



<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>

### *ResearchSpace@Auckland*

#### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback>

#### **General copyright and disclaimer**

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form.

**Learning to Cross Borders:**  
**Everyday Urban Encounters between South  
Korea and Auckland**

by

FRANCIS LEO COLLINS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

December 2006

# ABSTRACT

This thesis examines aspects of emergent transnational mobility within the experience of students advancing their education at tertiary institutions, private training establishments and language schools. In particular it focuses on the everyday practices and experiences of one group of international students from South Korea during their time in Auckland, New Zealand. The context for the research is that over the last decade the growth of international students and the institutions associated with their movement and education have begun to have significant economic, social and cultural implications in New Zealand, particularly in Auckland. Here, the rapid increase in the number and proportion of students from three East-Asian nations (China, South Korea and Japan) has contributed to profound changes in the socio-cultural geographies of Auckland's central city.

The aim of this study is to interrogate the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students as a means to more deeply understand the phenomenon of crossing borders to learn. I employ a multi-method and multi-sited research approach that draws on both orthodox and emergent techniques within human geography and related social sciences. Through these methods I focus on the individual and collective practices and experiences of these students as key actors in the developments associated with international education. At all times the focus is on 'the everyday' and the ways in which students negotiate their encounters between South Korea and Auckland.

In theoretical terms the thesis is situated at the border between the study of transnationalism and the study of cities. It identifies the ways that the transnational mobility and activity of students alongside others is involved in the changing spaces of Auckland's urban landscape. These changed spaces include physical, economic, sensory and perceptual landscapes of the city. In addition the thesis also illustrates the concurrent production, maintenance and resistance of pre-existing and new identities; the often difficult, highly structured and uneven landscape that emerges as a result of the interaction between individuals and groups who consider each-other 'foreign'; and the way that these types of interactions in contemporary cities are facilitated by but also maintain and produce increasing transnationalism. The thesis concludes by illustrating

the fundamental role that cities play in the practice of international education and the resulting importance of international education to the everyday realities of contemporary cities like Auckland.

*For Seunghee*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	xi
<b>Chapter One: First Steps.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Borders, Bordering and Border Crossing .....	2
South Korea and International Education .....	5
Urban Experience in South Korea and Auckland .....	7
Research Participants, Objectives and Approaches .....	11
Organisation of the Thesis.....	16
<b>Chapter Two: Foreign Exchange: International Education in New Zealand .....</b>	<b>19</b>
International Education in New Zealand.....	20
International Education beyond New Zealand .....	31
Conceiving International Education.....	32
Conclusion .....	38
<b>Chapter Three: Everyday Transnationalism in Cities .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>PART A: Transnationalism .....</b>	<b>39</b>
The Critiques.....	42
Reframing Transnationalism .....	46
Summary .....	58
<b>PART B: Transnationalism in the Project Ahead.....</b>	<b>58</b>
Migration, Transnationalism and Cities.....	60
A Cultural Perspective on the City: Everyday Urbanism .....	63
Everyday Urbanism and Transnational Bodies, Objects, Languages and Home .....	68
Everyday Transnationalism in Cities .....	72
<b>Chapter Four: Methodology .....</b>	<b>74</b>
Developing an Interactive Research Methodology .....	75
Methods.....	80
Approaching Analysis.....	95
Summary .....	97

<b>Chapter Five: Bridges to Learning: Migration, Tourism and International Education .....</b>	<b>99</b>
A Snapshot of Auckland .....	99
Connecting South Korea and Auckland: Migration and Tourism .....	102
South Korean International Students in Auckland .....	106
Pathways to Auckland.....	111
Living and Learning.....	119
Impressions of Auckland/New Zealand .....	125
Conclusion .....	130
<b>Chapter Six: Making Asian Students, Making Students Asian: The Racialisation of Export Education in Auckland .....</b>	<b>132</b>
International Education, Immigration and the New Zealand Media .....	134
The Economic, Cultural and Social Construction of the 'Asian Student' .....	137
Auckland's Changing Face .....	147
Consequences: Difference and Distance in Auckland .....	150
Conclusion .....	153
<b>Chapter Seven: Individual Pathways in Auckland .....</b>	<b>155</b>
Finding a Way to Understand the Transnational City.....	156
Individual Stories, Itineraries and Maps .....	164
Ways of Walking in Auckland.....	183
Conclusion .....	188
<b>Chapter Eight: Of Kimchi and Coffee: Familiarity and Culinary Consumption Choices .....</b>	<b>190</b>
Globalisation and Food.....	191
Culinary Nationalism and Globalism in South Korea .....	193
Culinary Consumption in Transnational Worlds.....	196
Culinary Consumption Choices of South Korean International Students.....	197
Discussion: Familiarity and Transnational Economies.....	215
Conclusion .....	218

