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](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
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  

Chapter One: First Steps ...................................................................................... 1  
  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  

Chapter Two: Foreign Exchange: International Education in New Zealand ........ 19  
  International Education in New Zealand .............................................................20  
  International Education beyond New Zealand ....................................................31  
  Conceiving International Education .....................................................................32  
  Conclusion .............................................................................................................38  

Chapter Three: Everyday Transnationalism in Cities ....................................... 39  
  PART A: Transnationalism ..................................................................................39  
    The Critiques ......................................................................................................42  
    Reframing Transnationalism ..............................................................................46  
    Summary ............................................................................................................58  
  PART B: Transnationalism in the Project Ahead ...................................................58  
    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  

Chapter Four: Methodology ................................................................................. 74  
  Developing an Interactive Research Methodology ..............................................75  
  Methods ...............................................................................................................80  
  Approaching Analysis .........................................................................................95  
  Summary .............................................................................................................97
Chapter Five: Bridges to Learning: Migration, Tourism and International Education ................................................................. 99
  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

Chapter Six: Making Asian Students, Making Students Asian: The Racialisation of Export Education in Auckland ............... 132
  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

Chapter Seven: Individual Pathways in Auckland ..................... 155
  Finding a Way to Understand the Transnational City .............. 156
  Individual Stories, Itineraries and Maps .................................. 164
  Ways of Walking in Auckland .................................................... 183
  Conclusion .................................................................................. 188

Chapter Eight: Of Kimchi and Coffee: Familiarity and Culinary Consumption Choices ......................................................... 190
  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
Chapter Nine: Connecting ‘Home’ with ‘Here’: Communication Practices ................................................................. 220
  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 Minihompy .......................................................... 238
  Conclusion ........................................................................................ 248

Chapter Ten: Volunteering, Social Networks, Contact Zones and Rubbish: The Case of the ‘Korean Volunteer Team’ ...... 251
  The Work of Volunteers .................................................................... 252
  Cultural ‘Contact Zones’ .................................................................... 254
  The Korean Volunteer Team ................................................................. 257
  Discussion: Volunteering, Social Networks and Contact Zones .......................................................... 267
  Conclusion .......................................................................................... 270

  International Student Re-entry and Migrant Returns ....................... 273
  Departures and Arrivals ..................................................................... 279
  Regrounding Everyday Life in South Korea ......................................... 282
  Transnational Trajectories ................................................................ 288
  Conclusion .......................................................................................... 297

Chapter Twelve: Learning to Cross Borders: Summary and Conclusions ................................................................. 299
  Summary of Findings ............................................................ 299
  Implications for International Education, Transnationalism and Cities .............................................................. 308
  Further Research ........................................................................... 312

List of References ................................................................................. 314
Appendicies .......................................................................................... 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 Minihompy Start Date, Number and Location of Il-chon 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

<p>| 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’ – <em>New Zealand Herald</em>, 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 – <em>San-su-gap-san</em> | 203 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Photos – San-su-gap-san</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Observation Notes – Dinner with Helen, Paul and Ha-Na</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Photos – Dinner with Helen, Paul and Hana</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Photos – Coffee Shops</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Notice on the Door of ‘Net Bar &amp; Rock Bar’.</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Photos – Exterior and Interior of <em>PC Bang</em> (Internet Rooms) in Auckland</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>The Author’s Cyworld <em>Minihompy</em> with Description of Details</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Background <em>Miniroom</em> Image, Pedro.</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Cyworld <em>Minihompy</em> Entry, Jae-Uk</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>Cyworld <em>Minihompy</em> Entry, Yu-Mi</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>Diagram of Pedro’s Cyworld <em>Il-chon Network</em></td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>Description of Pedro’s Cyworld <em>Il-chon Network</em></td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Ha-Na’s Experience of Surveillance through Cyworld</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Excerpt and Photograph from ‘Young Koreans Clean Up Image’, <em>New Zealand Herald</em>, 16 August 2004</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Korean Volunteer Team Rubbish Collection Photos (1)</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Korean Volunteer Team Rubbish Collection Photos (2)</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Korean Volunteer Team Route Map</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Korean Volunteer Team Social Activities, Photos</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Korean Volunteer Team Trip to Piha, Photos</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Cyworld Entry by Min-Hee on Yu-Jin’s <em>Minihompy</em>.</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 10th 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.
Chapter One

FIRST STEPS

The power of a country road is different when one is walking along it from when one is flying over it by airplane. In the same way, the power of a text is different when it is read from when it is copied out. The airplane passenger sees only how the road pushes through the landscape, how it unfolds according to the same laws as the terrain surrounding it. Only he [sic] who walks the road on foot learns of the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery of the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front.

Walter Benjamin (1979: 50), One Way Street

I remember the 26th of April 2002 like it was yesterday. On that day I boarded a plane in Auckland for the first part of my journey to Seoul, South Korea. At the time I didn’t really know where I was going. Of course I knew the geographic location of South Korea. In fact, I even knew the longitude of Seoul, something made infamous by the last remaining Cold War border. I also thought I knew some things about South Korea, about Seoul and about Koreans. I had tried to pick up some language; I had tried a little Korean food and I had read a little bit of history. Yet, my perspective was determined by distance. Like the airplane passenger that I actually was, my view of Seoul, South Korea and Koreans was constituted through reference to the ‘terrain’ that surrounds that city, country and people. Indeed, even in the first few days of walking on that ‘country road’ I began to see the power of this place in a completely different light. Throughout the year that I spent living and teaching English in Seoul I experienced many different ‘distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects’ that became part of my relation to that place. In fact, by the time I left South Korea, the ‘country road’ I first envisioned had all but fractured. I could no longer simply see this place without imagining and/or living all the small details that might have once constituted this whole.

This thesis investigates the journeys of individuals from different cities and towns in South Korea to Auckland, New Zealand and back again. These journeys take shape in different ways for each of the individuals involved and reflect their origins and destinations, positions and dispositions, pasts and futures. It is likely that for many of
the people who travel these paths there are similarities to my own experience described earlier and in particular the realisation that what can be known from afar is often not what it seems. The perceptions that these individuals have of Auckland, New Zealand and New Zealanders have undoubtedly shifted so that there may be difficulty applying these terms with the kind of certainty that is available to those who view from a distance. Like my own experience, these movements are also facilitated by the increasing transnationality of education. The individuals in this research are international students and they come to Auckland to study in language schools, private training establishments (PTE) and tertiary institutions. This thesis however, is not fundamentally concerned with the educational objectives of these individuals, although this is an inextricable aspect of their journeys. Rather, the focus here is on the journey itself and the borders that are produced, encountered and crossed in the everyday lives of South Korean international students in Auckland.

Borders, Bordering and Border Crossing

Borders are everywhere. In physical terms, they are the legal or official line that demarcates one space from another: nation, region, city, and jurisdiction. Borders, however, also have socio-spatial significance. The borders of nations, for instance, do not simply delineate between what is physically here or there. Rather, national borders are also constitutive of social and cultural difference. They distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, ‘citizen’ and ‘foreigner’ (Ahmed 2000). Sometimes socio-spatial borders mimic the scale of physical borders of nations but more often than not they also make distinctions within territories (Knippenberg 2002). Academically too, borders have often had great significance. They have distinguished between disciplines like geography, sociology, anthropology and others, marking out what subject matter and/or theories belong to whom. While today such intellectual borders appear at least somewhat blurred it still seems possible to distinguish between geography and sociology and at another level ‘economic geography’ and ‘social geography’, ‘urban sociology’ and ‘cultural sociology’.

All this would suggest that borders are very relevant to understanding the contemporary era. Yet, for a period many scholars declared that the world was now ‘borderless’ (Ohmae 1990), characterised by ‘spaces of flows’ (Castells 1996; 1997), ‘deterritorialized’ (Bauman 1995; 1998) and becoming increasingly ‘post-
national’ (Appadurai 1997). While the processes of globalisation that these authors pointed to are hugely significant they perhaps overstated the extent to which borders were no longer a critical element of human existence. In fact, more recent scholarship has identified paradoxes in globalisation (Hirst & Thompson 1999): its processes are uneven; outcomes uncertain; and, more often than not, globalisation does not take place at the expense of borders but rather is dissimilarly enabled and limited by borders themselves. Indeed, if anything the contemporary world is characterised not by weaker but by stronger borders, not smaller but more expansive borders and border systems than ever before (Newman 2006).

Borders, then, are not the static lines that they are often assumed to be in common parlance. Rather, they are the product of ongoing processes of bordering. This is apparent when we focus on the strategies used by institutions that seek to maintain order over territory whether they are nation-states, economic actors or the gate-keepers of academic disciplines (Harlow 1994). The border in these cases is always in the making by the process of bordering itself. Moreover, the importance of bordering as a process is even more notable when we consider the socio-spatial role of demarcation. Bordering in the socio-spatial sense is an ongoing strategic effort to distinguish between the insides and outsides of racial, national, ethnic, religious, sexual and other ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1983). This process can be both exclusionary and/or assimilatory. In New Zealand, for example, the construction of national identity has fundamentally relied upon the exclusion of unassimilable others who challenge racial perceptions of what constitutes ‘New Zealander’ (Collins 2006; Ip 2003; McKinnon 1996; Palat 1996). Similarly in South Korea, bordering also has great significance. In a physical and political sense the country has remained divided from North Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Within South Korea bordering also operates through nationalist discourses that attempt to assimilate North Koreans, and various regional identities within a broader essentialist Korean identity (Shin, Freda, & Yi 1999). At the same time returning overseas Koreans from China and the former soviet republics are excluded because their differences problematise the purity of Korean identity (Lee 1997). In each of these cases the process of bordering is not simply made up of the official strategies of states in regards to immigration, the law, education and government, although these are important. Rather, socio-spatial bordering also relies upon everyday practices of those individuals who actively create and maintain the
difference that is constituted in borders as well as those who submit to, subvert or resist exclusionary and assimilatory efforts.

In the sense that bordering is an active and contingent process it is also open to challenge. Indeed, ‘[t]he border is not univocal, or only polymorphous. Its breaks are not fetishized as a final cut: they are instead, or they may be, re-sutured, re-circulated or re-bonded’ (Welchman 1996: 179). Moreover, much scholarship now recognises that people, objects and ideas may not simply fit the either/or dichotomy that a fixed understanding of borders implies but may in fact be simultaneously both/and: both insider and outsider, here and there, citizen and foreigner (Pearson 2000). Such realisations are particularly, but not exclusively, the result of the rapid increase in border crossings associated with migration in recent decades (Castles & Miller 1998). These border crossings are not limited to the initial physical movement of individuals or families between one territory and another. Instead, they include practices and experiences that are actually constituted across the physical, social, economic and political borders that separate territories. Moreover, through the very act of border crossing these practices and experiences also contribute to the very process of bordering which they subvert: nation-states reconfigure their immigration regimes, identities shift to accommodate or (more often) exclude difference, economic regulations are enforced, security measures enhanced.

This thesis addresses one example of this kind of border crossing and its consequences. That is, the movement of individuals from South Korea to Auckland as international students to study in tertiary institutions, PTE and language schools. The main aim of this project is to interrogate the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland. As part of this overall aim the project also examines the differing relationships that South Korean international students have with other inhabitants of Auckland including other international students, South Korean and otherwise, citizens and residents of New Zealand (some of whom also identify as South Korean), in addition to relationships with family, friends and others beyond Auckland and New Zealand’s borders. Fundamentally, the project seeks to understand the ways in which everyday practices and experiences of (sojourning) inhabitants of a city can be involved in the broader social production of urban space. In the remainder of this chapter, I offer a broad overview of this project through discussions of the specific issues in South Korea that have led to the movement of students and the different
characteristics of urban experience in South Korea and Auckland. I then introduce the research participants, objectives and approaches and outline the organisation of the thesis.

South Korea and International Education

Although there is an important global context to the movement of international students (Waters 2005a), there are also significant national precursors to this phenomenon. In New Zealand, for example, this includes the gradual transformation of this country’s approach to international students from its origins as a form of foreign aid through to full commercialisation (see Chapter Two for further discussion). In South Korea too, there are important factors that have contributed to the movement of students overseas. These include the rapid growth in the South Korean economy during the latter part of the 20th Century, the role that education played in this growth and the increasing demand for tertiary qualifications and English language skills.

During the second half of the 20th Century South Korea experienced significant social, political and economic transformations. In the 1960s, for example, it was regarded as one of the poorest countries in the world following the devastation of 35 years of Japanese colonial rule and a bloody three year civil war that led to the partition of the Korean peninsula in 1953. In 1962 the annual per capita income of South Korea was US$125 (United Nations 1962). Yet, little more than a generation later South Korea is a member nation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and boasts a GDP per capita over US$20,000 (OECD 2005a). This rapid transformation was largely based on South Korea’s shift from a rural agrarian society at the end of Japanese rule to a form of export-oriented industrialism. Such spectacular growth however, did not come without costs. In particular, South Korea’s economic success was created through some of the longest working hours in the world and the loss of significant personal freedoms and rights under a long period of military dictatorships that only ended in 1992 (Nelson 2000).

Education has been central to South Korea’s rapid transformation. Indeed, Michael Seth (2002: 3) notes that in South Korea there is a significant ‘correlation between the general level of education and the level of economic development, with a higher level of education attainment than other nations of comparable per capita
income’. Throughout South Korea’s rapid period of growth successive governments have expanded and developed the public education system both as a means of producing skilled workers to advance the country’s development goals and as one means of producing a coherent narrative of the nation (Nelson 2000). In short, education has consistently been tied to the economic and social success of both South Korea and individual South Koreans. In contemporary South Korea huge value is placed upon education as the means of attaining economic security and status for individuals and families. South Korean families will invest immense personal and economic resources into the education of their children. The great value placed on education in South Korea is described by Michael Seth (2002), echoing similar phrases in the South Korean popular media, as *Education Fever* or *Gyoyuk Yeolgi*.\(^1\) In this thesis two somewhat related characteristics of the education fever in South Korea are of particular importance: the demand for places in higher-education and the increasing importance of English language training.

Although institutionalized higher education in South Korea began to emerge prior to the Japanese colonial period it has only expanded significantly since the early 1980s (J. K. Lee 2004; Seth 2002). At this time, the prior expansion of secondary education had led to increasing social demands for greater access to higher education. The government’s response was to change the systems governing entrance from one based on admission quotas to one based upon high-school graduation quotas. The immediate effect of this change was to rapidly increase the number of students who could participate in higher education (Mok 2003). However, in the longer term it has also led to increased specialization between institutes and in particular a much greater differentiation between junior colleges and universities. Moreover, even as the availability of higher-education in South Korea has increased it has been unable to keep up with demand, and in particular demand for university places (J. K. Lee 2004; Mok 2003). One alternative route taken by an increasing number of middle-class and elite students is to pursue a university education overseas. According to Johanna Waters (2005a: 4) this is a route that ‘is at once a *way out* of a highly competitive local system as well as a *more valuable* form of cultural capital’. Students who possess degrees from overseas universities, particularly high-profile North American universities, can return

\(^1\) Romanisation of Korean language in this thesis follows the new Korean Ministry of Education system retrieved from [http://www.glossika.com/en/dict/korpin.html](http://www.glossika.com/en/dict/korpin.html). Korean author’s names are romanised in the same manner as they are published in English.
to South Korea with greatly increased employment opportunities. From another perspective some of these students may be using overseas education as a route to longer term migration, either in the country of education or a third location (Butcher 2004b).

A second not-unrelated element of contemporary education in South Korea is the importance of English language skills. English has been taught as an official part of the secondary curriculum in South Korea since the Korean War (Moon 1991). Since 1997, as part of the government’s globalisation strategy, English was also extended as a compulsory element of primary education and it is increasingly a core component of college and university courses (Cho 2004; Jeong 2004). Despite this emphasis the continued focus on grammar and reading in compulsory English classes has meant that many students, even those who score high grades, are often unable to engage in even simple conversations. The increasing demand for English language has not simply been fostered by the government. Indeed, many businesses, particularly export-oriented businesses, require candidates for the most sought after positions to score highly in English assessments (Jeong 2004). One way that the mismatch between these expectations and the realities of English education in South Korea is dealt with is through the huge market for private tuition in English. Families will pay significant amounts of money to have their children taught English by fluent speakers and in particular native speakers from countries like New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States. For university and college students, many will consider another route and ‘defer for one or two years during their degree programme in order to obtain an English certificate abroad, which they know will subsequently give them a notable advantage when applying for a job’ (Cho 2004: 34).

**Urban Experience in South Korea and Auckland**

Cities are a crucial part of the movement of international students that is the central concern of this thesis. Certainly, not all international students come from urban areas and neither do they all choose to study at educational facilities located in cities. Nevertheless, international education is fundamentally an urban project. Regardless of the place of origin or education, students, almost without exception, travel through cities and more importantly rely on transportation, communication and business networks that operate between major cities (Hiebert & Kwak 2004). Moreover, this thesis is specifically concerned with the practices and experiences of students in Auckland, New
Zealand’s largest city. The participants in this research also come overwhelmingly from urban areas in South Korea. Finally, the focus of this thesis is on the everyday urban encounters of these individuals in Auckland and their practices and experiences here that connect them to aspects of life in South Korean cities and towns. Given this context, it is important to note briefly the unique characteristics of urban life in South Korea and Auckland.

Seoul is both exemplary of, and exceptional to, urban experience in South Korea. It is for this reason that a brief introduction to this city offers the best way to sketch more generally the form of urbanism that exists in South Korea. Seoul is extraordinarily densely populated. Indeed, with a population of 10,000,000 (within the jurisdictional limits\(^2\)) and a density of over 16,000 people per km\(^2\) (KNSO 2004) Seoul is one of the more densely populated cities in East Asia and the world. The results of such population density, and the rapid rate at which it has occurred, are visible in the dominance of Seoul’s residential housing stock by apartment towers and tenement blocks. Similarly the rapid economic development of South Korea as a nation is apparent in the proliferation of office blocks and business centres throughout many parts of the city. Socially, urban life in Seoul and other South Korean cities is lived publicly or semi-privately in consumption spaces and the open space of streets. Apartments and other forms of residence are not common places to socialise in South Korea (Gelezeau 1997). As such, all neighbourhoods in Seoul have restaurants, bars, markets, norae bang (singing rooms), PC bang (internet cafes) and other functions that facilitate semi-private socialising practices. The streets of neighbourhoods, often separated from the large boulevards that dissect Seoul, are also places where significant aspects of public life are lived (Gelezeau 1997).

To those unfamiliar with the everyday life of this city the rapid rate at which Seoul has grown physically, economically and socially can often make the different parts of the urban environment seem identical. The following quote from Laura Nelson (2000: 5) is indicative:

> Apartment complexes erected by Hyundai, Samik, or Woosung were assemblages of nearly indistinguishable blond concrete blocks, each building rising a dozen

\(^2\) The population in the extended Seoul Metropolitan Region is 23,100,000 when the surrounding urban centres of Bucheon, Goyang, Incheon, Seongnam and Suwon are included. This makes Seoul the second largest urban agglomeration in the world, behind Tokyo (Brinkhoff 2006).
stories or so, punctuated by three or four entryways and by verandas displaying racks of drying laundry, children’s bicycles, and brown pottery jars for staple condiments and kimchi. Bars, restaurants, and small grocery stores not only offered similar items and looked alike in almost any neighborhood in Seoul, but despite their different functions, they were very similar in design: they had the same aluminium-frame sliding windows looking on the street (and often the same blue plastic coating to cut the heat of the sun), aluminium swinging entry doors, bare concrete floors, low ceilings, and dark walls. Snaking through the alleyways in different neighborhoods, I was likely to encounter in each a bakery named for one of the ancient dynasties (“Koryo” or “Shilla”), a cramped real estate office with two or three men lounging inside, and more than one small church, each marked with a red neon cross. Women and old men wandered the streets or rested in the shade in the daytime. In almost every neighborhood I passed by old women (halmŏnis, literally “grandmothers”) wearing colorful loose, printed loose trousers or a skirt and a loose, printed short-sleeved shirt, both of slick, artificial fiber.

Despite the commonalities identified here, there are notable distinctions between the different parts of Seoul. These include differences in the socio-economic aspects, functions and spatial identities of different neighbourhoods. More importantly however, certain districts in Seoul exhibit characteristics that are part of the reason why this city is exceptional in the South Korean context. These include areas like ‘Apgujeong-dong’ (Shields 1998), ‘Hong-Dae’ (D. Y. Lee 2004), ‘Taehangno’ (Cheon 1999) and ‘Itaewon’ (E. S. Kim 2004) that are physical manifestations of the increasing global embeddedness of South Korean society and economy. In these places urban inhabitants can engage in forms of globalised consumption and identity construction that while unique have significant precedent in many cities around the world (Bak 2004; 2005). These include the increasing availability and popularity of global products including clothing, music, film and coffee (Bak 2004; 2005). It also includes aspiration to the sorts of identities associated with these products: young, single, wealthy and cosmopolitan (Shields 1998). Certainly, other major urban centres like Busan and Daegu have scatterings of such consumption and identity spaces but never to the same extent as they do in the capital. The South Korean urban experience is perhaps best described by these exemplary and exceptional characteristics of Seoul. In many parts of South Korea the neighbourhood described by Nelson above would not be out of place – this is the archetypal urban experience in that country. Yet, at the same time, urban inhabitants in South Korea, particularly those in Seoul, are now increasingly engaging in forms of urban lifestyles and identities that exist through reference to other parts of the world.
In comparison to Seoul, and most other urban centres in South Korea, Auckland has a relatively low population and density. In 2001, for example, Auckland’s population of 1,158,891 was smaller than all of the six largest urban areas in South Korea – Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Incheon, Gwangju and Daejeon. In terms of density the distinction is even greater. Auckland had a population density of 206.9 people per km² in 2001, lower than all of the major urban centres and most of the provincial areas in South Korea (KNSO 2004; Statistics New Zealand 2002b). Differences between Auckland and South Korean cities are also apparent in urban form. Alan Latham (2000: 285), for instance, observes that Auckland, like other cities in New Zealand is ‘characterised by an… emphasis on the single allotment, one-storey dwelling, and above all an obsession with keeping different activities and different land uses as separate from each other as possible’. In this sense the urban experience in Auckland, whilst unique to this locality, has significant morphological similarities with North American cities like Los Angeles and Santa Cruz as well as the Australian cities of Brisbane and Perth (Latham 2000). The suburban life that is predominant in Auckland differs quite significantly from that in South Korea, particularly in terms of social interaction. In short, the kind of single allotment, one storey dwelling that dominates Auckland’s city-scape is centred on a social life that is primarily private and domestic (Perkins & Thorns 1999) as opposed to the public or at least semi-private social life that is more common in South Korean cities.

