in both countries, the returnees had an important role in the English teaching sector. Tara Hong (F, 26), for instance, works in a company which made Korean English text books. She was astonished by the poor quality of the text books and as an almost native speaker, she worked extremely hard to edit the previous and current text books to enhance the quality and accuracy of Korean translations of certain English terms.

6.5 Everyday working experiences

I have shown that Korean New Zealander returnees arrive back in Korea with significant 'human capital' in order to assist national development. However, those successful stories of 'return and innovation' are not illustrative of all of the participants. Many returnees interviewed in this study did not return to Korea to 'contribute' or 'help' national development, but to seek better lives, to be employed, and to be reunited with their own people. In this section, I illustrate the everyday working experiences of the participants in more general terms. I want to convey that 'return and development' and 'returnees' everyday working experiences' are two separate things – and that often the second is forgotten when talking about the first. By focusing on their 'everyday', I depict the collective working experiences of returnees: how they and local Korean workers interact with each other on a day-to-day basis, returnees' experiences of belonging, identity contestations, and exclusions. In doing so, I not only illustrate returnees as 'agents of change' but simply as human beings. Although their working experiences are mostly presented to be negative in this section, there were definitely both positive and negative aspects.

Positive things (?) about working too many hours

The majority of the returnees interviewed in this study stated that Koreans work 'way too many hours' compared to employees in other countries. While some of the returnees could not get used to this kind of working environment, some also highlighted the positive sides of it. These included elements such as learning more skills at a greater pace and being able to bond with colleagues.

May Seo (F, 29) who was working as a spatial designer in a Korean company compared her previous work life in New Zealand:

> *I work extra hours almost every day. It gets pretty tiring, but I guess there is one good thing about it, I do learn a lot from it. The kinds of projects that I would normally get 6 months to work on if I were in New Zealand have to be done within 3 months here…which means, I come in the weekends and stay late at night to finish the projects. So despite the fact that I'm ruining my health (laughs), I have been learning a lot more skills and have been in charge of many important projects. I know that I couldn't have come this far if I was still working in New Zealand.*

Indeed, acquiring a 'sense of achievement' (Sussman, 2011) was important in the Confucian[34] mindset of the Korean New Zealander returnees. Despite the fact that the majority of the returnees longed for the 'laid-back attitudes of Kiwis'; some enjoyed the sense of pressure in their work environment. May Seo felt that she learned an enormous array of skills from working long hours, but she ended up spending less time exercising and eating healthily. Such a scenario was common among the returnee participants. A phrase such as 'Korea ruined my body' frequently appeared during interviews. Yet, when I asked 'Are you still happy with your work-life?', their common answer was a 'yes'. Many participants still enjoyed working in Korea under pressure. Once they started imagining the life of New Zealand; finishing work at six and always having evenings and weekends off seemed 'too idle' in the opinion of some of these young adults. In a way, a little bit of stress brought 'vibes' into their lives and a sense of achievement and involvement. Some returnees even mentioned that when they were working late at night, they felt that they were becoming 'more Korean'. They could associate more with the Korean society now that they were also busy 'worker-bees'.

[34] Chinese philosophy/teaching which emphasises the value of learning and working hard.

Working long hours meant that the returnees spent more time with their co-workers, which gave them more chances to bond and form closer relationships at work. John Yoon (M, 30) who was working as an engineer was, at first, surprised to see Korean people working extremely late. However, he became used to the long working hours and eventually started to enjoy it:

> *When I first started working, I was surprised to see people actually working until midnight almost every day! I thought this was just one of those 'myths' about working in Korea or what they show on TV, but they literally do work until midnight. I got used to it after about 3 months of struggling…and once I became used to it, I started to enjoy my work life. After working until midnight, we occasionally go out drinking until 2 to 3am. I did get a beer belly from it (Laughs), but I do enjoy spending time with my co-workers. It is a different kind of bond; we sit down for 'soju[35]' and 'sam gyop sal[36]' and talk about work among other things… I acquired a kind of friendship that I never received from my Kiwi friends whom I have known for many years.*

John's desire for a sense of belonging and acceptance was fulfilled by his workmates. No matter how much workload he had, he still enjoyed working for the 'warmth' that he received from his colleagues. Similarly, Tara Hong (F, 26) said that sometimes she enjoys working late because it makes her feel that she is achieving something and also spending time with her co-workers can be pleasing. Drinking 'Starbucks' coffee late at night, chatting and gossiping with her co-workers, and going to the *Dong-dae-moon* night market after work were somewhat different from her previous life in Auckland. Tara stated that this is the 'life of Seoul' which she enjoys.

Interacting with their co-workers

One of the key concerns in the returnees' everyday working experiences was their relationships and interactions with their co-workers. Unfortunately, interacting with their co-workers was not enjoyable and pleasing for all of the returnees. Many participants sooner or later stated that dealing with people at work was tough at times, which they called the 'people problem'.

Having to deal with a nasty boss or a manager may seem to be a universal experience, but a number of returnees expressed their frustration over certain cultural behaviours of their bosses that

[35] Korean vodka made out of rice.
[36] Korean style BBQ of pork belly.

were not necessarily universal, but Korean-specific. Hannah Choi (F, 26) stated that she likes working for her company and enjoys her daily tasks. However, whenever she experiences conflicts with her boss, she re-thinks cultural values and starts to miss everything about New Zealand:

> *I mean, he is one of the good bosses, but when he is angry, he yells at me in front of everyone. The last time he told me off like that, I cried in front of everyone. In New Zealand, if your boss wants to tell you off, he will do that quietly in his own office, right? I mean, that should be common sense. It was just too embarrassing. You know those scenes you see in Korean dramas where they try to put the main character in the worst situations? Well that's not an exaggeration, it really does happen…*

Yelling in front of everyone presumably wouldn't happen in a Western work environment. Yet, this kind of behaviour is commonplace in Korea. If not entirely 'acceptable', it was at least a practice that is viewed as unchangeable; no one would stand up and tell the boss that this is rude. As returnees, workers like Hannah were frustrated by this kind of behaviour and started to make comparisons and romanticise New Zealand's Western culture and norms.

Such frustration was also felt during work meetings where the workers of lower position had to follow what their managers instructed. A number of returnees stated that you can never have a 'normal conversation' with people in higher positions because they never listen to your opinion. Laura Lim (F, 26) who was working for a small financial company explained that whoever has a larger voice gets to say what they want to say in a meeting:

> *So really… whoever has the larger voice wins... whoever argues for their rights. When I say 'how about this…?' and try to suggest something, they never listen. They actually take it badly because I said something contrary to their opinion… it's ridiculous, now I just sit and listen.*

Laura further explained that she was disregarded by her co-workers, especially because she was a young female. She felt that her managers and senior workers were offended when she showed her personal opinions during meetings. It was something that she could not change, but had to accept and try to understand. Laura's work environment was even more 'traditional' in the sense of being hierarchal and patriarchal because it was a small Korean company where there were only local

Korean workers. Being the only overseas Korean worker, Laura felt isolated at times as she could not share her feelings with anyone at work. A similar view on the 'rigid' hierarchical system of Korean work environments was shared by many other returnees. May Seo (F, 29) who was working as a spatial designer in a Korean company felt 'out of place' at times because she could not relate to the behaviour of others:

> *Korean people are so machine-like…they just work like machines. They don't try to say anything back; they just follow and listen to the bosses. And I feel this especially in my current job. At my last job, even the deputy manager made his own coffee, but here, the 'Korean way' is so strong, there are so many hidden 'rules'… these are not written rules, but people just act the same.*

When asked if she could be more specific on the point of people all acting the same she said:

> *Um, it's just embedded in people's lives. The lower person in the position does everything for their bosses, like making coffees for them and doing stuff for them that is not even work-related. It's ridiculous. When we go out to lunch sometimes, we all just order what our main manager gets. I mean, it's good that we are loyal to our older people, but ordering the same food? I think that's just too much…*

May explained that when she first started working, she did not understand these 'hidden rules' of obeying their managers and higher executives. When she asked her co-workers why she had to order the same food, they just told her 'that's just the way it is'. Although May's case of ordering the same food may be an extreme case, there was certainly a general feeling amongst the returnees that they had to learn the 'hidden rules' of their work place by following others.

The 'fox' ladies

'Fox' is a common term used in Korea to describe women who are cunning, selfish, and sometimes 'tricky' to understand. More precisely, a woman is called a 'fox' when her 'inside' is different from her 'outside'. For instance, a woman who may seem very kind, and beautiful outside, may be very different inside and talk behind peoples' backs. Dealing with these 'fox ladies' was stressful for returnees in the workplace. Annoyance at 'fox ladies' was shared by a number of returnee workers. Alicia Choi (F, 26) who works at a financial company said she

doesn't know how to deal with the fox ladies. When asked what it was like working with local Korean workers she replied:

> *Oh…that's really hard actually. I sometimes don't like the female workers here, they are all typical foxes. I mean, they are not all entirely foxes, but there are a number of them. There is this one big fox at our work. She is really pretty and all, but you just don't know how to act around her. Last time she came to work with her hair all done, right? So I said to her "Oh hello! Did you perm your hair?" and smiled to her. Then she just said "Oh yeah..." and walked off. Then later that day, I heard her speaking out loud to other workers that I said her hair was ugly…I was like what the f**k? I never said that, I was actually about to say that her hair was nice but she just walked off! I mean, how do I deal with those kinds of foxes? Errr it's so frustrating sometimes.*

Alicia noted that not all local Korean women workers possess these characteristics, but there is definitely one or two in every department. Frustrations gained from dealing with 'fox' type women workers were apparent especially among the women returnees. Sandra Lee (F, 26) stated that she doesn't get along with her female co-workers because some of them are 'scary foxes':

> *There are so many foxes at our work… They are nice in front of you, but say bad things about you behind your back. Oh I hate them so much… we have the biggest fox in our company and she made me cry the other day because I was so angry but couldn't even express my feelings to her. If this were New Zealand, I would have talked to the person to try to sort things out… But I didn't know what to do or how to deal with this kind of person. You don't know how they will react to you, if I say anything to her, she will probably cry in front of others and make me to look like the bad person. Errrr I really hate those foxes.*

Sandra said that it is not a language issue when it comes to dealing with fox ladies. She feels that she definitely has some cultural barriers because she cannot act like them. Sandra further said that Korean girls tend to be too materialistic and that they have different values in life. Even if there was an ethnic bond, she could not make good friends with female co-workers who were around her age. It was frustrating for her because she wanted to make friends in Korea. Sandra further said that sometimes she missed the mind-set of 'laid back Kiwi people'. She felt that because of the fox

ladies at work, she could not be true to herself in Korean work settings and saw herself becoming like one of them – 'To fight those foxes, you have to become one.'

Interfering with privacy

A number of returnees felt that their co-workers stepped into their personal space too much. Having a close relationship and becoming friends with some of their co-workers was considered to be a positive aspect of their working experiences and certainly what they wanted to achieve by returning to their homeland. However, some returnees exhibited frustration over being scrutinised by their co-workers. Tanya Lee (F, 29) explained that she enjoys spending some private time with her workmates, but doesn't feel confident about sharing all of her private life at work when they ask her about 'everything'. Compared to New Zealanders, she explained, Korean people ask very personal questions without any hesitation. Such behaviour, as Tanya termed it, was a 'Korean thing to do':

> *There are definitely some cultural differences that I feel sometimes… For us (New Zealanders), even if we are pretty close, we would be cautious about asking some private questions, at least that's what I felt in my previous work. But here (in Korea), they ask me everything. The first week I was working for this firm, I was surprised by how many times people asked me my age and what my parents do for work. I mean, what has that got to do with my work, huh? Like last time, my boss told me that I should get a boyfriend. My mum doesn't even care whether I'm single or not!*

It is important to notice that when Tanya talked about her previous work in New Zealand, she used the term 'we' to refer to New Zealanders, which indicates her identification as a New Zealander rather than a Korean. The returnees used such self-identification when they were talking about negative experiences in Korea. Negative experiences at work resulted in the returnees' re-evaluating who they can associate with more, and, consequently, who they are.

Feelings of being 'scrutinised' also came from returnees' self-consciousness at being a 'cultural outsider'. Helen (F, 26) felt that her co-workers were always watching her and judging her behaviour because she was a returnee:

> *I feel that I try hard to disguise my personal life at work. I don't really know why but I just feel uneasy about showing what I do. One time, I came back to work after my lunch break with a shopping bag, right? And one of the managers told me that I shop all the time and that I should save money. I was like… why is that her problem? And then I realised that some people at my work are trying so hard to save up their money and I may come across as this 'rich returnee' from New Zealand spending all of her money on clothes and shoes. I don't like that feeling and certainly don't like someone other than my parents telling me what to do!*

Helen was aware of the general perception held by local Koreans that overseas Koreans are 'better off' and privileged. Hence, Helen felt that she needed to be extra careful in displaying her identity. She didn't want to be judged as an extravagant person who is snobby. It was not who she was and certainly not how she would like others to think of her.

Fighting against assumptions

Similar to the case above, many of the returnees' everyday working experiences were filled with either confronting certain stereotypes about overseas Koreans or consciously not conforming to them. Because of its prevalence, this theme deserves separate attention. Goo and Kang (2003) argue in their article about increasing numbers of Korean returnees that when returnees find their work experiences difficult, they would generally not sympathise with them, but view returnees' difficulties as something that they deserve. On the other hand, admiration for them also exists and this was conveyed through study participants' narratives. No matter how they were received, returnees' daily work lives were filled with confronting or fighting against local Koreans' pre-conceived ideas about overseas Koreans in general.

There seems to be a romanticised view of the 'West': local Koreans seem to think that returnees had it easy compared to the competitive life in Korea. Indeed, if someone were to compare the school life of a Korean teenager and a New Zealander teenager, their lives would be enormously different. The average life of a 16 year old student in Korea consists of school from 7am and straight after school finishes, he/she will go to various institutions for further study until 10pm. University admissions are highly competitive and some will spend extra years after graduating high school in order to get into a high-ranking university. Even after entering university, male Koreans will have to spend two years in army training. It is also very common for young Korean

adults to take time off from university to spend one to two years overseas learning English. Hence the average Korean does not begin work until they are in their late twenties or early thirties. Therefore from this local Korean perspective, a young returnee who is in their early or mid-twenties, recently graduated, fluent in English with an overseas degree, who may even be in a more advanced position in the workforce, may come across as someone who is 'spoiled' and 'better off'. Moreover, there is a preconception that those overseas Koreans who did not go through the competitive educational experience are 'less disciplined'. Indeed, narrative analyses revealed that returnees were constantly reminded of these preconceived ideas about them. Gloria Kim (F, 29) worked at a research company. On her first day at work, she was invited to her welcoming drinks and was surprised by the behaviour of one of her co-workers:

> *He just yelled at me – hey New Zealand! Come over here! – I knew that he was a little drunk, but I felt annoyed that he didn't call me by my name. So I acted like I didn't hear him and was talking to someone…then I overheard him talking to his friend, saying that I wouldn't survive more than 3 weeks in the company because I must be a spoiled brat from New Zealand! I was upset and found my face suddenly going red. I really didn't know what to do although I wanted to go and yell at him!*

Gloria was determined to fight against this stereotype and prove that overseas Koreans are also hard working people. Gloria stated that she 'worked her butt off' to get through her first three weeks, and eventually worked at the company for more than two years, eventually becoming a senior manager. In a similar way, there are certain ideas that returnees from the West are privileged:

> *They tend to think that I was privileged living overseas. However, they don't realise that we had to go through a lot of difficulties growing up in New Zealand as 1.5 kids. You know the things that we had to go through, helping out with our parents' businesses and having to adjust to a new culture wasn't easy in the beginning*
>
> (Raymond Kim, 32, M)

Raymond explained that at work, his co-workers were envious of his position because his life 'seems too easy' compared to that of local Koreans. While some co-workers simply admired his overseas background, others were jealous of him. A number of other returnees also reported the

experience of being seen as rich and privileged. Erin Lee (26, F) for instance, illustrated the positive and negative sides of being a Korean New Zealander:

> *We grew up in a good environment… For instance, we didn't have to study as hard as Korean kids do, and Korean people may think that we achieve things too easily..? People see me like that very often… they think that I probably grew up without any difficulties, they tend to think that we didn't have any hardships in our lives…*

Although Erin felt that Korean New Zealanders were privileged to a certain extent, she does not think that Korean New Zealanders 'don't know hardship.' Such a 'privileged' discourse about Gyopo from the West is partially due to the English skills that the returnees possess which are highly valued in Korean society. With their English skills, Korean New Zealander returnees have a higher possibility of getting into professional jobs (Lee and Oh, 2009). A number of the returnees felt hostile towards those who viewed their English skill as something that comes naturally from just being Gyopo. As Korean New Zealander returnees are mostly 1.5 generations, they still remembered the difficult days of their school years when they could not speak any English at all. Unlike second-generation immigrants who learnt English as their mother language, 1.5 generation immigrants had to work extra hours each day to gain their English skills.

Other related assumptions about overseas Koreans were that they were more 'open-minded' and 'non-traditional'. For instance, some returnees were often assumed by their co-workers to have had more experiences of drinking and doing drugs at a young age, and having sex before marriage. Such assumptions were somewhat undesirable images of overseas Koreans in general and, at many times, offended the returnees' feelings and hindered their sense of Korean identity and belonging in Korean society.

A large number of the returnees indicated that for better or for worse, they were always seen differently and were judged based upon their overseas status:

> *People tend to think that when you are from overseas, you are not polite to your co-workers. So, whenever I show certain (polite) manners, they tell me that I'm not like any other overseas Koreans and judge me very positively. On the other hand, when I say things upfront to others, they say that I do this because I'm from overseas.* (Mary Seo, F, 28)

Mary was not so much concerned about others judging her based upon her overseas Korean identity, but she did feel isolated at times because she was never fully accepted as Korean. Despite her strong desire to identify with her 'Koreanness', her New Zealand identity was always an obstacle. Stephen Paek (M, 29) had a similar experience and stressed that he didn't want his co-workers to know that he was from New Zealand:

> *I don't want any spotlight on me because I'm from overseas. You know, it's like… I don't like that look of "he doesn't know anything"… For instance, if they (co-workers) find out that I'm from overseas, I think it creates more disrespect for me than any respect. I don't like it when people just assume and say "you probably don't know this…" I hear this mostly when they talk about army or university experience… it's not that I get hurt or really offended, it's not really a big deal, but it does annoy me a little.*

Although Stephen said that 'it's not a big deal', his Gyopo identity did disturb his everyday life. Stephen further explained that he enjoys spending time with co-returnees more than local Koreans at work because of the differences that he feels. At certain times, he wanted to hide his overseas background because of the barrier that was created. Many of the barriers came about because of differences in education and the returnees' exemption from army training among other cultural/social activities.

Alicia Choi (F, 26) feels that Korean society's insistence on seeing Gyopo differently is because Korean people are still reluctant to accept different cultures and other ethnicities. Alicia stated that had she worked in New Zealand, she would have felt less 'like an outsider' compared to her work experiences of alienation in Korea:

> *If I tried harder and found a job in New Zealand and mingled with co-workers, like going to work parties and BBQs, I would have been more accepted and wouldn't be seen as much different from the rest of the Kiwis because New Zealand is such a multicultural country already. But here (in Korea), I am always seen as different… it could be little things like not knowing certain Korean words that makes them to think I'm a New Zealander. Nobody accepts me fully as Korean here.*

Such a narrative illustrates that being a 'cultural outsider' can be experienced as a bigger stress than being an 'ethnic outsider'. As 'cultural outsiders', returnees were not fully accepted in their work environment. Such exclusions, however, were not made explicitly, but through everyday conversations and behaviors that were hard to point out as discrimination. Yet, clearly, these small acts of discrimination existed in the returnees' feelings and memories.

Not 'overseas Korean' enough?

The majority of the interview participants indicated that they were often frustrated by the fact that their Korean New Zealand status was not as 'recognised' as that of Korean Americans. The level of 'recognition' was related to a certain degree of acceptance, understanding, and admiration. Many of the returnees were aware of the general social perception among Koreans that American education is superior to New Zealand education[37]. Once they were known as Korean New Zealanders, they were immediately seen as people with less adequate degrees. A number of returnees conveyed their annoyance during their initial job-finding processes:

> *As long as you don't have a degree from America, your degree wouldn't be accepted as something better.* (Paul Jo, M, 29)

> *Not many people know about the University of Auckland. Even if our university is higher on the world university rank, Korean employers will pick up a CV that has an American university on it. Even if it's a crap one that nobody knows, they will still like to see 'America' on a CV. That's the reality in Korea.* (Hannah Choi, F, 26)

> *You would be better off with a CV from Seoul National University than a university from New Zealand. Nobody knows where New Zealand is even. They think we are from an island of Australia!* (Damon Kim, M, 28)

[37] Indeed, social scientists have been discussing the 'Americanization' of Korea for many years. During the Korean War, social media portrayed Americans as the 'good helpers' of the nation since there was a huge reliance on them. Koreans not only economically and politically relied on America; they also admired American culture and social norms, which still continues today. America was seen as the 'land of dreams' and a large number of Koreans immigrated to the United States in the 1960s and 1970s in the hopes of achieving economic gains and better quality of life (Korean emigration history is more discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.1). For more elaboration on the 'Americanization of Korea', see:
Lee, S.-D. (2002). *Big brother, little brother: The American influence on Korean culture in the Lyndon B. Johnson years*. Oxford: Lexington books
Kim, D., and Won, Y. (Eds.). (2008). *Americanization: Americanization in Korea during the post-Korean War period and after [아메리카나이제이션: 해방이후 한국에서의 미국화]*. Seoul: PooRoon YeokSa.