<b>Chapter Nine: Connecting ‘Home’ with ‘Here’: Communication Practices .....</b>	<b>220</b>
Transnational Communication Practices .....	220
Virtual Transnational Geographies .....	221
The Internet in South Korea.....	224
Communication Practices of South Korean International Students in Auckland.....	225
The Uses of Cyworld <i>Minihompy</i> .....	238
Conclusion .....	248
<b>Chapter Ten: Volunteering, Social Networks, Contact Zones and Rubbish: The Case of the ‘Korean Volunteer Team’ .....</b>	<b>251</b>
The Work of Volunteers .....	252
Cultural ‘Contact Zones’ .....	254
The Korean Volunteer Team .....	257
Discussion: Volunteering, Social Networks and Contact Zones .....	267
Conclusion .....	270
<b>Chapter Eleven: Finding a Way (at) Home: The Onwards Journeys of South Korean International Students .....</b>	<b>272</b>
International Student Re-entry and Migrant Returns.....	273
Departures and Arrivals .....	279
Regrounding Everyday Life in South Korea.....	282
Transnational Trajectories .....	288
Conclusion .....	297
<b>Chapter Twelve: Learning to Cross Borders: Summary and Conclusions.....</b>	<b>299</b>
Summary of Findings .....	299
Implications for International Education, Transnationalism and Cities .....	308
Further Research .....	312
List of References .....	314
Appendices .....	363



## List of Tables

Table 4.1	Timeline of Research Methods	74
Table 4.2	Types of Observation	82
Table 4.3	Details of Interviews	86
Table 4.4:	Identifying Details of Interview Participants	88
Table 4.5	Number of Students Participating in Diary and Mapping Exercises	93
Table 5.1	Number of South Korean International Students Enrolled in Tertiary Institutes, PTE and Language Schools between 1999 and 2005	107
Table 5.2	Percentage Distribution of Selected Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	109
Table 5.3	Respondents' Reasons for Choosing to Study in New Zealand and Auckland	113
Table 5.4	Distribution of Educational Institutions Catering for International Students in Auckland	120
Table 5.5	Accommodation Arrangements of Respondents in Auckland	121
Table 7.1	Details of Students Involved in Diary and Mapping Exercises	165
Table 8.1	Questionnaire Responses – Food Consumption Questions	198
Table 8.2	Food Consumption Questions Defined by Respondents' Gender	199
Table 9.1	Respondents' Methods of Communication with and Accessing Information on South Korea	226
Table 9.2	Respondents' Time Spent on Internet and Place of Internet Access	228
Table 9.3	Respondents' Place of Internet Access Defined by Place of Residence	228
Table 9.4	Respondents' Time Spent on Internet and Place of Access Defined by Gender	229
Table 9.5	Respondents' Most Commonly Visited Web Domains	233
Table 9.6	Description of Most Commonly Visited Web Domains	234
Table 9.7	Cyworld <i>Minihompy</i> Start Date, Number and Location of <i>Il-chon</i>	239
Table 11.1	Details of Participants Involved in Re-entry Interviews in South Korea	279
Table 11.2	Returnees' Plans before and after Leaving Auckland	291

## List of Figures

Figure 5.1	Auckland Region – Local Authorities	100
Figure 5.2	Distribution of Korean Groups in Metropolitan Auckland. Mapped from 2001 Census Data	104
Figure 5.3	Overseas Visitors from the Republic of Korea, 1985-2005	105
Figure 5.4	Student Permits. Principal Applicants Who Held Student Permits in Top Seven Countries from 1999 to 2003	106
Figure 5.5	Number of South Korean International Students Enrolled in Tertiary Institutes, PTE and Language Schools between 1999 and 2005	107
Figure 5.6	A Continuum of Migration: Tourist – Student – Permanent Migrant	111
Figure 5.7	Location of English Language Schools in Auckland’s Central Business District	120
Figure 5.8	Description of Life in New Zealand from ‘New Zealand Educated’ Website	128
Figure 6.1	Print Media Articles Related to International Education Published in Auckland and Student Permits and Visas Issued in New Zealand 1998-2004	135
Figure 6.2	‘Auckland’s Changing Face’ – <i>New Zealand Herald</i> , 23 December 2003	149
Figure 7.1	Selection Matrix of Students Involved in Diary and Mapping Exercises	165
Figure 7.2	Photos, Jang-Ho (1)	167
Figure 7.3	Map Drawing, Jang-Ho	168
Figure 7.4	Photos, Jang-Ho (2)	169
Figure 7.5	Photos, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong (1)	171
Figure 7.6	Map Drawing, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong	172
Figure 7.7	Photos, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong (2)	173
Figure 7.8	Photos, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong (3)	174
Figure 7.9	Map Drawing, Won-Sik	177
Figure 7.10	Photos, Won-Sik	178
Figure 7.11	Photos, Su-Mi (1)	179
Figure 7.12	Map Drawing, Su-Mi	180
Figure 7.13	Photos, Su-Mi (2)	181
Figure 7.14	Photos, Su-Mi (3)	182
Figure 8.1	Scene from ‘Attack the Gas Station’. © CJ International	195
Figure 8.2	Korean Restaurants on Queen Street	200
Figure 8.3	Observation Notes – <i>San-su-gap-san</i>	203