In recent years there has been evidence that new, more urban (less suburban) lifestyles and identities are emerging in Auckland (Latham 2003b; Murphy, Friesen, & Kearns 1999). These include the increasing number of apartments in the inner-city (Collins 2004; Murphy et al. 1999), the development of an ostensibly cosmopolitan ‘café culture’ (Liberty 1998) and the gentrification of a number of suburbs (Latham 2000). At the same time Auckland has been an important destination for recent migration flows to and within New Zealand. This includes the post-World War Two internal migration of Maori and large scale immigration from the South Pacific since the 1950s and Asia since the late 1980s. The resulting population changes have significantly altered the ethnic makeup of Auckland from one that was largely Pakeha (European) to a thoroughly multicultural, if somewhat fractured, city (Poulsen, Johnston, & Forrest 2000). The presence and practices of more recent migrants have also contributed to the emergence of new consumption spaces like restaurants and retail
outlets that cater for both the migrants themselves and other Aucklanders (Yoon 2003). The result of these developments is a much more diverse urban experience in Auckland than was available even a generation previously. In a sense, these developments also offer a parallel with South Korean cities and Seoul in particular. In both Auckland and Seoul the emergence of new urban spaces, lifestyles and identities is a reflection of the primacy of these two centres in their respective national contexts and the specific global networks that they are increasingly embedded within. At the same time however, the particularities of these emergent aspects of urban experience are taking on specific local characteristics so that although there are similarities in the changes occurring in these two places, particularly in terms of globalised consumption practices, the future trajectories are quite distinct.

Research Participants, Objectives and Approaches

The participants in this project can be broadly labelled South Korean international students. However, the apparent unity of this term belies the real diversity in the participants involved in this research. This much is evident already in the discussion above that suggests a distinction between those students who travel overseas to gain tertiary qualifications and those who defer degrees in South Korea to improve their English skills. South Korean nationals attending primary and secondary schools may also be considered international students but their experiences are not part of this thesis. There are also students who attend PTE in Auckland who lie somewhere between tertiary and language students. These students are completing a tertiary qualification (albeit not a university or polytechnic degree) but they are often also taking time out of a tertiary qualification in South Korea and their aim is often primarily to improve their English skills and overseas experience. There is also a socio-economic distinction here. The cost involved in attending tertiary institutions overseas compared with the cost of learning English or attending PTE means that there are usually significant class differences between these individuals. As this thesis attests, these differences have a considerable influence upon the practices and experiences of these individuals both in Auckland and after return to South Korea. There are also palpable differences in gender and regional background that are shown to impact on students’ practices and experiences in different ways throughout this thesis (for further discussion of these differences see Chapter Five).
Despite these very important differences however, it is crucial to establish at this stage a working definition and delineation of those individuals who are, or are not, South Korean international students. In this project the focus is exclusively on those South Korean international students over the age of 18 who are studying at public tertiary institutions, PTE and language schools within Auckland.\(^3\) According to the Education Act 1989 (see Chapter Two) an international student is rather tautologically defined as ‘a person who is not then a domestic student’ (Ministry of Education 1989). For the purposes of this research South Korean international students are considered to be any South Korean citizen not possessing New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency studying at one of the three types of educational establishments listed above. This means that not all participants in this research hold a ‘student visa’ or ‘student permit’ as determined by the New Zealand Immigration Service. A number of participants, particularly those attending language schools, hold a ‘visitor permit’ or ‘working holiday visa’. These individuals may reside in New Zealand for three and 12 months respectively and enrol in language or other courses during this period.

This research is placed within a growing body of literature on the development and experience of international education in Auckland and New Zealand (Butcher 2004b; Lewis 2005; Whitehead 2004). Contemporaneously however, this thesis also seeks to engage broader themes in the experience of transnational migration (Ley 2004; Smith 2000; Vertovec 1999) and the everyday practices that constitute urban life and the changing structure of cities (Latham & McCormack 2004; Morris 2004; Thrift 2004). Broadly speaking then, the central goal of this research is to interrogate the experiences of South Korean international students as transnational actors and the transformations that are taking place in Auckland as a result of their presence and practices.

The more specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand the socio-cultural, economic and spatial practices and experiences of South Korean international students during their time of residence in Auckland.

---

\(^3\) In this thesis Auckland used as a marker for what Ward Friesen, Laurence Murphy, Robin Kearns and Edwin Haverkamp (2000) determine to be ‘greater metropolitan Auckland’ and which includes the four cities of Auckland, Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere and the district of Papakura (for further discussion see Chapter Five).
2. To ascertain what socio-cultural, economic and spatial impact South Korean international students have on the urban landscape of Auckland.

3. To investigate the role that taken-for-granted everyday properties (like bodies and languages) of South Korean international students contribute to the experience and transformation of space in Auckland.

4. To investigate the local, national and transnational cultural and economic flows that South Korean international students engage in while residing in Auckland and establish the ways such flows are articulated in the everyday enactment of urban space.

5. To contribute to the growing body of critical work on international education in Auckland, New Zealand and internationally. In particular to attend to the absence of critical socio-cultural emphasis in this literature (popular, policy and academic) that has led to negative discursive constructions that confine international students to subject positions as either foreign ‘others’ or financial ‘entities’ (see Chapter Two).

6. To analyse and provide criticism, with reference to this local context, on the literatures surrounding transnationalism and everyday practices in cities. To establish the ways that a combination of insights from these literatures can contribute to an understanding of the present and other research projects.

7. Finally, to develop a methodology that reflects on and engages with the possibilities and challenges of conducting research in a context that is simultaneously located in a specific urban environment while also characterised by factors that are experientially and practically transnational.

The fact that this research considers the practices and experiences of South Korean international students in Auckland is not incidental. Indeed, as I noted at the outset the journeys of the participants in this research has a parallel in my own temporary migration to South Korea. To be certain, there are also huge differences between these movements, not least the fact that my position as an English teacher rather than learner reflects the uneven power relations that are reinforced by the globalisation of the English language. Nevertheless it is the similarities between myself and the participants
Chapter One: First Steps

in this research that led me to this topic in the first instance. During the 12 month period that I lived in Seoul, South Korea between 2002 and 2003 I was alerted to the complex experiences and relationships held by sojourners in that urban environment. I was also engaged in and privy to the production of temporary landscapes of familiarity by New Zealanders and other non-Korean individuals in Seoul. These included collective socialising practices, sharing familiar foods that were difficult to obtain in South Korea, playing national sports (like rugby and cricket) as well as the use of symbols through flags, posters and other paraphernalia. Such landscapes represented elements of national, local and individual identities, utilised personal and institutional transnational networks and facilitated temporary feelings of belonging for the individuals involved.

In 2003 when I returned to Auckland it became quickly apparent to me that there were important similarities between these experiences and those of the increasing numbers of international students residing in Auckland at that time. In particular, my experience in Seoul meant that the presence and practices of South Korean international students were particularly notable. The similarities in these two different forms of transnational movement have played an important role throughout this project. Firstly, telling my story of sojourn has offered an opportunity to build bridges with participants along the lines of similar or shared experiences. Further, the extra understanding that I have been able to garner through reference to my own experience in Seoul has also been invaluable. Finally, my efforts to learn the Korean language in South Korea and during the design, research and writing process, and the assistance, advice and insight of my wife Seunghee has also been invaluable to this project. In combination, these factors do not mean that I can consider myself an ‘insider’ but it has meant that I am also not a complete ‘outsider’. Instead, my positionality vis-à-vis the participants in this research has been somewhere in between: neither insider nor outsider; certainly not ‘Korean’ but nor completely ignorant of the important social, cultural, economic and political context of individuals who travel from South Korea to Auckland. To be sure, I am still a Pakeha (New Zealander of European descent) male academic conducting research on South Korean international students but it would be a mistake to assume that the borders between these two positions are entirely impenetrable.

The particular research methodologies that have been employed in this project have also been an important part of the effort to overcome the distance between researcher and participants. Although these are discussed at length in Chapter Four it is
worth highlighting the general characteristics of the project at this stage. In its earliest phase the research comprised an ethnography (including interviews and participant observation) that was complemented by a survey of students and a critical discourse analysis of local print media accounts of international education. In the course of conducting the ethnographic part of the research I soon became aware that these quite orthodox approaches to the study of transnational populations were not going to be effective. This is partly because a significant proportion of the participants were language students and during interviews we often lacked the required language skills, either Korean or English, to address the complex issues that this research focuses on. Moreover, even where language was not an issue it was also apparent that interviews by themselves do not always offer the best insight into the kinds of everyday practices and experiences that I was interested in. To complement these approaches I developed methods that included diary writing, map/diagram drawing exercises and online research activities that, in line with interviews and observation, offered non-verbal, non-English or non-linguistic ways of engaging with participants.

Conceptually this thesis integrates theoretical work on transnationalism and the everyday practices and experiences of urban space. These two fields have often been mutually exclusive despite the fact that they are fundamentally related because transnational migration and practices more often than not occurs through cities and relies upon networks sustained in urban centres (Smith 2000). To bridge the gap between these two fields I simultaneously focus on the everyday aspects of transnationalism as they take place in the urban space of Auckland, not independently of other aspects of urban life but rather as part of the broader production of space in this city. This approach is articulated through a focus on the material and immaterial aspects of urban life that are encountered by transnationals and, in this project, by South Korean international students. Such aspects include the role of everyday properties like bodies and languages; objects like food, clothing and music that offer intimations of different places; emotions like feelings of belonging and estrangement, home and away; and the very real tensions between the imagined and lived practices and experiences of urban life both in Auckland and in the cities and towns that students come from in South Korea. The application of this conceptual approach is broadly inductive. It draws upon the traditions of phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnomethodology that employ theory as a tool or optic to interrogate research findings rather than as a systematic
structuring device. As such the writing in this thesis, particularly the fieldwork chapters (Five to Eleven) seeks to emphasise the voices of individual South Korean international students rather than the presuppositions of theory and the resolution of theoretical dilemmas.

**Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of 12 chapters that are loosely organised into four parts: Chapters One – Four; Chapters Five and Six; Chapters Seven – Ten; and Chapters Eleven and Twelve. The first part presents the contextual, conceptual and methodological backdrop. This introductory chapter is followed by a discussion of the historical experience and current configuration of international education in New Zealand in Chapter Two. I trace the shifting approach to international education and students in New Zealand from a policy centred in a colonial foreign aid project to one that approached students as rational economic subjects within a neo-liberal regime of profit and privatisation. This chapter also considers the ways in which international education has been conceived in New Zealand and internationally and identifies that there is a considerable gap in the critical scholarship on this topic regarding the practices and experiences of students themselves.

Chapter Three comprises the principal literature review in this thesis. It builds on the discussion in Chapter Two and the gap identified in this scholarship by considering the utility of transnationalism as a framework for re-thinking the practices and experiences of international students. I discuss the development of this field, particularly where it relates to migration and migrant activities in the contemporary era. I then integrate the insights gained from this field with a focus on the everyday practices that constitute urban experience. The outcome is a focus on everyday transnational practices in cities like Auckland, and the ways in which these practices manifest themselves materially and immaterially in urban space. Chapter Four introduces the methodological approach, which, as noted above, consists of both orthodox social science techniques and some experimental approaches to understanding everyday transnationalism in Auckland.

The second part of the thesis, Chapters Five and Six, offers greater contextual insight into the arrival and initial experiences of South Korean international students in
Auckland. Chapter Five offers a more detailed account of the social characteristics of greater metropolitan Auckland; considers the transnational networks that facilitate the arrival of South Korean international students in this city; the different social and demographic characteristics of students; and the initial impressions that students have of Auckland. Chapter Six reverses this perspective by tracing the debates that have occurred in print media in Auckland around the increasing numbers of international students in this city. It offers a critical discourse analysis of the ways that international students from a range of different countries including South Korea, and a cohort of young New Zealanders, have been discursively constructed as ‘Asian students’. This chapter also briefly considers some of the ways that these racist representations have been articulated in the everyday spaces of Auckland and the lives of students themselves.

The third part of the thesis shifts the focus to the actual everyday practices of South Korean international students in Auckland. Chapter Seven draws on the diary and mapping exercise that some students completed for this study to consider the individual pathways that students take in their everyday lives. The discussion identifies the differences and similarities in students’ practices and experiences. Here the distance and difference felt by students living in Auckland becomes quite apparent as well as the different strategies employed to cope with these experiences and the effect they have on particular urban spaces.

Chapter Eight also focuses on the lives of students but this time focussing on the quite particular practices and experiences of food consumption and the ways that familiarity – both with local and global foods – are crucial to the maintenance of identities and everyday practices of students. In addition to further illustrating experiences of difference and distance, coping strategies, and changing urban space this chapter also begins to highlight quite explicitly the kind of transnational networks involved in the practices and experiences of international students. Chapter Nine also focuses on a quite specific practice – the communication strategies of South Korean international students in Auckland. It illustrates the ways that the internet in particular is used to maintain connection with ‘home’ but also the ways that the very embodied realities of home (both positive and negative) are also re-produced through these practices.
The story that is told in Chapter Ten is the direct result of my long-running experiences and participant observation with a group of individuals known as the Korean Volunteer Team. This informal association of students spent two hours every Saturday picking up rubbish in Auckland’s inner-city for nearly one and a half years. Through their story, experiences of difference and distance again emerge, as do efforts to challenge the representations of ‘Asian students’ that were discussed in Chapter Six, as well as issues around the re-production of social norms as a way of constructing a sense of familiarity while abroad.

The final part of this thesis considers both the conclusion of students’ studies in Auckland and the thesis itself. Chapter Eleven shifts the site of research from Auckland to South Korea. This chapter is based upon interviews conducted with former international students about the experiences of return after study. In addition to reflecting on the ongoing movement involved in these individuals’ lives (it does not end when they leave Auckland) this chapter also illustrates the far-reaching transformations that transnationalism can have – not just in Auckland, New Zealand, nor just in individual students’ lives but indeed in South Korea and further afield. Concluding this thesis, Chapter Twelve draws together the sometimes disparate threads that have been followed in this thesis. As well as providing a summary of the findings, Chapter Twelve identifies the insights that can be gained from the analysis of the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland and the possibilities for further scholarship in this and related fields.
Chapter Two

FOREIGN EXCHANGE:

International Education in New Zealand

There is nothing new about the practice of international education. Indeed, in one of the earliest efforts to document the phenomenon, David G. Scanlon (1960: 1) suggested that international education is ‘as old as nations themselves’. In fact, if less emphasis is placed on the centrality of nations it might even be possible to identify the practice of academic exchange and learning for millennia (Butcher 2003; Puggioni 2005; White 1998). Nevertheless, there is something markedly different in the practice of international education today even when compared to its most recent antecedents. For one, the numbers of nations offering international educational services, the types of these services, the number of students studying abroad and the diversity of subjects studied have all increased enormously (Sylvester 2005). More than this, however, international education is now no longer just about pedagogical practice, if indeed it ever was. Rather, the contemporary practice of teaching students from other countries more often than not represents a manifest effort by nation-states and private organisations – often in tandem – to earn foreign currency. New Zealand’s experience of international education is no different. After a long period in which the education of overseas students was conducted as part of this country’s foreign aid programme (Tarling 2004), international education is now seen primarily as an export industry with all the marketing, development and governance that goes along with comparable projects (Lewis 2005).

In this chapter my objective is to outline the historical experience and current configuration of the practice of international education in New Zealand in a manner that will promote a better understanding of the material that constitutes the main part of this thesis. In this regard, the chapter begins by discussing the changing approach to international education in New Zealand – what has often been called the shift from ‘aid to trade’ (N. Bennett 1998; Butcher 2003; Tarling 2004; Ward 2001). A more detailed
account of recent developments in the new export education industry is then offered focussing on the changing demographics of international students, new state-led efforts to manage the industry and the increasing dominance of the city of Auckland as the principal site of international education in New Zealand. This section is followed by a brief description of the relative position of New Zealand in comparison to the global practice of international education. Finally, I consider some of the different conceptualisations of international education in academic literature placing particular emphasis on a small group of emerging critical perspectives.

International Education in New Zealand

In the past decade international education has grown to be one of New Zealand’s most financially successful ‘knowledge economy’ endeavours (Grewal 2003). It was claimed, for instance, in 2003 that international education was the fourth largest export earner in the country and contributed $2 billion dollars to the local economy (Education New Zealand 2003a). At the same time the sale of educational services to students from other countries has become the subject of considerable academic, popular and media debate (Butcher & McGrath 2004; Collins 2006). However, the education of overseas students in New Zealand has not always attracted this much attention or foreign exchange (N. Bennett 1998; Tarling 2003; 2004). In fact, in the longer history of international education in New Zealand the primary goal was not to increase New Zealand’s GDP but rather to provide aid to students who largely came from ‘under-developed’ countries in the South Pacific and South and South East Asia.

The Colombo Plan and International Education

The organised education of overseas students in New Zealand began in 1951 following the signing of the Colombo Plan in what is now Sri Lanka the year prior (Butcher 2003; Cook 1995; Oakman 2004; Tarling 2004). Students from South Pacific nations had been attending secondary schools in New Zealand since the 1930’s. However, as both Andrew Butcher (2003) and Nicholas Tarling (2004) argue, New Zealand’s colonial and regional relationship with these nations made this practice qualitatively and eventually quantitatively different from the education of students from further afield. The Colombo Plan was an aid and development agreement between the foreign ministers of Commonwealth countries. It was motivated by a fear of communism’s rise in poorer
Asian countries and seemingly underwritten by the sense of a civilising mission in the South Pacific’s British settler colonies (Kumar 2004; Oakman 2004; Tarling 2004). The Colombo Plan was not only concerned with educating the young of Asian countries. Rather, the education of these international students was complemented by larger efforts at technical aid and development that were carried out directly in developing countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2001; Oakman 2004).

The international students who came under the Colombo Plan structure were provided with training in tertiary institutions alongside domestic students. Initially, the number of students and the diversity of courses they studied was limited: in 1951, 16 international students studied in New Zealand under the Colombo Plan. They studied in courses for which the training ‘would be beneficial to both the country concerned and the trainee’ (Butcher 2003: 32). The numbers of students soon grew – by 1962 1,113 students had received training under the Colombo Plan. The majority of these students arrived from countries in South and South-East Asia, dominated by those from former British Colonies (Butcher 2003). Contemporaneously, another group of international students not sponsored by the Colombo Plan or their own governments were arriving in New Zealand – frequently from the same nations as Colombo Plan students. These students, who paid the same small fee as domestic students, were in many ways the ‘advance guard of today’s “private international students”’ (Tarling 2004: 10). They would soon outnumber the Colombo Plan students and their increasing number during the 1950’s – 1970’s provided some of the impetus for the initial conversations around the commercialisation of international education in New Zealand. In essence while they were not offered formal ‘aid’, through their enrolment in tertiary institutions, these students received a significant subsidy from the New Zealand taxpayer – a fact that would eventually raise questions about the economic value of offering ostensibly free education to foreigners.

 Debates about charging international students for their courses began to emerge in the 1970’s. In part these debates were a response to increasing numbers of international students. Indeed, by the early 1970’s three major New Zealand universities had placed quotas on the number of international students they would accept (Butcher 2003). Later, the government would place a quota on the number of students who could come from one country as a percentage of total international student enrolments – a move directed at reducing the dominance of Malaysian (and within that Malaysian-Chinese) students
who constituted 71% of first year private students in 1976 (Butcher 2003). At the same
time as New Zealand governments were attempting to limit the number of international
students through quotas and educational requirements, debates about charging students
emerged. Although these debates were facilitated by the increasing number of students,
they should not be seen in isolation from broader shifts in New Zealand’s foreign policy
approach and a changing perception of the value of education. Initially, in 1970/71,
suggestions were made about charging international students a surcharge of $100 for
their education but this was not implemented by the government of the time (Butcher
2003). Throughout the 1970s, reviews were completed and arguments continued to be
made about the possibility of charging international students for their courses. Yet, it
was not until 1979 that a concessionary fee of $1500 was implemented (Tarling 2004).
This fee remained until the mid 1980s when international students were again charged
the same fee as domestic students. The difference however was that the fee for domestic
students was now increasing as a result of changing perceptions about the value of
education more generally (Tarling 2004).

‘International’ to ‘Export’ Education

Nick Lewis (2005: 24) argues that while the charging of international students should be
seen as part of a ‘long-running series of policy debates… the decisive moments were,
nevertheless, initiated with the neo-liberal reforms to education of the late 1980s and
early 1990s’. These reforms were not limited to education but rather were part of a
much broader neo-liberal restructuring throughout New Zealand society and economy
(Hiebert, Collins, & Spoonley 2003; Kelsey 1995). In this regard, most authors
documenting the period identify a report by the New Zealand Market Development
Board (MDB) on the potential of ‘export’ education as the foundation for the full
commercialisation of international education in New Zealand (N. Bennett 1998; Butcher
2003; Lewis 2005; Tarling 2004). The MDB report suggested quite boldly that
institutions be able to ‘market their own courses, set their own fees and retain the
revenue in order to increase their capacity’ (N. Bennett 1998: 25). The report was not
without its dissenters, not least the New Zealand University Students Association who
saw the move as the ‘thin edge of a long wedge’ towards full commercialisation of
education (Tarling 2004: 161). However, in contrast to the 1970s when suggestions
about charging students were quickly rebuked by those both inside and outside
government the MDB report fitted within the restructuring programme employed by the
administration of the day. It was implemented in the Education Act 1989 and the Education Amendment Act 1990, which allowed institutions, public and private, to charge international students the full cost of their courses (N. Bennett 1998). At the same time a new industry organisation, New Zealand Education International Limited (NZEIL), was formed to help develop export education as an industry in New Zealand institutions (Lewis 2005).

During the 1990s the numbers of international students studying in New Zealand increased steadily but not extraordinarily. In 1989 as the legislative changes were first put into effect there were 675 students studying in public tertiary institutions (N. Bennett 1998). By 1999 there were over 6000 (Ministry of Education 2002b). Increases across other public and private sectors were similar and at the end of the decade there were almost 30,000 international students studying in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2005c). During this period the approach to exporting education as an economic good was characterised by an astonishing level of neo-liberalism (Lewis 2005). Mostly state owned educational institutions were exhorted to develop entrepreneurial approaches to increasing student numbers as a supplement to their relatively shrinking state-funded resources. At the same time increasing numbers of private academies were beginning to attract students from overseas into courses that domestic students would be unlikely to enrol in. Institutions were expected to market their own courses and programmes, accept the risks and responsibilities of hosting international students as customers and, where possible, reap the financial benefits. There was little regulation during this early period of commercialisation. Nick Lewis’ (2005: 25) account, although rather anthropomorphic, offers a useful sketch:

The *laissez faire* was quite remarkable as foreign students poured into state owned institutions (which became increasingly dependent on their fees), as income and resource inequalities among schools widened and as foreign language students became increasingly visible in city centres, stimulating demand for everything from fast food and fast cars to bus tickets and secondary office space, particularly in Auckland

The lack of direction provided by the state in the development of the industry would eventually cause problems. Early on, the financial collapse of two English language schools through mismanagement illustrated the risks involved in the market (Butcher 2003). As the industry increased however the difficulties of hosting large numbers of overseas students became even more apparent across the sector: the (lack of) pastoral
care for students, increasing inequality between institutions particularly in the state secondary sector, and difficulties in sustaining quality programmes (Butcher & McGrath 2004; Li, Baker, & Marshall 2002; Mao 2002).