What is important to note is that those kinds of feelings of being inferior based on their national identity were not something that returnees could prove easily. Their situation could not be compared to that of Korean Chinese returnees for instance, a group that has been historically and politically discriminated against in Korean society (Park and Chang, 2005; I. Yoon, 2008). At the end of the day, Korean New Zealander returnees were still employed for their English skills and were seen as more 'privileged' from the perspectives of their local Korean employees. Yet, Korean New Zealander returnees still face discrimination in subtle ways:

> *People definitely look at you with different eyes once they find out that you are from overseas. When I went for my first job interview, the first things they asked were which university you went to. When I told them I was from overseas, they suddenly made this strange face. You could see from their facial expression and eyes that they were thinking 'oh really…? So what can she show us..?'… You know that face right? Then they asked, "So where? America? Australia?" and then when I told them I was from New Zealand, they showed disrespect on their face.* (Krista Hong, F, 28)

Krista further explained that she faced this disrespect in her everyday working experiences. Although these narratives are coming from the returnees' perspectives, it cannot be seen as being completely subjective. The subtleties of facial expressions and murmuring voices behind their back can indeed bring even more stress and feelings of inferiority – especially when the discrimination is coming from their own ethnic people. The ignorance of New Zealand's education system in general also existed in the medical sector. Erica Kim (F, 30), who studied clinical psychology in New Zealand, was working as a clinical psychologist intern in Korea. Erica stated that she used to feel proud about what she has achieved until she started working in Korea:

> *My colleagues do not approve of our clinical psychology degree. It's a little frustrating… there is this other returnee intern who is from America, right? All of my colleagues, even the professors ask her about what the education is like in their psychology department (in America) all the time, but they never ask me. One time, when we were discussing something, I gave an example from our psychology department and I was completely ignored. They were like… "Oh really?" and didn't ask me anything further. So these days, I just don't say anything about where I'm from because I don't want to be hurt again. Korean people don't know much about New Zealand and how good our education is.*

This could be coming from a completely subjective view. Yet, it was something that Erica felt strongly and repeatedly coming from her co-workers. Among the returnees who were English teachers, 'Korean-American superiority' was also experienced. Michelle Jo (F, 25) shares her frustration:

> *The first thing that the boss asked me in the job interview was 'Can you speak in an American accent?' He told me that even though he knew that I was from New Zealand! I had to say yes to get the job, but I was pretty offended… All of the kids at the institution are so used to watching American English programs and learning American English that when I spoke in my normal Kiwi accent, they asked me why I spoke like that. It wasn't just the kids, but the parents wanted their kids to learn the American accent, too. Now I am used to it, but in the beginning, it was a real challenge to try to speak in an American accent. I did not enjoy it at all because I personally don't like the American accent.*

Michelle, along with other Korean New Zealander English teachers, further explained that in most English institutions in Korea, they use American English text books. Hence, they had to learn some words in American English and hide their New Zealand background on certain occasions. Grace Kim (F, 29) who has been working as an English teacher at a large institution in Seoul shared a similar feeling to Michelle:

> *In my profile page of our English school's website, my education background is not shown… or I should just say hidden...but all other teachers who are graduates from American, Canadian and Australian universities have theirs all clearly written. I asked the IT manager to state my university name twice already and he hasn't done it yet. I feel that it's because our English school just wants to show that they have all the good teachers from those larger countries and not someone from New Zealand…*

Such feelings of being inferior to Korean-Americans or Korean-Canadians were something that was strongly felt especially in the returnees' initial job-seeking process. Although a small number of returnees stated that there were people who highly recognised their degrees from New Zealand, most returnees had to work 'extra hard' and 'show other skills' aside from their English in order to gain employment.

Conflict, exclusion, and jealousy

The difference in socioeconomic status between the returnees and the rest of society has been regarded as a major factor in their exclusion from the receiving homeland society (Koh, 2008; Long and Oxfeld; 2004; Brettell; 2003). Other scholars have also argued that political discrimination and social power place returnees into marginal positions within the society (Tsuda; 2003a; Cangbai, 2008). The experience of exclusion and alienation was a dominant theme among the study participants. So far, I have illustrated the more discrete forms of exclusionary experiences coming from people making assumptions and judgments. In the next section, some of the more noticeable cases of alienation are illustrated through the stories of Helen and Richard.

Case Study: Helen Park

Helen (F, 26) returned to Korea when she graduated university at the young age of 21. She graduated young because she was able to commence her tertiary study after skipping her senior year at high school. When she returned in 2005, she was able to find a job easily because there was a high demand for professionals with English skills at that time. She was appointed as the quality auditor of a leading international pharmacy company. Her first year at work was very smooth as everyone welcomed her to the company. A number of the high-level executive workers asked her to join projects that required international collaboration. She was gradually considered to be a valuable member of her team. After a year, Helen was promoted to a higher position; and she suddenly started to feel excluded:

> *As you know… I was employed at a very young age. Then I got promoted very quickly after I started working for the firm. My co-workers thought that I got promoted only because of my English skills…. But that is really not true. Because I had English skills, I was involved in many important international projects; I worked extremely hard and worked extra hours at night and in the weekends…and of course learnt many new skills from it and contributed a lot to the company. So I think I deserved to be promoted, but that's not what others thought… no one congratulated me for my promotion and they were talking behind my back. I certainly realised that for sure when one co-worker explicitly told me at a work dinner that she hated me because I'm getting promoted faster than others just because I was from overseas…! Well at first I didn't really care. But I was really hurt by a colleague who I have become close friends with. When I realised that she was acting strange and*

creating distance from me, I was really hurt. I used to commute to work with her every day and we were really close you know… but after all, she was not a true friend…

Helen's feelings were wounded not only from the jealousy of her co-workers, but, also, from losing a friend. She was an older female friend who had helped Helen out when she was first settling in at work. She used to explain Korean culture and norms to Helen and made her feel at 'home'. Helen constantly expressed her hurt feelings during the interview and said that it was difficult for her to make friends in Korea. After the promotion, she tended to 'protect' herself from becoming close friends with the local Koreans because she was afraid of getting hurt again. Helen further explained that when someone else is promoted at work, it is a cultural norm in Korea to congratulate them and go out for drinks. Yet, no one congratulated her. Although Helen really enjoyed her work, the 'people problem' that she faced made it harder to settle permanently in Korea. Not many years later, Helen moved to Singapore because she did not like Korea anymore.

Case Study: Richard Yoon

Richard Yoon (M, 28) grew up in a small town in New Zealand. After graduating from university, he wanted to return to Korea because he felt that he never got to experience 'Korean culture' in his life apart from during his childhood. Growing up in a small town where there were not many Koreans, he never had many Korean friends and felt that he wanted to rediscover his Korean identity. Richard returned soon after his graduation without any connections and any specific plans, but with a bag of clothes and shoes. He was employed as a software developer at a computer engineering company in Seoul. Similar to Helen, Richard was promoted quite quickly compared to his co-workers because he was in charge of many international projects. He said that he used to love his job and his new life in Korea. However, after some hesitation, Richard told the story that changed his life:

So this incident happened few weeks after I got promoted... It was at a work's drink party… The general manager came and told me that I am no longer promoted and that I will be put back into my old position because he recently found out that I have been doing poor work over the last month. I was like what the hell? Then I eventually found out that my manager changed my previous month's work report and moved all of what I have achieved under his name!! I just couldn't believe that things like this could actually happen in the real world you know… I knew that most people at work knew about my story as it became quite a huge

> *issue. And of course… nobody blamed the manager and just acted real quiet about it… this could be just me, but I felt that people were laughing behind my back. I just couldn't take it anymore. I was disgusted by the whole thing. So eventually I had to quit the job… Just thinking about it now makes me angry.*

Richard further discussed why he could not fit into his work in Korea. Unlike his male co-workers, Richard did not attend Korean army training for two years. Hence, he was much younger than his co-workers and could not share the same 'army culture'. Richard felt that when he had to manage workers who were older than he was, he could sense that those workers were less respectful to him. Despite all the discrete forms of alienation and exclusion, Richard continued as he enjoyed working for the firm. However, when the above mentioned incident happened, he felt humiliated and under-valued. It was time for him to 'escape' from that sort of behaviour. Although he could have been a valuable member of his team, he eventually quit his job and returned to New Zealand.

6.6 Conclusion

The key objectives of this chapter were 1) to examine the returnees' impacts as 'agents of change' 2) to understand their everyday experiences at work 3) to further understand how their work experiences affect their sense of identity and belonging in their homeland. In this section, I summarise and further emphasise some of these narratives. Then I move back to the larger debate of considering returnees as 'agents of change' in order to answer the question '*How can a qualitative understanding of returnee working experiences assist in enhancing a positive relationship between return and development?'* With ideas taken from the narratives so far, I illustrate and discuss what may be some of the structural and individual factors which enhance and disturb the returnees' work performance as agents of change. In doing so, I make a qualitative contribution to studies of return and development.

When asked about their role as 'agents of change', some of the participants showed great enthusiasm toward the topic and explained their personal contributions as returnees – illustrating that they are a small, but definitely influential group. A number of returnees asserted that they were useful in the Korean job market. Within the design industry, a returnee has indicated that returnee designers brought in ideas and innovations that were different from the local Korean designers'. Some returnees indicated that they generated better communications at work with their

stronger personalities. Those who were working in the financial and research industries stated that with their English skills and cultural understandings, they were much more effective and adaptive at working on global projects, helping their companies to become globalised more smoothly. Within the English education sector, a number of returnee English teachers said that they were working on multiple tasks and were made head teachers/mentors with their ability to speak both English and Korean. Being 1.5 generation immigrants, the returnee workers generally saw themselves as valuable because of their openness to different cultures. More importantly, they showed great enthusiasm and loyalty toward the national development of their homeland.

In considering their 'everyday' working experiences, I have examined the day-to-day working hours of the returnees, their interactions with their co-workers, and their sense of identity and belonging. Returnees indicated that they worked too many hours compared to New Zealand. It was, however, further indicated that some of them enjoyed working despite the long hours as it brought positive experiences of learning at a fast pace and enjoying time with their colleagues. It seemed that they enjoyed the feeling of 'being part of a team' and being included as a member, a feeling they did not have in New Zealand. Their day-to-day interactions with their co-workers, however, did involve struggles. Returnees had difficulties dealing with the hierarchical system in the workplace, conflicts with 'fox' ladies, and they also struggled with interference in their private lives.

Further, narratives indicated that returnees were often stereotyped as different to their co-workers once they were identified as Gyopo. The two broad discourses of return migrants as 'agents of change' and 'privileged transnationals' affected the Korean New Zealander returnees' everyday lives in both positive and negative ways. The returnees' narratives illustrate that no matter how they felt about themselves, they were often stereotyped or seen as different from the local Koreans based on their overseas status. They were often seen as more individualistic, ignorant of Korean culture, rich, and privileged. Importantly, despite their strong ethnic ties to Korea, they were always seen as cultural outsiders. It seemed that the barriers between the returnees and the locals are still prevalent in Korean society. The sense of being 'othered' – whether it be in a discrete or explicit manner – was the everyday working experience that was shared by all of the study participants. I have also emphasised that the Korean New Zealanders were perceived as somewhat inferior compared to other returnees from America or Canada due to an image of 'national power',

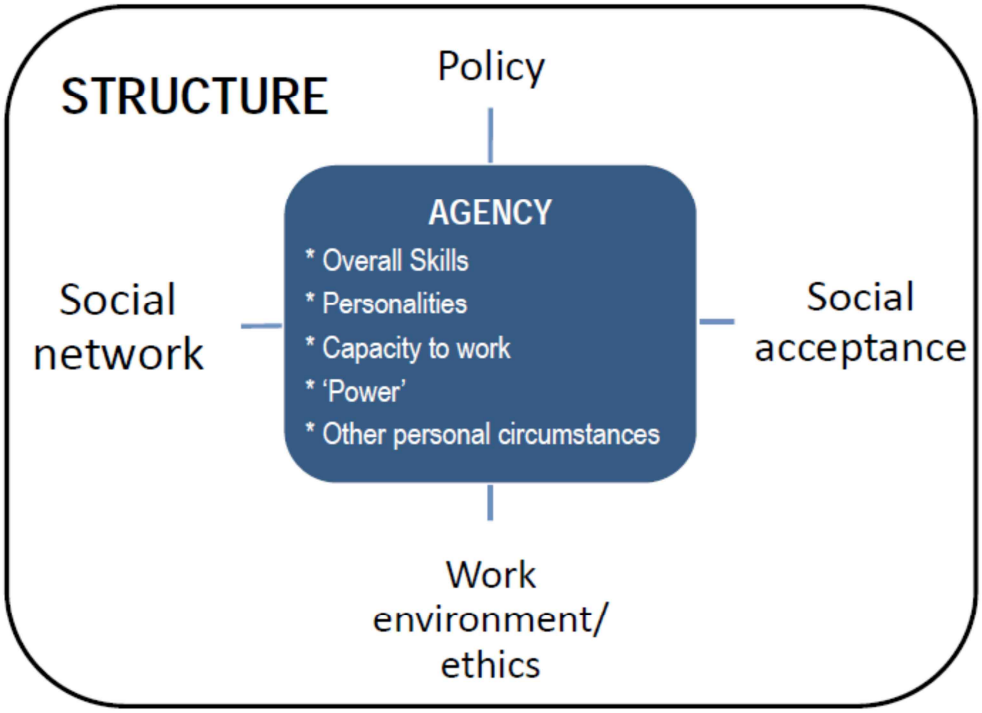
which made Korean New Zealander returnees' experiences of being cultural outsiders even more difficult.

The stories of Helen and Richard were presented as strong case studies which depicted experiences of exclusion and jealousy at work because of returnees' perceived 'privileged' positions. Both Helen and Richard were valuable workers in their companies. They were firstly hired because they both possessed the 'high' and 'global' skills that were needed for their firms. However, because their co-workers were jealous of their fast promotions, Helen and Richard both experienced exclusion and alienation. Despite the fact that they could have made valuable contributions to their companies, they could no longer work and had to leave Korea. What made this even more unsatisfactory for both Helen and Richard was that they both wanted to return to Korea because they missed 'home' and wanted to be closer to their own ethnic people. However, being 'cultural outsiders' they could not be accepted in Korean society. As shown by the case of Helen and Richard, while they could both have been valuable members in their companies, they were not socially accepted, so Korea lost some useful 'human capital'.

What are the enhancing and limiting factors that influence returnees' performances as 'agents of change'?

The narrative analyses in this chapter have indicated that while some returnees were successful in their jobs in terms of their performance and interactions with co-workers some struggled and had to either quit or move to a different job or even country. Through this qualitative understanding, a number of enhancing and limiting factors which may influence returnees' working performances as 'agents of change' can be found. As mentioned in the introduction, the theoretical aim of this chapter was to find a balance between the individuals' narratives and the 'scaled up' (Conway and Potter, 2007) discussions of social and economic impacts on Korean society. Figure 6.2 is a summary of the different structural and agency factors which may enhance or disturb the returnees' performance as agents of change.

Figure 6. 2 Structural and individual factors influencing returnees' performances as 'agents of change'



In terms of the structural, 'social acceptance' was one of the key factors which greatly affected the returnees' everyday lives and, consequently, their work performance. As Williams and Balaz (2005) illustrate in their study, in order to measure returnees' impact on their local home society, we should not only examine how many 'skills' returnees possess, but also how much 'social recognition' returnees receive from their home nation. When returnees felt excluded and alienated, they felt stressed and could not perform at their best. On the other hand, when they had colleagues who were more understanding of their situations and appreciated their roles and tried to help them, returnees felt more relaxed at work and felt like a part of the team:

> *There was a colleague who was always sympathetic of my position and tried to explain Korean work habits and norms…things that I wouldn't know because I'm from overseas. I was so thankful for that colleague, and later I found out that she did have some extended family members who were overseas Koreans as well. So that's probably why she was more understanding of my situation…* (Sunny Kim, F, 30)

Relevant to this point, returnee 'work environment/ethics' was another important structural factor. From the interviews, it is apparent that those who worked in local Korean firms were surrounded

by more 'traditional' and 'rigid' working environments and ethics. The work environment was much more lenient in international firms as the bosses were either foreigners or Koreans who had had overseas experiences. Hence, returnees were able to perform their roles to a fuller extent. Possessing a good 'social network' was another significant factor. The majority of the returnees felt that because they did not grow up in Korea, they didn't have the kind of social networks that local Koreans had. At certain times when they faced discrimination or cultural misunderstandings at work, not having enough of a social network made it even more difficult for them. 'Policy' was something that was not explicit in the narratives, yet it is an aspect that has a big impact on returnees even if they not aware of it. For instance, because Korean policy toward complete dual citizenship is still closed, it created distance between Korean and non-Korean citizens, and eventually made the returnees' everyday lives more alienated as they could not be fully accepted as Koreans. The discussion over their dual citizenships in relation to their hybrid identities is further examined in Chapter Seven.

The extent of their good performance however, largely depended on agency factors. The narrative analyses indicated that some returnees possessed the kinds of skills and personalities which made them successful at work. For instance, even if a returnee had a disagreeable boss or disrespectful colleagues, if he/she was confident enough about their own identity and skills, they could stay strong and continue to work. However, those who were less tolerant of these conditions suffered more, eventually quitting or returning to New Zealand. How adaptive and 'open-minded' returnees were also mattered. It was signaled that those who possessed the good 'middle person' quality – being able to fit into both cultures – had better chances of being good agents of change (Williams, 2005; Brown et al., 2001). By 'power', I mean in social and economic terms. Socially, if a returnee had a higher income or a highly valued (respected) job, he/she was much more confident and was not hindered by others. Economically, the level of their income/financial situation determined their level of confidence as successfully as how well they could perform at work. Other personal circumstances included age, marriage status, gender and even physical looks.

While it may seem to be an abstract ambition to understand the connections between return and development, a trajectory perspective of qualitative accounts can give vivid narratives of how innovative linkages can/cannot be achieved through return migration. In the case of Korean New Zealander returnees, they seem to be making small, but significant changes at a local level. However, the narratives of identity contestations, alienation, and exclusion suggest that there

needs to be better awareness and acceptance of Gyopo (overseas Koreans) in Korean society. Without more social acceptance, returnee workers will continue to feel isolated in their work environments through implicit and explicit discrimination and stereotyping. Returnees also need to make further efforts to understand Korean society and work ethics. Programs such as GTP & CAP (as mentioned in Section 6.3) to train foreign workers are not useful to Korean New Zealander returnees. They are often forgotten in this program because returnees are still 'ethnic insiders'. Research indicates that returnees also face discrimination, culture shock, and have limited understanding and access to Korean work ethics and social networks. Hence, they would benefit greatly from such programs. This will maximise positive relationships between return and development.

In Chapter Seven, I move to consider the returnees' identity negotiations and challenges further. I explain their identity (re)constructing experiences in relation to their search for 'home'. While I illustrate the difficulties of experiencing their 'hybrid' and 'transnational' identities, I also explore the ways that they learn to embrace their differences and gain stronger sense of identities.

7. Identity and 'Home': Challenge, Negotiation, and Growth

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the returnees' experiences of identity negotiations, challenges, and growth through their return journeys. I show how the returnees strived to achieve stronger selves over the course of their (sometimes challenging) experiences of migration to return migration. 'Identity' is a confusing concept for the returnees because many of them are nationally New Zealanders with New Zealand citizenships or residencies. Importantly, the returnees have spent their teenage years in New Zealand; which is considered to be the most important phase of one's life course in terms of identity construction (Kroger, 2007). Yet, they are ethnically Korean and have actively retained their Korean culture of language, music, food and certain norms and values. Hence, asking them whether they consider themselves to be Koreans or New Zealanders is fundamentally the wrong way to phrase the question. Indeed, not a single participant in this study identified themselves as fully Korean or fully a New Zealander. What was clear is that every one of them, during the course of their life time as immigrants and especially as returnees, had experienced identity negotiations and challenges. Whether or not they eventually gained a stronger sense of national identity was up to the individuals' activities and perceptions.

In Chapter Five, I illustrated how living as Asian immigrants in New Zealand has gradually affected returnees' sense of minority identity. This happens due to various elements such as experiencing explicit and implicit discrimination, conflicting cultural values (Kroger, 2007), or simply the feeling of difference of being 'Asian' within a Western society. By gradually gaining underprivileged identities during their lives as immigrants, the returnees' desire to be in the mainstream intensified. Indeed, their longing for a fuller sense of identity and belonging served as a primary or complementary reason to return. In Chapter 6, I illustrated that by returning and positioning themselves into various work places within Korea, the returnees also realised and gained a new sense of identity as 'Gyopo' – overseas Koreans – who were considered to be

different from local Koreans. Having unusual backgrounds, many of the returnees felt different from their co-workers and faced another 'identity crisis'. Findings from both these results chapters suggest that these young immigrants' return experiences served as a turning point in their lives where they were faced with a new set of questions about their identities and 'home' (in both the physical and emotional sense).