Figure 8.4	Photos – <i>San-su-gap-san</i>	203
Figure 8.5	Observation Notes – Dinner with Helen, Paul and Ha-Na	209
Figure 8.6	Photos – Dinner with Helen, Paul and Hana	209
Figure 8.7	Photos – Coffee Shops	212
Figure 9.1	Notice on the Door of ‘Net Bar & Rock Bar’.	231
Figure 9.2	Photos – Exterior and Interior of <i>PC Bang</i> (Internet Rooms) in Auckland	232
Figure 9.3	The Author’s Cyworld <i>Minihompy</i> with Description of Details	237
Figure 9.4	Background <i>Miniroom</i> Image, Pedro.	241
Figure 9.5	Cyworld <i>Minihompy</i> Entry, Jae-Uk	242
Figure 9.6	Cyworld <i>Minihompy</i> Entry, Yu-Mi	242
Figure 9.7	Diagram of Pedro’s Cyworld <i>Il-chon</i> Network	244
Figure 9.8	Description of Pedro’s Cyworld <i>Il-chon</i> Network	244
Figure 9.9	Ha-Na’s Experience of Surveillance through Cyworld	247
Figure 10.1	Excerpt and Photograph from ‘Young Koreans Clean Up Image’, <i>New Zealand Herald</i> , 16 August 2004	251
Figure 10.2	Korean Volunteer Team Rubbish Collection Photos (1)	259
Figure 10.3	Korean Volunteer Team Rubbish Collection Photos (2)	260
Figure 10.4	Korean Volunteer Team Route Map	261
Figure 10.5	Korean Volunteer Team Social Activities, Photos	264
Figure 10.6	Korean Volunteer Team Trip to Piha, Photos	265
Figure 11.1	Cyworld Entry by Min-Hee on Yu-Jin’s <i>Minihompy</i> .	272

## Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been completed without the intellectual, professional and personal support of so many individuals. I thank you all. In addition to all the family, friends and colleagues who have supported me the following deserve special mention.

In the first instance I would like to thank Robin Kearns and Ward Friesen for the crucial role they have played as both supervisors and mentors. Their guidance through both the intellectual and practical challenges of the Ph.D. process has been invaluable. More generally too, I would like to thank the staff and students of the School of Geography and Environmental Science for making me feel welcome in my new disciplinary home.

For the most practical of reasons this thesis would not have been possible without the generous financial support of a number of organisations. This included scholarships from the University of Auckland and the Building Research Capability in the Social Sciences Network. The Royal Society of New Zealand assisted with travel to the 10<sup>th</sup> International Metropolis Conference in Toronto. The ASIA:NZ Foundation and the New Zealand Asian Studies Society generously supported my fieldwork in South Korea.

I am greatly indebted to all those who have helped in the practical aspects of the research. This includes everyone who participated but especially Pedro (Cho Won Jun) and the other members of the Korean Volunteer Team for allowing me to take part in their project and being so open and supportive of mine. In South Korea my research was aided by Esther Song. Thanks also to Alan Cheung for helping with the internet survey.

Thanks to my Korean language instructors at the University of Auckland, Dr Inshil Yoon and Dr Younghee Lee. Their tuition has helped me develop language and broader cultural skills that have been a decisive feature of this project. I am also grateful for the constructive criticisms of the anonymous referees at the *New Zealand Geographer* and *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* that have helped to fine tune some of the key ideas in this work.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to save the biggest thanks for my wife Seunghee Pak. I may never have started let alone completed this thesis if it was not for your keen interest, the endless practical assistance you gave and the limitless inspiration you always offer me. More importantly however, you have always provided the kind of support that no one else could. I dedicate this thesis to you.