**Changing Demographics**

Between 1998 and 1999 international education in New Zealand was re-configured once again. This re-configuration had three aspects which will be addressed in turn: a change in student demographics, increased involvement by the state and the growing dominance of Auckland as the principal site of international education.

During most of the 1990s the demographic makeup of international students in New Zealand remained relatively similar to the period before the establishment of the education export industry. Students came predominantly from South-East Asian countries and within that Malaysia and Malaysian-Chinese in particular (N. Bennett 1998; Statistics New Zealand 2001b; Tarling 2004). In late 1997, as the industry was beginning to feel the effect of the Asian financial crisis, the government agreed to admit a quota of 400 Chinese students. Previously, entry for students from the People’s Republic of China had been highly regulated and their contribution to total student numbers had been a meagre 1-3%\(^1\). This quota was extended to 1000 in June 1998 and to 4000 by October that same year (Tarling 2004). The quota was removed completely in 1999 with the blessing of the Chinese government (Asia 2000 Foundation 2003). Nicholas Tarling (2004: 223) usefully illustrates the gravity of this change in student population: ‘in 1994 1.5% were from China and in 2002 56.3%; in 1994 31.1% were from Malaysia and in 2002 4.9%’.

Alongside students from the People’s Republic of China, international students arriving from Japan and South Korea also became increasingly important during this period. These nationalities had begun to be a significant part of the international student mix since the early 1990s and have consistently increased as a proportion of total international student numbers\(^2\) (N. Bennett 1998; Ministry of Education 2002b). Overall, between 1999 and 2003 the total number of international students studying in

---

\(^1\) Prior to 1997 the restrictions on Chinese student’s entry were justified through arguments that ‘such students would try for refugee status or political asylum’ or they would use their student status as an immigration shortcut (Tarling 2004: 226).

\(^2\) The only exception to this pattern was a noted decrease in South Korean international students following the Asian financial crisis in 1997.
New Zealand increased from around 30,000 to nearly 120,000 (Statistics New Zealand 2005c). More than 80% of these students came from the aforementioned East Asian nations of the People’s Republic of China (45%), South Korea (20%), and Japan (17%). This percentage rises to nearly 90% when students from all Asian countries are included (Education New Zealand 2003b). Although New Zealand stands out as an international study destination totally reliant on students from Asia, other countries have also been dominated by students from this region. In Australia, for example, as many as 71% of Australian international students have arrived from countries in Asia, in Canada the figure is 48%, in the United States 62% and globally students from Asia account for 45% of all international student enrolments³ (Kane 2005; OECD 2005b).

The reasons why students from these nations have chosen to study in New Zealand and elsewhere in much greater numbers in recent years and the choices they make about where to study are multiple, overlapping and complex. In a useful but rather functional account Pam Malcolm, Anthony Ling and Carol Sherry (2004) have shown that the main reasons Chinese international students choose to study in New Zealand are its safe environment, value for money, the fact that it is an English speaking country, and that it has easier visa regulations. However, more in-depth research overseas suggests that the reasons for study more often reflect the particularities of potential students’ experiences. Johanna Waters (2006), for example, has discussed how increased demand for university places at home, increased globalisation and the desire for cultural capital amongst Hong Kong international students motivates their travel to study in Vancouver, Canada. This view appears to be supported by other research on the “push and pull” factors that affect students’ choice (Mazzarol & Soutar 2002; McMahon 1992). In regards to the choice of study destination Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak (2004) have challenged normative accounts that suggest reputation is the only influence on the choice of where to study. They suggest that networks with co-nationals who are permanent migrants or previous tourist experiences are at least as important if not more important when it comes to choosing where to study. Elsewhere Nittavud Pimpa (2003) has similarly found that for Thai international students the most significant influence of where and what to study is family beliefs and recommendations. What is clear throughout these examples is that the pressures to choose to study overseas and the

³ These figures all relate to student numbers in 2003 except for the Canadian figure which is for 2002 – Canada did not report international student numbers to the OECD in 2003.
factors involved in the choice of study destination are spatially variable. These factors reflect the particular histories of regions, nations, cities, neighbourhoods, communities, institutions, families and individuals. The increasing predominance of international students from particular parts of the world, namely Asia and within that East Asia, must be viewed within this context.

**Managing Export Education**

The second characteristic of the shift in the practice of international education during the late 1990s and early 2000s was an increased level of state involvement. In the period from 1989 – 1999 there was little effort to regulate the export education industry, particularly with regard to the quality of educational provision or the pastoral care of international students. To put it simply, ‘[i]n the policies of the period 1984 to 1999, international students were notable by their absence and the quality of their education and experience was a secondary concern’ (Butcher 2003: 64). Perhaps the only significant exception to this absence was the introduction in 1996 of a voluntary code of practice (Lewis 2005). This code made provisions for the pastoral care of students and protecting their rights as consumers – signatories would be committed to these provisions. The code also led to the formation of the International Education Appeals Authority (IEAA), an independent body that would deal with complaints from international students regarding pastoral care and educational provision. In the end however the code only ever really represented a distinguishing mark for already high quality institutions. The voluntary nature of the code meant that it had little effect in controlling the poor quality institutions that were increasingly worrying both the industry as a whole and advocates for international students.

In 1998 there was also a change made in the organising body of the export education industry. ‘New Zealand Education International Limited’ became ‘Education New Zealand’ and was given explicit responsibility ‘as the industry's umbrella body to promote and facilitate recruitment of international students to New Zealand’ (Asia 2000 Foundation 2003: 10). This new role sought to encourage a more unified approach to the marketing, recruiting and management of international students in New Zealand. There remained at this time little interest in the experiences of international students or the quality of the educational services that they received.
Since the election of a Labour-led government in 1999 there has been a new interest in the ‘quality’ of export education in New Zealand (Butcher 2003). This situation reflects this administration’s employment of a ‘third way’ approach (Giddens 1998) in many areas of policy as it does any effort to bring real quality to the experiences of international students. The interest in quality is manifest in reports by the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (Giddens 1998; TEAC 2000; 2001c; 2001b; 2001a); the Export Education Strategy (Ministry of Education 2001); the Tertiary Education Strategy (Ministry of Education 2002c); the Tertiary Education Reform Bill and perhaps most importantly the Code of Practice for the pastoral care of international students (Ministry of Education 2002a). Each of these documents discussed education principally as an economic good; within that international students are discussed for their economic value; the importance of perceptions of quality to growth in export education are highlighted; and the need for greater co-ordination amongst the different public and private actors involved in the industry is established (Butcher 2003).

In March 2002 ‘the centrepiece of the new regulatory framework for export education’, the Code of practice for the pastoral care of international students took effect (Lewis 2005: 27). This new code was no longer voluntary and as a result saw the number of signatories increase from 250 to over 1000 including many of the private institutions that had previously slipped under the state’s radar. The code was enforced by the Education Standards Act 2001 which required any provider who enrolled international students to be a signatory to the code and to abide by its regulations (Butcher 2003). These regulations included provisions for pastoral care, assessing grievances, monitoring institutional behaviour and imposing sanctions. The Code of Practice can be interpreted as a governmental technology of the state (Lewis 2005). It has served to make industry subjects self-regulating and shift the responsibility for the economic risks of international education to institutions, students and their parents. By doing so the code literally produces the export education ‘industry’ in New Zealand – ‘it treats foreign students as consumers and schools as businesses, exhorts the use of agents and encourages an ‘institutional thickening’ of the industry’ (Lewis 2005: 36). The code constitutes a brand for New Zealand education as a ‘quality destination’ for international students. It does this by suggesting to students, their parents, agencies and foreign governments that the ‘product’ – New Zealand education – is quality controlled (Lewis 2005). There is an important distinction to be made here. The code at no point
guarantees the quality of educational provision, although it does offer ways to pursue complaints through the IEAA if the customer, the international student, is not satisfied.

By the mid 2000’s the code of practice and many of the other discussion documents and legislation of the early 2000’s had become thoroughly embedded in the discourses and practices of the export education industry. Far from a new focus on quality and the experience of international students emerging however, it is the ‘perception’ of quality which is now central to the practice of exporting education. The brand *Educated in New Zealand*, which has now become *New Zealand Educated* to emphasise that offshore programs are also of good quality, has been used to market the industry all over the world (Waters 2005a). To date however, there is no evidence at all that the code of practice has had any effect on the experiences of international students in New Zealand. In fact, a report by the Ministry of Education in 2004 suggests exactly this (Ward & Masgoret 2004). The report identified that many students were not satisfied with their experiences in New Zealand, a point that was raised in a similar investigation in 2001 (Ward 2001). Moreover, other research into students’ perceptions of educational quality in English language schools suggests that problems in that area also remain (Li 2004).

**The Centrality of Auckland**

The final characteristic of the export education industry in the early 2000s was the importance of Auckland as the principal site. To focus on the centrality of Auckland is neither to deny the impact of export education elsewhere (Gan & Lee 2003) or the fact that Auckland has always been an important location for the education of international students (Tarling 2004). However, it is to suggest that for a number of salient reasons Auckland has become both numerically and proportionally the most popular destination for international students in New Zealand. In the first place Auckland is the major international access point in New Zealand. It is home to the largest proportion the nation’s (particularly recent) migrants, many of whom have arrived from the same countries as the majority of international students – namely the People’s Republic of China and South Korea (see also Chapter Five). There is, of course, a long history of connections between major urban centres and transnational activity of the sort that international students engage in (see Chapter Three). Indeed, if Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak’s (2004) work in Vancouver is anything to go by it is the very presence
of large numbers of migrants in Auckland that facilitates the arrival of large numbers of international students from the same nationalities. Furthermore, Auckland is also the location of New Zealand’s best performing university in both national (TEC 2003) and international (THES 2006) assessment exercises. As such Auckland is an educational destination in its own right even if it is much further down the hierarchy from locations like London, Vancouver or Sydney (Wakefield 2003). The reputation of institutions like the University of Auckland (Abbott & Ali 2005) and the transnational networks sustained by migrants has a spill-over effect that has contributed to Auckland becoming the preferred destination for international students in New Zealand, particularly those from East Asia. This preference is reflected in the research that follows with South Korean international students (see Chapter Five).

The numbers of students studying in Auckland also speaks for itself. In a report commissioned by the Auckland City Council it was shown that, in 2002, Auckland accounted for over 50% of international students with 44614 compared to the national total of 87923. This proportion is particularly significant given that only three years earlier Auckland accounted for only around 40% of students with 11595 out of a total of 29051 (Stroombergen 2003). In the years since, Auckland has maintained this proportion of students even as the industry has begun to struggle (Ministry of Education 2005). The presence and practices of such large numbers of international students in a city like Auckland has had a significant social, cultural, physical and economic effect (Collins 2004; Stroombergen 2003). As Nick Lewis’ (2005) earlier comments about the impact of students intimated there has been a huge growth in services that either directly or indirectly target international students in this city. Such services include the provision of student’s national foods in restaurants and shops, information communication technologies in internet cafes, entertainment facilities like karaoke rooms, the activities of education and immigration agencies, banking services and the hugely significant provision of homestay and other accommodation to students (Collins 2004; Paetz 2003; Wakefield 2003). In the case of South Korean international students many of these services are provided by recent South Korean migrants to Auckland through ethnic networks that cut across the differences between citizens, residents, temporary workers, international students and perhaps even tourists in New Zealand. These are significant developments, they are manifestations of the transnational activity now occurring daily in Auckland, they have played a role in the changing meaning attached to certain places
in the urban landscape, particularly the inner city, and at times have been the target of racist representations in the news media.

**Boombust and...**

The phenomenal growth that had characterised the export education industry in New Zealand from the late 1990s through to the early 2000s reached its peak in 2003. In that year almost 120,000 international students studied in schools, tertiary institutions and private academies throughout New Zealand\(^4\) (Statistics New Zealand 2005c). At that time it was estimated that educating international students was contributing approximately $2 billion into the New Zealand economy. This made export education one of the top five export industries in New Zealand (Education New Zealand 2003a). By that time however it had become apparent to many in the industry and many commentators – both academic and political – that the long rise in student numbers stimulated principally by students from East-Asia was reaching an end (Butcher & McGrath 2004). Between 2003 and 2004 the number of international student permits and visas issued decreased by 8% (Statistics New Zealand 2005c). The decrease was particularly notable amongst English language students and students from the People’s Republic of China (Malcolm et al. 2004). At the time this decrease was attributed in various parts to the collapse of a high profile private institution, *Modern Age Institute of Learning*, the heavy reliance on students who came from China and subsequent bad publicity in that country’s media, poor educational provision, and virtually non-existent pastoral care (Li 2004). However, since these initial proclamations of an industry in ‘crisis’ more detailed examinations have identified other factors (Abbott 2004; Abbott & Ali 2005; Butcher & McGrath 2004). These factors include the increasing value of the New Zealand dollar, a loosening of entry requirements for students in Australia alongside a relative tightening in New Zealand, and increased competition in the total market for export education internationally.

The last available statistics at the time of writing this thesis indicated that in the eight months until August 2005 there were around 82,000 international students studying at 1013 institutions across all sectors in New Zealand (Ministry of Education

\(^4\) This information refers only to “the number of student permits and student visas issued, not the number of individuals granted such permits and visas. It is possible for a person to be granted more than one permit in a 12 months period” (Statistics New Zealand 2005c). This figure also does not include students who study less than 3 months and are not required to obtain a student visa.
2005). This figure compares to 96,000 international students studying in New Zealand at 1099 institutions during the same period in 2004 – a decrease of 15% and 8% respectively. On the basis of the previous years statistics this would suggest that the total number of international students studying in New Zealand in 2005 will be around 95-96000. The majority of the decrease was in the numbers of students studying at primary and secondary schools and private academies (including English language schools)\(^5\). This fact suggests that there may still be significant decreases in the overall number of international students studying in New Zealand as many students first study in secondary schools or private academies before going on to public tertiary education (Education New Zealand 2005). In the same figures Auckland is still the dominant location for international students with 52.6% of all enrolments – a small increase on its proportion in 2004. Similarly, students from the People’s Republic of China, South Korea and Japan are still the most significant national groupings of students although their proportion of total student numbers has decreased to 70% of all enrolments.

At the time of writing, it remains unclear whether or when the numbers of international students studying in New Zealand would stop their decline let alone increase again. In 2006 the decreasing numbers of international students was still a significant topic of journalistic discussion. However, what is very clear is that for the foreseeable future the approach to teaching students from other countries will remain the same. This is an approach that is guided by global neo-liberal discourses that measures individual international students principally for their economic value and risk. This is the nature of the ‘foreign exchange’ involved in international education in New Zealand today. It is an exchange determined simply as a transaction between an individual consumer, the international student, and the provider of educational services, the particular institution. Although the numbers and nationality of students who study in New Zealand may ebb and flow in the years to come there is currently no evidence that any change in this approach to international education is forthcoming.

**International Education beyond New Zealand**

The total number of students studying outside their countries of citizenship has grown rapidly in recent years, not just in New Zealand but also in many other countries.

\(^5\) Students in primary and secondary schooling decreased by 23% and private academies also by 23%. In contrast, students in public tertiary education only decreased by 3% (Ministry of Education 2005).
According to OECD records, in 2003 there were over 2 million students studying overseas (OECD 2005b), twice the number of twenty years ago (Waters 2005a). This figure is likely to increase to around 7-8 million by 2025 (Asia 2000 Foundation 2003). New Zealand’s share of the total international student enrolments is relatively small – only 1.4% in 2003 at the height of the student ‘boom’ in this country.

The vast majority of international students study within a very small range of countries. The top five student receiving countries – the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Australia – together accounted for nearly 80% of total student enrolments in 2003 (OECD 2005b). The dominance of these five countries and other developed nations including New Zealand reflects the patent unidirectionality of international student mobility. The United States of America, for example, accounts for nearly 30% of global foreign student enrolments (OECD 2005b) yet only 1% of United States students spend any time studying overseas and even less as full international students (Larsen, Martin, & Morris 2002; Sowa 2002). In contrast, approximately 150,000 students from South Korea study abroad annually while little more than 6000 overseas students study in South Korea and most of those are from its East Asian neighbours Japan, China and Taiwan (J. K. Lee 2004).

Broadly speaking the geography of international education is from developing countries to developed countries, from East to West and from non-English speaking countries to English speaking countries (Bennell & Pearce 1998; Rizvi 2000; Waters 2005a; Willinsky 2000). This characteristic of international education is similarly reflected in New Zealand where very few New Zealanders travel to study overseas but large numbers of students from East, South-East and South Asia are enrolled in New Zealand public and private institutions. It is a characteristic which highlights the uneven geography and ongoing neo-colonialism apparent in the practice of international education throughout the world (Matthews & Sidhu 2005).

Conceiving International Education

Although the current practice of educating international students in New Zealand is a phenomenon infused with the particularities of history, place, action and thought in this country, it is also inseparably connected to processes beyond the borders of this nation. This much is obvious even in the early developments of the Colombo Plan, an
agreement which was a product of particularities of British Imperialism in certain parts of the world (Oakman 2004). In recent times however the practice of educating overseas students has arguably become even more globally connected. For one, the movement of individual students from a range of countries is not just governed by regional and national agreements – something that should be classified as international (Portes 2001) – but by the agreements and regulations of global bodies like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Sauvé 2002). Secondly, although the increases in New Zealand’s student numbers, particularly since the late 1990’s, partially reflect the state’s role in regulating student mobility, these increases are not without parallel elsewhere. Indeed, each of the major English speaking countries – Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and more recently the Republic of Ireland – have experienced dramatic increases in student numbers at some point during the last decade (Waters 2005a). Furthermore, and perhaps most notably, the neo-liberal discourses that have constituted the export education ‘industry’ in New Zealand are not a unique characteristic of this country’s experience. Indeed, Nick Lewis’ (2005) account of the development of the Code of Practice points to exactly this issue. He illustrates quite effectively how this governmental technology, although in itself unique to New Zealand, is also part of broader neo-liberal globalising processes that are part of the practice of selling education to international students throughout the world (see also Rizvi 2000; Sidhu 2004; Waters 2005a).

These three examples are not wholly independent of each other, nor do they exhaust the ways that international education is involved in the processes of globalisation. Nevertheless, they do point to the fact that international education is something that cannot be viewed only through the optic of national society – to do this would be equivalent to the fallacy of methodological nationalism, the uncritical conceptualisation of society simply in terms of relatively independent national-territorial states (see Chapter Three and Beck 2004). Contemporaneously however, it would also be unwise to place too much emphasis on the global and the processes of globalisation as the key driver of international education. Such an emphasis is riddled with the problems of solely economistic perspective that privileges global capitalism as the driving force of history (Smith 2000). It is this approach that has led many theorists to over-emphasise the extent to which the world is all becoming the same in a range of
metaphors that include ‘time-space compression’ (Harvey 1989), ‘spaces of flows’ (Castells 1996; 1997) and a ‘borderless world’ (Ohmae 1990). In contrast to these theoretical abstractions it is better to view the developments of international education in places like New Zealand through the practices and discourses that constitute this phenomenon politically, economically, culturally and socially. This approach will necessarily include elements that cross national borders but will also provide ample room to understand the particular manifestations of international education that occur in and across different places.

In this regard however, only minimal advice can be taken from the existing literature on international education both in New Zealand and elsewhere. Overwhelmingly this literature is economistic, positivistic and developmentalist. Principally, it has concerned itself with pedagogical development (Apple, Kenway, & Singh 2005; Biggs 2003; Carroll & Ryan 2005), psychological adaptation (Leung 2001; Luzio-Lockett 1998; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco 2002), and economic impact (Anderson 2004; Heaton & Throsby 1998; Johnston, Baker, & Creedy 1997). The literally countless number of studies of this kind offer little advice – at best they provide descriptive accounts of the numbers of students, how they might best be taught, abstract quantitative renderings of international students’ experiences, and most commonly the dollar value of students. Focussing on the literature that is specific to New Zealand offers little more except that the descriptive accounts here are more relevant to the topic of this thesis. For the most part the research into international students in New Zealand is atheoretical (Ballingall, Smith, & Duncan 2004) and even when it is informed by theory it is almost always lacking solid critical perspectives. The best example of such a theoretically informed but relatively uncritical approach is the increasing number of studies utilising the Socio-Cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) to measure international students cross-cultural experience (Berno & Ward 2003; Ward 2001; Ward & Kennedy 1999; Ward & Masgoret 2004). Elsewhere in the New Zealand literature most research and writing on international education is based around refining customer support services (Walker 2001) or improving economic measurement (Abbott 2004; Abbott & Ali 2005; Stroombergen 2003), demographic records (Butcher 2002c), marketing and management initiatives (Fam & Gray 2000; Smith & Rae 2006), and quality control (Peddie, Lewis, & Barkhuizen 2003; Larner & Le Heron 2002; Larner & Walters 2002). In a sense these efforts reflect the fact that much of this research has
been state funded and has been part of the recent state-centred project of developing a successful export education industry. They have not questioned the nature of exporting education nor the principles that underlie its practice.

Beyond the majority of research on international education there is a small amount of scholarship that has developed relatively recently that does engage with the topic from a critical perspective. Firstly, there is a series of discussions beginning to emerge under the auspices of post-structural political economy (Larner & Le Heron 2002; Larner & Walters 2002). Nick Lewis’ (2005) account of the changing governance of international education in New Zealand – quoted at length in this chapter – is one example. Lewis has offered a thorough analysis of the Code of Practice through the lens of the governmentality approach. He goes beyond existing criticisms that the code is simply a marketing strategy for the industry (Butcher 2003) to show that it actually constitutes the industry itself by implicating it within globalising practices and discourses. In Australia, Ravinder Sidhu (2004) also takes a post-structural political economy approach to understanding the governance and development of international education in that country. She has illustrated how a global imaginary of international education has served to legitimate an approach to internationalising in universities that is solely concerned with the recruitment of a diverse international student population (see also Matthews 2002). These accounts usefully identify that the global ideas of international education are as much products of particular national experiences as they are about the movement of ideas and people across borders.