This final results chapter focuses primarily on illustrating the returnees' everyday negotiations with particular reference to 'home' and identity. By returning to their homelands in search of 'home', their confusion over their identities intensified. Their questioning of where their 'home' is located is related to which place they identify with and this, consequently, determines who they are. The returnees engaged in transnational activities of creating a more personal 'home' within their homeland. By practicing their Korean and New Zealand cultural activities, their identities were constantly created and recreated. What emerged as significant was that their identities were never exactly 'half and half' – as so-called '1.5 generation' or 'hybrid' identities – but were much more complex, flexible, and prone to change according to different circumstances. With the purpose of illustrating complex returnee identity formation as a process, I address two main questions in this chapter:

- *What kinds of internal and external elements affected the returnees' identity negotiations and challenges?*
- *How much does their search for 'home' affect their identities and how do their identities change and mature over time and space?*

Firstly, I discuss some of the influential theories that inspired me to write about immigrants' identities in relation to home. I also discuss a number of significant concepts surrounding identity, 'hybridity', and 'home'. Instead of grouping the returnees' identities into certain identity categories, my aim is to focus on simply exploring a number of key factors and elements that affect the returnees' identity negotiations during their return experiences. The results are broadly divided into two parts. Firstly, I discuss returnees' identity constructing experiences. I touch on a number of different elements which stand out as dominant themes, such as citizenship, social norms and values, language, embodiment, and questioning of where 'home' (both physical and emotional) is. I illustrate that returnee identities are malleable and change due to different circumstances. The stories move from the negative experiences of not being able to gain a whole

identity to more positive ones of appreciating and embracing hybrid identities. Secondly, I tell stories of how the returnees attempted to negotiate their identities through their practices of creating a more familiar 'home'. These include various everyday and occasional experiences of spending more time with returnee friends, watching foreign TV shows, listening to NZ music, attending Kiwi events happening in Seoul, searching for clean and peaceful environments, and seeking Kiwi food. I explain that these practices are significant in returnees' everyday lives in terms of feeling at 'home' and they are also significant performances of their Kiwi identities. I conclude the chapter by briefly exploring stories of those returnees who decided to return to New Zealand after a short period of residence in Korea. The so-called 're-returnees' add another layer to the discussions of home in relation to identity.

7.2 Understanding Identity through Hybridity, 'Home', and beyond

Identity is a very complex phenomenon to understand. How can one attempt to understand another's identity when, in reality, one cannot even understand one's own? What is an identity anyway? Erikson (1968) states that there are three major forms of interacting elements (that formulate one's sense of identity), which are biological, physiological, and social/cultural. Biological attributes include a person's unique personality, interests and needs. Physiological characteristics refer to one's physical appearance such as sex, and bodily features and limitations. The social element of one's identity is mostly formulated during one's adolescence to adulthood period (Erikson, 1968) and also changes throughout one's life course as social circumstances change over time and space. Kroger (2007:8) explains further that "optimal identity development involves finding social roles and niches within the larger community that provide a good 'fit' for one's biological and psychological capacities and interests."

Identity is a social construction (Hall, 1996) and it is an ongoing process (Sarup, 1996). "Identification is contructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation" (Hall, 1996:2) However, no one can have a total 'fit' into a category. No one has a homogeneous identity, but instead, we all carry 'contradictory selves' (Sarup, 1996). There is the 'stable self' within us, which does not change despite all other identities developing over time and space. It is the "collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed "selves" which people with a shared

history and ancestry hold in common and which can stabilise, fix or guarantee an unchanging 'oneness' or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences" (Hall, 1996:4). In saying that, we need to deconstruct and understand the processes that have historically characterised our certain cultures and populations (Hall, 1996).

Hybrid identities: Marginalised or a third identity?

Studying immigrants' identities is complex because of the different cultures and places that are intertwined in the identity acquiring processes. Kroger (2007) explains that growing up as part of an ethnic minority within a larger mainstream group can be difficult especially because one can be in conflict with different cultural values. Kroger (2007: 130) argues that "ethnic identity emerges as adolescents experience a sense of difference". Indeed, as already discussed in Chapter 5, the Korean New Zealander immigrants gradually gained their ethnic minority identity as 'Asian immigrants' by living in New Zealand over the course of their adolescence. Kroger (2007) further illustrates that by the end of adolescence, it is up to the person to optimally gain sense of self by achieving a sense of tolerance. Gaining a sense of tolerance for unsettling identities can be very difficult for young adults however, as is discussed later in this chapter.

'Dual identity' and 'Hybrid identity' are common terms used to refer to people who belong to more than one identity category. The term 'hybridity' originally comes from biology to refer to plants or animals that are bred out of two different species. Consequently, the term connotes impurity and/or even inferiority (McDowell, 1999). There is also another connotation of strength, being 'hybrid vigour', seen as strategically mixed to height immunity. For these reasons, one needs to define and use this term cautiously. While there are scholars who use 'hybrid identities' to specifically refer to an ethnically mixed person (Kamada, 2010), there are many other studies which use the term to discuss cultural hybridity. McDowell (1999) explains that there have been two different experiences of hybrid identities. Some studies use the term to refer to those who seem to 'live on the margins', who are excluded because they cannot be a perfect fit into one identity category. In other studies, the term 'hybrid identity' has been applied to a third identity – one that replaces the two and constructs a combined one. Indeed, "the 'in-between' is itself a process or a dynamic, not just a stage on the way to a more final identity" (McDowell, 1999: 215).

A study of young Trinidadians who have decided to return to their country of birth is a good recent empirical example (Conway, Potter and St Bernard, 2008). The study indicates that the returnees'

identities, with their dual citizenships, are often assumed to be hybrid. Despite this supposition, many of the returnees maintain a stronger national identity connected to their original homeland. The authors further show that it is the 'transnational connectivities' that allow the returnees to hold stronger sentiments toward their original roots. Although the young Trinidadians (consisting of both 1.5 generation and 2nd generation immigrants) lived most of their lives in their overseas settings such as Canada, US, and Britain, they were still culturally, politically and socially connected to their original homeland and felt their sentiments to contribute to the development of their original/ancestral homeland.

Bell (2009) illustrates that 'birth', 'blood' and 'belonging' are the three most important markers of one's national identity. 'Birth' is the most obvious marker and 'blood' refers to having their ancestors being born in that country. Belonging is 'living the identity' – being able to interact with the country through social connections. It was having all three of the components which give a person a stronger sense of national identity. Korean New Zealander returnees definitely had the 'birth' and 'blood' elements to their Korean national identity. However, 'belonging' was contested. This chapter examines what actually affected their sense of belonging in order to have or not have a sense of 'full' national identity.

'Home' and identity

"Home is not just a three-dimensional structure, a shelter, but it is also a matrix of social relations and has wider symbolic and ideological meanings" (Valentine, 2001:63) 'Home' embraces socially and culturally constructed meanings that provide a sense of belonging, identity, and security. Expressions such as – 'Home Sweet Home,' 'Sweet Home Alabama' 'There's no place like Home' – are just a few examples to convey that discourses of home are surrounded by notions of safety, love, familiarity, and belonging and, quite often, nostalgia of one's lived childhood (or a past).

'Home' is a key element in the development of one's identity as it gives a sense of belonging (McDowell, 1999; Tuan, 1977). De Botton (2008:1) suggests that home is where we can forget about the outside world and really be ourselves: "Our love of home is in turn an acknowledgement of the degree to which our identity is not self-determined. We need a home in the psychological sense as much as we need one in the physical." What home helps to create is a sense of true self.

Home is more of a 'feeling' (not a physical place) where one feels attached and is able to gain a sense of security, belonging and identity.

Meanings of home become very complex and multi-dimensional in a return migration context. Wiles (2008) argues that ideas of home, whether constructed individually or collectively, strongly affect immigrants' lives. Indeed, living as a migrant, one is often situated in a minority position where belonging to mainstream society is always contested through policy and social norms. In this sense, people's social behaviour or searching for 'homeness' and familiar places is much more dominant within immigrant societies (Jackson and Penrose, 1993). For immigrants, 'home' can also be a 'nostalgic past or a utopian future' (Blunt, 2005). Most importantly, 'home' is a feeling, a sense of security, and it helps give a person their identity (Sarup, 1996).

In the following sections, I discuss the concept of 'home' (in both the physical and emotional sense) and identity as a complicated interwoven process. Self-identification is realised further through their ideas and experiences of home, and through their home-searching (returning back to New Zealand) and home-creating practices (engaging in multi-cultural activities). However, we must not forget that identity is not "a purely human accomplishment" (Knopp, 2004: 125). Instead, identity is produced from complicated interwoven factors and tangible and intangible elements that are mutually interdependent.

7.3 Constructing identities: Negotiation, challenge, and growth

> Identity quests, for example, are understood as intensely reflexive, relational, and always under construction practices that are generated by multiple material, linguistic, technological and other capacities that inhere in all parties to the environments in and through which they take place, not just humans. […] The 'agency' involved in identity quests, then, is understood as more than just a prerogative of human beings. Rather, it is an always incomplete and partial achievement brought about through networks of associations, capacities, and contestations that involve families, communities, language, technology, social institutions, resources of various kinds, and a wide range of discursive frameworks.
>
> (Knopp, 2004: 127-128)

Questioning 'identity' was not an easy thing to do during the interviews. I started by asking interviewees 'do you ever think about your identity?' I wanted to understand whether identity

really mattered in their day-to-day lives. I wanted to ensure that the question of identity was not just a 'scholarly question' and did not want to enforce any supposition that all returnees experienced identity challenges. As stories were told by the returnees, it was clear that most of them did think about their identities in a number of different contexts. Some yearned to have a 'stable and whole identity', and some did not mind. By 'whole', I am referring to a whole national identity. Yet, as Knopp (2004) points out in the foregoing quote, identity is always incomplete and its partial achievement is brought about through numerous interactive elements that can be seen and unseen. As I discuss later in this section, the returnees' quest for stronger national identity involved many different facets of their identities.

Dual citizenship; dual identity

Despite the increasing number of countries that are opening up citizenship and migration policies to allow dual citizenship or 'quasi-dual citizenships', the consequences of these policies on identity is overshadowed by economic and political discussions (Joseph, 1995; Conway et al., 2008).

As mentioned in previous chapters, most of the participants in this study are either dual citizens or holders of New Zealand permanent residency. In Chapter Three, I showed that this was considered to be a privilege in Korea because not all Korean people are able to have dual citizenship. More importantly, however, there is a stigma attached to dual citizens in Korea because it is illegal. Those discourses around dual citizenship did affect the returnees' everyday lives and much of this significantly affected their 'dual identities' (Conway et al., 2008). This was evident through the interview data in which more than 90% of the participants talked about the problem and inconvenience of using their current overseas Korean residency card. The local Korean population was still unfamiliar with the terminology of 'overseas Korean residency card' (Geo-so-jeung) and they were often confused by the different numbers that were shown on these cards:

> *Sometimes I have to use my passport as my ID because they wouldn't accept my Overseas Korean ID card, so in some places, I am known as Overseas Korean, and in other places I am known as a local Korean, it is bit confusing sometimes.*
>
> (Michelle Jo, F, 27)

Michelle, along with the majority of other returnee participants, explained the difficulty of using their residency card in everyday facilities such as banking, mobile phone stores, and when they wanted to sign up for certain memberships in stores and online. As explained in Chapter 3, because their ID cards had a different number system to the national ID used by the rest of the local Korean population, many of the facilities in Korea did not accept them as proof of identity. This not only creates obstacles in their everyday lives, but it also has a significant impact on identity:

> *I feel like I am a Korean person but whenever I have to use my ID card in different settings, I get treated differently and that is when I realise that I am not Korean but a foreigner here.*
>
> (Grace Kim, F, 28)

Although living with an F-4 visa or overseas Korean residency[38] allowed the returnees to live in Korea for as long as they wanted and enjoy the same social welfare as local Koreans, these issues continue to disturb their identities. When they could not use their own identification to buy a mobile phone or to open up a bank account, and when they had to borrow their family's or friend's ID cards to use certain facilities, they felt like outsiders or that they were being unlawful. As suggested by Wiles (2008), homeland is not 'home'if they cannot feel that they belong:

> Familiarity with local places for shopping or health care are useful, but it is the ability to conduct those daily transactions without feeling like a stranger that makes a place feel like home. The physical, social and symbolic aspects of home as a place are mutually interdependent.
>
> (Wiles, 2008:134)

Indeed, Korea was their homeland without a doubt. Returnees did speak about the positive sides of living in Korea including delicious local food, huge shopping outlets, late-night markets, watching recent Korean films; the list is endless. However, when returnees could not use those everyday facilities like other Koreans, they felt out of place. Some participants conveyed their urge to fully give up their New Zealand passports to get back their Korean residency status to reduce these everyday stresses. One returnee noted that she did not really need to retain her New Zealand passport if she was never going to return to New Zealand to live, and she would rather 'have (her) Korean identity back'.

[38] Refer to Chapter 3 for extensive discussion on the returnees' complexities over citizenship/residency status.

More narratives suggested that dual citizenship or overseas citizenship status greatly affected returnee identity. It did not matter which nationality they wanted to identify with; as long as they were holders of foreign passports, they were not considered to be Koreans:

> *When I show my ID card to other people, they always ask me "Oh so you are from overseas? So you are not Korean?" That's when I get little frustrated and I always argue back to them and say that I am Korean. I kept my Korean citizenship… and even if I don't have my citizenship, that's only a matter of a paper, I mean, what is not Korean about me? I am so Korean, but that one single ID card determines who I am to these (local Korean) people. I don't like the feeling when they ask me if I am a foreigner. Really, holding this overseas Korean ID card is not a problem in my everyday life, but whenever I get treated like a non-Korean, I feel abnormal and it always leaves me unsatisfied. It's like I am not accepted as a Korean person even if I am Korean.* (Jasmine Lee, F, 30)

As exemplified by Jasmine, those who retained Korean citizenship by only acquiring New Zealand permanent residency had a greater desire to be fully accepted as Koreans. As Jasmine was eager to convey, she wanted to know 'what was not Korean' about her, especially because she did not give up her Korean passport, she wanted to be accepted as Korean.

Yet, some returnees also stated that they were aware of their 'illegal' status for retaining both of their citizenships. As briefly mentioned in Chapter Three, the reality for some of the returnees is that they had to hide their New Zealand citizenship, but only show their permanent residency in order to keep both of their citizenships. Because dual citizenship is illegal in Korea, many of the returnees were hesitant to tell others (including myself) about their dual citizenship status:

> *I have dual citizenship. I have both Korean and New Zealand passports. To say it correctly, yeah it is illegal, but of course Korea doesn't know that I have a New Zealand passport… so usually, I don't tell people that I have a New Zealand passport, especially local Korean people. They will immediately look at me like I am doing something wrong, or I'm being greedy for keeping both nationalities.* (Gloria Kim, F, 29)

> *There are definitely people who see us in negative ways…like, they ask me when I say that I have New Zealand citizenship "so are you not Korean?" and I tell them, yes I am*

> *because I still have Korean passport… then they say "oh so you are illegal…!". The fact that people see me in this way annoys me a little because I mean, in New Zealand, almost everyone holds dual citizenship because of their parents who are first generation or second generation immigrants… and it's considered to be normal. I know a friend of mine who has 4 passports even. It's really nothing…its only a matter of paper, but people really look at you differently here. That's when I feel a little disrespected here.*
>
> (Helen Park, F, 27)

As discussed in Chapter Three, dual citizenship in Korea is a contested issue that is historically and politically interwoven. The experience of being seen as the 'illegal other' was particularly prevalent among the male participants because of the army conscription:

> *When they know that I'm from overseas, the first thing that they say to me is almost always "oh so did you go to the army?" or they just automatically assume that I didn't go to the army and become jealous of me. It is definitely not a good feeling and sometimes I want to just lie and tell them I went to the army. It instantly creates distance between me and them, and for this reason I tend to not become close with my local Korean work mates. I just don't portray a good image to the Korean people because they know that I bypassed the army.* (John Yoon, M, 29)

John's experience was similar to that of other male participants. As discussed in Chapter 6, there exists some negative attitudes toward those who do not serve in the national army. Not serving is seen as a privilege and avoidance of one's responsibility. The returnees knew about this general perception, which made it harder for them to be open about not attending the army. Two of the male participants indicated that they are seriously considering joining the national army for two years since they were seeing themselves living in Korea for a long time. The biggest reason for considering this was not for their strong nationalism or patriotic feelings, but because of their experiences of alienation.

Embodied identities

> *I listen to Kiwi music and hip-hop… but I look Asian. Who am I? I'm confused.*
>
> (Kyle Oh, M, 29)

The embodied experience of identity was another important theme. By 'embodied identities', I am referring to the role of the body, the actual physical feature of a person, in the construction, experience and performance of identity. Often scholars call this 'bodily experience' or 'bodily performances'. Many studies have also been conducted to examine how the body interacts with material culture in order to produce social identities. Much of the literature also observes how embodied identities can sometimes be excluded as 'abnormal bodies' are forced out of certain spaces. By the 'body', we are referring to the whole package including physical ethnic features, body size, clothing, gestures and how they speak (Collins, 2006; Longhurst, 2001).

Studies examining second or third generation returnees showed that returnees faced identity contestation because they physically looked and dressed differently and, hence, stood out from mainstream society (Tsuda, 2003a). Moreover, their imperfect pronunciation and poor knowledge of their ancestral language also caused identity construction as 'cultural outsiders' (Kim, 2009a). Among the 1.5 generation Korean New Zealander returnees, bodily experiences of identity construction arose not only from differences but from having similar bodies, as well.

Their bodies were an important component in reaffirming their Korean identity through similarities. Many returnees stated that they felt included and felt relaxed to be in Korea. Seeing Korean people everywhere gave them an instant feeling of inclusion because they shared this ethnicity. As mentioned in Chapter 5, some felt that they could never become a 'Kiwi' person because of their Asian bodies. Sunny Kim (F, 31), who majored in psychology, explained that as a teenager, she often wanted to be accepted as fully Kiwi and did not want to be stereotyped or judged by her Korean ethnicity:

> *When I was not sure about what path to take after graduating university, I went and talked to my supervisor. My supervisor told me that there are so many Korean people in Auckland, but there are no Korean clinics, so he suggested that I should open a clinic specifically for the Korean community. I don't know why, but after talking to him, I just started to cry…! When I think back to that time now, I don't know what really made me cry. But back then, my initial feeling was that he didn't see me as a person of who I really am, but he only saw me as a Korean person. I felt that I was restrained from what I wanted to do. I mean, I was really childish back then, what he suggested was actually a good idea and it would have*

> *done something good for the community. But back then, I was young, and I was just upset by the simple fact that I couldn't get away from my Korean identity; My Korean face.*

Sunny was upset because she felt that if she was not an Asian student her supervisor would have suggested something different to her. It was a simple matter of wanting to be treated the same as other students. In Chapter 5, I illustrated that there was an anxiety over not wanting to be seen as just 'Asian' and not to be categorised or stereotyped as an Asian person in New Zealand. Similar to Sunny, Jerrod Han (M, 29) also explained his realization of his different 'body' in New Zealand:

> *One of the reasons that really made me want to return to Korea was that one day, all of a sudden, I realised that I was not Kiwi. This happened at a postgraduate gathering at the university… I realised that I was the only Asian person among the crowd. I was black and they were all white. I know it's funny, but all of a sudden, I felt homesick and wanted to be in Korea.*

Jerrod also mentioned that he does not consider himself to be a New Zealander because he puts greater emphasis on his Korean ethnic identity. For Jerrod, New Zealand was a place where he studied and lived as an immigrant, but it did not determine his identity. As he stated, his ethnicity played a greater role in constructing his identity. He further emphasised that no matter how hard he tried, his 'Korean face would not turn into a White person's face[39]'.

Upon returning, the feeling of having different bodies disappeared because all of a sudden, they were surrounded by their own ethnicity:

> *Even if I lived in New Zealand for 15 years, I always felt like a minority and there was always an anxiety….like, when someone looked at me on the street, I would feel like, have I done something wrong? Or I thought that they must be racist. But here in Korea, I don't have to worry about that kind of stuff because I am one of them. I feel relaxed walking along the street because I look the same, I have black hair and black eyes…I'm ethnically the same, which makes me feel at ease.* (Jasmine Lee, M, 29)

[39] New Zealand is a multicultural and multi-ethnic nation. Although the participants are dealing with the mainstream, therefore referring to a 'white person's face', there are also ethnicities of British descendants, Maori, Chinese, and many other ethnic groups which form the national identity of New Zealand. There is not a single ethnic identity for New Zealanders and is hard to define.

Many other returnees also shared a similar feeling of comfort from being surrounded by a majority of Korean people. Interestingly, this bodily experience through similarities became uncomfortable for other returnees. Two participants noted that they did not enjoy having surroundings of all Koreans:

> *My initial sense of being at home was a bit strange… When I saw Korean people everywhere, I felt that I was just one of them… (laughter) You know… in New Zealand, I always stand out because I am Asian, but when I was in Korea… I just felt that I wasn't seen… I know it sounds a little strange, I cannot explain it, but I can tell you that it was definitely not a good feeling.* (Taylin Kim, M, 30)

> *I can't explain it, but somehow I want to be seen like a New Zealander sometimes. When I walk along the street and see that everyone is Korean, I somehow want to show that I am different from them. It's not like I can stick a name badge on myself to show that I'm from New Zealand. You know, like when I meet a foreign person, I want to talk to them and I want them to see me and know that I can speak English to them, but no one will know because I just look like all other Korean people. It's a strange feeling.*
>
> (Paul Jo, M, 29)

These narratives suggest that the participants experienced inner conflict. Although they felt included whilst surrounded by people of their own ethnicity, they also wanted to be associated with their New Zealand identity. Paul, for instance, was pleased to see a foreign person and wanted to talk to them in English and was curious to find out where they were from. He further explained that he wished that foreign person could detect that he was from New Zealand. Somewhere deep inside, these returnees wanted to perform their New Zealand identities, yet their bodies created distance.

Experiences of bodily identities were not just about sharing ethnically Korean bodies, but also about differences. The differences were found in materialistic associations with the body. A number of returnees talked about the 'materialistic culture' of Korean people. From the returnees' perceptions, Koreans were always dressed up 'too perfect' and they all looked like models and stars. A number of the participants conveyed that they have to be more careful about what they wear in Korea:

> *I changed the way I dress since I moved to Korea. Everyone is really dressed up, even at supermarkets… (Laughs). One time when I first moved here, I went to the department store in my baggy shorts and jandals and I felt that people were looking at me as if I was too poor to be there. I could feel all the stares from other people… that's when I realised, I should really dress up outside my own house. I mean, in New Zealand… I would just wear whatever. I would wear shorts, jandals, and sweatshirts with holes in them, and people wouldn't really watch or stare at you. But here, it's really obvious when people look at you. I don't want to be too materialistic, but I did change, I really dress up now.*
>
> (Michael Lee, M, 29)

A number of returnees stated that they were "becoming a true Korean" for going to the hair salon once every month or more. Female participants commented on the skinny bodies of Korean women and how their conception of being 'slim' is different to the Korean people's perception of being slim. The participants in this study were young adults and most of them were working at the time of the interviews. Hence, having confidence in their physical appearance was an important part in constructing their identities. Alicia Choi (F, 28) explained that she felt out of place sometimes because she is not a 'normal' Korean woman size:

> *When I was living in New Zealand, I wore sizes 8 to 10. That is like small to medium right? And I was never really self-conscious about my weight…but when I came to Korea, all I see is slim girls. One time, I went to a store and tried their one-size only clothes, and it was way!!!! too small for me. (Laughs). I mean, I am not a big person! Or at least no one really made me feel that way…Ooh one time, I went to a store, and that sales person told me that I should wear a large size and brought it to me. It just made me feel fat.*

Similarly to Alicia, another participant, Amy Woo (F, 30) stated that she feels 'unattractive' in Korea:

> *I never felt short in New Zealand… I guess, people never really tell you that. At work, people will just say 'oh you have a nice shirt' or all the positive things. But here in Korea, when I first started working, I got some culture shock because people would say things like I look tired, I have pimples on my face, or that I should re-do my hair because its not that*

> *nice looking…and so many people commented on my height too! Like when I go to a store, the sales person will tell me that I won't look nice in certain clothes because I am short. And so many people told me that I should wear high heels because I am short.*

Amy further explained that she felt 'ugly' and 'unattractive' sometimes. In New Zealand, she was confident with her physical appearance. People commented on her nice black hair, pretty eyes and guys found her attractive. She was always the 'cute Asian girl'. However, in Korea, she was rejected a few times by guys who she asked out. Amy felt that perhaps it was the way she looked or the way she dressed:

> *Ummm perhaps it's a cultural thing. I never had a Korean boyfriend in Korea. I don't think the guys here like me (Laughs). I don't know if this is just my own feeling, but I feel that femininity in Korea and femininity in New Zealand are quite different. I don't think I have that sex-appeal to Korean guys. They like skinny girls who have white skin and who dresse in skirts and all that… but perhaps because I have darker skin? Or because I don't dress the same… I don't know what it is, but I really lost my sense of confidence in my looks.*

For Amy, her bodily experience was very personal and cultural at the same time. First, she felt that she did not have a great chance of meeting a guy who found her attractive. Later, she realised that she did not have the ideal 'Korean beauty' because she did not dress perfectly and have whiter skin. Whatever the reason might be, Amy lost confidence in herself after returning to Korea.

Language is another part of bodily experience of identity challenges. The returnees explained that at certain times, local Koreans commented on the way they spoke:

> *I don't know exactly what or how I speak in Korea, but there must be something in my pronunciation or something because sometimes people detect that I'm from overseas. One time, my co-worker asked me if I was from overseas when he first met me. I was really surprised because I always thought I was so Korean. I guess sometimes, words like "oops" or "Oh my gosh" come out naturally while I'm speaking in Korean. (Laughs) and that's when they detect that I'm from overseas.*
>
> (Jasmine Lee, F, 29)

> *I have had hard times trying to speak in the polite form of Korean language ("Jon-Daet-mal"). I forget to say things in polite form or I say it wrongly… I guess I never really spoke Korean in polite form in New Zealand because I only had to speak Korean to my family and friends and this is my first time speaking Korean at work. At work, I always have to use the polite form, and I didn't do that properly when I first started working. A number of co-workers told me that I should practice more otherwise I would come across as rude to others. I felt a little homesick then and missed speaking in English and just calling my professor and my boss by their names.* (Tara Hong, F, 27)

More narratives indicated the important relationship between language and identity. Returnees' bilingual status brought confusion over their identities. Unlike the second generation whose mother-language would be English, or the first generations whose mother-language would be Korean, the 1.5 generation returnees felt that they could not speak or write in either language as though it were their own:

> *It's really strange… like when I'm speaking to my colleagues at work in Korean, I don't fully feel like a Korean person. I have to try harder to fit in by speaking better Korean.*

When asked if he felt more comfortable speaking English he replied:

> *Well not exactly that either, my English is not that perfect because I moved to New Zealand at my teens. So… I do know more Korean words, but when I am speaking or trying to write a document, I feel that English is easier. I think and act differently depending on which language I'm speaking in… and I realised it when I moved to Korea. Like when I meet a foreign person at work and when I'm speaking to that guy in English, I feel happier and I feel like who I am and feel true to myself.* (Eric Ham, M, 29)

This kind of confusion or lack of confidence over language ability was a shared experience among the returnees. The returnees were sometimes expected to possess perfect English skills because they were from overseas. However, one participant explained that although he can speak English almost perfectly, he still has a Korean accent and people comment on this:

> *They think that my English should be perfect because I have lived overseas…but when they hear my accent, they ask me why my English isn't perfect. It's a bit stressful to meet their expectations… (Laughter)* (Fraser Shim, M, 29)

This is a confusing experience and a stressful one for some of the returnees. Below is an email that I received from one participant that I interviewed. She contacted me after our interview saying that she forgot to mention how much language had an impact on her sense of identity. Perhaps this extract from her email summarises what many of the returnees experience in their everyday lives. It suggests that their 'bodily' experience is a highly cultural and psychological matter:

> *Sometimes I really hate the way I think. I wish I could write consistently in one language whether it's Korean or English. But I switch all the time. It confuses me. And I don't understand how it works. I'd like to understand what's going on in this head of mine. I would like to be able to think in the language I would like to think but I can't. I have no control over it. And it's weird. It's confusing. It's unsettling even after so many years. It's as if some sort of alien entered my brain and is dictating it like 'Man In Black'. I feel violated. I never allowed this to happen yet how did this happen?*

The narratives surrounding bodily identities are somewhat related to returnees' national identities. Perhaps for some of the returnees, their identity challenges in Korea were not always about their nationalities, but how confident they felt about their physical attributes was equally significant. At the end of the day, a person's ego identity is about how happy and confident they feel about themselves. Their physical appearance, material culture, the way they speak, and their language ability were all important components in constructing their identities.

'Home', Belonging, and identities

Living as migrants, the returnees always longed for a sense of belonging and their attachment to their homeland intensified. However, by returning, they experienced mixed feelings about where their 'home' might be. The returnees' different conceptions of their 'home' were strongly related to their sense of self. It is argued that "home is the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community" (Relph, 1976:39). Indeed, just as difficult as it was for the returnees to answer whether they considered themselves to be Korean or New Zealanders, defining where their

'home' might be was a very difficult question that returnees had to strive to answer. Below is an illustration of this emotion:

> *That is a difficult question…um…I never really feel 100% at home in Korea... I've lived away from Korea for too long, but then again, I never felt fully at home in New Zealand either. I don't really have a 'home' really.* (Stella Kim, F, 32)

In this sense, Stella conceptualises the idea of 'home' as a feeling of security and comfort. She further explains that she feels comfortable in both countries because she lived in both places for equal periods of time. Yet, there are times when she feels uncomfortable and insecure in both countries for various reasons such as cultural differences or missing family. Indeed, family was an important part of defining 'home'. Many of the participants returned to Korea alone, leaving their parents and siblings behind. Hence, the missing of family and connections with New Zealand affected the returnees' sense of home and belonging:

> *I feel that your home is where your family is at. I always miss New Zealand and will consider my home to be New Zealand because my parents are still there…so I still visit home during Christmas breaks and stuff... so I cannot escape from New Zealand and I cannot fully settle in Korea. I guess, it was the same case, when we first moved to New Zealand, we couldn't completely settle there because I was missing my cousins, grandma and grandpa...uncles and aunties…so I never felt at home living in New Zealand. I guess that's the dilemma of all migrants, you are never completely home anywhere because your families are all scattered all around the world.* (Helen Park, F, 28)

'Home' is not just about where returnees feel 'in-place' rather than 'out of place'. Home is also about where they originate. However, the importance of determining a person's origin was not just about their birthplace, but also about where they could generate more associations with certain places and culture. This difference could be found when the returnees started talking about where their 'home' and 'Gohyang' might be. Gohyang is a Korean word for 'home'. More precisely, it contains the meaning of 'roots and origins' (Choi, 2005). Just as the word 'home' is loaded with numerous meanings, Gohyang is also a highly loaded term. In Korea, people use the term Gohyang to refer to a place where they originated and as a result it may not particularly be one's place of birth, but where one's ancestors are from. Also, Gohyang is used to describe a place

where you hold most memories of your childhood. While the returnees considered that 'home' can be both Korea and New Zealand, they often called New Zealand their 'Gohyang'. It was an interesting division especially when one considers the nature of the term 'Gohyang'. Many returnees felt that they considered their 'Gohyang' to be New Zealand, and they realised this once they returned to Korea:

> *Well, I feel that New Zealand is my Gohyang. I know I was not born there and it's definitely not where my ancestors are from (Laughs), but I think that is where I miss most and where I can relate to more. It's funny, I was talking to a colleague the other day and he said that he wants to return to his Gohyang (hometown) when he grows older…then all of a sudden, I told him that I want to go back to New Zealand when I grew older. Then I realised, I want to call New Zealand my Gohyang. It's really where I consider my home to be, that feeling of Gohyang you know... New Zealand is where I miss, where I can recollect the memories of my teenage years and it's where I am from.*
>
> (Clare Kim, F, 30)

For Claire, New Zealand was her 'home' in the sense of origin. New Zealand made her who she was. More narratives indicated this strong relationship between 'Gohyang' and identity. Despite not having any blood or ancestral relation to New Zealand, returnees continued to refer to New Zealand when they used the Korean term Gohyang:

> *Well, my home place is both. I consider Korea and New Zealand to be both my home. But New Zealand is my Gohyang. Well, that sounds funny as I am saying it.. haha. It's weird, but yeah, it's true. My home is Korea, and my Gohyang is New Zealand. New Zealand was where our family first bought our own house… and it's where I spent my childhood and teenage years. I know more about New Zealand, I don't know anything about Korean politics or geography or history… but I know all about Aotearoa. I studied the history and geography of the land through the school years, and it just feels right to call it my Gohyang because I can relate to the land.* (Tara Hong, F, 27)

Indeed, having more knowledge about the country, knowing where to buy things instantly and having the memory of spending time, all constructed what 'home' meant for them. To use the term 'Gohyang' to refer to New Zealand illustrated a strong point about where the participant related to

more. One's discovery of a 'home' is related to their identity (Valentine, 2001). Home is where a person firstly recognises their 'place' (where one attaches meanings and feelings to a space), and through this individual 'place', they gain knowledge and perceptions about their society and nation (Choi, 2005). As people grow up, their sense of belonging to their initial 'home' may change and they attach new feelings of 'home' to different (physical and abstract) spaces.

Interview analyses further suggested that 'home' and identity have a strong relationship. The relationship really depended on which country returnees spent more time during the critical identity developing phase of their lives (Kroger, 2007; Christou, 2006a). Indeed, a number of returnees said that they considered New Zealand to be their home because that is where they gained their first strong sense of identity, especially because they spent their teenage years in New Zealand:

> *I feel that Gohyang is where your identity is first constructed. In this sense, New Zealand is my Gohyang and my home. Well, Korea and New Zealand both affected who I am now, but New Zealand definitely had more impact if I had to choose one because that's where I spent my teenage years. I'm sure all my (Korean New Zealander) friends from high school will think the same way.* (Alicia Choi, F, 28)

> *The spiritual homeland for me is New Zealand despite the fact that I lived in Korea longer. I think it's because I spent my teenage years in New Zealand and that is when I gained confidence in myself and gained a stronger sense of self. I learnt what I wanted and I grew up to be who I am. Korea does not feel like my own land…like I can't grow my roots here, the land is not hard enough to grow my roots. My mind is always somewhere else. If I can get a job in New Zealand, I will definitely go back there.* (Karla Jeon, F, 30)

Christou (2006a) has illustrated in her study about Greek American returnees that the time spent in a place cannot be erased, but it affects the person's identity. The recurring theme among Alicia, Jasmine and Justine is that all three of them felt New Zealand significantly affected their identities, so they considerd New Zealand to be their 'home'. Their life-history really mattered in this process of acquiring their sense of home and self. Jasmine, for instance, was a pianist in New Zealand who had a hard time during her university years when her finger was severely injured. When she could no longer play the piano as a professional player, she spent many months in depression wondering

what she could do. Soon, she was contacted by her professor and received free counseling from her school and so much additional support. She decided to become a piano tutor and spent her free time in other hobbies. Looking back on those hard years in New Zealand, Jasmine realised how much she matured and became a strong woman. Jasmine also explained that had she been in Korea, she would not have received so much support from her university, but she would have probably spent more time depressed. Jasmine returned to Korea for marriage and family reasons, but these days she really misses her ‘home’ place, which she considers to be New Zealand.

Karla was another person with a similar narrative. Karla said that she never had a strong identity growing up in Korea as a child. Her parents were always overseas, and she was not a happy child at school. She did not have many friends, and her memory of childhood in Korea was filled with isolation from her friends at school. Karla said that she made her ‘true’ friends in New Zealand. Her friends were other immigrant kids at school who were from the Philippines, Singapore and China. Because she did not want to be surrounded by Korean friends, she made stronger friendships with other ethnic minority kids at school. Through her teenage years, Karla gained a stronger sense of self. Karla is working in a Christian NGO in Korea helping with kids who have family problems and other conflicts. Karla said that she considers New Zealand to be her ‘home’ because that is where she grew older and gained confidence in herself.

> *In Korea as a child, I was never happy. My parents weren’t very stable or happy parents either and I didn’t know the value of me. I had no confidence in me and I was always feeling like a useless person. Really… all those feelings of hatred towards my parents and the society, and the hurtful feelings were healed through the years of living in New Zealand. The people I met in New Zealand, the friends I’ve made through school and churches have really accepted me as who I am and as their friends. They saw a value inside me and told me only good things.* (Karla Jeon, F, 30)

The narratives so far illustrate some interesting stories about the returnees’ experiences of identity construction in relation to ‘home’. Although Korea was their ‘home’ in the sense of being their birthplace, ethnic origin, and where they shared some common culture, it was a distanced homeland when it came to defining ‘who they are’ and where they could find more cultural and social associations through sharing common backgrounds.

Being Hybrid: Towards finding stable selves

For the Korean New Zealander returnees then, defining their identity and 'home' was not always easy and clear. Some of these identity-constructing experiences happened due to external factors such as local Koreans' perceptions toward having dual citizenship (i.e. not accepting overseas Koreans to be fully 'Korean' nationals, ignorance of overseas Korean residency cards). I have also conveyed that returnees' 'bodily experiences' also affected their sense of self. Where 'home' was is another question the returnees often asked themselves, and the fact that they never fully belonged to one place or another emphasised their 'hybrid' identities. Being hybrid was a stressful experience for the returnees. The fact that they were being asked to talk about their identities was unsettling. Fraser Shim (M, 28) stated that he wished he had never come to New Zealand in the first place.

> *I mean, yes I really enjoyed the life in New Zealand and it was a good experience. But if I lived in Korea all my life, I would have never known all of these confusing comparisons. I wouldn't be here doing interviews with you, right? I probably would have been living normally and I would have had a more of inner peace.*

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the returnees have gradually assumed identities as ethnic minorities, as Korean kids in their host society. As Korean immigrants, they realised that they could never belong to the 'mainstream' and they faced subtle discriminations in their everyday lives. At school, they had to either choose to hang out with the Korean kids or the Kiwis. Much of their immigrant living memories were filled with estrangements and being unable to feel that they belonged. Through return migration, they also realised that they were not like the Korean people, either.

However, being 'in-between', and 'hybrid' does not always mean that one's identity is consistently experienced as marginal (McDowell, 1999). Instead, many returnees said that they had more control over their identities and could choose depending on different circumstances. A number of the returnees said that they assumed different identities depending on who asked them:

> *It depends….sometimes I choose Korean as my identity because I'm with particular people, and sometimes I say that I'm from New Zealand because I want to associate with that person. So when I am on an overseas trip and have to mingle with other people from different countries like America or Canada, I would always say that I'm from New Zealand.*

(Damon Kim, M, 29)

Although I gave up my Korean citizenship, I have two national identities. I am a dual citizen, and I think I really choose where I'm from depending on the circumstances. I mean, yeah truly inside, I feel like I am bit of both. Can't really choose you know, I'm sure you feel the same way, too… it's a common thing among all of us 1.5ers… but when you are working in Korean society and to survive in the work environment, you really have to try harder to fit in. So at work, when we go out for drinks and stuff, I would always try my hardest to show my Koreanness to them. I would tell them that I also love soju, and I'm fully Korean… and I will tell them more about where I used to live in Korea and so on, to really show them that I am on their side. Then when I'm with my other returnee friends, of course all we talk about is whats happening in New Zealand and it's not like we talk bad things about Korean culture, but we don't have to twice before we say anything and worry about how we may be portrayed to others.

(Edward Gwak, M, 29)

Returnees also stated that even if they found it difficult not being 'fully' Korean or New Zealander, they also appreciated what they had and did not want to change their identities in order to fit into a particular identity category. Much of this stability and tolerance came from sharing certain values and norms within the 1.5 generation returnee community. They felt that they had a 'little bit of both'. While they had the 'hard working' mindsets (as discussed in Chapter Six), they also possessed 'laid back' mindsets to enjoy life more. Below are some narratives which exemplify this point:

I feel that I'm not 100% Korean because I have a different personality to the rest of the Koreans. I think differently, and I am more relaxed and at ease about things. Korean people are fast minded people and they want to get things done really quickly. And they want to learn all the time, like going to different classes after work…I look at them and think, why can't they just relax and enjoy life more rather than taking night classes to learn more things? I feel that we are much more relaxed at looking at our lives…I mean, you can see it from small things like, I don't understand why Korean people run to get their buses and they have to push others to get into the subway, why can't they just wait for the next one..?

James Han (M, 28)

When the returnees shared similar values and norms with the local Korean people, they felt that they were Korean, but when they saw themselves to be different to the rest of the Koreans through sharing different norms and values, they also realised that they were different from them. Many returnees indicated that they were able to retain the values and norms from New Zealand. By realising that the returnees held certain different norms and values to the local Koreans, they were able to find their stable selves because they felt positive about this difference and felt that they could 'think outside the square'. What this suggests is that identity construction is much more active rather than passive. In the next section, I illustrate the different kinds of everyday and occasional activities that the returnees engage in in order to create and re-create their personal 'home' in Korea. These practices involved both Korean and New Zealand culture, and are a way of performing their unique identities. Although the internal process of their mixed identities was complex and stressful at times, the returnees grew through their experiences of migration to return migration and they confidently engage in performing their unique Korean New Zealand culture.

7.4 Performing identities: Re-creating 'Home' in Korea

> Actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves
>
> (Hall, 1996:4)

As Hall (1996) clearly points out, questioning identities should not be about 'who we are' or 'where we are from', but should be about the 'process of becoming'. In this section, I share the stories of the returnees' identity growth – how they actively engaged in cultural activities to perform their Korean New Zealander identities in a 'process of becoming'. As discussed earlier in this chapter, "the 'in-between' is itself a process or a dynamic, not just a stage on the way to a more final identity" (McDowell, 1999:215). Instead of constantly worrying about not fitting into the category of being Korean or New Zealander, the returnees engaged in various 'home'-making processes, which gave them a stronger sense of belonging and, therefore, a stronger sense of self. While some were more collectively organised activities (e.g. a university alumni event); some were very personal (e.g. friends gathering, posting a picture on Facebook, food consumption).

Their everyday practices of Korean and New Zealand culture in Korea created a unique 'home' within their homeland.