A second group of critical approaches to the study of international education has considered the possible development of globally oriented subjectivities amongst highly mobile international students. In this case Julie Matthews with Ravinder Sidhu (2004) have provided a useful yardstick. They discuss research undertaken with students in Australian secondary schools that problematises their own belief that the co-presence of different nationalities in the school environment would provide the opportunity for new transnational affiliations. Instead, their research found that with only minor exceptions international students and Australian students had little to do with each other in their everyday lives. The authors illustrate how both local and international students were implicated in ongoing neo-colonialist discourses about international education that places the neo-liberal, western, male as the idealised subject of any cosmopolitan encounter. In another example, Fazal Rizvi (2000) has discussed whether the practice of
international education contributes to the development of a global culture. Through reflection on a series of in-depth interviews with international students in Australia Rizvi shows that belief in the inevitability of a westernised global culture is unfounded. The movements of students may well be unidirectional but this does not mean that students will always accept the dominance of the cultures that they study within. Instead, he argues, ‘[s]tudent identities can never be treated as self-evident: they are saturated with the experiences of colonial histories, local cultural diversity, and political complexity, on the one hand, and with the contemporary homogenizing experiences of “global media spaces” on the other’ (Rizvi 2000: 221).

Finally, of particular significance to this thesis, there is also a growing scholarly interest in international education that focuses on the movements of individual students. As yet there is no study that focuses totally on the experiences, practices and implications of movements of individual international students within transnationalism or its related fields. There have, however, been a number of superficial comments made about international students in general discussions of transnationalism (Conradson & Latham 2005b) and perhaps more importantly a few examples of research projects that integrate issues that relate to student mobility (Butcher 2003; Hiebert & Kwak 2004; Rizvi 2005; Waters 2005a; 2005b; 2006). In one example, Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak (2004) have offered a useful account of the networks that connect differently placed South Korean migrants, including international students in Vancouver, Canada. Johanna Waters (2005a), also focussing on Vancouver, has documented the mobility and cultural capital associated with a foreign education for Hong Kong migrants and international students. In New Zealand, Andrew Butcher (2003) has offered a starting point for understanding the processes of re-entry through his research with South-East Asian international students who return to their countries of origin after completing studies in New Zealand. Finally, Fazal Rizvi (2005) again has offered a useful account critiquing the literature around ‘brain drain’ that constructs skilled migrants like international students as neo-liberal rational subjects. In contrast to this he offers a description that places the mobility of international students at the centre of competing pressures related to individual success, national belonging and community and family obligations.

This thesis engages with these developments in the conceptualisation of international education. In the first instance, the research addresses a specific gap in the
literature on international education in New Zealand. Firstly, it focuses on a numerically significant national group, South Korean international students, which have not been considered in detail beyond basic speculation by any other researchers. Secondly, this project attempts to understand the experiences of these individual international students outside the classroom – something that has also only been approached superficially (Butcher 2004b; Butcher & McGrath 2004) or in highly aggregated ways (Ward & Masgoret 2004). Moreover, in contrast to the majority of academic literature on international education in New Zealand and internationally, this project is not purely an attempt to understand the experience of studying overseas or hosting international students. Rather, I am concerned here with the practices and experiences of one group of transnational actors, South Korean international students. They are a group whose sojourn in Auckland is caught up in the practice of international education but not completely determined by it. Indeed, in the next chapter I will position this thesis conceptually in ways that connect the practices of international students with those of other mobile individuals – migrants, tourists, expatriate workers – as means to understanding the practices and experiences of transnationality and its impacts on contemporary urban space in Auckland.

This project also engages with many of the ideas that have been developed and discussed in the critical literature on international education. This includes an acknowledgement of the ways that discourses of globalisation are involved in constituting the industry of exporting education (Lewis 2005; Matthews 2002; Sidhu 2004). It also includes a consideration of the ways that international students, including South Koreans in Auckland, are involved in the processes of cultural globalisation (Rizvi 2000) and the practices of transnational affiliations (Matthews & Sidhu 2005). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this thesis takes particular note from research that examines the mobility of international students, the networks that facilitate such mobility (Hiebert & Kwak 2004), the socio-cultural value of such mobility (Waters 2006), the emotional experience of shifting place affiliations (Butcher 2003) and the multiple factors that influence students life choices (Rizvi 2005). In the chapters that follow I will discuss and develop on the ideas that have emerged in this work. However, I also aim to uncover new understandings of the practice of international education through reflection on the multiple everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland.
Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the historical experience and current configuration of international education in New Zealand. It has detailed how the practice of educating overseas students in this country has shifted from being a part of one state-centred project of international aid based upon colonial relationships to a different state-centred project that views international students as economic objects through neo-colonial relationships. New Zealand’s place within the worldwide practice of international education was highlighted alongside a brief description of the current rather uncritical literature on the subject. Some emerging critical themes in the study of international education were also highlighted as part of the pathway towards the designs of this project.

In the next chapter I map out the conceptual approach employed in this project. It details the growth of academic literature around the framework of ‘transnationalism’ and the ways that this can contribute to understanding the practices and experiences of mobile individuals like South Korean international students. In addition, I also foreground an emergent connection between these literatures and scholarship in urban studies, particular that work concerned with everyday encounters in urban space. This integration of literature on mobility and urbanity points to the ways in which the lives of transnational actors need to be understood in terms of their effects in the multiple locations that they often simultaneously inhabit.
Chapter Three

EVERYDAY TRANSNATIONALISM IN CITIES

The key concerns of this thesis are threefold. The principal concern is the practices and experiences of South Korean international students with an emphasis on the transnationalism involved in their everyday lives. The second is the ways that the practices of these students are involved in the continuing transformation of urban space in the city of Auckland – physical, social and cultural. Finally, through these primary concerns, this thesis also offers a critical analysis of the project of international education in Auckland and New Zealand (as described in Chapter Two) that challenges the dehumanising economism that has characterised most popular, political and academic writing on the subject. Following on from the discussion of international education in the previous chapter this literature review lays the groundwork for the primary concerns of this thesis. The chapter is divided into two parts. Part A discusses the field of transnational studies as it has emerged in the last two decades including a consideration of the major critiques of and recent developments in this approach. Part B frames the ways in which transnationalism is used in this project and seeks to integrate aspects of transnational studies with scholarship focused on the everyday practices that constitute urban space.

Part A: Transnationalism

The field of transnational studies emerged from a confluence of academic debates around migration and globalisation (Bailey 2001; Faist 2004; Kivisto 2001). Prior to the emergence of a transnational approach academic scholarship tended to conceive migration as a linear process or series of processes: a permanent rupture followed by assimilation into a new society; as a temporary sojourn followed by a permanent return ‘home’; or through studies of circulation in migration. As such the main priorities of migration research were to measure migrants’ relative patterns of adaptation, integration or exclusion from their destination society. However, many of the processes that are commonly associated with globalisation have brought into serious question this
approach to the movement of people. Increasingly, it appears that migrants maintain contact and involvement with their origin nations and locales in quantitatively greater if not qualitatively different ways from the past. In part the increasing occurrence of transnational activity amongst migrants has been facilitated by the increasing availability and affordability of transportation, changing border configurations and international relations, and the development and increasing use of new information communication technologies.

As a result of these changes contemporary migration researchers tend to conceive of migration as a fluid process of movement between equally fluid places. In this conception migrants never completely depart from their original home, nor totally arrive at a new one. Indeed, scholars often evoke the character of the tourist, nomad or sojourner as the quintessential figure of contemporary migration (Ahmed 1999). Certainly this experience of fluidity is not universal but there is ample evidence that the movement of people, ideas, and objects across borders has, and continues to, increase in both number and speed (Faist 2000; Pries 1999). In large part this shift in the focus of migration research has been stimulated by the emergence of related debates around the processes, causes and consequences of globalisation in academic, popular and political arenas. These debates have forced migration researchers to reconsider their understandings of nations, borders, the permanency of migration, the sphere of migrants’ actions and the concepts of ‘race’, ‘class’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘gender’ within migration. In the following discussion I introduce the early developments of transnational migration research, restate the key criticisms of these early efforts, and identify some new directions that have emerged in recent years.

Some of the first efforts to research and conceptualise the framework of transnationalism were initiated in the early 1990s by the American anthropologists Lina Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1992; 1994). While this may not have been the first employment of the term ‘transnational’ in regards to migration (Appadurai & Breckenridge 1989; Bourne 1916), Basch et al. are the first to develop a framework of transnationalism as an approach to interrogating what has come to be seen as a qualitatively different form of international mobility. Their work illustrated the increased cross-border activities of contemporary migrants through examples including a Haitian hometown association in New York, political consultations by the Grenadian government with emigrants, and newly regulated forms of remittances between the
Philippines and migrants in the United States. In the process of charting a new research paradigm the authors introduced two key conceptual points. The first is that the study of migrants and migration in the social sciences must become unbound from its focus upon the nation-state as the key container of social action. This limited focus, the authors argue, fails to provide adequate space to consider the much wider field of action that contemporary migrants inhabit. The second point is that within this conceptualisation of contemporary migration there also needs to be a concomitant rethinking of accepted understandings of race, class, nationalism and ethnicity. Fundamentally, these concepts need to be regarded as much more flexible and pliable than they have been previously to take into account the new multiple forms of identifications that transnationals or trans-migrants potentially possess. The early work of Basch et al. in this regard provided a blueprint for the study of transnational practices. Their work also spawned the most common definition of transnationalism (Basch et al. 1994: 8):

We define ‘transnationalism’ as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders.

Contemporaneously with, and in the years following, the work of Basch et al. a number of other scholars across the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and geography have contributed and developed ideas and research around migrant transnationalism. In fact, as a result of some diverse contributions, the already wide range of activities considered within the realm of transnationalism has increased even further. Studies have included discussion of the emergence of a ‘transnational public sphere’ amongst migrant populations (Gupta & Ferguson 1992) and analysis of the modes of social organisation, mobility and communication that such communities engage in (Smith & Guarnizo 1998). Related work focussing on the everyday lives of migrants in host societies has considered the increasing presence and centrality of transnational social spaces or fields (Faist 2000; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt 1999; Westwood & Phizacklea 2000). Other researchers have examined the formation of new identifications amongst migrants that are not limited by territorial links but rather take shape through communication technologies and popular culture alongside face to face relationships (Cohen 1996; Ong & Nonini 1997; Vertovec 1999). Elsewhere, scholars have used transnationalism as a
framing for understanding the emergence of new hybrid forms in global cultural flows (Appadurai 1997; Appadurai & Breckenridge 1989; Sklair 1995; 1998). Other research has focussed on the financial side of transnationalism and considered the macro-scale rise of transnational corporations and their networks (Sklair 1998; 1995; Castells 1996) as well as the continued persistence of remittance networks maintained by transnational migrants (Lessinger 1992; Mahler 1995; Smith 1994). Finally, there is also a body of research that specifically considers the extension of political engagement beyond national borders in the actions of transnational migrants, nation-states and international non-governmental organisations wishing to gain influence both at home and abroad (Smith, Chatfield, & Pagnucco 1997; Smith & Guarnizo 1998).

**The Critiques**

It should not be surprising, given the breadth of material deemed to fall within the realm of transnationalism that there has been sustained criticism of many aspects of the field from numerous quarters. Often such criticism has been targeted at the use of transnationalism rather than the framework itself or at the specifics of some types of analysis. In the following section I consider the criticisms of transnationalism more broadly as they emanate from both within and outside the field. These criticisms include the argument that transnationalism is, at best, vaguely defined; that there is often an overemphasis on, and reification of, mobility in research; that researchers commonly fall into the trap of methodological nationalism; and that too often work on transnationalism has been overly focussed on presenting evocative anecdotes, vignettes and metaphors but has failed to be adequately ‘grounded’ in empirical research. After describing each of these critiques in turn I will introduce some recent work that attempts to refine the field of transnationalism.

The most common criticism of the field of transnational studies is that it lacks an appropriate definition and that too wide a range of phenomena have been included in what is considered to constitute this area of study (Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller 2003; Kivisto 2001; Rogers 2005; Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004). Indeed, Steven Vertovec (1999: 449-456) has identified that there are at least six distinct uses of the term transnationalism. These include transnationalism as social morphology, a type of consciousness, a mode of cultural reproduction, an avenue for capital movement, a site of political engagement, and as representative of the (re)construction of notions of place.
in the contemporary world. The sheer breadth of subject matter in these different approaches to transnationalism has meant that, even within those uses which relate specifically to migrant experiences, transnationalism might include phenomena as different as corporate expatriates (Beaverstock 1996) and the forced movement of refugees (Al-Ali, Black, & Koser 2001). In this regard Alejandro Portes (2001: 182) argues that ‘if ‘transnationalism’ encompasses all that immigrant groups do, it defines nothing in particular and mostly ends up re-labelling what was already known under other terms’. He suggests that transnationalism must refer to specifically new and proven phenomena. Yet, despite this apparent lack of clarity about what transnationalism refers to, interest in and use of the concept only continues to increase (Vertovec 1999). As a solution to the vagueness of transnationalism some scholars have attempted to clarify the differences within the field by variously distinguishing between transnationalism from ‘above’ and ‘below’ (Smith & Guarnizo 1998), ‘international’, ‘multinational’ and ‘transnational’ (Portes 2001), or between ‘levels’ of transnational actors (Beaverstock 1996; Findlay, Li, Jowett, & Skeldon 1996). Counter to these calls for a delimitation of the field others have argued that more not less should be considered within the rubric transnationalism (Bailey 2001; Crang, Dwyer, & Jackson 2003; Smith 2000; Ong & Nonini 1997). These authors suggest that transnationalism should not be seen simply as a category for which migrants or others do or don’t fit within. Instead they argue that transnationalism should be conceived as a framework or optic that allows researchers to consider any phenomena that physically or virtually crosses national borders.

A second major critique of research in the field of transnational studies suggests that too often there has been an overemphasis on mobility at the expense of only limited consideration of continued emplacement or difficulties of movement (Foner 1997; Ong & Nonini 1997). Luis Guarnizo, Alejandro Portes and William Haller (2003), for example, identify the manner in which the ethnographies and vignettes commonly employed in transnational migration research have tended to sample exclusively on the dependent variable – highly mobile trans-migrants. This focus tends to exaggerate the extent of transnational phenomena by fostering the perception that the extraordinary few migrants who are highly mobile represent the more ordinary majority who typically are not. Such a bias can encourage an epochal view of transnationality that associates it with arguments that the nation-state is becoming irrelevant (Appadurai 1997). From a
different perspective Sara Ahmed (1999) suggests that this reification of mobility and the figure of the migrant in transnational studies have served to replace the literal frictions of contemporary migration with metaphorical musings on the fluidity of movement. Taking a similar line Avtar Brah (1996: 182) argues that ‘[t]he question is not simply about who travels, but when, how, and under what circumstances?’. These authors suggest that it is not enough to simply identify and celebrate the presence of transnational practices. Rather, transnational scholars need to identify the differences between free and forced movements, what movements are possible or impossible, who can move to particular places and who can’t, and perhaps most importantly what is the relationship between movement and continued emplacement (Ahmed 1999; Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier, & Sheller 2003; Brah 1996; Fabricant 1998).

In a sense the call made by Basch et al. (1994) for scholars to ‘unbound’ their approach to researching migration was a criticism of what might be called ‘methodological nationalism’ – the presumption that society equates only to national-territorial society organised in states (Beck 2004). Despite this, however, a common criticism made of case studies within the field of transnationalism is that they maintain a sense of this methodological nationalism. While migration scholars have certainly widened their perspectives to consider the cross-border involvement of migrants and the possibilities outside permanent movement they have often not moved beyond ‘groupist’ thinking (Brubaker 2004). Typically this approach produces narratives of transnational communities that cross-borders and challenge the state but which are still conceived as ‘relatively stable, culturally bounded and socially integrated groups’ (Wimmer 2004: 2). While there is certainly evidence of continued solidarity amongst migrants (J. H. Kim 2004) the presumption that migrants will always identify with national groupings shrouds the more complex interaction of class, race, gender, regional identities, language, faith, age and sexuality alongside national identity in the everyday lives of migrants (Smith 2000; Wimmer 2004). Some critics suggest that this persistence of methodological nationalism in migration research can be blamed on the gap between the development of new conceptual measures and methodological tools (Crang et al. 2003; Hendry 2003; Marcus 1995; Vertovec 1999). These authors suggest that early transnational research has tended to employ methods common to nation-state or area study. They suggest that transnational research methodologies must be released from the container of the nation-state to reflect the contexts of transnational communities.
through multi-sited methods ‘designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations’ (Marcus 1995: 105).

The final major criticism that I wish to address here is the claim that early efforts in transnational studies were empirically weak and the field needs to be re-grounded. In large part this criticism is directed at the significant amount of scholarship that has sought to generalise the patterns of transnationalism from small case studies often based on individual narratives or vignettes. In this regard, Kathryne Mitchell (1997: 110) has called for the theories and vocabularies of transnationalism to be explicitly connected to ‘actual movements of things and people across space’. From one disciplinary perspective she suggests that academics start ‘bringing geography back in’ as a route to locating deterritorialised analysis. Similar arguments have also been directed at the excesses of the cultural studies approach to transnationalism that is often characterised by rather abstract and dematerialised scholarship supported by anecdotes and vignettes that simply prove what the author wants to say (Ong & Nonini 1997). Mitchell (1997) and others (Crang et al. 2003) have argued that it is this very lack of empirical detail that has led to some of the other weaknesses in the field. The lack of clarity about what is or isn’t transnational, the reification of hybrid subjectivities and metaphorical movement, and continued methodological nationalism all illustrate that much of the early work in the field was eloquent and evocative but hardly heuristic.

Taking this critique a step further there may be value in questioning the continued reliance solely on social constructionism in much transnational research. While transnationalism as a field has often been at the forefront of confronting tired and traditional conceptualisations of the world it has, as the critique of Mitchell and others illustrates, not always been at the forefront of methodological development (but see Clifford 1997; Marcus 1995). Indeed, during the period of transnationalism’s emergence and infancy another debate regarding use of representation in the cultural sub-disciplines of anthropology, geography and sociology emerged. In geography considerable type-space has been employed by Nigel Thrift (1996; 1997; 1999; 2000) and various colleagues (Latham 2003a; Lorimer 2005) since the late 1990s to develop what Thrift calls non-representational theory. This approach draws upon the writings of post-structuralism, performance studies, phenomenology, feminist theory and technology studies amongst others. It emphasises the importance of considering those elements of how life takes shape that cannot easily be reduced to academically
uncovered meanings. Often this means including the utterly banal domains of everyday routines, movements and practical skills. Elsewhere, there has been a call for more focus on the body, senses, emotions and extra-human objects as examples of influential elements of life that cannot be revealed through representational strategies alone (Ahmed 2004; Davidson & Milligan 2004; Longhurst 2001). The study of transnationalism would likely benefit from the insights available in these new approaches to research for they no doubt apply to this field as much as any other.

Re-framing transnationalism

The above critiques illustrate that the emergence and early period of the study of transnationalism has been at times haphazard. Indeed, Steven Vertovec (1999: 448), a keen proponent of the transnational approach, admits that “in the excited rush to address an interesting area of global activity and theoretical development, there is not surprisingly much conceptual muddling”. In contrast, recent efforts in a second-wave of transnational research and scholarship have been characterised by more detailed empirical work and indeed more thoughtful conceptualisations. 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. Although there have been many recent attempts to refine the concepts and advance the empirical work of the field of transnational studies I will focus here only on three broadly defined developments that relate most specifically to the project ahead. Firstly, I consider the development of transnational approaches that consider the interaction of mobility with continued emplacement and fixity. In particular I will consider what value Michael Peter Smith’s (2000; 2003; 2005b) proposition of transnational urbanism offers the study of cross-border activities. The second development that should be acknowledged is the increasing efforts to include more than just representational aspects of life in transnational study. This area has to date been more empirical than conceptual and has included work on transnationalism and commodity culture, communication technologies, food consumption and emotions. Finally, I will discuss scholarship that is moving beyond the basic identification of the who, what, where and how of transnational practices to consider their wider influence.
This area of development has started to delve into the particular transformations that may occur as a result of transnational practices at multiple scales.

**Mobility and Emplacement**

Place has always been a difficult subject for transnational studies. Indeed, the call to ‘unbound’ (Basch et al. 1994) the study of migration was in fact a challenge to accepted understandings of place – based as they were around relatively stable understandings of the nation, city and community. Yet, this shift beyond a fixed sense of place in migration study has also been criticised for moving too quickly to celebrate mobility, and for brushing over the very real friction that is experienced by migrants moving between places. Since the late 1990s however a number of scholars have conducted empirical work and developed conceptual tools that have revealed a greater connection between new mobilities and continued emplacement in contemporary migration. First in this regard is the collection *Living the global city: globalization as a local process* edited by John Eade (1997b). The authors of this volume take the challenge of grounding studies of transnationalism seriously through discussions of a series of research projects on London as a global city. Their reference however is not London, the global city that is abstracted beyond meaning by writers like John Friedman (1986) and Saskia Sassen (1991) but rather very concrete analyses of the increasing transnationality of daily life in one city. The authors consider the acting out of local and global through representations of particular transnational phenomena – Bangladeshi youth culture (Eade 1997a), tribal art displays (Alleyne-Dettmers 1997), Muslim identity formation (Albrow, Eade, Dürrschmidt, & Washbourne 1997) – which relate specifically to the real places of their enactment in London and equally to real places beyond London and Britain. Summing up this approach to transnationalism Jörg Dürrschmidt (1997: 66) argues that ‘from this point of view, places are no longer isolated, but interwoven in a “biographical situation”, connecting them according to “biographical relevances” of migrants. In other words, the importance of place is not diminished by the apparent increase in mobility, but rather the experience of place appears to become more important to individuals’ lives even if that experience is more fractious and multiple.

Another useful example of the way that biographical relevances work to connect multiple places is illustrated in an insightful ethnographic exercise by Park Kyeyoung
Discussing the lives of Korean-Latino re-migrants to the United States, Park reveals the ways that both mobile and emplaced identities are employed to situate these transnational actors in cities like Los Angeles. Eschewing their representation as Koreans or Korean-Americans in the US context, these re-migrants seek to connect their daily lives with migrants from Latin America with whom they share many linguistic, culinary, and social practices. Over time these re-migrants have constructed a different sense of identity based on varying attachment to place – they see themselves as ethnically Korean, culturally Latino, and nationally American.