First, I want to start with a quote from Jonathan who was one of the many returnees who felt regret for 'not fully becoming a Kiwi' after returning to Korea. As the old saying goes, 'the grass is always greener on the other side'. When some returnees went back to Korea, they began to realise what they had missed out on:

> *If I could turn back the time, I wish I had tried harder to become one of them. Sometimes when I see Korean kids having so many Kiwi friends and are mingled within the Kiwi culture, I wish I could be more like them. When I was living in New Zealand, I think I made a wall between me and them… I never wanted to join the rugby team or cricket team at school, so I just hung out with my Korean friends all the time and went to noraebang[40]. Now I think about it, I should have learnt how to play rugby and I should have made more Kiwi friends. I regret it now…I had so many opportunities that I just blew away just because I chose not to.* (Jonathan Gwak, M, 29)

As suggested in Chapter Five, many of the returnees indicated that they could not fully integrate into New Zealand culture because of discrimination, their ethnic minority status and racism. Yet, when returnees reflected on their difficult teenage years, they realised that they could have tried harder to participate in New Zealand culture. By saying this, I am not suggesting that the returnees wanted to become New Zealanders in Korea. Instead, I argue that this kind of retrospective feeling affected their identity growth, and, importantly, affected the returnees' daily activities of creating and recreating their unique 'home' and identity.

By creating 'home', I am not just referring to 'homemaking' (Espiritu, 2003) practices that have been documented as an important part of immigrants' daily lives in creating their home and retaining their identities such as cooking (Longhurst et al., 2009) and gardening (Lesley, Muir and Hampel, 2010). I am also referring to practices outside of physical homes such as participating in communities, food consumption (Collins, 2006), spending time with close friends who share the same culture (Li, 2011), and various other daily and occasional activities which remind returnees of 'home'. The term 'home making' is used in the broader sense of creating a 'home away from

[40] Korean style 'Karaoke' (a singing room)

home' (Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Indeed, "we need a home in the psychological sense as much as we need one in the physical" (De Botton, 2008).

Participating in New Zealand communities and events in Korea

A number of returnees recognised the importance of existing New Zealand communities in Korea in retaining their New Zealand identities and culture. Certain gatherings by the New Zealand community in Korea allowed the returnees to participate and gain a sense of belonging. Indeed, with the growing economic relationship between Korea and New Zealand through the FTA (Free Trade Agreement) and globalisation more generally, there has been some social network development between Korea and New Zealand. The New Zealand chamber of commerce in Korea, known as The Kiwi Chamber[41], is a voluntary organisation that was founded in November 2008. The group's aim is to support business opportunities between New Zealand and Korea by creating networks and giving support. Les Edward, the past chairman of the Kiwi Chamber, stated that although the organisation is economic in its mission, the nature of this group is about creating social networks:

> *Yeah it's about the people, it's about connecting the people of New Zealand and Korea, and it's about creating better social connections for them and for them to understand each other's culture better. It's not just about business.*

Indeed, the Kiwi Chamber organises numerous casual events such as 'The Friday Night Hui[42]' or 'Wine and Cheese party' in Seoul (Refer to Figure 7.1).

[41] http://kiwichamber.com/
[42] 'Hui' means gathering in Maori language.

Figure 7. 1 The Kiwi Chamber Event: Friday Night Hui

The 'Friday Night Hui' event is advertised through emails, the online community, Facebook's event column, and through a posting on the Chamber's website. A number of the participants indicated that they occasionally attend these Kiwi Chamber events. The common response to this was - "I like to mix with other Kiwis… I feel like I can communicate." In these events, the organisers bring New Zealand beer and wine, and local New Zealand food. For the returnees who attend these events, it creates an instant feeling of being at 'home'. Paul Jo (M, 29), for instance, shared his experience of being a member of the Kiwi Chamber:

> *I just go to these events for socialisation. I mean, I have a job here in Korea, I'm not going to be doing any businesses over in New Zealand, so it's not that I need that particular network to meet people for businesses…but I heard about some Kiwi drinks happening in town from my friends and decided to go along with them. I really enjoyed it, just meeting Kiwi people, having that casual gathering you know… like I could introduce myself to anyone there and say that I was from New Zealand… that I grew up on the North Shore and so on. I met many Kiwis who also came from my hometown in New Zealand and it was a fun night. I'm definitely going to go to other events when I find time. It's like having our own association group.*

Paul further stressed that he does not have a high school or university reunion to attend, and he always felt the lack of a social network in Korea. After attending the Kiwi Chamber event, he felt more strongly connected to the community than any other communities in Korea. Paul felt

instantly that he belonged when he met Kiwi people who shared the same culture and background. Another participant also shared this experience:

> *There have been some New Zealand events organised by the New Zealand embassy like the alumni event or some drinks organised by the chamber of commerce…I've been to a couple of them and I really enjoyed it. I even met some Korean returnees from New Zealand who work in my field, so I kept in touch with them. I was just so pleased to see so many Kiwis in Seoul.* (Laura Lim, F, 28)

Laura felt that when she first went to Seoul, she had no friends. Unlike other returnees who had some returnee friends, Laura said that all of her best friends were still back in New Zealand. Being the only person from overseas at her work, Laura said that she did not make close friends. Laura said that she tried harder to attend these New Zealand gatherings in order to socialise with more people from her background. For some, it was a 'little break away from Koreanness':

> *Whenever I go there, I feel at home. I can listen to English and the atmosphere is so casual… like all of a sudden, you can make friends in that casual manner, you don't have to worry about speaking in polite forms or anything like that, but just act like yourselves. I like that feeling.. It's a little break away from Koreanness* (Jasmine Lee, F, 30)

In 2009, the Kiwi Chamber with the support of the New Zealand embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched an event called "New Zealand Unlimited". This was a 2 day event, where New Zealand culture was shared. In a huge convention room located in one of the biggest malls in Seoul, a wide variety of New Zealand cultural activities were presented. There were various booths giving out free samples of tasty NZ mussels, ice cream, wine, and cheese. On the stage, there was a haka[43] performance where the watchers were invited to join and try the dance. This was one of the very first and one of the biggest New Zealand cultural events that had ever happened in Seoul, Korea, attracting over 13,000 visitors (See Figure 7.2).

[43] Traditional Maori dance.

Figure 7. 2 New Zealand Unlimited festival, 4th April 2009, Seoul – Kiwi Fruit & All Blacks

This cultural festival was remarkably made. There were over 200 volunteers who participated in this event. Among the study participants, nine stated that they went to this festival and another 13 of them were aware of the event but could not attend for various reasons. Those who attended truly enjoyed it and they all stated that it was great to see New Zealand culture in Korea. Some went with other returnee friends and some took their friends and families in Korea to teach them about New Zealand. Eric Ham (M, 30) took his wife to this event and said that he felt homesick watching the haka dance. Figure 7.3 illustrates the haka and poi dance as performed at the event.

Figure 7. 3 New Zealand Unlimited festival, 4th April 2009, Seoul – Haka & Poi performance

When I saw the dancers doing haka, I could feel a little pain in my heart. It felt weird, I was really missing New Zealand and I felt like a New Zealander at that moment…

(Eric Ham, M, 30)

Eric further stated that he remembered learning the haka dance when he went to school in New Zealand. He remembered doing the dance and all of a sudden, he was missing home. Eric also found himself being the ambassador of New Zealand by teaching his wife, who is a local Korean, about the history of New Zealand and sharing knowledge about the culture.

One participant compared this event to the 'Korean Day' annually held in Auckland during which Korean food and drink are sold and some Korean immigrants perform traditional and modern Korean dances, martial arts, and music. Claire reflected on this day when she was at the New Zealand Unlimited festival:

> *When I saw all the New Zealand signs that I was familiar with, I felt instantly at home. All of a sudden, I was missing home. Me and my friend ran to the New Zealand Natural (icecream shop) booth and we tried the icecream and we said "Yeah this is the taste I've been missing!" It was such a great day and I wish they had more food like mince pies and sausage rolls. (Laughs). Then it made me think, it was like going to the Korean Day in Auckland. I used to always go to the Korean Day with my friends to eat ddeok-bok-gi*[44] *and watch the performances. But back then, it was just a fun day to go out with friends… but here, when I went to this festival, it gave me an instant homesickness.*
>
> (Claire Kim, F, 29)

Claire further explained that the event was an 'eye opening' moment for her. She did not realise how much she missed New Zealand until this day. She stated that she even organised a pot luck dinner with her friends from New Zealand where they were only allowed to cook New Zealand dishes. Carrying on her New Zealand cultural activities definitely was a 'home'-making practice and was healthy for her identity construction process.

Another community that some participants mentioned was 'The University of Auckland (UoA) alumni group' in Seoul. The majority of the participants who studied at the University of Auckland emphasised the importance of this group. The UoA alumni group in Seoul was formed in 2000. A number of the participants indicated that they come to the alumni functions to meet their friends and, also, to make new ones. This group served as an important gathering for the returnees especially because they sometimes felt excluded in their work places:

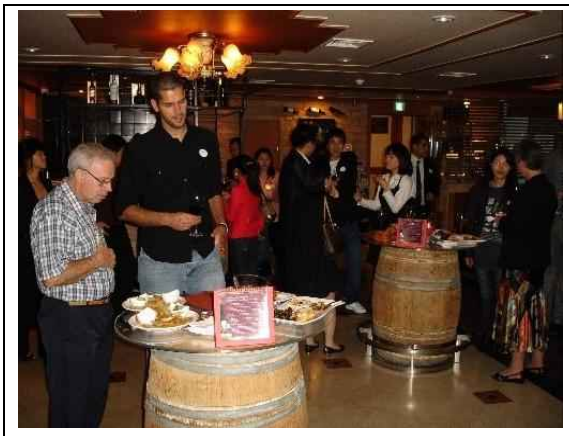
[44] Korean spicy rice noodle

> *I didn't have many social networks to start with… my co-workers have their sun-bae (older graduates from the same school) or hoo-bae (younger graduates from the same school) but I have no one at work. So I felt a little bit lonely in the beginning, then I realised that there are many Auckland graduates in Seoul, too, and there's even our alumni group here.*
>
> (John Yoon, M, 28)

John noted that going to the alumni group serves as an important part of his life in Seoul as it gives him a community where he feels he truly belongs. John also said that it is always great to meet people from New Zealand as he can interact with them with ease.

During the fieldwork, I attended a UoA alumni function through volunteering to help by contacting the University and the organisors in Seoul. The attendees of the event were from all age groups and a large variety of ethnic backgrounds. Figure 7.4 shows that a noticeably large number of attendees were Korean returnees. The event took place at a bar in Itaewon, a part of Seoul that is known for its cultural diversity. The function began with a number of speeches by organisors and graduates. After this, it was mostly social mingling. People networked in very casual ways and everyone introduced themselves without any hesitation. There was a lot of laugher and enthusiasm involved.

Figure 7. 4 The University of Auckland alumni event, May 2009



(People gathered at the event)

(New Zealand candies)

(Figure 7.4 Continued…)

(A post-function drink with the Korean New Zealander returnees)[45]

Above, I illustrate some pictures from the event and a picture that I took with the Korean returnees at our drinks. When the function was nearly over, I was approached by one of my study participants and was asked if I wanted to have drinks with some of the other Korean New Zealanders. During the drinks, I noticed that not everyone knew each other. It was a drinks occasion organised separately with the Korean returnees only. One lady told us that she had to lie to her friend who was at the function (who was ethnically not Korean) saying that she felt that this was a ‘Korean only gathering’ and felt bad about not inviting her friend. Everyone nodded and felt bad about it, but they all understood what she felt. It was true to a certain degree that the returnees wanted to meet other returnees and create a stronger bond among 1.5 generation Korean New Zealander returnees. Everyone introduced each other again, and I told them about my research and many of them were willing to support my study by taking part in the interviews. The returnees talked about how important it was to support each other in Seoul. For instance, they also instantly understood the importance of my research because they all had stories to tell me. The returnees said things like ‘I learned a lot by living in Korea’ or ‘Yeah, lots of things happened while I was here… I can tell you so many stories.’ All of a sudden, I felt included and felt a warm support from the people that I met for the first time. I kept in touch with a number of the returnees that I met at this function. Some of them became my study participants, and many of them became my friends.

[45] Those who did not consent their photo to be public are disguised

This experience tells a compelling story about the returnees' sense of self. By participating and being willing to take a part in certain New Zealand communities in Seoul, the returnees were finding their own social networks. Moreover, they particularly wanted to meet other Korean New Zealander returnees, the 1.5 generation immigrants who were just like them. More narratives from the study indicated that having strong connections with their fellow returnees from New Zealand was very significant in their daily lives and also in retaining and performing their unique Korean New Zealand identities:

> *There are times when I am talking to my friends from primary school in Korea when I realise that we are very different. They are too busy and worried about life. I definitely feel more comfortable when I meet my friends from New Zealand. I feel much more relaxed and can rely on them for anything. We can talk about anything really.*
>
> (David Kim, M, 28)

> *I feel so relaxed around my (Korean) New Zealander friends. I can just tell them that 'I miss mince pies' and by understanding each other's feelings, we can take each other's stresses away. My returnee friends give me that place to relax.* (Alicia Choi, F, 28)

As illustrated, returnees indicated that their (Koreans) friends from New Zealand were the only ones who can really understand them. They were the ones who were ethnically, socially, culturally, and politically similar and they could empathise with each other.

You are what you eat! Searching for the taste of 'home' food

> The taste, texture, touch, look and smell of food may not be exactly the same when it is created in a 'new home', but it does, in a visceral way, connect Iraq, or Hong Kong, or South Africa, or Somalia, or wherever home might be.
>
> (Longhurst et al., 2009:342)

Many scholars have studied the ways that food consumption choices have shaped migrants' lives in their new homes. The foregoing quote is from a study of 11 immigrant women living in Hamilton, New Zealand. The study finds that these women find cooking an enjoyable task in their daily lives because it brings them the taste of their home (Longhurst et al., 2009). Similarly, Collins (2008b) illustrates the ways that the Korean international students living in Auckland

engage in food consumption and preparation activities that bring the taste of Korea into their daily lives. Collins (2008b) also talks about the complexity that globalisation has brought into these processes because the Korean international students find that 'Starbucks' (an American café chain) brings the smell and atmosphere of their home. Because Starbucks is common in South Korea, the students find this a place of comfort during their stay in New Zealand. What both of the studies and many others to date illustrate is that consuming food from home in an immigrant's new home creates the taste, smell, and feeling of being at 'home' leading to a stronger sense of security and belonging in the new place.

The narratives provided by the participants in my study reflect these ideas. While previous studies have illustrated the strong linkage between food and their original homeland, my study participants convey this relationship in the reverse way – they create their home food from New Zealand; their 'hostland'. Indeed, as already discussed earlier in this chapter, many of the returnees considered New Zealand their 'home' and this attraction could be found in their eating habits. I must clarify here that although they often missed the food from New Zealand, this does not mean that they did not enjoy the Korean food. They all enjoyed having Korean dishes, but retained their taste for New Zealand cuisine and finding their 'home' food from New Zealand was an important part in constructing and performing their Korean New Zealand identities.

As the returnees became more used to living in Korea, they sought out the taste of New Zealand more and more. Tara Hong (F, 28), for instance, said that she likes to cook New Zealand dishes at home, but when she first moved to Korea, she was not able to find the right ingredients. She now goes to a huge American supermarket that is about one hour drive from her house:

> *When I first came here, I really missed the food that I used to eat in New Zealand. Like when I wanted to cook pasta and salads, I couldn't find that cheese and the right kind of sauce. Korean cheese and pasta sauce is bit gross you know… and now I am much more used to living here, I now have a car, so I drive all the way to Costco and buy the things that I need. Although they don't have exactly the same cheese, they have a wider range of cheeses that I can choose from and its one step closer to the taste of home.*

Tara further said that she does not like to eat out at restaurants specialising in Western food in Korea because they are expensive and the food does not taste as good. So, when she goes out to eat,

she likes to eat Korean dishes and at home, she cooks Western dishes. I asked Tara to send me a picture of what she would make at home and below is a picture that she sent me.

Figure 7. 5 Cooking at home: Tomato, Mozarilla, Basil salad

The dish is of course Italian, not something that originated in New Zealand, but this is what she was used to eating in New Zealand. Tara wrote in her email:

> *Hello~~ ^^ this is what I made today, mozarilla salad!! Mmm I love mozarilla. Well, I couldn’t find basil, so I just added some green salad, but it tasted fine. It’s so hard to find basil in Korea, I should really grow them on my own!*

Tara also noted during the interview that whenever she goes back to New Zealand to visit her family (which she does once every year), she always brings back cooking ingredients and confectionary. Tara once wrote on her Facebook page “*Craving One Red Dog chorizo pizza and cabonara pasta bad!!!!*” ‘One Red Dog’ is an Italian restaurant in Auckland, New Zealand. For Tara, food made her homesick and one of the ways for her to feel at ‘home’ was to consume ‘homely’ food. Tara also said that she sometimes invites her local Korean friends over for dinner and cooks them dishes from New Zealand. One time, she even cooked homemade mince pie for her friends because they didn’t know about the food. Eating the dishes from ‘home’ gave Tara a sense of comfort and also confidence in her identity. Eating and smelling the foods that she enjoys was an important part of creating a ‘home’ within her home.

More accounts of the importance of food in constructing the returnees' 'home' and identities could be found through their online communities. As discussed in Chapter Four, an online observation of the study participants' personal blogs such as Facebook and Cyworld have been conducted. Most of the time, these information gained from their online pages was presented in written forms only for privacy reasons. In the case of observing their eating habits, however, I wanted to show the photos of food that were posted on the participants' personal online pages for visual understanding.

As Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin (2008:1830) observe in their study of identity construction on Facebook, "the Facebook selves appeared to be highly socially desirable identities individuals aspire to have offline but have not yet been able to embody for one reason or another." Yet, such digital selves are also real; they are the user's identity claims and performances. Perhaps the returnees' online community was the best place for them to show their desired identities because it was distanced from the reality of Korean society. From my personal observation of 15 participants' Facebook pages, I have perceived their strong attachment to New Zealand food, which is implicitly related to their sense of home and identity. Below are some of the images captured from their Facebook pages:

Figure 7. 6 Consuming New Zealand Food & Drinks: Wine and Cheese

One participant posted a picture of her and her returnee friends from New Zealand having wine and cheese at her house. It was noted from her description (in the next picture that was posted) that the wine was brought by a friend who recently visited New Zealand. She writes, "NZ wine and cheese…ahhhh…felt like home again!"

A couple of other participants posted pictures of themselves drinking energy drinks from New Zealand. With the opening of the FTA between New Zealand and South Korea, more products from New Zealand are being sold in Korea. The energy drinks 'V' and 'Redbull' are two of the products that have been recently imported by Korea. As can be seen from Figure 7.7 and 7.8, both of the participants are very excited to find these drinks being sold in Korea:

Figure 7. 7 Consuming New Zealand Food & Drinks: Energy drink 'V'

The description on the right reads "V from New Zealand (smiley face). This helped me to survive my daily tiredness, hehe, I was so happy to see this drink."

Figure 7. 8 Consuming New Zealand Food & Drinks: Energy drink 'Red Bull'

The description on the right says "Drinking Red Bull in Korea~"

Both of the pictures were commented on by other returnees who were equally excited to see these drinks. 'Red Bull' and 'V' reminded them of their high school and university years when they used to drink these before their tests or to work on their homework and assignments until late at night. More comments such as 'Oooh I want it too!' or 'Where did you get it?!' or 'Ooh this reminds me of our study space' followed. Their photo uploads indicated the significance and excitement over having these drinks from 'home'.

Another food that was greatly talked about even during the interviews was mince pies. The mince pie is an important part of New Zealand's culinary identity. A majority of the participants indicated that they missed mince pies and some tried to bring frozen mince pies back to Korea after they visited New Zealand for holidays. Jesters Pie, an Australian chain, was opened in Korea in 2011. There are now over 10 restaurants in Korea and it is highly popular among the Korea population[46]. Below is a picture posted by one of the study participants after his first visit to Jesters Pie:

Figure 7. 9 Consuming New Zealand Food & Drinks: Meat Pie

The participant writes, "Pie from Oceania, finally..haha! Now send me some chicken cordon city stop!" 'City stop' is a convenience store in Wellington, New Zealand, where the participant is

[46] http://jesterskorea.com/

from. He is clearly thinking of his hometown and is happy to see food from New Zealand. Below, his other co-returnee friends comment: ‘Let’s go to this place this week!’, ‘This is the best food for hangovers~’ and ‘This is the best food ever!!’

Another clear pattern of behaviour was posting pictures of New Zealand’s food (and scenery, returnees’ actual physical houses, friends and family) during visits ‘home’ to New Zealand. A large number of the study participants were living in Korea alone while their parents were still back in New Zealand. For those who can afford it, visits to New Zealand are as frequent as once or twice a year. Below is a picture posted by one of the participants during her visit to New Zealand:

Figure 7. 10 Consuming New Zealand Food & Drinks: Sausage Roll & Carrot Cake

The participant writes “Sausage roll and carrot cake from my favourite bakery near my parents place! Finally feel like I’m back home.” What these pictures of food on Facebook suggest is that they are clearly related to the returnees’ sense of ‘home’ and belonging, and their Korean New Zealand identities. By eating and drinking ‘home’ food in Korea, and by sharing pictures in online communities and commenting on each other’s photos, returnees shared Korean New Zealanders identity is recognised. Through the formation of collective identities, their sense of belonging is enhanced. These are presumably important to participants’ daily creating of their ‘home’ within Korea.

TV and Music

> *One time, I was listening to the radio and heard a Polynesian band playing the music 'How deep is your love'. I was surprised to hear New Zealand music on a Korean radio! I heard the accent, that particular accent of New Zealand. It really moved me and made me feel homesick. Guys can get emotional too you know (Laughs). I wanted to download that song so bad, like I wanted to listen to it every day. I still haven't found it yet, but I really want to find it.* (Michael Lee, M, 29)

Listening to certain kinds of music or watching a particular TV series can definitely create the sensory atmosphere of being in one's 'home'. It was interesting to hear the returnees say that they often watched non-Korean TV series and listened to non-Korean music to help them to feel at ease. What made it interesting was that most of the returnees (as discussed in Chapter Five) enjoyed watching Korean TV series when they were living in New Zealand. As teenagers, watching Korean TV series served as an important part of retaining and constructing their Korean identities. However once they returned to Korea, some wanted to watch TV series that they used to watch in New Zealand:

> *It's really funny, but when I was living in New Zealand, I used to loooove watching Korean dramas and TV shows. That was really what I did almost every day. Well, these days (in Korea), I'm too busy to watch TV anyway… and when I have time to relax at home, I watch American drama series like Desperate Housewives. I don't know why, I like watching the foreign ones, not Korean ones, I like listening to English sometimes and I feel like I don't want to lose that part of me.* (Janet Park, F, 28)

Janet further explained that she wanted to continue watching TVs that are in English because she worries that she might forget how to speak English by living in Korea for too long. Many returnees compared their lives back in New Zealand as teenagers to their lives now in Korea and the irony behind watching Western TV series:

> *The funny thing is… I always missed all the Korean culture when I was living in New Zealand. I missed the fast paced life, wanted to go shopping in Korea so bad. I used to always watch Korean drama and TV shows… but then the other day, I was watching a*

> *cable channel and saw 'American Idol', and I had this painful feeling inside me. I was suddenly homesick and it was so good to hear people speaking in English. These days, I download American drama serious from internet and watch those instead of watching Korean TV. I think we human beings are just funny like that (Laughs)*
>
> (Petra Nam, F, 29)

Engaging in these daily activities of watching TV series in English was an important part of creating a sense of 'home' and retaining their New Zealand cultural identity. It was their way of engaging with their 'home' culture. Importantly, their everyday transnational connections with TVs and music from elsewhere illustrates that their sense of direction towards their 'home' was now towards New Zealand.

Searching for 'homely' environments

> *It would be so ideal if Korea had exactly the same natural environment as New Zealand…I miss the beaches and the clean environment. If I had that here, I would be almost 100% satisfied with this place* (Jonathan Yoon, M, 29)

Most of the returnees grew up near their local beaches and they often missed the clean and green scenery of New Zealand. One scholar once stated that finding one's identity is about "discovering and disclosing the self in and through place, and about changing place in such a way as to facilitate this process" (Knopp, 2004:127). Indeed, a number of the returnees indicated that because they missed the green and clean environment, they attempted to find this place or to create their own. Michael Lee (M, 29) for instance, says that he eventually wants to move to a city in Korea that is near the coastline:

> *I love going to Busan[47], it reminds me of Auckland. It's a city near the sea, so seeing all the lights and people hanging out by the sea give me room to breathe. I was so busy living and working in Seoul city, I didn't even realize how much I missed the look and smell of the ocean. A few months ago, I went to Busan for work and I fell in love with the city. I want to move to Busan someday, I think that will be the closest place I can get in Korea where I will feel at home.*

[47] A port city in Korea located on the southeast tip of the Korean peninsula

Michael further explained that growing up in Auckland, he used to go surfing and spent most of his leisure time near the sea. His father loved going fishing, so he used to go fishing with him. He did not realise the importance of this part of his identity until he went to a port city in Korea.

Returnees also shared a yearning for New Zealand's clean and green environment. Many of them lived in quiet suburbs and they all had gardens of their own. Because most of the returnees went back to Korea alone, they were not financially able to buy or rent a house that resembled their house in New Zealand. Most of them live in small apartments in Seoul city and it is hard for them to find green and peaceful environments near their houses. One participant shared her story of moving to a suburb near Seoul in order to find a quieter place:

> *Korea…well, Seoul is not really a great place to live. Firstly, the sky is not blue. I get stressed by the fact that there is not enough nature in Seoul city. You know in Auckland, there's so many trees and just so much green everywhere, and the beach is close by and I am just so used to that. So… one of the reasons that I moved to a suburb away from Seoul was to find that place. I found an apartment that is newly built and they have gardens and benches in our unit. That is the place I sit down in the morning to give me a sense of calmness. I couldn't find a place like this when I was living in my little studio in Seoul city.*
>
> (Sunny Kim, F, 29)

Sunny found more time to relax at her new house and this was because she was surrounded by some 'green'. Other returnees also talked about the importance of having some trees by their house because they have balconies instead of an actual garden in their new houses in Korea.

Other ways to find 'homely' environments is through vacations. A number of participants say that the only way to release their stress from work or other daily trials was to go on a vacation. A couple of the participants also indicated that they bought cars in order to go on long drives to the countryside at the weekends. During my fieldwork in Seoul in 2009, I went on a vacation with two of my returnee friends who were also my research participants. Although I did not organize the trip and it wasn't for my research, I could not help but notice the returnees' behaviours and I had to take some notes of this[48].

[48] The ethical issues regarding this type of documentation were discussed in Chapter Four. The participants were informed about my observations of them and they allowed their photos to be used for the research.

Figure 7. 11 Vacation with the returnees

(Holiday Vacation with the returnees in Deok-San)

(Rangitoto Island, Auckland New Zealand)

In May 2009, a couple of friends and I decided to go on a two day trip to a place called ‘Deok-San’. Before going to the hot springs, we stopped at a huge park where they grow herbs and sell dishes made from fresh herbs. When we walked all the way to the top of the hills, we were astonished by of the abundance of green fields. One of my friends shouted ‘Wow! It’s like New Zealand here.’ Then another friend said ‘Awww look at that island over there. That looks like Rangitoto Island.’ Then they discussed how much they love the green fields and that it is important for them to be with nature from time to time. The picture of Rangitoto Island in Figure 7.11 is actually a photo taken by one of the friends who went on this trip. This picture was taken by the beach near her house in New Zealand. Although it is human nature to feel relaxed near green fields, rivers, and trees, for these returnees, it was more than a feeling of relaxation. The green hill tops and the sea view of an island far away brought memories of their ‘home’ environment that was across the sea.

So far, I have illustrated different daily and occasional activities that the returnees engaged in in order to create and re-create their ‘home’ in South Korea. I have provided examples of their daily engagements with New Zealand cultural/social activities because these were activities that were actively sought and allowed returnees to perform a Korean New Zealand identity. What has not been discussed so far, and something that is certainly apparent, is the ways that the returnees also engage in various cultural activities within Korean society with local Koreans. Having access to both Korean and New Zealand social and cultural activities helps returnees settle in Korea and maintain their unique Korean New Zealander identities.

7.5 Searching for 'Home' and Identity again? Re-return migration journeys back to New Zealand

While I could end my discussion at this point, the stories of those people who returned to New Zealand after living in Korea for a short period of time are worthy of discussion. Empirically, this is another growing migration pattern among Korean New Zealander returnees. I decided to study a small sample of this group in order to find out what made them return to New Zealand and what they gained or lost in their return experience. Nine further interviews were conducted with the re-returnees (as I refer to the group of returnee Korean New Zealanders who decided to return to New Zealand after living in Korea for a short period of six months to two years. As discussed in Chapter 4, these re-returnees were all single at the time of returning to New Zealand.

This group of returnees, the 're-returnees,' add another layer to the understanding of returnee experiences of identity negotiation, and growth. Their journeys of returning to Korea and then moving back to New Zealand again were rather challenging. It was challenging because making that decision to return to Korea in the first place was not easy, and deciding to move back after a short period of time seemed to imply another 'failure' of their initial decision to return. Moving between their home and host countries can be financially and time consuming, but it is also a complex and interwoven experience between the migrant's own decisions, and their family and friends' and society's expectations of them more generally. Despite the challenges that they faced, re-returning experiences gave these returnees room to reflect on their past decisions and to find newer meanings of 'home' and identity.

The re-directed journeys

Danny Kang (M, 26) returned to Korea in 2006 when he was unable to continue his study at university. For Danny, his reason to return to Korea included many more 'push factors' from New Zealand than pull factors from Korea. Danny said that his main reason to return was to 'escape' from all the problems that he faced in New Zealand:

> *Well, 2006 was a tough year for me… I returned for so many complicated reasons… I was not good at studying, I was studying Science at uni and I always failed. So even if I was enrolled in classes, I never really attended any class. I was getting depressed because I thought studying was not for me and felt a bit lost with what I should do. And back then, I*

was in a really bad break up with my girlfriend. We dated for many years and when we broke up, she didn't let me go. She was all clingy and was spreading bad words about me to our mutual friends. She would call me every night, and yeah, she was just crazy (Laughs). And I was just not having a happy life… Also, I hated the fact that we lived in such a small Korean community, I was getting worried that if I kept on failing at university and never getting a degree, that news will spread out fast within the Korean community and my parents would have to hide their faces when they went to the local Korean supermarket. You know what I mean, right? I just didn't like all that gossip within the Korean community and so I used to only hang out with Kiwi friends. Really for me, I didn't return because of racism and all that, it was my feeling of suffocation within that small Korean community. Anyway, I was becoming more depressed with my life and Korea seemed to be a place to go at that time. It was like an escape for me, from all my problems.

So in May 2006, Danny decided to return to Korea for good. Without telling any of his friends, he moved to Korea. His father suggested that he should go to the army for two years to 'clear his mind'. Danny thought about doing this, and then his cousin asked him if he wanted to do some work for his friend's company. It was mostly administrative work that required English skills. Danny worked for the company for 6 months. At first, he really enjoyed his job but as time went by, he knew that he was not getting paid right for the amount of time that he was spending in the company. He was working over the weekend and until very late at night, but was not getting paid enough. When he queried this, he was told that it was because he did not have a tertiary degree. Without a degree from university, his pay rate was always going to be very low. Danny thought about going to university in Korea. However, it was going to be tough because he didn't go through the same high school system as other local Koreans. Plus, the university fee was going to cost him double the amount that he paid in New Zealand. The more he thought about his life decisions, the more he felt like a failure. He was also full of regret after working in the harsh Korean work environment at having wasted his parents' hard-earned money on courses he had failed. He knew at that point that he needed to get his life back. In November 2006, Danny moved back to New Zealand. He decided to change his major and study English literature. Danny always enjoyed reading books and he was a good writer. Danny told me that the only reason he studied Science in the first place was because he felt pressured by his parents. Upon returning to New Zealand, he gained a stronger attachment to New Zealand. He realised what a beautiful country New Zealand was after his return experience. Once he started to study English literature, Danny

never failed his classes. Danny recently completed his master's degree in English literature and has started a PhD.

Danny's trajectory of re-return to New Zealand is not a unique case. More interviews with the re-returnees indicated a similar pattern of decision making. Many of them talked about how they were 'too young' at the time of returning and had not thought much about what they wanted to do once they returned. They did not have enough 'return-preparedness' (Cassrino, 2004). There were definitely more push factors than pull factors which motivated the re-returnees to return in the first place. Their willingness and readiness to return to Korea was not enough and they did not mobilise themselves with enough capital and social resources. Indeed, one of the reasons to return was to gain the capital and social resources they lacked in New Zealand. However, without adequate qualifications or enough ground work to establish employment prior to return, many re-returnees were unable to acquire a full time job that was 'high skilled' or well-paid. Returnees became financially, socially, and personally unstable. Elizabeth Park (F, 27), for instance, returned to Korea straight after her university graduation and she said that she lacked social networks to start with:

> *I think at that time, I was really young and I thought I could achieve anything. I thought by returning to Korea, I would succeed. I didn't see any big markets in New Zealand, and I wanted to move to Korea where there are more people and where they might accept me. Then when I went to Korea, I realised every job is found through people's networks. Especially within the fine arts industry, you only hire people from your own university. If I knew about this, I wouldn't have returned to Korea, but probably would have gone to Australia or somewhere else. I thought with my English skills and my fine arts degree, I would be better off to get good jobs, but I sure wasn't. So after a few months of being unemployed, I ended up taking a curator internship job in this gallery… I worked there for 2 years, and man that was tough. Interns don't get paid that much and with such little pay, I was working way too much… and I was just becoming like a poor person. I started to hate my life and I started to miss my beautiful room in our house in Mission Bay (in Auckland). People weren't that friendly either. They all treated me like a foreigner and yeah, just everything about living in Korea wasn't for me.*

Living as a returnee in Korea, Elizabeth realised the importance of having a good, healthy life and she gained new insight into what it means to be ‘successful.’ Elizabeth went on to say that her expectations for Korea were too high. She thought Korea would have bigger markets and more opportunities for her. Perhaps she could have tried harder and become ‘that artist’ or a curator of a gallery and become famous like she always wanted to. Yet, Elizabeth learnt more important things. She was not making any good friends in Korea because she felt excluded at work. Without earning much money and working over 50 hours a week, her emotional and physical health was deteriorating. When Elizabeth returned to New Zealand, she decided to enroll in a teaching degree. She is now working as an art teacher at a high school. Being back ‘home’ in New Zealand, Elizabeth enjoys her work very much and spends quality time with family and friends. Elizabeth said that after more years of working in New Zealand and saving some more money, she would like to move to England for further study.

Indeed, not being well prepared for the initial return brought some negative consequences to the daily lives of re-returnees and led to their eventual decisions to return to New Zealand. Advice from most re-returnees was not to return to Korea if you are not sure about your decision. They held certain expectations of their homeland, which were hard to fulfill. More importantly, their daily problems in New Zealand were not solved in Korea. In this case, the return experience was taken as a lesson for the re-returnees and they returned to New Zealand with learned skills and fresh minds to start something new.

I have explained that not being well prepared prior to return brought some negative consequences. I want to stress further that the negative experiences of return migration were not always about financial instability. We must not forget that the re-returnees also faced identity challenges and certain discrimination in their everyday lives due to their overseas Korean status. The case of Richard Yoon (M, 28) was discussed in Chapter 6. His experience of severe alienation at work was the main reason for him to move back to New Zealand despite his well-paid job in Korea. Matt Kim (M, 29) also returned to New Zealand despite the fact that he was earning lots of money in Korea because he felt he was working too many hours and it was taking a toll on his physical health. He was not eating the right food at the right time, and in the end, he became seriously ill. It was an overall sense of ‘quality of life’ that re-directed the returnees back to New Zealand.

Growth concerning one's 'home' and identity

Coming back to the main focus of this chapter, the re-returnees reflected on their past decisions and experiences of return and discussed how their sense of 'home' and identity grew and matured through their returnee and re-returnee experiences. Returning and re-returning are not easy. Having the ideal returnee's life (a good job, a good group of Korean and returnee friends, and frequent visits to New Zealand for holidays) is not the fate of everyone who decides to return. Perhaps this ideal 'transnational' life can never be achieved by anyone since identity is inherently incomplete. Yet, gaining that 'third' identity depends on the person's willingness to constantly create and re-create their 'home' and sense of self through interacting with those who share similar backgrounds. As discussed in Section 7.3, it was the realisation and appreciation of their access to Korean and New Zealand cultural and social activities which helped returnees to overcome their identity challenges. Appreciating what they possess inside of them - their different cultural understandings, skills, and uniquely mixed values and norms- also aided the process.

Returnee narratives illustrated that not everyone can strive to achieve their stable identity in Korea and perhaps it is not an option for everyone for various personal, financial, social, and cultural reasons. One may not be financially able to visit one's family back in New Zealand because they are not earning enough money. Social gatherings can also be a bit awkward for some people. For instance, a number of the re-returnees explained that they did not want to go to university alumni functions or other kinds of New Zealand gatherings because they were afraid of not knowing anyone there or because they were not happy with themselves, or simply because they thought those functions were not for them.

Upon returning to New Zealand however, the re-returnees grew in terms of their identity and their maturity in envisioning 'home'. As mentioned in the beginning of Section 7.3, there was a realisation among some of the returnees that perhaps they were the ones who 'created the walls' between them and the host society in New Zealand. Through their experiences of marginality in both Korea and New Zealand, they realised that perhaps they could have overcome the discriminations in New Zealand had they opened up more:

> *Well, I changed the way I see New Zealand people after I came back here. Like I told you before, my main reason to return to Korea was because I wanted to be with my own ethnic people. I faced some racism when I was at school and I just hated being the Asian kid. I*

wanted to be in the mainstream. Then after living in Korea for a couple of years, I realised that their exclusions of us Gyopo is pretty bad too. And when I came back to New Zealand, everyone looked so peaceful. People walking along the street in their jandals… and people saying hello to me in the park made me feel at 'home'. I realised that nobody really cared that I was Asian. Perhaps racism is really an age thing. It was bad at school, but there was not much racism at university when I look back. Also, it was only a couple of those at school who bullied me for being Asian. Other kids were pretty nice. I realised that Koreans can be even more racist towards Black or other non-Korean people. At least New Zealand is a much more multicultural society compared to Korea. So when I came back to New Zealand, I decided to just accept the fact that I'm Asian here, and that I'm an Asian New Zealander. It doesn't matter that I'm Asian because that's just who I am. I shouldn't just assume that people look down on me or they discriminate against Asian people because that just creates a barrier in my life and takes my opportunities away. (Steve Choi, M, 27)

The re-returnees' changing perception towards their host society, sense of 'home' and identity was valuable in the sense that they were gaining a deeper understanding of their Asian immigrant identity in New Zealand. Elizabeth Park (F, 27) also explained about the growing confidence in her sense of self which she gained through her recent movements between the two countries:

I think that even though I lived in Auckland for more than 15 years, my English never matured to its perfection. It's probably because I lived in my Korean circle when I lived in Auckland and I started to regret this while I was living in Korea. I mean, many Korean people admired my position, they wanted to learn English but they couldn't. I had so many good opportunities to learn English and to learn other cultures outside my box, but I hadn't taken much of that because I just wanted to hang out with my Korean friends and watch Korean TV all the time. These days, I am much more integrated into Kiwi society because I work at a local high school. I use English all the time and my colleagues are all non-Korean so I spend more time with Kiwi people than I do with Korean friends. I like it this way right now, I feel like I finally 'fit in'. Even if my students sometimes make fun of my Korean accent, it does not matter because I'm still their teacher. I even made a joke to one of my student one time; I told him that he will get a B grade if he keeps on making fun of my accent. Everyone laughed and he doesn't make fun of me anymore. I have more accepting of my identity now.

Elizabeth further explained that she feels the importance of her role at her school. She is one of the few Asian teachers at school and she has acquired some mentoring roles. She was able to talk to a number of 1.5 generation or 2nd generation immigrant students who were facing similar identity challenges and discrimination that she faced when she was a teenager. Elizabeth's role as mentor for those students reassured her that her decision to return to New Zealand was a good thing. It was her way of giving something back to New Zealand and also made her feel she had an important place in New Zealand society. While the interview analyses of both Steve and Elizabeth suggest that their maturity and acceptance of their identities was a result of their recent return experience in Korea, they also emphasise the importance of time and space over one's identity. Both participants mentioned that having a stable identity was more challenging when they were teenagers and when they were at school because of peer pressure and immaturity.

More narratives from the re-returnees illustrated the identity acceptance through their appreciation of New Zealand as their homeland:

> *Before I returned to Korea, I had lots of preconceptions about New Zealand. I felt the population was too low and there were not many opportunities here. Then after living in Korea for two years, I realised that if you reach out, there are many opportunities. You just have to try harder. Especially because I decided to study hair design, I find that this job is much more advanced in New Zealand. When I came back to New Zealand, I became more active in doing what I do. I also started to make more Kiwi friends from my school and started to hang out with them more. I changed a lot… before I was too shy or just didn't think it would be fun to hang out with Kiwi people, but when I just open myself up to them, I realised that it's fun to hang out with them. I realised that we have much more in common than I do with some local Korean people that I met. Returning to Korea was a life changing experience for me.* (Jennifer Park, F, 26)

Jennifer used to work as an English teacher in Korea. She did not know what to do after graduating from her university and decided to return to her homeland and teach English. However, she realised that it was not what she truly wanted to do. Jennifer was always interested in fashion and hair design, and when she wanted to change her career path, she realised that New Zealand was a much better place for it. In Korea, Jennifer also faced a lot of identity challenges and realised that she was not accepted in the society. Especially if she wanted to study hair design, she knew she

would have to go back to New Zealand as this industry is still not well developed in Korea. More importantly, Jennifer knew that in Korea there was a general perception that hair design is for those who cannot go to the university. She wanted to get away from the preconceptions and the stresses that she faced in Korea. Jennifer went on to say that she matured as a result of her return experience and became more attached to New Zealand as her homeland.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have closely and extensively examined how returnees' identities are challenged, negotiated, and developed in relation to their complicated journeys searching for 'home'. Most importantly, I wanted to convey that one's identity is a process (Hall, 1996; Sarup, 1996) that is constantly created and re-created through various factors that are both tangible and intangible (Knopp, 2004).

In the first part of the chapter, I illustrated the different ways that the returnees' identities were challenged and constructed in Korea. Sense of self and having to deal with 'Koreanness' and 'New Zealandness' was a significant and often challenging matter that impacted upon the returnees' everyday lives. There were also many different internal and external elements that affected the returnees' identity constructions. Although there were many other elements involved, I confined my discussion to dual citizenship/overseas Korean residency status, physical and emotional 'bodies' and sense of 'home'.