In a quite different empirical exercise Aihwa Ong (2003) has challenged assumptions made about how the dis-placed and ‘disembedded global racial citizenship’ of diasporic Chinese is propagated and accepted by those considered within its sphere. Focussing on reactions to the anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia in 1998, Ong illustrates how a rather placeless global-Chineseness rapidly articulated on the internet was resisted by Chinese-Indonesians on the ground. Contesting both academic and popular assumptions about transnational identity Chinese-Indonesians reacted to the diasporic call-to-arms by re-asserting their grounded identities as Indonesians (of many generations) over the ‘floating lives’ that the global diaspora were asserting. In contrast to much study in transnationalism these Chinese-Indonesians did not want to be displaced from their everyday connections with Indonesians by silencing the latter part of their hyphenated identity. These examples remind us ‘that we need an understanding of migration to the United States [or other nations] that can explain flexible and partial belonging to the nation-state’ or indeed multiple nation states (Grewal, Gupta, & Ong 1999: 659). Crucially it shows that mobility considered in isolation from emplacement will not explain the subjectivities that transnationals form, nor will it make visible the continued friction that transnationals encounter in their everyday experiences.

Perhaps the most important, and certainly the most theoretical, effort to connect transnational mobility to a continued emphasis on place and emplacement is the ‘epistemic optic’ of transnational urbanism. Developed in a volume of the same title and subsequent chapters and articles by political scientist Michael Peter Smith (2000; 2003; 2005b), this approach has also been employed as the central framework of a special issue of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (Conradson & Latham 2005b). In short, transnational urbanism is a challenge to the economism of recent globalisation and urban theory (Castells 1997; Dear & Flusty 1998; Harvey 1989; Sassen 1991; Soja
1989) and some of the more abstract approaches to transnationalism (Appadurai 1997). In contrast to the placelessness of these approaches, Smith organises his framework around contemporary cities as both the geographic and metaphorical location of transnational phenomena. Reflecting some of the earlier work by John Eade and colleagues, transnational urbanism conceives cities not as socio-economic ‘command and control’ centres (c.f. Sassen 1991; Friedmann 1986) but rather as actual places where the daily enactment of transnationalism occurs. In this way transnationalism is viewed from below (see also Smith & Guarnizo 1998), not as completely local phenomena, but as a set of practices constituted by individuals and the different places that they are connected to (Ley 2004). Smith (2000: 5) himself describes the concept as:

[A] marker of the criss-crossing transnational circuits of communication and cross-cutting local, translocal, and transnational social practices that “come together” in particular places at particular times and enter into the contested politics of place-making, the social construction of power differentials, and the making of individual, group, national, and transnational identities, and their corresponding fields of difference.

The usefulness of this approach to transnationalism is that it inflects the narratives of frictionless movement by deterritorialised actors with the situated daily encounters of individuals who are able to cross-borders. In a sense it reminds academics of the obvious: that no matter how hyper-mobile transnational subjects might be, they still must do the ordinary things: ‘they eat; they sleep; they have families who must be raised, educated and taught a set of values’ (Conradson & Latham 2005b: 228). Moreover, the focus of transnational urbanism on cities as the places where transnational phenomena usually occur, or at least move through at some point, allows studies within this framework to consider the wider implications of such practices. Instead of being limited to identifying the who, where, what and how of transnationalism, this approach grasps a much wider realm of activity by considering the influence of transnational practices in the everyday experience of urban environments, both for those who move and for those who don’t.

In a special issue of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies published in 2005 the conceptual possibilities suggested in transnational urbanism were purposefully deployed to consider a collection of quite different empirical examples. Focusing on what the editors called ‘middling’ transnationalism – activities between the extremes of transnational elites and developing-world migrants – each contribution sought to
illustrate ‘how particular people negotiate life-worlds that involve shuttling across international borders’ (Conradson & Latham 2005b: 228). Although all the contributions to the edition provide useful examples of how transnational urbanism can be employed empirically, two articles are particularly relevant to this project. The first of these is the David Conradson and Alan Latham’s (2005a) own work on antipodean transmigrants working and travelling in London. The authors demonstrate that there is more to the lives of these temporary migrants than just a taste of overseas experience. They argue instead that these young, university educated New Zealanders are engaged in a creative project of crafting their own identities in relation to the places they come from, presently occupy and intend to go to. The constant role played by friendship networks in sustaining and even shaping this project reveals the texture of movement and skills that are always required to get from here to there and back again. Secondly, Wardlow Friesen, Laurence Murphy and Robin Kearns’ (2005) discussion of a ‘Spiced-Up Sandringham’ in Auckland, New Zealand is also highly relevant to this project. These authors use quantitative and qualitative work conducted with Indian transnationals in Auckland as a means to illustrate the daily, and at times quite mundane, transformation of one middling suburb. This investigation goes beyond identifying the patterns of transnational activity, as all the papers do, to consider the effects that such activity has on the landscape of the city. In this case, the city represented by Sandringham, ‘which was once regarded as the epitome of the “kiwi suburb”… has evolved an increasingly complex layering of transnational connections involving movements of people, goods and information’ (Friesen et al. 2005: 398).

Despite the possibilities offered by the optic of transnational urbanism, this approach has been subject to some rather severe criticism. In particular Smith has been taken to task for lacking an appropriate empirical base for his argument (Binnie 2003; Sørensen 2003) and for being eloquent but rather vague about the assertions he makes (Cowley 2003; Statham 2001). Each of these criticisms however has been addressed to a certain extent in both Smith’s own later discussions (Smith 2003; 2005b) and the empirical work that employs his approach (Conradson & Latham 2005b; Yeoh 2005; Yeoh, Charney, & Tong 2003). Of more concern to this project however is the continued employment of a solely social constructionist methodology and its attendant commitment to representational research. As described in the critique of transnationalism more generally this type of approach has been criticised for excluding
important elements of the (transnational) everyday lives that Smith wishes to analyse. He describes his view of social constructionism early on in the original volume suggesting that ‘social subjects give meaning to their lives through the networks of communication in which they are involved and through which they constitute themselves, their identities, and their relations to social structures’ (Smith 2000: 9). This is no doubt true but as a methodological approach it offers little room to consider aspects of everyday life that do not have apparent meaning associated with them. To embrace a conception of transnational life as more-than just representational (Lorimer 2005) – as it most certainly is – this particular methodology, which sits at the centre of his approach, needs to be re-articulated.

**Objects, Bodies, Emotions**

Another important development in the field of transnational studies has been the emergence of new approaches to researching transnational phenomena. In general this new focus has sought to include more elements of the lived experiences including analysis of commodity cultures; communication technologies; food consumption; as well as the emotions associated with transnationalism.

The earliest efforts to develop new research approaches to transnationalism occurred in the field of anthropology and in particular with the work of George Marcus (1995) and James Clifford (1997). In what has become a heavily quoted article, Marcus argues that transnational research techniques need to embrace a multi-sited outlook and framework. He makes seven propositions for transnational research: follow the people, follow the thing, follow the metaphor, follow the plot, story or allegory, follow the life or biography, follow the conflict or engage in what he calls ‘the strategically situated (single-site) ethnography’ that is capable of grasping a multi-sited context (Marcus 1995). These propositions, to a greater or lesser extent, have been followed up by transnational researchers from a range of disciplines. In geography, Phillip Crang, Clair Dwyer and Peter Jackson, have taken Marcus’ call to ‘follow the thing’ quite seriously by arguing the benefits of focusing on commodity culture as a window into transnationalism (Crang et al. 2003; Dwyer 2004; Dwyer & Crang 2002; Dwyer & Jackson 2003). Their research focuses on multiple examinations of transnational commodity flows between Britain and the Indian subcontinent and the roles played by a range of different actors involved in this movement. Their approach to transnationalism
is much broader than the more common focus on migrants and includes producers, wholesalers, buyers, retailers, cultural intermediaries and consumers located both in South Asia and the British Isles. By following the flows of commodities from one part of the world to another and the networks that sustain them these researchers have shown that there are a wide variety of expressions and experiences of transnationality and that to limit our study only to the people who move may well be closing off fruitful avenues of research.

Another interesting avenue for new transnational research is the increasingly prevalent use of information technologies to communicate both across and within territorial borders. While many academics point out that ongoing communication between migrants and their homeland is nothing new (Kivisto 2003; Morawska 2001; Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004) it is recognised that the current period of relatively affordable transportation and communication have facilitated a much greater level of interaction across borders (Shields 1996; Vertovec 2004a). One recent example of this kind of transnational research is Paul Adams and Rina Ghose’s (2003) investigation of what they call a communication ‘bridgespace’ between North America and South Asia. These authors discuss the multiple ways that information technologies like the internet are used both to communicate between countries like India and the United States and to form communities of shared interests within the destination country. Taking their analysis a step further the authors also consider the way that this type of communication can be employed for both repressive and resistant practices. In particular they discuss the surveillance of the activities of children and young adults and the subversion of accepted cultural patterns by these same subjects (for other examples see Parham 2004; Thompson 2002; Woo 2004). Elsewhere, Steven Vertovec (2004a: 219) reminds us that much older forms of technology like the telephone also often act as ‘the social glue of migrant transnationalism’. In this work Vertovec (2004a: 219) presents statistics that show the increasing volume of international telephone calls since the early 1980s – ‘from 12.7 billion call minutes in 1982 to 42.7 billion call minutes in 1992 and further to 154 billion by 2001’. This dramatic increase in telephone communication reflects both an increasing capacity but also a dramatic fall in cost so that it is now possible to purchase a $10 pre-paid card that will make a three-hour phone call from cities in the USA to Latin America or indeed Auckland to South Korea. Vertovec’s discussion highlights the importance of taking account of even the apparently mundane methods of
communication that have for much longer connected migrants in different parts of the world.

Returning to the focus on lived experience of transnational migrants, while also retaining a sense of the movement of objects in a transnational world, there is also considerable work being carried out on the role played by food consumption in the lives of transnational migrants. Lisa Law (2001), for example, has considered the importance of ‘home cooking’ in the daily lives of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong. Examining the weekly gathering of Filipino women in the central areas of Hong Kong, Law illustrates how food consumption is used as an act of remembrance and a way of connecting to lives left behind in the Philippines. Many of her participants have families, including husbands and children, still in the Philippines who they support through their domestic labour. During their weekly outings these women share stories of home, show photographs of loved ones and engage in the utterly sensual act of consuming food from the Philippines as a means of grounding their transnational lives in Hong Kong. In a similar effort, Simon Choo (2004: 203) has considered the importance of food as a ‘Proustian “remembrance of things past”’ for Malaysian migrants in Australia. Choo (2004: 206) argues that food acts as a substitute for ‘other forms of cultural articulation, such as geography, language and history’ and provides an avenue for the everyday expression of Malaysian-ness. Like Law’s research, and indeed much of the other transnational research on food consumption (Cwiertka 2002; Duruz 2000; 2005; Hage 1997; Pratt 2004), Choo’s study not only investigates the representational elements of food consumption (where it comes from and what meaning it carries), but also the very sensuality of such consumption. These studies allow us to see that experiences of transnationalism are often mediated by actions and experiences that cannot be easily represented because they relate not only to meaningful practice but also to bodily affect and emotion.1

Elsewhere, the study of emotions has been at the centre of transnational research. Sara Ahmed in particular has written considerably on the different emotional experiences of transnationality (1999; 2000; Ahmed et al. 2003). In a telling piece on

---

1 These studies also illustrate the real dilemma in the academic effort to consider ‘more than representational’ (Lorimer 2005) aspects of everyday life. Choo (2004), for instance, included descriptions of recipes and the tastes and smells of foods in his article and Law (2001) the very tactility of the eating practices she considers. Yet, even in these cases the authors are compelled to reduce such more-than-representational aspects to representation through text (Latham 2003a).
narratives of migration and estrangement, Ahmed (1999) discusses the competing emotions that migrants feel as they move between places. Her work criticises and debunks many of the earlier narratives that described hyper-mobile transnationality as a new ontological condition characterised by the loss of home or place. Instead, she illustrates how even feelings of estrangement are inextricably tied to a sense of place, even if that sense of place is never fixed and final. Moreover, her work challenges the implicit methodological nationalism of some earlier transnational research to show the way that the formation of migrant communities reflects not just a common sense of identity, as they only sometimes do, but also an (un)common sense of estrangement – the shared feeling that one is out of place. Investigating the sense of home is crucial to this work by Ahmed. In particular, her work with Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier and Mimi Sheller (2003: 1) calls ‘into question the naturalization of homes as origins, and the romanticization of mobility as travel, transcendence and transformation’. Instead, home is conceived as part of the continuous, always changing practices of ‘uprootings/regroundings’ that is enacted by migrants through habits, skills and feelings that reflect personal biographies but also serve to ground individuals in particular locations, as a way of ‘homing’. Geraldine Pratt (2004) has also investigated similar issues of transnational emotions, feelings and actions. She calls these actions and feelings ‘gleaning the home’ and speaks about the importance of objects, tastes, smells, sounds, and actions involved in this affective process of home-making. Other work that focuses on emotions in transnationalism includes analysis of the feeling of hope in migration (Mar 2005; Wise 2005); belonging (Westwood & Phizacklea 2000), feelings associated with migratory return (McKay 2005) and further discussion of the connections between embodiment and emotions (Thomas 2004; Warin & Dennis 2005).

**Modes of Transformation**

The final area of development in the second wave of transnational writing to be discussed here is the emergence of more detailed accounts of the wider effects of transnational activities. As has been identified a number of times in this chapter, the early studies in transnationalism tended to focus on simply identifying the existence of transnational activities – the who, what and where – and only sometimes the importance of such activities – the how and why. Moreover, there has been rather little work that has considered the impact that such activities have on the broader contexts of particular localities implicated in transnationalism or indeed what global influence increased
cross-border activity might be having. However, as with other gaps in this field there is increasing attention being paid to the effects that transnational activities of migrants have, and will continue to have in the future. Steven Vertovec (2004b: 971) again has provided guidance in this area by publishing a useful summary of this work identifying three different ‘modes of transformation’ which migrants might be involved in:

These include: 1) perceptual transformation affecting what can be described as migrants’ orientational ‘bifocality’ in the sociocultural domain; 2) conceptual transformation of meanings within a notional triad of ‘identities-borders-orders’ in the political domain; and 3) institutional transformation affecting forms of financial transfer, public-private relationships and local development in the economic domain.

I add to these three categories, studies that have considered the impact of transnational activities on the experience of place in receiving countries. In the following section a brief summary of work under each category is provided, drawn from Vertovec’s summary and other scholarship.

The first category of emerging research in Vertovec’s summary examines the shifting world-views or outlooks of individual migrants. Within such research it is common to suggest that transnational migrants are at the forefront of new global subjectivities because of their association with two or more territorial areas. Luis Guarnizo (1997: 311), for example, draws upon Bourdieu to develop the idea of a transnational habitus that is ‘a particular set of dualistic dispositions… The transnational habitus incorporates the social position of the migrant and the context in which the transmigration occurs’. Other authors have considered the bi-focality of peoples’ daily routines and habits (Mahler 1998). Such arguments highlight how ‘[a]spects of life “here” and life “there” – whether perceived from the migrants starting or destination point – are constantly monitored and perceived as complementary aspects of a single space of experience’ (Vertovec 2004b: 975). Research revealing these changing perceptions has included accounts of home and foreign contexts amongst Sylhetis in Britain and Bangladesh (Gardner 1995); Italian-Moroccan women in both Italy and Morocco who engage with symbolic products from their ‘other home’ as a means to highlighting their sense of double belonging (Salih 2003); and also the difficulty of dismantling this type of bi-national outlook even if it is desired (Kyle 2000). Overall, this work usefully illustrates the personal transformations that transnational activity is likely to have. Given that some scholars in this field believe
these types of ‘affiliations and consciousness will become the predominant form of migrant belonging in the future’ (Castles 2002: 1158) it is crucial that we understand the processes involved in these new world-views.

Transformations in conceptualisations of the political domain of the nation state are also influenced by the activities of transnational migrants. Although migrant transnationalism is not likely to bring about such transformations on its own it is one part of the processes and outcomes associated with globalisation that are at the very least re-configuring our understanding of the nation-state. Vertovec draws on Albert, Jacobson and Lapid (2001) in this regard to suggest that the best frame of reference for considering the political challenges posed by migrants is through the ‘analytical triad’ of ‘identities-borders-orders’. In this regard some authors suggest that transnational migration and its attendant practices openly challenge the boundedness and identities of both sending and host societies (Fitzgerald 2000; Heisler 2001). This is because counter to the fundamental assumptions of assimilationist theories, migrants are now more likely to continue to involve themselves in the politics of their origin nation (Katoryano 2002). Concomitantly, migrants can no longer be presumed to become total members of their host society but often maintain some if not all cultural, linguistic and personal connections to a home nation and sometimes seek out dual citizenship/nationality as a means of securing this. These actions serve to stretch the borders of nations so that they encompass individuals, and sometimes institutions beyond territorial markers. Politicians from source nations are forced to take into account of the desires of their emigrant populations (Rogers 2000; Shain 1999; Smith & Guarnizo 1998) while host states must reconfigure national projects in ways that can be accepting of such diverse affiliations and allegiances within the nation.

The third grouping of Vertovec’s summary examines economic transformation, with a specific focus on the re-institutionalising of development through remittances. In addition, Vertovec also identifies ethnic entrepreneurship (Portes, Haller, & Guarnizo 2002), the facilitation of international trade (Light, Zhou, & Kim 2002), and businesses based in migrant sending countries that reach out to customers in the diaspora (Rogers 2001) as transformational elements of transnational activities. In terms of pure economic value, however, remittances undoubtedly have the most significant transformational impact. Indeed, in many developing nations remittances constitute as much as 10 percent of GDP (UNDP 2002). This money includes both personal
remittances to relatives and associates as well as those funds sent by hometown associations to support the development of infrastructure in particular locale within migrants’ origin countries. While such funds transfers can have significant positive effects, it is suggested that they may also be exacerbating inequalities in sending countries, artificially inflating local prices, and creating a culture of economic dependency. Nevertheless, much of the money sent, particularly to developing countries serves as basic subsistence for food, or provision of education that would not otherwise be available (Vertovec 2004b).

The final mode of transformation that I wish to investigate here is the influence that migrants have on the experience of place, particularly in the countries they choose to settle. This category is perhaps not considered by Vertovec because at the outset he draws on Kenneth Wiltshire (2001: 8) to suggest that ‘transformation… describes a more radical change, a particularly deep and far-reaching one which within a relatively limited time span modifies the configuration of societies’. Wiltshire’s frame of reference is appropriate because the aim of both his and Vertovec’s work is to consider broad scale changes that can be identified in and aggregated across many locales. My overall aim in this project however is different and includes a specifically local focus alongside more transnational concerns. Furthermore, the transformation of place, particularly the transformation of the everyday experience of place is also an area that was not adequately dealt with amongst first generation transnational research. Research that has considered the local transformations that migrants’ activity initiates includes the already mentioned work of Friesen et al (2005) on ‘middling’ Indian migrants in Auckland and Ehrkamp’s (2005) discussion of Turkish immigrant neighbourhoods in Germany. Another interesting offering is presented by Karl Hargstrom Miller (2001) in a historical discussion of the transformation of San Antonio’s market square in the 1930s by Mexican transnationals trying to express aspects of their history and identity. Elsewhere, Kevin Dunn (1998; 2003) discusses the involvement of both migrants and the local government in Sydney in an effort to transform the suburb of Cabramatta both physically and representationally. Crucially, what these studies do is reveal some of the processes involved in the transformation of city or suburb space by migrants utilising material and immaterial transnational skills.
Summary

After emerging in the early 1990s, the field of transnational studies has been through a period of heightened interest, sustained criticism, empirical grounding and conceptual refinement. Early work in the field sought to establish the presence of transnational activities as the emergence of forms of migrant activity that had not previously been recognised. Associated with this was the identification of the causes of transnationalism in other processes associated with globalisation – changing international relations, increased availability and affordability of international transportation, and new communication technologies like the internet. A significant amount of this initial work in the field tended to be a little quick off the mark to declare epochal shifts in migrant activity and the emergence of a post-national world. Many of the criticisms that characterised the mid-phase of the transnational research perspective focussed on the exaggerated and rather celebratory conceptualisations of new migrant activity and the lack of empirical evidence backing up claims of hyper-mobility, hybrid subjectivities and free-floating individuals. In contrast, however, recent work in the field has taken a much more measured approach to investigating and presenting the changes in migrant activities. In some cases this approach is exemplified by greater consideration of the continued importance of place and locality alongside increasing mobility. In other cases it has meant a different methodological focus that considers the importance of commodity cultures, communication technologies, food consumption and emotions in transnational lives. Finally, much greater consideration has also been given to the transformations that transnationality is producing. This has included consideration of the changing world-views of transnational migrants and the influence their actions have on political and economic configurations. In each of these new developments it is clear that the field of transnationalism has reached a state of some maturity. This is manifest in the fact that researchers are able to not only consider the practices of transnational migrants, which continue to be a central focus, but also the impact of their lives on others, their role in changing local, national and global relations, and the similarities and differences between their experiences and the experiences of those who do not migrate.

Part B: Transnationalism in the Project Ahead

There is no doubt that the practice of international education is in a very literal sense trans-national – it involves the individual and institutional crossing of national borders.
Indeed, given that education has traditionally been an important domain of the nation-state (Anderson 1983) the shifting of this responsibility to other nations overseas reflects a significant trans-national departure. In terms of the definitions of what is and what isn’t transnational in the literature however, there is some question as to whether international education can be considered within this category. Alejandro Portes, Luis Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt (1999), for example, urge academics to avoid cluttering the field with actors whose transnational activities may be short, fleeting and without real conceptual or empirical significance. They suggest that the concept of transnationalism should be delimited to ‘to occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation’ (1999: 219). This definition excludes occasional or one-off cross-border activities: notably irregular gifts, one-off home-town purchases, tourists and corporate travellers. By the same token it is also likely to exclude individual international students – excepting those who go on to be migrants – who are generally assumed to only engage in transnational activity for a fixed period of time.

Other academics however, like Adrian Bailey (2001) have suggested that this approach to transnational study (based upon traditional dichotomies of forced vs. voluntary migration, temporary vs. permanent) is problematic in the light of the flexible strategies migrants employ. In specific regard to international students in Vancouver, Daniel Hiebert and Min-Jung Kwak (2004) argue that our transnational focus needs to be on the different networks and strategies involved in the movement of individuals from one country to the next. In what would be a poignant response to Portes et al. they ask quite appropriately ‘[w]here does tourism end and migration begin?’ (2004: 6). In terms of international education the delimitation proposed by Portes et al., feels all too similar to the rather inappropriate categories employed by immigration departments in countries like New Zealand, Canada and Australia. South Korean international students travelling to either Canada (Hiebert & Kwak 2004) or New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2005c) may arrive on a student visa, a holiday visa or no visa at all; they may stay only for the term of their study and then never return; however, equally, they may change categories and never depart or indeed return to South Korea only to prepare for longer-term migration. At the same time, as Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak are at pains to point out, there is a series of very deep, cross-cutting interpersonal and institutional transnational networks that very literally underwrite the practice of
international education in cities like Vancouver, and, as this project will illustrate, Auckland. The fact that the state is generally not aware of such networks, or indeed ill-equipped to deal with them reflects the real transnational complexity involved in the sustained practice of international education. It is from this perspective that international students and the practice of international education are best viewed within the framework if not the categories of transnationalism.

Transnationalism is employed in this project as an optic or lens that permits the conceptualisation of activities that occur in and relate to more than one nation and locality. As an optic or lens transnationalism is useful because it reveals both the presence of cross-border activities while still being attendant to the continued significance, if changing role of, nation-states and place. Indeed, it is the way that transnationalism draws attention to what it appears to supersede – the nation – that gives it much of its explanatory power (Yeoh et al. 2003). As such transnationalism differs significantly from other optics of cross-border activity like globalisation (Appadurai 2001) and cosmopolitanisation (Beck 2002) which in different ways all negate the significance of local specificity and/or nation-states. The optic of transnationalism however is not a fool-proof approach to viewing the contemporary world. As the critiques of the early work in this field illustrated, too much can be made of the actions of relatively few individuals leading to predictions of epochal shifts in economic, social, cultural and political relations. To avoid the dangers of reifying the quality and quantity of cross-border activity or ignoring the significance of institutions like the nation-state, transnationalism is used in this project alongside a conceptualisation of urban space as it is encountered in the everyday lives of transnationals. In the section that follows I relate contemporary transnationalism to cities, present some cultural perspectives on urban space and then discuss the importance of bodies, objects, languages and home to the transnationality of cities. The combination of these approaches serves to connect the transnational activities of international education with the everyday lives of students, the different influences on their practices, and the role that such practices have in changing places in the city of Auckland and elsewhere.

**Migration, Transnationalism and Cities**

Migration, the movement of people between territories, is not in itself inherently connected to urban areas either historically or contemporarily. Indeed, in the last great
period of migration to settler countries like New Zealand, migration often led to settlement in rural areas (Belich 1996; Reeves 2005). Similarly, it would be a mistake to assume that even if most contemporary migrants settle in large urban areas that this is the only significant form of migration (Boyle & Halfacree 1998). On the other hand, transnationalism and other forms of sustained contact and interaction between territories that are often stimulated by migrants are by and large connected to cities both historically and contemporarily (Shaw & Hudson 2002; Smith & Bender 2001). Principally, this is because the means of contact and communication between different territories have almost always been maintained in cities. Indeed, a quick scan of the earliest work in urban studies as a discrete discipline reveals that scholars have long viewed cities as nodal points in the networks between territories – if only in different terminology. Max Weber (1958) spoke of the connections between cities and the diversity of lifestyles that they could sustain. Georg Simmel (1950) described the figure of the stranger, a traveller, trader or migrant, as key to the development of urban life. Frederich Engels’ (1987) study of industrial Manchester also described, however negatively, the connections between migrant Irish in that city. In North America the human ecology approach developed by the Chicago School of Sociology was primarily based upon understanding the growth of cities like Chicago stimulated by great waves of migration from Europe. The principal scholar in that school of thought, Robert Park (1925: 607), spoke specifically of impact that transportation and communication have had on the ‘mobilization of the individual man [sic]’ both within and between cities. More recently, Ralph Grillo’s (2000) historical study of plural cities reveals that even pre-industrial urban centres were important facilitators of contact and interaction between different territories. Not all these inter-territorial practices that such authors describe would necessarily be considered ‘transnational’ per se, partly because they often predate the formation of coherent nation-states as they are understand them today. Nevertheless, such contact and interaction between different places has much affinity with practices that are now more often called transnationalism.

In the contemporary era, cities continue to be a key facilitator of transnational activity. Access to communication and transportation routes alongside the critical mass of migrants often present in urban areas means that even if not all transnational activity begins or ends in cities it almost always passes through cities at some point. The optic of ‘transnational urbanism’ that was introduced earlier in this chapter addresses just this
point. Michael Peter Smith (2000: 5) argues that urban centres are important because ‘transnational social actors are materially connected to socio-economic opportunities, political structures, or cultural practices found in cities at some point in their transnational communication circuit’. In addition to material that has already been cited considerable scholarship has identified, if not been focussed on, the centrality of cities to the experiences and practices of transnationals. Aiwha Ong (1999) for example speaks of the ‘Pacific shuttle’ between cities like Hong Kong and Vancouver and the transnational social spaces this sustains (see also Ley & Kobayashi 2005). Likewise, Paul Spoonley, Richard Bedford and Cluny Macpherson (2003) have identified the circulation of people, goods, money and ideas between locations like Auckland and Apia for Samoan transnationals. Elsewhere, transnational practices are described through connections between multiple cities in multiple countries and continents like Changzoo Song’s (2003b) discussion of South Korean garment manufacturers’ journeys ‘from Pusan to Asuncion, to Buenos Aires, and then Los Angeles’.

At the same time as cities can be identified as key facilitators of transnationalism, such practices must also be viewed for their influence on the production of urban space in cities. This connection between transnationalism and cities is often only implicitly discussed in literature around transnationalism, perhaps because it is considered by scholars to be so obvious (for more detailed considerations see Friesen et al. 2005; Miller 2001; Smith 2000; Smith & Bender 2001). Yet, for this project, understanding the explicit role of transnational practices in the production of urban space is crucial. Connecting the transnational practices of actors like South Korean international students with their influence on the city provides a space in which to locate and relate such practices to the everyday experience of urban space. As such, South Korean international students do not have to be viewed as mobile actors in binary opposition to a static host population. Instead the differently mobile inhabitants of a city like Auckland can be conceptualised in much more fluid relation to each other where it might be possible to identify practices and experiences that are shared between individuals across categories at the same time as identifying other practices and experiences that are unique to specific individuals and groups. In this way this project aims to be rather phenomenological in its approach – seeking an understanding of difference in the urban environment through embodied practice rather than solely through representational categories. This is important not least because it will provide a
much more holistic view of the ongoing influence of international education in Auckland. However, it also provides space to identify the ways that more or less transnational bodies, objects, languages and emotions are involved in different interactions in urban space and the uneven relations that such interactions create, maintain and at times challenge.

A Cultural Perspective on the City: Everyday Urbanism

There is a relative consensus in contemporary urban cultural studies that the city can no longer be framed as a single unit of analysis or thought (Massey, Allen, & Pile 1999). Cities seem to be growing continuously, sometimes crossing state or even national borders (Ehlers, Buursink, & Boekema 2001). Cities may be made of a multitude of what appear to be totally incommensurable parts, based upon networks and practices that sometimes seem to have little or no connection with other parts of the city. Indeed, the bi-focal or multi-focal practices of transnationals themselves might appear to undermine the very territoriality that cities have historically been measured by. Yet, such changes, if in fact they are changes, do not negate the existence of urban space or the need to understand experiences and practices that constitute urban space. In fact, I would argue that the recognition of such characteristics in some contemporary cities implores academics to re-train their sights on urban space, if only from a different perspective and with a different set of methodological tools. No longer can cities be seen in the typologies of Lewis Mumford (1938), the cyclical developments of Oswald Spengler (1926), or the concentric rings of Ernest Burgess (1928). Instead, contemporary cultural approaches must shun such systematic theories in favour of approaches that are open to a multitude of different experiences of the city, the co-presence of different social groups, ethnicities, cultures and classes all of whom engage in quite different urban lifestyles (Barnes 2003). In this thesis I also embrace a conceptualisation of urban space which presents only a tentative understanding of urban life, seeking the ways that individuals make sense of the urban worlds they live in and the often uneven relations that underlie these worlds.

Culture is now often considered to be at the centre of urban geography and urban studies more broadly. Although economic, political and environmental explanations for urban experience and changes persist they are often at least partially connected to or developed through cultural theories or methods (Barnes 2003; Mitchell 1999). In this
thesis too the cultural understanding of urban experience is central. In particular I place considerable weight on those descriptions and discussions of urban experience that are centred on the everyday-ness of life in urban worlds. In large part authors who embrace this focus on the everyday utilise either explicitly or implicitly the work of three scholars: Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Walter Benjamin.

No one piece of social theory is more important to understanding urban space than Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) seminal work *The Production of Space* (see for example the exposition, employment and critique of his work in a multitude of urban studies volumes including Castells 1977; 1983; Crang 1999; Gottdiener 1994; Harvey 1989; McCann 1999; Pile 1996; Soja 1989; Unwin 2000). Principally Lefebvre intended to create an account of alienation in everyday life and through this a total theory of space as mental, physical and social. As such, Lefebvre approached space as a ‘triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived’ (Lefebvre 1991: 39). Space for Lefebvre is always continuously historically conditioned (in a very Marxist way) both by individual action but also by social structures. However, Lefebvre’s work also challenges the temporal emphasis of Marxist, Hegelian and other dialectical social theories. In place of such approaches he proposes an understanding of everyday life centred upon conceptualising space alongside time as inseparable factors in social experience. Moreover, Lefebvre also challenges Cartesian dualism by proposing the interconnecting triad of mental, physical and social space rather than the binary of mental and physical space as it is conceived in classical philosophy.

There are critiques of Lefebvre’s work (Curry 1996; Miller 2005; Smith 1998; Unwin 2000), not least the fact that the language used in his text is complex at best and at worst practically impenetrable. Yet, Lefebvre offers something in his work that was previously unavailable, that is a framework for social theory and research that is attentive to the influence and interaction of structure, agency and history within a conceptualisation of space. Space is hence constituted by the interactions and interdependence of everyday spatial practices (buildings and actions), representations of space (theories and abstractions) and representational spaces (imaginations and experiences). Within this triad of space is a reliance on ‘relations of immediacy’ (Amin & Thrift 2002: 16), the rhythm of continuous, overlapping and variable movements of people, objects and ideas in urban space. Such rhythms are not limited to sights but also include smells, feelings and other movements that are not always seen. While Lefebvre
is rarely explicit about the what, where and how of urban space this is in many ways part of his approach – it encourages an open and fluid vision of spatial interactions that suggests the city is always being made, not just by individual practice but by multiple intersecting flows and pathways that include individual practice, social institutions and representations.

The key to understanding such multiple overlapping engagements of contemporary urban life has often been an emphasis on understanding the mundane and routine elements of lived experience. In this regard, Michel de Certeau’s (1984) work on *The Practice of Everyday Life* and in particular his discussion of ‘walking in the city’ has been a touchstone for many contemporary urban cultural scholars (Crang & Travlou 2001; McEachern 1998; Morris 2004; Smith 1995; Stratford 2002; Thrift 2004). Central to de Certeau’s (1984: 93) conceptualisation of everyday life is perspective: he argues that taking a panoramic view of the city is ‘theoretical simulacrum… a misunderstanding of practices’. Instead, he suggests that space and place are better viewed through the rhetorical practices of city users, walkers and passers-by – without the enunciation that these practices offer the built environment is dead. For de Certeau (1984: 99) those practices that constitute the mundane, repetitive routines of daily life ‘affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects etc., the trajectories it “speaks”’. In this sense ordinary everyday practices that are generally not considered within the frame of urban studies are thrust into a position comparable to ‘what the speech act is to language or the statements uttered’ (1984: 97). This is a perspective that is more than just attentive to the muted aspects of social practice, for it also offers an approach to understanding the enactment of difference in the city. Through the focus on everyday life that de Certeau offers the minutiae of difference in individuals practices become the focal point of urban research – the different styles of walking, places of departure, arrival and transition; the different sounds, tastes and smells and any other actions that constitute the daily life of cities.

Finally, conceptualising the city as multiple and transitive we arrive at the work of Walter Benjamin and in particular his reflective accounts of 1920s Paris, Naples, Marseilles, Berlin and Moscow (Caygill 1998; Chisholm 2002; Featherstone 1992; 1998; Gilloch 1996; Lentin 2004; Robinson 2004). Through his reflections on spontaneous wandering through each of these cities Benjamin saw the improvised theatricality of urban life – streets and buildings are ‘divided into innumerable,
simultaneously animated theatres’ (cited in Caygill 1998: 178). The city as improvised theatre suggests that we are unlikely to uncover any systematic conceptualisation of urban space. Moreover, the apparent boundaries between different phenomena are seen to be porous and lacking clear definition. Benjamin’s work focused on understanding different and often outcast perspectives of the city – ‘[t]he invisible are made visible’ (Gilloch 1996: 9). Central to his unorthodox narratives are the figures of the ‘sauntering flaneur, the self-conscious dandy, the loud mouthed beggar, the suffering prostitute, the wretched ragpicker’ (Gilloch 1996: 9). Through each of these figures Benjamin develops a vision of the city bound to the perception of the viewer, a vision that is ultimately subjective and unstable as it relies on the specific space and time through which the city is experienced. Through this perspective the processes of urban space such as the multiple uses of the street, the interaction between people and buildings and the exercise of power and exclusion can be made articulate through reflections on individual experiences of movement in the city.

Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (2002) have quite usefully brought the work of Lefebvre, de Certeau and Benjamin into union through a discussion of the metaphors of transitivity, rhythm and footprints. Through these metaphors they illustrate what the three author’s share – a vision of the city that is continuously in the making by countless actions, movements, memories and representations. Yet, Amin and Thrift also find that these metaphors, while evocative, lack methodological clarity. Moreover, they consider the tradition of everyday urbanism that these authors offer to be flawed in three ways. Firstly, there is a sense of unlimited ebb and flow to the city’s rhythms and movements with little consideration for the control of movements whether banal (traffic lights) or extraordinary (gated communities). Secondly, the focus on face-to-face interactions in these approaches misses the significant proportion of urban life that is characterised by interactions between people, objects and machine like circulation. Finally, Lefebvre, de Certeau and Benjamin all focus on the city as the site of localised flows and as such miss the extensive connections beyond city, region and national borders that are central to contemporary urban life and indeed this project.

In place of, but also building upon, these approaches Amin and Thrift present an ontology of the city based upon encounter. Encounter, they argue, is able to take account of the importance of the random and seemingly insignificant acts, relations, presences and absences as well as the quite deliberate efforts to control, fix and resist
the flow of urban life. They view the city as an ecology, not in the developmentalist sense of the Chicago sociologists but as a site of continuous interactions between the many human and non-human species that inhabit the urban. In viewing the city in this way they foreground the centrality of what they call ‘biopolitics’, ‘the practice of engineering the body and the senses – and life more generally – so as to produce governable subjects’ (Amin & Thrift 2002: 28). It is here that power relations enters the equation of urban life and also where connections are made between the uneven relations of everyday life and the role of the senses, our very tactile experience of life. ‘Cities cast spells over the senses’ (Amin & Thrift 2002: 28). Such spells are cast by businesses or the state, by individuals or by communities. Through the understanding of how cities affect the senses we reach the point of the routine, the everyday that is just below consciousness and instead determined by habits, emotions and bodily flow. Here the importance of networks becomes apparent; not fixed networks between points but fluid ones like flows that intersect in any number of encounters. The encounters between different networks, of bodies, objects, representations, emotions, institutions and so on ‘produce particular spaces and times, as a consequence of the ways that the actors in these networks relate to one another’ (Amin & Thrift 2002: 29).

Amin and Thrift’s account of how to re-imagine the city is attractive for the openness that it offers while still maintaining a sense of the grittiness of urban life – the sensual experiences that might not always be positive, the control of bodies in space and the networks that may restrict as well as expand the possibilities of encounters. Yet, it is also rather elusive and abstract – a product of the scholarly tightrope the authors are trying to walk between openness for all things that might be urban and actually stating explicitly what they mean. In part this problem is a result of the fact that theirs is a purely conceptual explanation of cities generally (or in the north at least) rather than an empirical explanation of ‘particular spaces and times’ in one city through the experiences of one diverse group of individuals. Through my project, however, it might be possible to offer a little more clarity, at least in regards to the urban encounters that are the focus here.
Everyday Urbanism and Transnational Bodies, Objects, Languages, and Home

The key to focusing on everyday urbanism is a shift in perspective from large scale abstractions of the city from above to grounded analysis from below. This is not to suggest that we ignore the big picture of urban studies, or the relationships that stretch beyond cities into regions, nations or the world. Rather, we should focus on the scale at which urban life is experienced and enacted and how global, transnational, national, regional and local networks, individuals, institutions, communities and cultures are encountered in the city. Furthermore, this is not simply to argue as some have (Lees 2002) for a re-materialisation of urban or cultural approaches in geography or its related disciplines. Rather, taking from Alan Latham and Derek McCormack’s (2004) insightful account, it is a focus on the ‘material that admits from the very start the presence and importance of the immaterial, not as something that is defined in opposition to the material, but as that which gives it an expressive life and liveliness independent of the human subject’. Within such a focus there are certain ‘things’ that can be used both metaphorically and literally as a medium to express the material and immaterial elements of everyday urban life. In this project the ‘things’ which matter most or which serve the exposition of research most are the very transnational ‘things’ that South Korean international students bring with them to their encounters in the everyday urban life of Auckland: bodies, objects, languages and home. Such ‘things’ are not the limit of this investigation but serve usefully to expose many different aspects of everyday transnational urbanism in this project.

All individuals in a city are locked into an embodied relationship with the urban environment and all those embodied others in urban space, human or non-human. Put simply, ‘bodies and cities produce one another’ (Pile 1996: 174). The nature of this co-production is necessarily multiple and it would be foolish to assume that more than a taste of the relationship could be described here so I will focus merely on what relates to this project. Most bodies are both the subject and object of vision in the urban environment – this much is clear. However, it is also clear that some bodies are more visible than others. Some bodies are produced, through actions and representations within urban space as differentially raced (Ahmed 2002), gendered (Domosh 1997), (dis)abled (England 2003), (m)othered (Longhurst 2001) or indeed made invisible (Seshadri-Crooks 2000). In Auckland for example, South Korean international students’
bodies are produced through representations of what might be called the ‘facts of yellowness’ (Ang 2001), something that binds certain bodies (Asian) together in opposition to other bodies (White) in countries like New Zealand. Such a malediction also serves to produce space as certain parts of cities or certain micro spaces within cities through representations of inhabitation or use by racialised bodies (for example McCann 1999). In other examples racialised bodies can re-produce meaning and experience in particular spaces, intentionally or unintentionally, through embodied practices (Miller 2001; Shaw 2001).

Bodies are of course not simply something that other body/selves experience for they are also the way we experience the urban environment and the worlds we encounter. The senses, whether sight, sound, smell, taste or touch, are crucial to experiences of urban or indeed other space (Rodaway 1994). They dictate what appear to be dirty or clean spaces, noisy or quiet spaces, pleasant or unpleasant spaces, familiar and unfamiliar spaces. The senses are of course a significant part of producing the representations discussed above. Senses also serve however to create belonging, particularly for individuals who are estranged in urban space. The taste and smell of familiar food, the sight of familiar bodies, the sound of familiar music or even the touch of familiar clothing can help to develop a sense of belonging in space, or conversely when such things are absent to highlight a sense of estrangement. For migrants – temporary or otherwise – the senses can also serve in both a positive and negative way to connect individuals with a whole range of transnational networks of community, identity, representations and of course objects (Choo 2004; Duruz 2005; Hage 1997; Law 2001; Thomas 2004; Wise 2005).

The objects that connect individuals transnationally are many and varied. They might include objects of little or great economic, symbolic or emotional value (Hage 1997). In other cases they might include technologies or tools that allow transnationals to connect with other places like computers, faxes and telephones (Adams & Ghose 2003; Vertovec 2004a). Such objects might be sustained by the networks of merchants and commodity cultures (Crang et al. 2003) or simply be passed between friends, families and acquaintances. In all cases objects can serve to connect migrants to transnational networks, and provide them with the means of re-grounding in otherwise foreign territory (Ahmed et al. 2003). One of the most common objects that migrants engage with in cities both through commodity cultures and personal networks is food.
Food, as products in supermarkets, ethnic restaurants or home cooking skills has both immaterial and material value that introduces elements of familiarity into the urban landscape (Bell & Valentine 1997). It is also an object that has affect on the material and immaterial experience of particular urban spaces through the integration of different foodways (imagine walking past restaurants or stalls emitting unfamiliar smells). Cultural items like music, in whatever forms (compact disc, computer files, musical instruments), also connect transnationals while influencing in small ways the constitution of the urban landscape they inhabit (Jazeel 2005). Other objects that connect migrants through transnational networks while simultaneously influencing the spaces they inhabit might include fashion, film and cultural artefacts.

Yi Fu Tuan has reflected that ‘the city—its existence and quality—is closely linked to the quality of language, to the words we use to communicate with one another’ (1994: 144). This much is apparent in the use of language in the basic machinations of urban space – the construction of buildings, the interactions between people or the language of road signs, advertising or maps. However, language is not singular in its production, exchange, or influence. In cities like Auckland which are increasingly part of transnational routes of migration, travel and indeed international education the multiplicity of language is particularly apparent. Minority and above all languages that are newer to urban spaces can be seen to have significant effect on the experience of urban space. Equally, different pronunciations have important implications (Kearns & Berg 2002). The sound of different languages, often concentrated in particular parts of cities (Collins 2004; Dagenis & Lamarre 2005) can change perceptions of that space – a process that is often connected with the racialisation of bodies that produce such sounds (Silverstein 2003).

Language in this sense, like other social practices, ‘does not exist outside the social relations of power... There is, in other words, a politics of language’ (Jackson 1989: 157). This politics is manifest in the bounding of individuals to ethnolinguistic identity both from within and without. As Michael Silverstein (2003: 537) observes ‘[t]his is a boundary policed, both positively and negatively, from both sides in sometimes legal as well as politicoeconomic discourses of “obligations [to or toward],” “rights[to or in],” and “protections [from]”’. From one perspective this sees individuals being included or excluded from particular everyday urbanisms because they use particular languages or are unable to use other languages to a relatively competent level.
In different ways language use also produces ethnolinguistic identity through its use in urban space and by doing so binds individuals to the structures of ‘we-group difference within such larger social formations’ (Silverstein 2003: 537). These structures may promote a sense of belonging for individuals, and provide shelter from a shared sense of ‘(un)common estrangement’ (Ahmed 1999: 344). However, such structures also facilitate the reproduction of in-group power relations that may restrict the actions of individuals both within and beyond the group. Although these different understandings of language in everyday urbanism are important for any understanding of the city they are particularly salient for multilingual transnationals like South Korean international students who arrive in a city where their ethnolinguistic identity is not the dominant one and they are forced to negotiate with care the social practice of language use in urban space.