The interview analyses showed that being fully accepted as a Korean or a New Zealander was an important component of these returnees' identities. For the returnees, being accepted as a Korean person was more desired because of their ethnic tie. However, being the 'cultural' and sometimes 'social' outsiders as well, they were not fully accepted as Koreans. Recent scholars have viewed transnationalism as something that helps people to retain their original culture, and it does not necessarily produce a 'transnational' identity (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Ehrkamp, 2006; Conway et al., 2008). Indeed, having a transnational identity was challenging sometimes because of strong ties to two homelands. However, with their dual citizenships or overseas residency cards, Korean New Zealanders' identities were further constructed as Gyopo, and they were not fully accepted as Korean.

The returnees’ embodied experiences of identity construction were an interesting facet to examine. ‘Body’ is defined in a broader sense to include physical appearance, material culture, style of speech and language ability. While some returnees felt instantly ‘at home’ when surrounded by Korean faces, others felt that they wanted to physically show their overseas Korean identity. Having different conceptions of body size, fashion and what is ‘feminine’ was also an issue for some women returnees. Some returnees also felt that Korean people are too materialistic and they missed the New Zealand way of dressing and identity performance. Returnees also discussed challenges faced as a result of their Korean and English language abilities. How they spoke and how well they could speak and write in those languages determined their identities. Some felt that they were not perfect in either language, which brought added confusion to identity formation.

The returnees’ sense of ‘home’ – where they feel relaxed and included – is significantly related to their origin and identity. Many returnees felt that although they can feel at ‘home’ in both countries, if they had to choose one, they would choose New Zealand. This was because New Zealand was where they spent their teenage years and where they could identify with more. Also having their parents and family members still living in New Zealand affected their sense of ‘home’. Even without having any birth or blood relation to the land, returnees still felt that they belonged to New Zealand more than Korea and wanted to call it their ‘home’. Having this sense of ‘home’ also determined their sense of self as New Zealanders.

However, gaining a sense of a singular identity is an impossible task (McDowell, 1999; 2008). Even if the returnees felt that they were from New Zealand, and that their ‘home’ was New Zealand, they were still ethnically and culturally Korean. I illustrated that their identities are malleable and they are prone to change according to different circumstances. Depending on who was asking them, the returnees were able to portray different parts of their identities in order to either identify with or differentiate themselves from other people. Although the returnees had some control over their identities, I have illustrated through the narratives that their identities were unstable in many ways and it was up to the individuals to accept themselves.

In the second part of this chapter, I illustrated the different ways that the returnees engaged with people and place in order to create and re-create ‘home’ within Korea. I also included the stories of those returnees who decided to return to New Zealand and how they found the return experience a stepping stone in finding a stronger sense of ‘home’ and identity. Returnee narratives illustrated

that the returnees participated in various 'home'-creating activities in Korea. They took part in various Kiwi communities that were organised by certain voluntary groups or among the returnees. I have also observed that returnees often searched for the taste of New Zealand through their food preparation and consumption practices. Watching foreign TV shows and listening to New Zealand music was another way to feel at 'home'. Returnees also indicated that they seek a clean and green environment and like to spend time in parks, gardens, and going on vacations to be close to nature. Importantly, the interview analysis showed that these practices of creating a 'home' within Korea were an important part of identity performances. Through engaging in both Korean and New Zealand cultural and social activities in Korea, returnees were able to portray and perform their unique Korean New Zealand identities. Moreover, their identity challenging experiences in Korea led them to discover the importance of retaining their New Zealand cultural practices.

I then introduced the narratives of a group of returnees who decided to return to New Zealand after their Korean return experience. These added a richer understanding to identity transformation. Through returning and re-returning experiences, the re-returnees realised the importance of their personal perceptions and preconceptions. They realised that they were the ones who were creating the 'wall' between themselves and the host society. Through their return experience, they realised that perhaps they were partly or largely responsible for the barriers to integration in New Zealand society. Upon returning to New Zealand, re-returnees became more appreciative of New Zealand as their 'home' and were more accepting of their hybrid Korean New Zealander identities. The stories of the re-returnees illustrate that 'return migration' is not always the answer to problems in the host society. These narratives also emphasise that return in general is a highly complicated movement.

In this chapter, I illustrated the identity challenges, negotiations and growth that the returnees experienced in their return migration journeys. Through the returnees' experiences of living as transnational and return migrants, they realised that national boundaries and 'localities' still matter (Kong, 1999; Yeoh et al; 2003). Having a transnational identity and having more than a single 'home' can cause disturbances to 'who they are' and 'where they belong'. In spite of all this, Korean New Zealand returnees and re-returnees learn to value their experiences and themselves.

8. Conclusion

This research was inspired by my personal encounters with an increasing number of Korean immigrants in New Zealand who were permanently returning to their original homeland in the hope of finding better jobs and happier lives. As I mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, I was an immigrant before becoming a researcher. By deciding to study the migrant journeys of the 1.5 generation cohort, I could closely associate with the participants' experiences of living as Asian teenage immigrants in New Zealand. This gave me a passion to study the returnees' motives behind their decision to move, how they re-settle in their original homeland, and how their lives and identities might change through their return experiences. Being an insider and a researcher gave me license to explore the complex picture of the returnees' everyday lives, not just as an ethnic group of immigrants, but as individuals and young adults.

I employed transnationalism as a theoretical tool through which to examine the returnees' lives. Transnationalism refers to a both a context and process whereby recent international migrants' everyday lives are socially, economically, and politically connected and sustained between their original homeland and host society within a single 'transnational social field' (Basch et al., 1994). Unlike a diasporic perspective on return migration, where 'return' is seen as the end to one's migration journey as immigrants become reunited with their original roots (Ni Laoire 2008), a transnational approach sees return migration not as an end, but as a part of their on-going journeys that may continue to other destination countries (King, 2000; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005) including the 'home' nation. Such a theoretical framework sheds light on the reality for many of the recent immigrants whose lives are situated across many national boundaries. Yet, by following many of the critiques of the transnationalism theory (Ong and Nonini, 1997; Ralph and Staeheli, 2011; Sinatti, 2011), I have highlighted in this study that national boundaries and fixed meanings of national identities are still playing important roles in the returnees' everyday lives.

Under the theoretical framework of transnationalism, the overarching objective of this study was to observe how transnational connections shape and affect the returnees' everyday living. I interviewed 40 returnees and nine re-returnees, participated in social activities with returnees, and

directly and indirectly observed their social situations. I sought to gain a nuanced understanding of exactly *when*, *how*, and *to what extent* transnationalism plays a significant role in the returnees' migratory and everyday experiences. More importantly, I wanted to find out how these transnational linkages affect their sense of 'home' and identities within a return migration context. In order to achieve this 'small-scale' transnational approach, the analyses of their narratives focused on their pre-return, return, and post-return phases.

My results were presented in three parts. Firstly, I wanted to understand the returnees' initial lives as immigrants in New Zealand and what motivated them to return to Korea as their next or final destination. Secondly, I took a close look at their initial return phase of finding jobs and experiencing their personal work spaces through socially interacting with their co-workers. I also examined how the returnees were contributing to their work spaces as 'agents of change'. In the last results chapter, I offered and interpreted narratives relating to how the 'hybrid' identities of the returnees were (re)constructed over the longer period of their return stays. I also followed up on the re-returnees' stories – those who had to physically re-locate themselves back to New Zealand in order to feel at 'home' and find a stronger sense of identity. At all times, my focus was to understand how their everyday transnationalities shape and affect their everyday experiences.

In this concluding chapter, I highlight the key research findings under the theoretical framework of transnationalism. In doing so, I illustrate how the returnees' transnational experiences changed over time and through space over their life course firstly as immigrants, and later as returnees. I emphasise that there are different kinds of transnational experiences that are filled with reunification and estrangement feelings within the return context. I then discuss some of the limitations to this study and suggest ideas for further research in the context of return migration and migration more generally. I conclude this chapter by highlighting some of the theoretical contributions of this thesis.

8.1 Transnationalism and the Myth of 'Home' and 'Return'

Although my study participants lived in a highly transnational context, and their lives were very much situated between Korea and New Zealand, they held much more fixed ideas about their 'return' as they intended to return to their original homeland permanently. Most of the study participants returned after graduating from university when they were seeking jobs and a new way

of life. With their English skills, the participants recognised that their background would be highly valued in Korea. Some female participants indicated that they primarily returned to Korea because they wanted to find someone to marry. These return intentions seemed to be significantly related to their changing life-course; where they were graduating from universities and entering adulthood intent on finding jobs and getting settled. While this seemed to be a straightforward answer to why they returned to Korea, further analyses of their narratives presented much more complex reasons. Through a life-history approach, I illustrated that the returnees' motivations to return grew over a longer period of time as they lived in New Zealand as part of an ethnic minority.

The study participants immigrated to New Zealand when they were in their early teenage years. The study participants returned to Korea mostly as individuals by personal choice, unlike their previous move to New Zealand which had been dependent on their parents' decisions. Unlike second generation immigrants, they had the difficulty of learning English at school and many felt homesick during their early migratory experiences. Knowing that their parents moved to New Zealand mostly for their education, and sometimes seeing their parents having hard times with a lower income than they had earned in Korea, the immigrant children felt pressured to become 'successful' and tried harder to integrate and learn English. Yet, school life was not always easy; they faced (subtle and explicit) racism and discrimination because of their ethnic minority status. Trying to 'fit in' to the mainstream during their school years was a stressful experience. Some of the participants still remembered the times they were bullied at school. Even those who seemed to be well integrated and those who made Western friends easily never felt fully included and accepted into the mainstream society. These difficulties were what eventually led the returnees to return home.

Such aspiration to return 'home' was intensified through their everyday transnational linkages. Many of the participants stayed connected to friends and family in their original homeland through the internet and other media, and through regular phone calls and e-mails. They watched Korean TV shows and dramas, and listened to Korean pop music. These were also shared amongst their Korean friends, which helped them to maintain their collective Korean identity. Through their everyday transnational live, they created more distance from their host society, and they romanticised their original homeland further. Some returnees, as evidenced in Chapter Five, returned to Korea as soon as they finished their last university examination. It was this kind of 'home-instinct' feeling that was shared by many of the participants.

It was important to understand their return motivation as a long-term process, rather than a 'strategic' decision based on job opportunities, which is the more widely known return intention within a transnational framework (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Ho, 2002). The initial return intention for some returnees was to find employment. However, it became clear after questioning that many did not indeed particularly enjoy their lives in New Zealand for variety of cultural and ethnic barriers. At the same time, we must not forget that the number of people returning is far less than the number who stay in New Zealand. My study participants illustrate that there is a strong element of searching for one's identity and yearning for a sense of belonging in the return migration context. Living within a transnational social field, the returnees gained a stronger sense of their Korean identity through sustaining their original culture. No matter what the outcome of their return intention came to be, most participants' initial intent to return was shaped by desires to be reunited with their original homeland and to be accepted.

8.2 Transnational Skills & Innovation

Migration studies repeatedly refer to returnees as 'national developers' and 'agents of change' – those who can bring changes and development to their receiving home nation with their overseas skills (Bovenkerk, 1981; Ghosh, 2000; Zweig, 2006; Conway and Potter, 2007). My findings support and contribute to the studies of return and development. Through a qualitative understanding of the link between return and development, I have demonstrated how the innovations and developments were achieved at a micro-level. It was found that the Korean New Zealander returnees were making significant contributions to their work places in Korea with their skills gained from New Zealand and elsewhere. As returnees, they had greater English skills compared to local Koreans and they were engaged in important international collaboration projects at work. Such tasks required not only their English skills, but also the ability to interact with foreign business partners. Growing up in a multicultural society, returnees had a better understanding of various ethnic cultures; hence they could form better collaborations with foreign investors and also interact well with those foreign workers who were already working in Korea. Within the design industry (fashion, advertising, computing), the returnees indicated that they were different from their co-workers. Having lived overseas, they could 'think outside the square' and their work tended to be more creative. Within the English education sector, the returnees had a significant role as overseas Korean teachers. Unlike the foreign teachers who could not speak

Korean, the returnee teachers were able to teach the students English and also be a mentor and communicate with the students' parents. They were also able to explain their knowledge about overseas life to the students who were interested in studying abroad. My findings suggest that the returnees' 'transnational presence' (Potter and Conway, 2008) in Korea is significant and helps in the process of the nation's development towards participation in a stronger global economy.

Among the narratives of work and transnational contribution, there were also negative experiences of work. Mostly referred to as 'people problem', the returnees faced cultural barriers and discrimination from their co-workers. In Chapter Three, I shared some insights into why certain stereotypes of overseas Koreans exist within Korean society. There is a stigma towards those who are from overseas as being in a privileged position. Among many other examples, they are seen as 'national traitors' or 'national users' who benefit from the national social welfare, but do not pay the national tax. Male expatriates are doubly stigmatised within the movement process because they can bypass the Korean national army conscription with their overseas citizenship. Such discourse did affect the everyday work experiences when the returnees realised that they were not fully accepted as being Korean among their co-workers. They were often stereotyped as being rich, and having had an easy life in the 'Western world'. This perception created frustration because they were always the 'cultural outsider' despite the returnees' strong sense of Korean identity. The feelings of being a 'cultural outsider' at work were accentuated by the fact that most of these returnees did not have strong social networks in Korea. For some returnees, their fast promotion at work created jealousy amongst co-workers. Also, there were 'hidden' codes of behaviour in their work place such as fully obeying their higher executives and bosses and collective ways of interacting with their co-workers that were not understood by the returnees. These difficulties were part of the returnees' everyday working experiences.

Although the study participants lived in a 'transnational social field' as immigrants back in New Zealand where they retained their cultural linkages and maintained Korean identities, they suddenly felt disconnected from their original homeland upon their return. The disconnections were felt from their lack of social network and lack of knowledge about Korean culture and especially about work ethics. The disconnections were also created by external factors such as the social reception by the local Koreans, and the returnees' inability to obtain a Korean national identity card. This situation tells us that the fluidity of one's "social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al., 1994:6) is limited

to a certain degree. Their transnational links helped maintain their cultural connections through media and certain social associations with their family and friends, which formed only a partial view of their homeland and a partially disconnected transnational social field. Not being able to enjoy their work life because of certain cultural, political, and social barriers, there were cases where returnees eventually quit their jobs and moved to a third country or back to New Zealand. The difficulties faced by the returnees at work suggest that there needs to be a better way of sustaining the relationship between return and development.

8.3 Transnational experience of 'home' and sense of selves

This thesis has closely examined how the Korean New Zealander returnees' sense of transnational identities were challenged, negotiated, and matured over their return stays. As already mentioned, the returnees did not fully identify themselves as either Korean or New Zealander. This realisation of their 'transnational identity' was gained when they returned to Korea. Prior to their return, they fully identified themselves as Koreans because they were different from the host society's mainstream ethnicities. However, upon return, they felt different from their own ethnic people. Such fluidity created confusion over 'who they are' and 'where they belong'. Firstly, the fact that the returnees were confused and were challenged by their transnational identity tells us that there is a strong desire to be accepted into a certain national category. Secondly, being excluded from a national category created a sense of stress and alienation. My study supports the perception that despite the multiple practices and identities that contemporary migrants have across national boundaries, their identification with "territorially defined national polities or locales is [not] disappearing" (Leitner and Ehrkamp, 2006:1618).

There were a number of internal and external factors which reinforced the returnees' national identity challenges. Having dual citizenship created confusion over their identities because once they were known as holders of foreign national citizenship/residency, they were not accepted as being fully Korean. Such exclusion from the Korean national identity category was not just through a political border (of not allowing dual citizenship), but through social and cultural borders as well. It was the preconceptions and certain judgements that the local Korean people made about the returnees' identities which brought them feelings of estrangement and isolation. Also, there were certain features of their 'bodies' which created confusion over who they are. Despite the fact that the majority of the returnees felt secure and included when surrounded by

their own ethnic people, they also felt different based on their Korean language ability, way of dressing, and body size. Some returnees had difficulties of speaking in Korean at work because of certain polite forms within Korean language that the returnees were unfamiliar with. Sometimes they felt out of place because they did not dress up to Korean expectations. Some female participants also noted that they felt 'bigger' than the average size of Korean woman, which was something they did not think about in New Zealand. Internally, they also had different cultural values and norms which they gained from living in New Zealand. All of these experiences led them to question 'where they belong' and most significantly, where their 'home' is.

Over the years of living in Korea as returnees, they gradually felt that their 'home' became both in Korea and New Zealand in terms of where they feel comfortable. Yet, as discussed in Chapter Seven, when I differentiated between 'Home' and 'Gohyang', their sense of direction towards their 'Gohyang' was in New Zealand. The meaning of 'Gohyang' in Korean terminology is significantly related to one's origin and roots (Choi, 2005). Hence, the returnees felt that New Zealand was where they originated from. Indeed, New Zealand was neither their birth place nor where their ancestors were from, yet it was a place they felt more connected to socially, personally, and culturally. They wanted to retain their personal values and norms which were a mixture of Korean and 'New Zealand' culture, and they strongly felt that they needed to retain their 'New Zealandness'. Such a realisation of their 'New Zealandness' within their identity was only realised upon their return. These were a significant identity challenging, (re)negotiating and (re)constructing experiences for the returnees.

In order to find a stronger sense of identity and stability over their 'hybrid' and 'transnational' identities, their coping strategy was to create their own sense of 'home' within home. This was done in numerous ways such as participating in New Zealand social and cultural activities in Korea, spending more time with returnee friends from New Zealand, searching for 'home' food, connecting to New Zealand media, and seeking a quiet and clean environment that resembled their 'home-town' in New Zealand near the beach or green grass. Such engagement in their 'home' culture constructed a collective identity for them as 'Korean New Zealanders'. This observation echoes my earlier depiction of the study participants during their immigration phase, when they used to collectively construct their Korean identity as they were missing their 'home' country of Korea. A change in their identity construction and growth within their transnational social context

can thus be noted. By returning to their original homeland as adults, they gained a stronger sense of their hybrid identity and learned to embrace their transnational culture.

Yet, some returnees had to physically re-locate themselves back to New Zealand in order to feel at 'home' and have happier lives. The stories of re-returnees told us that creating 'home' within home and living a transnational returnees' life was not an option for everyone. Indeed, being able to move back to New Zealand or to a third country is a part of the 'transnational movement' where there is a unified social field (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). The re-returnees certainly had greater opportunity and ability to move elsewhere when they were not happy with their situation in Korea. Yet, as exemplified by a number of re-returnee participants in this study, their migration back to New Zealand was firstly felt as a failure of their initial return and it involved stress and confusion over their decisions. It was hard to say that they 'strategically' and freely moved between their host and home nations when these movements were happening over a short period of time, with a sense of failure and great anxiety. My study illustrates that the returnees' transnational experiences of searching for 'home' and identity is a highly complex and personal process.

8.4 New Directions for further research

There are a number of research directions which this research did not pursue, but that would be useful to consider in future research. Firstly, the research only examined one particular ethnic group and one generation cohort. While the study focus was unique in this way, it overshadowed the important role of family in returnees' individual journeys. As briefly mentioned, the study participants' lives and their ability to sustain their transnational connections depended very much on their parents. Some parents were earning enough money to afford frequent plane tickets to send their children to Korea for the holidays, while some were unable to do so. Even if money was not the main problem, some parents did not allow their children to visit Korea or watch Korean TV shows because they wanted their children to learn English instead. Upon return, their relationship with their families also changed. Some returnees said that their relationship with their parents became better since they were living apart. There was also a changing role within their family unit. What it means to have family relationships across national borders could be usefully interrogated in future research. Waters (2005:359) for instance, examines the 'transnational family strategies' within Chinese diaspora and argues that we need to move "beyond more common political and economic interpretations of this contemporary migration."

Another area that could be expanded upon is the role of technology in the process of sustaining transnational connections. Since the purpose of this study was not to analyse the impact of growing technology on people's everyday lives per se, this did not form part of the analysis. Globalisation and internet technology have developed rapidly over the last five to ten years. Social networks through online spaces became prolific very recently (Choi, 2006; Zhao et al., 2008). Smart phones are also devices that became common much more recently. It was noted that the returnees stay even more closely connected to their friends and family in New Zealand and around the world by using their mobile phones. If the returnees returned to Korea in the 1990s, the stories would have been much different. As the contemporary world is rapidly changing, more research should be conducted to point out these developments in our society and how they impact upon migrant's lives and identities.

It was pointed out during the discussion of the discourses around overseas Koreans (Gyopo), that the Korean New Zealanders generally feel different from Korean Americans or Korean Canadians even if they are all 1.5 generation status. There seemed to also be a hierarchy within overseas Koreans who are from Western nations. As my study only examined the experiences of Korean New Zealander returnees, it would be interesting to carry out a comparative study of the everyday lives of Korean returnees from a number of different host countries including New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Through a comparative study, a more inclusive view could be achieved to find out the similarities and differences among the Korean returnees from different overseas settings in terms of their everyday experiences, wider social impacts/interrelationships, and policy implications.

Due to the snowball sampling method, this study was limited to examine those returnees who mostly lived in the North Shore and Auckland region and who moved to the metropolitan city of Seoul. Hence, this study was mainly about the 'urban experiences' of Seoul and Auckland. There were a small number of participants in this study who did not grow up in the Auckland region and their stories of teenage years in New Zealand were different in subtle ways. For instance, because they did not have too many Korean friends at school, they engaged in less Korean culture. In some ways, this motivated them even further to return to Korea because they felt like they were 'missing out' on their own culture. There were also a small number of my study participants who did not return to Seoul, but to a much smaller town, whose experiences were also very different.