Home is perhaps one of the most important elements of urban space. In this sense ‘[h]ome is place but it is also a space inhabited by family, people, things and belongings – a familiar, if not comfortable space where particular activities and relationships are lived’ (Mallett 2004: 63). Conceived in this way home can simultaneously refer to the material and immaterial – the meanings that are attached to particular structures that house individuals but also a feeling or sense of home that may have no spatial correlate. In migration individuals must leave home as the house or dwelling that they previously resided in and travel to another neighbourhood, city, or country to temporarily or permanently reside in a place that is at least initially unfamiliar. As such it can be argued that ‘[t]he journeys of migration involve a splitting of home as place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience’ (Ahmed 1999: 341). In this way the transnational experience of home and its articulation in urban space can be seen through two interrelated phenomenon. On the one hand home becomes ‘a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination’ (Brah 1996: 192). Indeed, it is through nostalgia that the idea of home might shift from being a particular building in a particular neighbourhood, town or city to being the entire neighbourhood, town, city, region or even country (hooks 1990; Massey 1992). Ghassan Hage (1997: 101) argues that the nostalgia for a mythic home often relates to a yearning for ‘the national home, “our national home”, or “back home”’ among migrants in general. In a second related way the desire for home or homeliness is often articulated in migrant practices of ‘regrounding’ (Ahmed et al. 2003). Regrounding practices might include engagement
with objects like food and photographs or encounters with familiar bodies and languages. Such practices are not necessarily connected to places of residence but might include the public spaces of the city or other private or semi-private spaces where a sense of home can be made. It can serve like any other encounter in the city to change urban spaces and times through the transnational ‘things’ that are brought to these encounters and the creative, if not always successful, reconfiguration of space to make home in the public and private spaces that we inhabit.

**Everyday Transnationalism in Cities**

Different ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ localities offer migrants dissimilar contexts of exit and reception, and thus dissimilar political, social, cultural and economic opportunities and constraints. It is these opportunities and constraints and what transmigrants do with them that will (and should) occupy the field of transnational urban studies in the decades ahead (Smith 2005b: 243).

Cities in the contemporary world are inextricably connected to practices and processes that cross over and occur beyond their boundaries. Equally, transnational practices are, through the tools and technologies of mobility, communication and emplacement, intrinsically tied to the functions of cities. It has been the aim of this review to draw the oddly disparate literatures of transnationalism and urban cultural studies together through an identification of what they share – the everyday. As the prediction in Smith’s quote above illustrates this kind of everyday approach will necessarily produce explanations for transnationalism and urban life that are contextually reliant. Indeed, perhaps Smith does not go far enough in this statement. Surely there is more than just the different sending and receiving localities, and the experiences of exit and reception that must be taken into account when trying to understand an everyday transnational urbanism. There must also be room for the ‘encounters’ of all those human and non-human networks that occur in cities (Amin & Thrift 2002). Networks that will include more than just sending and receiving contexts but indeed the involvement of practices and processes that might span the globe – the connections are potentially infinite and immeasurable. Nevertheless, through the project that follows I aim to operationalise this approach to understanding contemporary cities and transnationalism through the encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland. This effort is not an attempt to limit and completely conceptualise these encounters but rather to establish
what through reference to Amin and Thrift (2002: 3) we might call ‘a provisional ordering to [transnational] urban life’.

This chapter has reviewed the main scholarly influences of this thesis. In the first part of the chapter I considered the development of the field of transnational studies. This included a discussion of the initial emergence of this field as a reconsideration of the space of migrant activities beyond the boundaries of the ‘sending’ or ‘receiving’ nation state. I also detailed the critiques that have been directed at transnationalism and the recent re-framing of scholarship within this field. The second part of the chapter served a number of purposes. Firstly, it established the use transnationalism in this project as an optic, lens or framework and the relevance of this approach to a study of international education and the practices and experiences of students specifically. Secondly, I identified the ways that a study of transnationalism is fundamentally also a study of urbanism because of the crucial role that cities play in the sorts of practices and experiences that are usually conceived through this framework. Finally, I investigated the ways that a focus on everyday practices in urban space can be deployed as part of this study of the transnationality of international students. In particular, I identified the ways that a focus on bodies, objects, languages and home can act as a synthesis between transnationalism and urban studies. It is these ‘things’ that have become the focus of important developments in both of these fields. Moreover, the focus on bodies, objects, languages and home illustrates that the lives of transnational migrants like international students cannot be viewed in isolation from other urban inhabitants. Rather, their practices and experiences must be conceptualised in relation to the other differently mobile inhabitants of a city like Auckland so that it is possible to identify not simply what is unique to specific individuals and groups but also what is shared.

The next chapter outlines the methodology used in this thesis. Picking up on some of the themes raised here this chapter offers a candid discussion of the reasons why the research in this project developed from an orthodox ethnographic approach to include a number of experimental techniques.
This chapter details the methodologies employed to understand the practices and experiences of South Korean international students in Auckland. In broad terms this thesis has employed a multi-method qualitative methodology complemented by some quantitative data. Within this general approach many of the methods employed are part of what is now considered the orthodox approach in much of human geography and its parallel social sciences: questionnaires, discourse analysis, interviews and observation (Crang 2002; Hay 2005; Latham 2003a; Thrift 2000). In addition to these commonplace research techniques this thesis also employed methods that are still considered experimental in much of human geography and other social sciences: diaries, mapping exercises and online research. As I discuss in this chapter, the use of this multi-method approach was not a pre-determined part of the research design. Rather, it was the product of an ongoing critical reflection on my practice as a researcher. The shift to include more experimental approaches was a result of my realisation of the limitations of my initial design. In this way the methodology of this project developed over time so that certain methods informed others, while other methods were reactions to problems in early encounters. The time-line of research methods is illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Timeline of Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire data collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print media analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diary / mapping exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In what follows I offer a textual account of the ways that my research methodology developed over the course of this project. In particular I discuss my initial use and problematisation of a traditional ethnographic approach and the ideas that influenced a broadening of my research methodology. Following this, I offer a descriptive account of each method that was employed, the issues of recruitment and sampling where applicable, and the manner in which the different research material I gathered was analysed.

**Developing an Interactive Research Methodology**

**Ethnographic Openings**

As stated in Chapter One, the main aim of this project is to understand the everyday practices and experiences of South Korean international students in Auckland. In line with the most common approach to researching transnational subjects, like international students, this project began life in the form of a traditional ethnography (Crang et al. 2003; Smith 2000; Vertovec 1999). I intended to use semi-structured interviews with participants and key informants, alongside a considerable period of participant observation to understand the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland. This ethnography would be complemented by a questionnaire exercise that aimed to gather descriptive data covering students’ living arrangements, social activities, relationships and movements during their sojourn (see Appendix A) and an analysis of print media accounts of international education in Auckland. Following Steve Herbert (2000: 564), I hoped that through ethnography I would be able to ‘explore the complex connections that social groups establish with one another and with the places they inhabit, cultivate, promote, defend, dominate and love’.

This approach, at least initially, relied upon three unintended assumptions: that my relationships with participants in this project would be for the most part unproblematic; that the foci of my research – those ‘everyday urban encounters’ – were already in the field waiting to be researched; and finally that the actions of students could be studied in relation to a single site, Auckland, even if there were connections to other places. Each of these assumptions presented problems for the research project that became apparent during the first six months of fieldwork.
Firstly, recruiting South Korean international students for my research was more difficult than I had envisioned. Perhaps more importantly however, my research encounters with individual students did not easily render the kind of information I was expecting. Students were rarely forthcoming. Moreover, the considerable differences in our capacities to communicate – either in Korean or English – seemed to impede the interactivity of these research encounters. In addition to, and as a result of, these quite ‘practical’ difficulties in the research encounters I also began to experience another more epistemological problem with my approach. I began to feel problematised by what has been called the ‘crisis of representation’ (Marcus & Fisher 1986) – the question of ‘Who speaks for whom?’ (Kobayashi 1994: 75) in research and the production of academic knowledge. In short, I felt increasingly uncomfortable with my position as a Pakeha (European) male whose connection to the city of Auckland is rarely in question researching South Korean international students whose connections to Auckland are regularly problematised by other inhabitants. I wondered, what role am I playing in the production and representation of knowledge about these students?; and, how can I give students themselves a greater role in the production of such knowledge?

The second assumption of my initial approach was more ontological in nature. It arises from emerging concern amongst many human geographers that the focus of scholarship since the ‘cultural turn’ has been all too discursive, based on an assumption that human beings act in ways that are always intentionally meaningful and if the correct methods are employed researchers can uncover significant elements of such meaning (for a detailed discussion of this problematic see Crang 2003). This assumption was problematised by two factors. Firstly, it was complicated by the fact that the interviews I was conducting seemed incapable of illustrating the kind of ‘everyday urban encounters’ that I was really interested in – the mundane actions students are involved in every day that they seemed not to care about very much. These interviews, characterised by what Anthony Giddens (1984) calls a ‘double hermeneutic’, forced me into a situation of reading or deducing meaning out of the answers that students gave – answers that were often predictable responses to the kind of questions I was asking in the first place. Secondly, at the time that this research was developing I was also becoming increasingly influenced by the literatures around the performativity of everyday life (Butler 1997; Gregson & Rose 2000), embodied practice (Longhurst 2001; Pile 1996), material geographies (Jackson 2000; Lees 2002) and non-
Chapter Four: Methodology

representational theory (Lorimer 2005; Thrift 1996). Reading these literatures emphasised the point that the kind of practices I was interested in were only sometimes imbued with intentionality and meaning and more often than not were perceived simply as the background to a broader social world. It was obvious that the orthodox ethnography I was engaging in was never going to uncover such nuanced and subtle elements of everyday activities.

Finally, the enacting of research only in Auckland as the site of students’ action was a result of my aim of understanding students’ role in changing spatial experiences in this city. Yet, while this approach was useful for understanding students’ actions here and their relationships with other inhabitants in Auckland it also shrouded the very transnationality of student practices that I was also seeking to uncover. It was centred on students’ action ‘here’, meaning that the sort of actions that took place simultaneously in their home towns and cities as well as Auckland were often missed. I realised that through the use of these particular methods I had unintentionally employed a form of methodological nationalism that treated action in Auckland and action in South Korea as separate entities that only sometimes came into contact rather than being inherently connected in ways that might challenge the borders between such places.

Each of these assumptions then became problematic not because it was impossible to continue the research but because they highlighted the ways that the methods I was employing were not based upon the same epistemo-ontological underpinnings as the conceptual framework that I have discussed in the previous chapter. These problems are not unique to this project. Indeed, Geraldine Pratt (2000) has written about human geography’s methodological conservatism – the continued mismatch between the ways geographers think and the research methods that they employ. She argues that human geographers have yet ‘to put much of our theoretical talk into research practices. Our talk may be that of poststructuralists, postcolonialists, or social constructivists, but our practice continues to be that of colonising humanists’ (Pratt 2000: 639). In the same way the traditional ethnographic project that I had designed positioned me as the researcher at the centre seeking out the truth about South Korean international students in Auckland – even if my conceptual framework was much more participant oriented and my objectives far more nuanced and tentative. It became all too apparent that I needed to broaden the scope of the research methods employed in this project.
Chapter Four: Methodology

Broadening the Approach

In seeking to broaden the scope of my research practice I had two main goals. Firstly, I was seeking a way to shift the research practice away from methods that were centred *only* on my interpretations of the meanings that I encountered to one that allowed greater participation of students while also being focussed on more than just the interpretation of meaning. Secondly, I sought to employ research methods that would focus on more than just the site of encounter; methods that would embrace the distinct trans-locality of the research that I was conducting. In this regard some recent discussions on performative methods and multi-sited ethnographies were particularly informative.

During the last decade there has been a shift in human geography – and social and cultural geography in particular – towards conceptual tools centred on embodiment and performance as metaphorical and literal foci of investigation (Gregson & Rose 2000; Longhurst 2001; Lorimer 2005; Nelson 1999; Pile 1996; Pratt 2004; Shields 1996; Thrift 1997; 2000). These shifts have been discussed in relation to transnationalism and urban studies in the previous chapter. Although the focus of these discussions has, for the most part, been conceptual a few authors have begun to consider different means by which the focus on performance and embodiment might be effectively (and indeed affectively) realised through different sorts of research methods (for two useful examples see Latham 2003a; Pratt 2004). Interestingly, many of those considering different methods and methodologies have advocated an approach to research that is not dictated by systematic, replicable and reliable methods. Rather, scholars like Alan Latham (2003a: 2012) have suggested that geographers (and others) approach the questions of research practice and method with a ‘sense of playfulness, as-if-ness, plurality, combined with a genuine curiosity about the ways that social life is ordered and carried through’. Such an approach suggests that research methods need not always be attempts to produce data that can simply be compared and aggregated across the particularities of research projects (although this often remains very important). Instead, the design of research projects should embrace the particularity of the research participants and the site(s) of encounter. It might, in other words, be more useful to tailor-make our research methods rather than be solely focussed on standards and orthodoxy.
In the field of transnationalism too there has been some concern for the ways that research is carried out of late. In particular, much has been made of the importance of what George Marcus has called ‘multi-sited ethnography’ (Crang et al. 2003; Hendry 2003; Marcus 1989; 1995; Smith 2005a). Based upon Marcus’ discussion this account suggests that researchers need to shift their ethnographic practice from its focus upon the single site of encounter – whether this be the neighbourhood, city, region or nation – towards research that traces ‘a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity’ (Marcus 1995: 96). Ulf Hannerz (1998: 137) has taken Marcus’ suggestion a step further to suggest that ‘research may need to be not merely multilocal but also translocal’. The approach suggested by these authors is not simply about conducting research like interviews, observations or more innovative methods in different places (although this can be an important aspect). Rather it is about shifting the focus of any research conducted with transnational actors so that it actually interrogates the links and ruptures between places as well as individual and group actions that are influenced by different places or occur across different places.

In developing my research methodology from a traditional ethnographic approach I have taken both of these debates very seriously. Without, relinquishing the valuable contribution that questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and discourse analysis had and would continue to provide I sought to include some more innovative and creative ways of understanding the practices and experiences of South Korean international students. These methods included experiments with written and photo diaries, a participatory mapping exercise, a walking tour, a new more trans-local focus to all research practice, a series of interviews in South Korea and online encounters with students involved in the research. Alongside my existing research practice these methods helped to resolve many of the problems I had found in my original research design: they assisted with communication issues by providing a less linguistically reliant means of interaction with students; they allowed students to be much more ‘participants in’ rather than ‘subjects of’ the research project; they opened up space for students’ contributions on how their bodies and performances are involved in the constitution of everyday life; and they shifted the focus from Auckland to one that embraced the actions and experiences of students that might occur in Auckland and/or South Korea. In the section that follows I provide descriptive accounts of these
experimental methods as well as the use of the questionnaires, discourse analysis, participant observation and interviews.

**Methods**

**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire developed for this research was designed to provide descriptive data on South Korean international students’ living arrangements, social activities, relationships and movements during their sojourn (see Appendix A). The purpose of this survey was to elicit data that was more specific to the population and objectives of this project than what was currently available in larger surveys of international students (Ward & Masgoret 2004). Elements of the questionnaires employed by Andrew Butcher (2002c) on the experiences of international students in Auckland’s North Shore City and Colleen Ward and Anne-Marie Masgoret’s (2004) national survey of international students were adopted and integrated with questions that were specific to this project. The original questionnaire contained 40 questions with a number of sub-questions. After 50 questionnaires had been completed I reviewed the answers that were being provided (and those that were not) and made a number of alterations to the questionnaire. The modified questionnaire was considerably shorter – it contained 37 questions and no sub-questions.

I had the questionnaire translated into Korean and respondents were given the option to complete the survey in either Korean or English. In total, 92% of respondents completed the questionnaire in Korean. Initially, the questionnaire was made available only via the internet. Respondents were recruited through advertisements placed on Auckland-based Korean language websites and notice boards at Korean internet cafes (*PC Bang*), restaurants and educational establishments. While the questionnaire was available only on the internet it received a disproportionate number of responses from public tertiary students. To counter this I purposively sampled for respondents at private training establishments and language schools by providing printed copies of the questionnaire to key informants at these locations so that they could distribute them amongst students. A total of 74 completed online-questionnaires and 56 completed print-questionnaires were collected, comprising a total of 120 completions.
Chapter Four: Methodology

The questionnaire exercise was effective in obtaining indicative data about the activities of South Korean international students in Auckland. In particular it complemented the existing data available on international students more generally in Auckland and New Zealand. Additionally, the questionnaire served as one avenue to recruit participants for other areas of the research through a question that asked students to volunteer their details if they wished to be involved further in the research. Finally, the questionnaire provided information that could be investigated further through the other methods employed.

Print Media Discourse Analysis

As part of this project an analysis of print media widely available in Auckland was conducted. This research, which makes up the content of Chapter Six (see also Collins 2006) was based on a survey of materials drawn from newspapers and magazines that are easily available to members of the public in the Auckland urban area.\(^1\) The survey used the Newstext Plus search engine (available through numerous libraries in New Zealand) that covers most major print publications in New Zealand, including daily, weekly and community newspapers, magazines and business serials. Auckland-based publications and nationwide publications that are available in Auckland were included in the survey. The surveying procedure was to search Newstext Plus for any reference to the terms ‘international education’, ‘export education’, ‘international students’, ‘Korean students’, ‘Asian students’, ‘foreign students’ or ‘overseas students’ in articles that were published between 2000 and 2004. Once duplicates had been removed, a total of 859 articles that included these phrases were identified. Letters to the editor and other correspondence were not included in the analysis.

The articles were analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is essentially the critical study of language to uncover socio-political inequality (Fairclough 1995). According to Tuen A. van Dijk (1993: 249-250) it is an approach that focuses ‘on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance’ where dominance is defined ‘as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial

---

\(^1\) For the purposes of this research, the Auckland metropolitan area is given to include Auckland City, Manukau City, North Shore City, Waitakere City and Papakura where the majority of export education has been concentrated. I have not included media that is published specifically for the districts Franklin and Rodney.
and gender inequality’ [emphasis in original]. In this analysis then the focus was on the ways in which South Korean international students were being represented in Auckland’s print media. Because there was only one article that was specifically about South Korean international students the focus was shifted to the dominant representation of South Korean and other students as ‘Asian students’ in Auckland’s print media. The purpose of the analysis was to illustrate the ways that South Korean international students are perceived in Auckland and some of the broader social dynamics related to the practices and experiences of students during their sojourn.

**Participant Observation**

Participant observation formed a central element of this research project. Indeed, in Table 4.1 it can be seen that I was involved in some form of participant-observation from the very beginning to the very end of the fieldwork phase of this project. The types of observation that I employed varied considerably from highly directed accounts of particular locations through to shared experiences with South Korean international students who were as much friends as they were participants in this project. Table 4.2 provides examples of the different types of observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Observation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Site observation</td>
<td>Observation conducted either individually or accompanied at sites that had been identified in questionnaires, interviews, diaries or maps. Little or no contact with participants.</td>
<td>Restaurants, cafes, internet cafes, streets etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Event observation</td>
<td>This includes observations of one-off or groups of events including a concert by a visiting Korean rock group, Korean student’s association events and others. Varying levels of contact with participants.</td>
<td>Various event venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Student learning centre</td>
<td>Attendance at an English conversation class held at the University of Auckland. Participation as a member of the class – often assisting the tutor with class activities.</td>
<td>University of Auckland Student Learning Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Korean volunteer team</td>
<td>(see Chapter Ten) Involvement and full participation in a volunteer group of Korean students who met every Saturday for 18 months to pick up rubbish in Auckland’s inner city.</td>
<td>Various areas around Auckland’s inner city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Accompanying individual / groups of students</td>
<td>Accompanying students whom I knew well on personal / social outings. Full participation with those involved.</td>
<td>Students’ homes, restaurants, cafes, bars, singing rooms,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘[P]articipant observation for a geographer involves strategically placing oneself in situations in which systematic understandings of place are most likely to arise’ (Kearns 2005: 196). However, as noted above and in Table 4.2, the ways in which researchers can place themselves in situations can vary considerably. Indeed, Robin Kearns has noted a useful distinction between the ‘observer-as-participant’ and the ‘participant-as-observer’ as a means to differentiate approaches to observation on a continuum from detachment to engagement.\textsuperscript{2} The different types of participant observation noted in Table 4.2 can be effectively divided between these two categories: in observations 1 and 2 I was acting as a ‘participant-as-observer’; in 4 and 5 ‘observer-as-participant’; and observation 3 lies somewhere between these two positions.

Despite these differences in approaches to participant observation this method is unified by the fact that it is unavoidably based upon researcher-centred interpretations of the places and peoples being researched. This can be very beneficial. Yet, this can also be seen as a limitation – no matter how much a researcher participates while observing it is always s/he who is vested with the responsibility of writing the ethnography and by doing so also writing the subject of research into truth. This sort of responsibility can be problematic. It is a stark example of the point noted above that researchers employing such techniques risk taking the role of the colonising humanist if only with different intentions. These problems notwithstanding, participant observation is in many ways not only an inherent characteristic of qualitative research (we are always observing) but also an invaluable one (Crang 2002; Herbert 2000; Kearns 2000; 2005). Participant observation provides the researcher with first-hand experience of the ways in which life is conducted in the locations being observed. Such experience is certainly valuable in itself but it also serves a very important complementary and contextualising role in research practice. Participant observation can help provide information that serves to explain, confirm or even contest information gathered through other methods like interviews. Additionally, participant observation as a method that relies on engagement with the individuals and groups being researched helps to establish relationships that are valuable to other methods involved in a project.

\textsuperscript{2} Kearns (2000; 2005) also notes the ‘complete observer’ and ‘complete participation’ on his continuum. The prior seemingly only possible through a surveillance system like closed-circuit television and the latter requiring long-term involvement in a research setting – he gives the example of ‘living in a rural settlement to understand meanings of sustainability’ (Kearns 2005: 196).
The procedure employed for conducting observation exercises during this project necessarily varied between the different types of observation that were being conducted. In situations where I was observing particular sites (observations 1 and 2 in the above table), or attending events with little or no prior connection to many of the other participants my approach to observation could be seen as quite systematic. I would observe the particular location according a series of pre-determined themes including who and what was there, how participants and objects were inter-acting, what appeared to be normal and abnormal behaviour in such places, and what meaning could be read from the ‘goings on’ in such a location. These observations would also be conducted for fixed periods of times or where applicable until an event concluded. On a number of occasions I was accompanied by my wife who is also South Korean – her assistance in these observations was always invaluable. After these observations concluded I would write-up the experiences in the form of a narrative as soon as it was practical to do so.

Conversely, when participating and observing in occasions where I was an acknowledged member of a group (observations 3, 4 and 5 in the above table) my approach to observation was still guided by many of the same themes but could never be so systematic. I was always interacting in a very conscious way with other participants and was focused first and foremost on this activity during the observation. At the conclusion of such occasions (which in the case of 4 and 5 could be quite a significant period of time) I would also write-up my experiences in the form of a narrative as soon as it was practical to do so. Although these latter more interactive observations were less systematic in nature the detail of my narratives were far richer. My interactions meant that I was not just observing but also gathering the perspectives and experiences of those involved – something that is perhaps the greatest advantage of participant observation as a research method.