As has been mentioned in other studies, not all returnees return to the exact home-town that they lived in, but they may return to the larger city of their home country to find more opportunities (King, 2000; Ralph, 2009; King and Christou, 2011). Asking these important questions of sources and destinations in terms of cities and regions, not just countries, and pointing out the differences among the wider variety of returnees' experiences would be important for future research.

8.5 Conclusion: Transnational journeys of reunification and estrangement

This thesis has presented a partial but novel picture of the 1.5 generation Korean New Zealander returnees' journeys of returning to their original homeland. Their everyday return experiences as transmigrants were filled with the success of acquiring jobs, reunification with their own culture and people, but numerous feelings of estrangement. Although transnationalism emphasises the significance of multinational connections and the loss of national boundaries, this thesis suggests the importance of having one national identity should not be overlooked as contemporary migrants still desire the strong sense of self which belonging to one nation can help provide.

The recurring theme in this study was the changing intensity, temporality, and spatiality of transnational connections. Within a person's migration journey, her/his ability to sustain and connect across national borders changes over time and space. For the study participant returnees, the 'transnational social field' changed in the sense of its direction (of where their 'home' is), but it also changed in its intensity and form. As teenage immigrants, their 'transnational social field' started back in the 1990s. At this time, internet usage was only starting to grow and as exemplified by the empirical findings, they watched Korean dramas and TV shows by physically hiring them from their local Korean stores – which meant that they had to wait for a longer period until they could finally watch them. The fluidity of media and the internet was much slower at this time. Also, as mentioned by a participant in Chapter Five, it was their 'dream' to go and visit Korea during holidays. For children and teenage migrants, their 'transnational social field' was limited in terms of control and what they were able to stay connected with. Arguably, this created even more romanticisation of Korea as their 'home' because they could not stay connected as frequently as they wanted to be.

On the other hand, as returnees, their personal situations changed with the global context of the society that we are living in today. Most of these returnees returned to Korea alone, leaving their parents and family members back in New Zealand. Also, the returnees were now living in their 'transnational social field' as young working adults, who had much more control over their lives. They were financially capable to send money or gifts to their parents, and to visit them if they could get time off from work. Their social, economic, and personal connections across borders are much more intense and frequent because they are individual adult migrants themselves. These changing situations of their transnational social field were highlighted in this study, which is a unique contribution to the studies of transnationalism.

Through the narratives of confusion over the returnees' sense of identity and 'home', this study has highlighted that one's willingness and ability to adapt to their transnational situation highly affects their transnational identity. The returnees' encounter of their original homeland allowed them to see the disconnections that they had and certain limitations of living as 1.5 generation immigrants, as they could never fully identify with their original or home society. Such feeling of 'in-betweeness' was a recurring theme in this thesis. I have pointed out through numerous cases that it created more isolation than inclusion, and it was stressful for many of the returnees. Learning to embrace and appreciate their partial and fluid identity was a complex process which involved many identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation experiences. Being connected economically, socially, culturally, and politically across borders may give them a 'transnational social field', but being a 'transmigrant' depends on how much the migrant feels that they are connected and how much they are willing and able to connect to their transnational settings. One cannot simply refer to immigrants who are connected to more than one nation as 'transmigrants' and apply the concept to their identities and assume that recent immigrants are free of desire to belong to one single nation.

This thesis has emphasised the significance of context when trying to understand one's transnational journey. Koreans have a strong long term pride in their mono-ethnic and mono-cultural national identity. I have argued that the national identity and sentiments toward their land are strong in Korea because of the nation's hardship over achieving their recent liberation from its colonial past and war. Hence there are 'political borders' as well as 'social borders' in Korea that even exclude its expatriates. I explained why dual citizenship is hard to achieve and why it is seen as a 'privileged' status. Further, there is certain stigma towards overseas Korean people in general

and the consequent stereotypes of overseas Koreans within Korean society. These political and social contexts of Korea were significant in understanding the transnational lives of returnees because these discourses affected the returnees' everyday lives. This thesis highlighted that every return and transnational experience is situated within a particular context that can be political, social and cultural.

To conclude, this thesis has offered a nuanced understanding of how transnational linkages have shaped and affected returnees' lives at particular times and spaces of their migration and return migration journeys. Transnational ties can certainly sustain one's original identity by unifying cultural and social ties across national borders. Transmigrants are able to move across national borders and make contributions at both ends as a 'globally skilled' group of people. However, transnational linkages can be partial and limited when it comes to understanding the migrants' everyday experiences and sense of 'home' and identity. I have shed light on the narratives of discrimination, racism, isolation and estrangement that are clearly visible within the transmigrants' lives. These should not be overshadowed by the fluidity of their situations. Transmigrants are not simply 'sojourners' but they are also people who desire to belong.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Author's Positionality

Research methods	Positionality	Consequence	Negotiation
Pilot Research in Korea, 2008	As a 1st year PhD student, I was visiting Seoul as part of my conference trip. I had read around the basic literature on return migration, home, and identity politics.	As a researcher, I did not have much knowledge about the returnees' lives at this point. As an insider, I had many close friends who were returnees.	I tried to be disconnected from my research while I was talking to the returnees. I had to keep my questions very simple.
Participant Observation + Interviews (40 returnees) in **Korea**, 2009	I was an insider immigrant researcher. I was living in Korea for a short term. I was also based at Seoul National University (SNU) as a visiting researcher. I also had many close friends who were returnees.	Making contacts with the returnees was very easy. Yet, some of the interview participants were too closely related to each other. I was involved in many (formal/informal) social gatherings of returnees.	When interview participants asked me about other returnees, I kept privacy. I played down my role as a researcher and stressed my 'insiderness'.
Participant Observation + Interviews (9 re-returnees) in **NZ**, 2010	Within New Zealand, I was an immigrant, researcher, and a family member. Most interviews and observations were done when I was 3rd year researcher, hence I had more knowledge.	I could be more open about my positionality among my family and friends in NZ. I could be strategic and ask chosen questions to the interview participants in New Zealand.	Because I had already talked to numerous returnees, I was constantly observing my relatives, friends and family. While I could gain useful information, I had to be more reflexive.
Online Participant Observation, 2009~2010	I consider myself as 1.5 generation and x-generation. I am aware of many online sites that are used by young Korean and NZ online users these days. I have access to computers & a smart phone.	Because I was close friends with a large number of returnees, I had easy access to their everyday lives through online communities. I could understand their lives this way.	I had to be careful not to 'scrutinise' their lives too much. I did not use any of the quotes or photos without asking the returnees' permissions. At the same time, I had the privilege to further look into their lives.
Self Diary participation, 2009~2010	I am an insider 1.5 generation. I had lived in Korea as a returnee in 2005, and could experience it again in 2008 while I was in Korea for fieldwork. I had access to the local Korean community.	I was involved in many activities at SNU with the local students. I was also spending a lot of time with other returnees. I observed myself being a complete returnee and a researcher. I wrote an extensive field journal.	I had to be careful not to be 'self-indulgent' and spend too much time on worrying about my own personal politics. I had to draw a line and focus on what I was writing for rather than writing about every single experience.

APPENDIX B

Participant Profile (Returnees=40)

Fictional Names	DoB (Yr)	G	Migration to NZ (Yr)	RM to Korea (Yr)	Education	Occupation (Korea)	Residency status (Korea)
Gloria Kim	1982	F	1997	2005	B of Commerce	Client Service	OKN
Taylin Kim	1980	M	1994	2008	B of Law	N/A	FNK
Paul Jo	1981	M	1994	2008	B of Commerce	Airline Company	FNK
Grace Kim	1982	F	1993	2006	B of Science	English teacher	OKN
Raymond Kim	1977	M	1992	2000	B of Commerce	Marketing	FNK
Michael Lee	1983	M	1992	2005	B of Arts	Civil Servant	FNK
Jasmine Lee	1981	F	1994	2008	B of Law	International Solicitor	OKN
Edward Gwak	1982	M	1996	2006	B of Commerce	Marketing	FNK
John Yoon	1981	M	1994	2004	B of Science	Research Engineer	FNK
Janet Park	1984	F	1996	2007	B of Science	Pharmaceutical Company	OKN
Helen Park	1984	F	1996	2004	B of Pharmacology	Quality Auditor, manager	OKN
James Han	1982	M	1995	2007	B of Law	International Lawyer	FNK
Marry Seo	1983	F	1997	2004	B of Commerce/Law	Advertisement	OKN
Hannah Choi	1985	F	2001	2006	B of Commerce	Financial Derivatives	Citizen
Damon Kim	1982	M	1995	2006	B of Commerce	Business Analyst	FNK
Sunny Kim	1980	F	1999	2008	B of Science	Lecturer	OKN
Kyle Oh	1981	M	1996	2006	B of Arts	Media design	FNK
David Kim	1984	M	1995	2006	B of Arts	English teacher	FNK
Michelle Jo	1986	F	1995	2007	B of fine arts	English teacher	OKN
Laura Lim	1984	F	1995	2007	B of Commerce	Administration	OKN
Stephen Paek	1979	M	1995	2007	B of Com Science	Programmer	FNK
Claire Kim	1979	F	1993	2003	B of Arts	Media Advertising	FNK
Alicia Choi	1984	F	1993	2008	B of Com Science	Fund accountant	OKN

Anne Kwon	1982	F	1993	2006	B of Arts	English teacher	OKN
Jonathan Yoon	1981	M	1994	2007	B of Ministry	Graduate student	FNK
May Seo	1982	F	1997	2004	B of Design	Designer	OKN
Tara Hong	1985	F	1990	2008	B of Design, Marketing	English Teacher, Marketing	OKN
Eric Ham	1982	M	1994	2005	B of Tech (Hon)	Tech Sales rep	FNK
Fraser Shim	1983	M	1996	2004	B of Science	Airport engineer	OKN
Erica Kim	1981	F	1995	2002	Master of Psychology	Clinical psychologist int	OKN
Petra Nam	1980	F	1993	2005	B of Commerce	Accounting	OKN
Erin Lee	1984	F	1996	2006	B of Commerce	Accounting	OKN
Krista Hong	1983	F	2002	2006	B of Commerce	Marketing	Citizen
Karla Jeon	1980	F	1999	2007	B of Education	NGO	FNK
Stella Kim	1976	F	1990	1999	B of Education	Civil Servant	OKN
Amy Woo	1979	F	1994	2000	B of Architecture	Home maker	OKN
Justine Lee	1978	F	1995	2003	B of Music (Hon)	Home maker	FNK
Tanya Lee	1983	F	1994	2006	B of Commerce	Analyst	OKN
Jerrod Han	1982	M	2000	2009	Master of Commerce	Analyst	FNK
Christine Jeon	1977	F	1993	2004	Master of Science	Home maker	OKN

APPENDIX C

Participant Interview Schedule (Returnees)

- **Stage I: Initial Migration**

What were your (and your family's) main reason(s) for immigrating to NZ?
How did you feel about immigrating to NZ?
What were your expectations of NZ?
What was your image of NZ prior to immigration to NZ?
Has it changed since your residence?

Tell me about your teenage life in NZ… What school(s) did you go to?
Did you have many Korean friends or more Kiwi friends? Tell me about your experience
What were your goals as a child/teenager?
What were the good/difficult times growing up as a Korean in NZ?
Has any of these affect your decision to return to Korea?

Did you have many connections to Korea while living in NZ?
How often did you travel to Korea while growing up in NZ?
Did your short holiday visits to Korea affect your life in any ways?

Do you feel like you lived in a 'Korean bubble' while living in NZ or would you call yourself as integrated New Zealander?
Tell me some of the "Korean" and "New Zealand" things you did particularly (e.g. dance, social activities).

If you haven't immigrated to NZ, would you be working or studying the same thing you do now?
Are you happy with where you are now?
What does immigration mean to you?

- **Stage II: Return Migration**

Who made the choice? Explain.
What kinds of individual/social variables have affected your decision to return to Korea?
Have you always planned of returning?
What were your expectations of returning to Korea?
What was your image of Korea while growing up in NZ? What constructed this image? (Media and people)
Tell me about the procedures you had to go through to permanently move back to Korea.
How difficult/easy was it for you to settle?
Who helped you the most? What kinds of things would help for a person to move back to Korea in the future? What sort of things matter?
What sort of feelings did you go through? Was there any part of the process where you were made to feel like a non-Korean?

Tell me about your life in Korea…
How did you find out about your job/further education?
Was it hard/easy getting the job? What sort of processes did you have to go through?
Did you have to go through interview process? Explain.
How satisfied are you with your job?
Is this your first job? If not, what was your old job like and what was the reason for leaving?
How are your workmates?
Do you have to do a special/extra task at work because of your English skills?
What do you like/dislike about your job?
Do you feel that you are making any specific contribution to your work place based on your overseas skills?

What do you do in your spare time? Who do you hang out with?
What do you do differently from NZ?
What do you like/dislike about Korean daily lives?
Are there any places where you feel more included/excluded?
Do you ever miss NZ? How? When? Why? What aspects do you miss most?
Tell me of any special occasion that happened which involved a culture shock.
Tell me about your friends and close friends…

Do you have many social networks?
Has this helped you in the process of reintegration?
How often do you meet with your family/extended family in Korea?
Are you happy with your current contact?
Do you belong to any churches, clubs, organizations or any other associations?
Do they help you to make friends and keep a good connection with lots of people?

- **Stage III: Thematic questions**

Gyopo and identity
Do you think it makes a difference that you are a Gyopo in Korea? How?
Do people make assumptions about you because you are from NZ? How?
Tell me of an incident….
How are you different from an American Gyopo or Japanese Gyopo? What makes you unique as a Korean New Zealander from any other Gyopo?
Are there any conflicts in your daily life because you are a returnee?

Family
Tell me about your family. What do your parents do? What was it like growing up with your family in New Zealand? Where are your family now?
Has your returning made any changes to your interaction with your family members (in Korea/NZ)?

Citizenship
Does citizenship matter to you in terms of your identity?
Do people perceive you differently based on your citizenship?
What is your view on dual citizenship?
Are you a Korean or a New Zealander? Or both?
What are the policies that you feel happy and not happy about in relation to your daily lives in Korea?

Choice and decision
Who made the choice? Was it yours or others? How?
Do you ever regret returning?
What is your future plan?
Can you make decisions easily about moving to a different country? If not, what are the obstacles and why?

Home and place
Where is your home?
Where do you feel most comfortable and not comfortable in Korea?
Who makes you feel in-place and out-of-place?
Do your family and close friends ever make you feel out-of-place?
Is having a 'home' really matter? Does origin matter? Do you have Gohyang? Where is your Gohyang?

Have I missed out on anything?
Any last comments?

APPENDIX D

Participant Information Sheet (English and Korean)

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

School of Geography &
Geology and
Environmental Science

The University of Auckland

Participant Information Sheet

Proposed research title: (De) constructing the Korean New Zealanders return migrations to 'homeland'

To: Whom it may concern

My name is YeonJae Lee. I am a student at The University of Auckland conducting research for a PhD thesis in Geography. I am conducting this interview for the purpose of my PhD thesis, which is on Korean New Zealanders who have returned to Korea. I have chosen this topic because of the growing awareness of returning immigrants, which is a significant matter of (dual) citizenship, identity and Multiculturalism. This project is funded by the University of Auckland's Doctoral Scholarship.

You are invited to participate in my research and I would appreciate any assistance you can offer me. You have been suggested as a participant in this research by a mutual acquaintance. I am interested in your experience of living as a returnee and what kinds of experiences you have encountered through re-settling into your own culture. Interviews usually last one to two hours, but I will interview for a duration that suits your time schedule for the day. I would prefer to audiotape the interview to facilitate note-taking, but this would only be done with your consent and could be turned off at any time. You can edit or withdraw information from your transcript any time up to three months after the interview. The audio tape and transcript will be securely stored in a locked cabinet on the University of Auckland premises to protect against unauthorised access. After six years, the data will be completely destroyed.

You are under no obligation at all to be interviewed or complete the diary. You would also have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving reasons. Your confidentiality and privacy will be maintained during this process, and you will not be mentioned by name unless you give specific approval for this to occur. Should you be interested in the results of this research, a copy of the thesis summary will be made available to you.

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. To thank your participation in this research, I have provided a book voucher (worth 10 dollars) for your interview participation and a shopping voucher (worth 20 dollars) for the diary participation. If you have any queries or wish to know more please phone me at [redacted]. You can also write to me at the address given above, or email me at j.lee@auckland.ac.nz

My supervisors are: Dr. Ward Friesen
School of Geography, Geology and Environment Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland. Tel: (09) 373 7599 xtn. 88612

Professor Robin Kearns
School of Geography, Geology and Environment Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland. Tel: (09) 373 7599 xtn. 88442

The Director of School is: Professor Glenn McGregor
School of Geography and Environmental Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland.
Tel: (09) 373 7599 xtn. 85284

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:
The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland. Tel. 373-7999 extn 87830

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

School of Geography &
Geology and
Environmental Science

The University of Auckland

연구 참여자를 위한 안내서

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지도교수님들의 연락처: Dr. Ward Friesen
School of Geography, Geology and Environment Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland. Tel: (09) 373 7599 xtn. 88612

Professor Robin Kearns
School of Geography, Geology and Environment Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland.
Tel: (09) 373 7599 xtn. 88442

지리학 주임 교수님 연락처: Professor Glenn McGregor
School of Geography and Environmental Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland Tel: (09) 373 7999 xtn. 85284

연구 참여자 분들께 공정하도록 그리고 불필요한 일이 없도록 더 많은 노력 하겠습니다. 혹시 불편하셨던 점이 있으시다면, 저의 대학교의 도덕위원회로 연락 주시기 바랍니다. 연락처는:
The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland. Tel. 373-7999 extn 87830 입니다.

APPENDIX E

Interview Consent Form (English and Korean)

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

School of Geography &
Geology and
Environmental Science

The University of Auckland

Consent Form

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: (De) constructing the Korean New Zealanders return migrations to 'homeland'

Researcher: Jane YeonJae Lee, *PhD Candidate*

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information traceable to me at any time up to 3 months after our interview/s (or from the date of receiving a transcript should I request one) without giving a reason.

Please tick the appropriate box:

□ I agree to be interviewed for this research

□ I agree/do not agree that the interview will be audio taped

□ I understand that I will receive a book voucher (worth 10 dollars) after the interview

□ I consent /do not consent to the use of my role in the community or job title (as appropriate) in the research.

Signed: _____

Name:
(Please print clearly) _____

Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

School of Geography &
Geology and
Environmental Science
The University of Auckland

연구 참여 동의서

논문 주제: '고향'으로 역 이민간 재뉴 교포들:

연구자: 이 연재 (박사과정)

본인은 연구참여에 대한 정보를 다 이해하였습니다. 인터뷰는 한 시간 정도 걸릴 예정이며, 모든 질문에 대답은 저의 판단에 따라 하겠습니다.

동의하는것을 표시하여 주십시오:

□ 인터뷰 참여에 동의 합니다.

□ 음성녹음에 동의 합니다/ 안 합니다.

□ 인터뷰가 끝나고 (만원) 도서권을 받을것을 인정합니다.

□ 저의 개인적인 지위가 밝혀져도 됩니다/ 안됩니다.

성함: _____

날짜: _____

서명: _____

APPENDIX F

Participant Profile (Re-Returnees=9)

Fictional Names	DoB (Yr)	G	Migration to NZ (Yr)	RM to Korea (Yr)	Re-RM to NZ (Yr)	Education	Occupation (Korea)	Residency Status (Korea)
Matt Kim	1980	M	1994	2005	2007	B of Engineering	Mechanical Designer	FNK
Jennifer Park	1984	F	2001	2007	2009	B of Arts, Chinese	English teacher	FNK
Richard Yoon	1984	M	1995	2007	2009	B of Engineering	Software Developer	FNK
Elizabeth Park	1983	F	1996	2007	2009	B in Design	Design Company	FNK
Steve Choi	1985	M	1994	2005	2008	B of Arts, Media	Student	OKN
Danny Kang	1985	M	1996	2006	2006	Masters in English	Office work	FNK
Bonny Nam	1986	F	1996	2007	2009	B of Arts	Receptionist	OKN
Jamie Noh	1986	M	2001	2008	2010	B of Science	Student	OKN
Sandra Lee	1984	F	1996	2006	2010	B of Commerce	English teacher	FNK

APPENDIX G

Participant Interview Schedule (Re-Returnees)

- **Stage I: Growing up as a Korean teenager in NZ**

What were your (and your family's) main reason(s) for immigrating to NZ?
Tell me about your teenage life in NZ… What school(s) did you go to?

- **Stage II: Return Migration**

What made you return to Korea in the first place?
Have you always planned of returning?
How difficult/easy was it for you to settle?

Tell me about your life in Korea…
How satisfied were you with your job?
Do you feel that you were making any specific contribution to your work place based on your overseas skills?

- **Stage III: Re-Return Migration**

Why did you decide to re-return to New Zealand?
What was the main reason? Explain.
Looking back, what were you happy/unhappy about your initial return to KOR?
What do you do now?

- **Stage IV: Thematic questions**

Home and place
Where is your home?
Where do you feel most comfortable and not comfortable in Korea/NZ?
Is having a home, really matter? Does origin matter? Do you have Gohyang? Where is your Gohyang?

Choice and decision
Do you ever regret returning?
Can you make decisions easily about moving to a different country? If not, what are the obstacles and why?

What is your future plan? Would you ever go back to KOR again?
Have I missed out on anything?
Any last comments?