The narratives that I have written from these observation exercises implicitly and explicitly pervade the entire thesis. From one perspective they are my experience of researching South Korean international students in Auckland. As narratives they tell my story of interacting with students, of being to some extent a complete outsider as exemplified in the first type of observation to becoming so engrossed in this research project that I was living social lives alongside a number of the participants as indicated in the fourth and fifth types of observation. Although I feel it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of these observations – the fact that they are always my interpretations of
events – I also feel that they are a crucial part of learning about the topic of this research. Alongside the interviews that I discuss shortly, they provided me with opportunities to learn from the South Korean international students involved in this project and as a result helped enhance the detail and texture of the overall project.

**Interviews**

Interviews, both with participants and key informants, also form a central element of this research project. As part of the initial ethnographic approach to this research they acted both as a route to understanding the perspectives and/or experiences of interviewees and as an opportunity to recruit participants for questionnaires, interviews or other research methods. Broadly speaking the interviews were semi-structured in nature although some of the key informant interviews were more structured while some participant interviews eventually became more narrative/in-depth in nature. In any case the distinction between these different ‘types’ of interviews is rarely unambiguous (Dunn 2000). Interviews were principally conducted with individuals except on three occasions where participants wished to be interviewed with friends, roommates or classmates. Interviews with participants included an initial series of interviews in Auckland with current international students as well as a subsequent series of interviews conducted in South Korea with former international students. One key informant interview was also conducted during the fieldwork in South Korea. Table 4.3 illustrates the different sample details for these interviews:

Initial contact was made with key informants through the educational institutions, public organisations and associations they represented. In the first instance a database of educational institutes providing services to international students in Auckland was developed. Each institution was contacted initially by email requesting an interview with a representative who had experience with South Korean international students or who would be knowledgeable about student experiences. Subsequent contact was made by phone and in person. Key informants from public organisations and student associations were recruited in the same manner.

---

3 The period of research conducted in South Korea was generously funded by the ASIA:NZ Foundation and the New Zealand Asian Studies Society.

4 This database was developed from the signatories listed on the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (see Chapter Two).
### Table 4.3: Details of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>No. recorded</th>
<th>No. not recorded</th>
<th>Fieldwork Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key informants</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Educational institution representatives (managers, marketing advisors, counsellors)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 2004 – September 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Agent Representatives of public organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Korean student association representatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants in Auckland</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>South Korean international students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>September 2004 – May 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants in South Korea</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Former South Korean international students</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>July 2004 – September 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amongst educational institutions there was considerable resistance to participation in this project, particularly from representatives of private education providers. Indeed, the 10 representatives of educational institutions comprise only 11% of a total of 86 institutions that were contacted. Most providers would ignore my attempts at contact; some replied by stating that they had a policy of not allowing research relating to their business while others took offence when I followed initial attempts at contact by phone or in person. In general I felt that many institutions (and again particularly private providers) were concerned about the negative effect that research might have. This concern is, in many ways, a reflection of the time at which the research was conducted – between 2004 and 2005 the export education industry was feeling the impact of the decline in international student numbers and was blaming a lot of this decline on reports of negative experiences amongst international students in New Zealand (see Chapter Two and Li 2004; Whitehead 2004). While the representatives of educational agencies were equally hesitant to be interviewed, public organisations related to international education and Korean students associations were much more willing to participate in this project.
I used a number of methods to recruit South Korean international students for interviews. Initially I relied upon the questionnaire as a means of recruiting students – the final question asked students to leave their email address if they wished to be involved further in the project. Although a large number of students responded positively to this question only four students replied to the follow up email about participation. In addition to this approach I also asked each of the key informants to ask any students they met whether they would be interested in participating in the research. Finally, a certain amount of snowballing was employed to recruit students through interviewees and where I met new students through my observation activities. Further, in addition to the 29 interviews conducted with students I also had informal contact with well over 100 students. At times these informal discussions with students would relate quite directly to aims of my project at other times they would only have minimal relevance. Nevertheless, each of these formal and informal interactions with students contributed to the development of the overall project.

Most of the interviews in South Korea were conducted with participants who had already been part of the project in Auckland and had subsequently returned to South Korea. In addition two participants were recruited through the University of Auckland alumni association in Seoul. These former university-based international students were recruited because virtually all of the university level students involved in the project were still living in Auckland at the time I conducted fieldwork in South Korea. One interview was also conducted with the head of the alumni association in Seoul about her interactions with former international students.5

My approach to each of the interviews varied – not just in terms of the three different types of interviews (key informants in Auckland, students in Auckland and former students in South Korea) but also in regards to each individual interview. Particularly in the case of key informants the interview schedule would be tailored to their position in their organisation and the knowledge that they could be expected to have about South Korean international students – a manager of a language school as opposed to a Korean speaking counsellor for example. The interview schedules for

5 The head of the University of Auckland alumni association in Seoul and most of its members are in fact New Zealand permanent residents or citizens. Indeed, the two former international students recruited for this research through the association were the only alumni known to the association who had been international students in Auckland. This was a surprising realisation that suggesting that international students and New Zealand citizens of Korean descent have quite different post-study trajectories.
students differed only slightly in terms of the type of educational institute they studied at (university, language school etc) but the direction of discussion during the interviews necessarily varied quite considerably. Likewise the interviews in South Korea were based upon a relatively generic interview schedule\(^6\) that allowed the participants to lead the discussion in the direction they desired. The generic interview schedules are provided in Appendices B, C and D.

Throughout the thesis I make reference to the comments of interviewees through pseudonyms – individual students are referred to through fictional names\(^7\) and key informants are referred to through a personal communication number (e.g. Pers. Comm. 1). Students have been given fictional Korean or English names depending on what they regularly used during their time in Auckland. I also indicate through abbreviations different characteristics of that individual: for students, their area of origin in South Korea, age and the type of institution they attend; for key informants, whether they speak Korean and the organisation they work for or are associated with. These abbreviations are illustrated in Table 4.4. A full list of interviewee details is provided in Appendix E.

Table 4.4: Identifying Details of Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informants</th>
<th>International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. Pers. Comm. 1: KS, PTE)</td>
<td>(e.g. Min-Gyeong, TS, Gwangju, 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Speaking</td>
<td>KS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Korean Speaking</td>
<td>NKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Tertiary Institution</td>
<td>PTI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Training Establishment</td>
<td>PTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language School</td>
<td>ELS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Organisation</td>
<td>IEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland Korean Students Association</td>
<td>AKSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tertiary Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private Training Establishment Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) Additional background questions were asked of the two former international students who had not been involved in the research in Auckland.

\(^7\) The only exception is a student named Pedro, who established the Korean Volunteer Team that is discussed in Chapter Ten. Pedro and I decided that it was pointless to give him a fictional name because the newspaper articles on the Korean Volunteer Team had already identified him by name publicly.
Experimenting with Methods

As I discussed earlier in this chapter I encountered a series of practical, epistemological and ontological dilemmas during the early period of fieldwork. To restate these briefly: I felt that linguistic differences were at times limiting the type of interactions I was having with students; that, partly as a result of this, the project was not turning out to be as participatory as I desired; and that the kind of methods I was employing were unable to evoke and reflect on the kind of ‘everyday urban encounters’ that were the focus of this project. As a way of facing these dilemmas through my research practice I began to employ a series of methods experimentally that I hoped would provide innovative solutions to these issues. These methods included written and photo diaries, a mapping exercise, a walking tour, the development of an interactive website and analysis of pre-existing student websites. Students were asked to be involved in one or more of the methods during interviews or via email and Korean language websites for the interactive website. As was expected not all of these methods were of interest to students. In the end only the written diary, mapping exercise and individual website analysis were used for this project. The following methods were not successful:

- Photo diary: This method was based upon the use of photography by a number of social science researchers in recent years (Dodman 2003; Latham 2003a; Markwell 2000; Prosser 1998; Rose 2001). Students were given a disposable camera and a note-book with places to record information (in Korean or English) about the photographs taken. Although five students initially took interest in this method only two returned their cameras and very few photos were shot. It became apparent after discussions with these students that they didn’t see the point of using such basic technology – most students had digital cameras and took regular photos of their lives in Auckland anyway. Many students were happy for me to use these photos but were also not interested in writing or talking about each photo. This experience contrasts significantly with the apparent success of photography by other researchers (Latham 2003a; Dodman 2003). Curiously, this may reflect the fact that this type of photography is already a part of students’ everyday lives in Auckland.

- Walking tour: The objective of this method was to get a better understanding of students’ everyday life-worlds by asking them to spend two hours showing me
locations and routes they regularly used. The method was similar to an approach employed by Margarethe Kusenbach (2003) that aims to uncover ‘lived experience in situ’. It also shares elements with Claudia Bell’s (2004) research on a tour bus in Auckland to understand the ways tourist sites are produced. In total three students decided to be involved in this method. Those who were involved found the experience interesting and interactions we had during the walking tour were quite productive – it was like a walking interview. However, there were not sufficient numbers of students who wished to participate. It became clear that for many students the time involved and the apparent ‘banality’ of their everyday places/routes seemed to limit the number interested in participating in this method.

- Interactive website: As part of my attempt at expanding the types of methods employed in this project I also sought to develop a website where I hoped students would interact about the issues relating to this research. I developed this website on the http://www.cyworld.co.kr domain as a ‘club’ or group site. On the website I placed links and information about living in Auckland and other things that would be useful to students. I also placed photographs from around Auckland and posed questions to visitors. I encouraged students to use the website through email and advertisements on other websites. Again, this method was unsuccessful. There are already a number of Korean language websites focussed on Auckland and New Zealand and, as I discuss shortly, many students already have their own personal websites. Like the experience with the photo-diary this method was just a replication of practices that were already a part of students’ everyday lives and, in hindsight, it was always likely to be unsuccessful.

Because of continued difficulties in recruiting students for these methods and the relative success of the other methods I discuss below I eventually decided to stop asking students to participate in the photo-diary, walking tour and interactive website. Nevertheless, valuable information was collected from the few photo-diaries completed and the three walking tours and has been integrated with other findings.
Written Diaries and Mapping Exercise

Although written diaries are not commonly listed within orthodox approaches to research in the social sciences there is a growing interest in the benefits that they offer (Bijoux & Myers 2006; Latham 2003a; Young & Barrett 2001). It is suggested by researchers who use diaries that this method allows us to get closer to the practices and experiences of everyday life. The diarist, in a sense, becomes a proxy observer both fulfilling a role that the researcher cannot assume, while also, when complemented by follow-up research encounters, contributing to a conversation with the researcher about everyday experiences and practices. Additionally, the use of diaries in this project also acted as one way to navigate the difficulties of language that had impeded interaction during interviews – participants were encouraged to write their diaries in the language with which they felt most comfortable. Like most other examples of diary use the production of the diary in this project was also pre-ceded and followed by other methods – interviews before-hand (as discussed above) and a mapping exercise after the diary was completed. This approach also has a precedent in earlier work (Christie 2003; Nelson 2000; Young & Barrett 2001). Mapping exercises, like the one employed in this project, seek to visualise the ‘mental maps’ (Lynch 1960; Tuan 1975) of participants in ways that highlight not just the places of importance but also the ways in which participants move between places – the routes and pathways of everyday life. Like the use of written diaries the production of drawings, maps or diagrams during research encounters aims to break down some of the barriers that are characteristics of interviews and observation while still retaining the fundamental premise of qualitative research – the interaction between researchers and researched.

The written diary in this project was, in the first instance, inspired by the recent work of Alan Latham (2003a). Students who volunteered to take part in this method were given a pre-constructed diary that included focussing questions in both English and Korean. Unlike Latham’s approach I provided students with two diaries – one in which they could record their ‘normal’ daily activities and another in which they could write about their experiences each day for one week. Also differing from Latham’s approach, the diaries used in this project were much more focussed around the recording

---

At the time that the diary and mapping exercises were conceived I had hoped to also include photo-diaries. However, given the lack of success of the photo-diary approach I decided that only the written diary would be used while conducting the mapping exercise.
of experience, practices and events rather than long descriptions of particular locations. I decided not to ask for highly descriptive accounts because by this stage of the research project it had become apparent that students were already wary of the time commitment of being involved in this project and that I risked having very few participants if I asked too much of them. Students who chose to participate in this method usually had two to three weeks to complete the diaries (although they were asked to focus on one continuous seven day period) depending on a mutually agreed date. Students were informed that after completion of the diaries, there would be another meeting at which we would discuss the results and then draw up a map together of their daily experiences. In addition to this formal method one student also gave me access to the personal diary she had kept during her time in Auckland. The diary was written in English because it was one of her strategies for learning. I have used selected quotes from this diary in different parts of this thesis but I did not subject it to analysis with other participants’ diaries.⁹

The mapping exercise used in this project is aligned with the approaches employed in a number of recent projects employing action research methodologies (Kesby 2000; Pain & Francis 2003; Young & Barrett 2001). In each of these projects the aim was both to benefit the individuals and groups involved in the research and develop a participatory framework that would evoke detail that seemed inaccessible by orthodox approaches like interviews. The mapping exercise was conducted during a follow-up encounter that had been planned during the first interview – students were asked to bring their daily and weekly written diaries (and at least initially their photo-diaries). These meetings were not tape-recorded although I took notes during the meeting and wrote up the experience afterwards. Each meeting began with a discussion of the diaries to clarify different elements of the diary and to expand on things that emerged. Then students were given an A3 sheet of paper on which they could draw a map that was based both upon the practices, experiences and events in the diary as well as on other things that came to mind during this encounter. While students were drawing I would ask them about the different things on the map and make notes. Students also indicated where certain parts of the map related to entries in the diary. Students were encouraged to draw maps that reflected their own experiences and not to be concerned with scale, proportionality or other technical aspects of the maps. When

⁹ Quotes from this diary are marked as ‘Anonymous Diary Entry’.
these maps were completed they were often quite crowded with rough drawings and notes and as such were rather indecipherable to individuals not involved in the process. Therefore with students’ permission I re-produced the maps on a later date by sketching over them and re-writing the notes in a much more orderly way. The re-drawn maps were then scanned and sent to students by email for final confirmation.

Not all the students who completed a written diary returned it to me and not all of those who returned the diary completed a mapping exercise. Additionally, in one case a group of three students created one diary and map together. The diaries were first given to students in November 2004, the first map was completed in December 2004 and the process continued until the final mapping exercise was conducted in August 2005.

Table 4.5: Number of Students Participating in Diary and Mapping Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Took Diary</th>
<th>Returned Diary</th>
<th>Mapping Exercise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14 (12 diaries)</td>
<td>14 (11 maps)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4.5 above illustrates 16 students initially agreed to complete a diary during interviews. Of these 12 diaries were returned to me, including the diary that had been contributed to by three participants – two students did not return the diary and decided to withdraw from the project. A total of 11 maps were completed, including a map completed by three participants together, and another map completed by two participants together. The maps that were produced in these encounters varied in terms of the places covered, the routes taken and the feelings attributed. As I will illustrate in Chapter Seven these maps provide considerable detail on many of the social structures that students encounter on a daily basis during their sojourn in Auckland. Moreover, they also evoke a lot about the ways in which individual students and groups of students not only move within but also manipulate the urban environment to their own means. Indeed, this mapping exercise has provided some of the most evocative material from all the research conducted in this project – not just in terms of the finished product but also in terms of the process of producing maps and the conversations held about different aspects of students’ everyday lives.

**Online Research**

The internet, alongside other new information communication technologies (ICT), offers social science researchers a unique space to interrogate emergent online and
offline social practices. Yet, at the same time, internet-based research also requires that social scientists exercise considerable caution in terms of the methods employed, ethical considerations, types of analyses and conceptual issues. In short, it is not sufficient that researchers view the internet simply as a new research arena that provides an ‘an easily accessible route to previously hidden populations’ (Illingworth 2001: 1.1). Nor is it appropriate to view the internet in the same way as we might view offline environments (Waskul 1996). The internet is a space or series of interconnected spaces that blur the lines between public and private in ways that problematise many of the assumptions made by social scientists about when, where and how it is appropriate to carry out research on human subjects/participants. Thus the internet requires an approach to research that is tailored to the particular considerations of the subject of study.

In response to these issues discussions have emerged of late in many social science disciplines about appropriate means of conducting internet research. This recent shift contrasts starkly with much of the pioneering internet research which took a rather laissez faire approach to methodological issues. In general these discussions emphasise the importance of viewing online behaviour neither as independent of, nor a virtual proxy for, offline experience. Rather, it is argued that ‘the (re)territorialisations produced through the incorporation of the virtual into other geographies need to be examined’ (Crang, Crang, & May 1999: 12). In terms of methodologies this means that research on the internet either needs to include both online and offline methods or that online methods need to be developed in ways that can illustrate the always (even if differently) embodied elements of online behaviour (Adams & Ghose 2003).

In this project, research on the internet practices of South Korean international students was not limited to internet-based research. Rather, many of the methods discussed above also sought information on internet practices: parts of the questionnaire were related to internet use, observation was conducted in internet cafes, students were asked questions in interviews about the internet, some of the diaries discussed online behaviour and the mapping exercise indicated that there is offline spatiality to online encounters. Indeed, it was through the findings of these earlier methods that my approach to internet-based research emerged. It had become apparent to me, particularly during interviews, that the internet played a crucial role in the everyday lives of students, both as a communicative tool but also as a factor that was completely integrated with offline experience. I realised then that the research that was conducted
online offered the potential to engage with the practices of students in the form that they occurred rather than simply through their or my interpretations of them. Initially, as noted above, I tried to develop my own internet site through which students could engage in this project. As it became apparent that this would not be an effective approach I decided to focus on the existing internet use of students that had been identified in the other parts of this research. This took the form of an analysis of one main community website and individual students’ personal homepages.

The objective, then, of this research method was to interrogate the internet-based practices of South Korean international students during their sojourn in Auckland through analysis of existing internet sites. The sites to be analysed were identified through responses to the questionnaire (question 36 – ‘What are your favourite websites?) and discussions with students in interviews. Through this approach a website called New Zealand Iyagi (New Zealand Story) (http://cafe.daum.net/newzealand) was identified as a central place for accessing information about Auckland and New Zealand on the internet. In addition all but one of the students involved in the interviews for this research possessed an individual personal homepage on the Cyworld domain (http://www.cyworld.co.kr) (for a further discussion of these two systems see Chapter Nine). Based on these findings I decided to focus on an analysis of New Zealand Iyagi and a number of individual homepages on the cyworld domain. Initially I had hoped to recruit 10 participants with cyworld homepages. In the end seven participants agreed to take part in this section of the research. The method of analysis was to focus on images, text, and functions of the websites to identify the roles that they played in students’ everyday lives. The findings were then analysed in light of the discussions I had conducted with students in interviews and issues raised in diaries and mappings that were internet-related. To take account of students’ privacy I have only used text from websites translated from Korean to English (making it impossible to trace to particular websites). I have also not included, for obvious reasons, any addresses of personal homepages.

**Approaching Analysis**

The methods employed in this project are wide ranging in terms of their objectives, the traditions that inform them and the nature of the ‘data’ they produce. The diversity of these approaches reflects simultaneously the wide range of practices and experiences
that are involved in this project and my efforts to develop an approach that would move beyond categorisations and generalisations about the experiences of the individuals involved. As a result of this diversity the approach to analysis has also needed to be multi-faceted. In particular, it has been important to note the differences between analysing textual accounts as they emerge in interviews, observations and discourse analysis (Aitken 2005; Crang 2005; Jackson 2001; Robinson 1999) and analysing images such as those that are produced in the mapping exercise and website analysis (Aitken & Craine 2005; Kearnes 2000; Markwell 2000; Rose 2001).

Broadly speaking, the approach to analyses in this project has been to work inductively from research materials to develop broader ideas. This approach, connected to the traditions of phenomenology (Malpas 1999; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Pickles 1985; Thrift 1996; Tuan 1977), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967; Laurier, Whyte, & Buckner 2001; 2002) and grounded theory (Bailey, White, & Pain 1999; Baxter & Eyles 1999; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Yeung 1997), seeks to illustrate phenomena and experiences of phenomena not through the presuppositions of theory but through individual enactments and experiences (and the stories told) of space and place. In the first instance then the key voice in this research is intended to be that of individual South Korean international students. Although a certain amount of research was conducted with ‘key informants’ and on ‘print media’ these voices are analysed primarily as a supplement to and as a context for students’ experiences and practices. The analysis of materials, then, seeks to both emphasise the interpretations and/or performances of each method while also seeking an overall set of research narratives. It is hoped that these narratives will begin to tell the stories of individuals who travel from South Korea to Auckland to live and study temporarily.

Critical reflection on my positionality vis-à-vis South Korean international students has also been a central element of analysis in this project. Following the considerable debates that have occurred in feminist and cultural geographies since the early 1990s I have taken seriously the call to interrogate the ways in which I am involved in producing knowledge about the participants in this project (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins 2005; England 1994; Jackson 1993; Kobayashi 1994; 2003; McDowell 1992; Nagar 2002; Rose 1997). In particular it has been important to recognise that the types of interactions I had with students during research, and the ways of knowing that characterise my ‘writing’ of this thesis, are inextricably tied to my own
personal embodiment (including my perceptions). At times this critical reflection has identified the sometimes quite obvious, sometimes not so obvious, ways that considerable distance exists between myself and the students who participated in this research. At other times, however, it has also been very beneficial to reflect on the ways that I have shared connections with students: as a language learner, a student, of a similar age and/or gender, possessing similar interests and/or political motivations, and other factors. I have not tried to write these gaps and/or connections out of this thesis – I have not sought a ‘transparent reflexivity’ (Rose 1997). Rather, I have approached my positionality vis-à-vis participants as something that must be critically reflected on for the way it is involved in the production of this thesis, not something that can be removed. In this regard then, while conducting ‘writing’ as analysis (Jacobs 1993; Robinson 1999) in this thesis I have always tried to be cognisant of these factors – at times this reflection is explicit in the text, at other times it is only implicit. At all times it has been foremost.

In practical terms the analysis in this project followed a process of identifying broad themes as well as individual and group narratives. This process began with a period of ‘open-coding’ (Bailey et al. 1999) of each of the different research materials that had been collected. From these codes it has been possible to identify some of the themes that are important to this research – including some of the issues discussed in the previous chapter around home, bodies, language, objects, difference and distance. These codes were not formalised and the research materials were not analysed using any form of software or systematic approach. Instead, the codes have been used to identify important themes that have laid the ground work of discussions that occur within or across the fieldwork chapters (Five-Eleven). In addition, I have sought to draw out individual and group narratives from the materials – particularly from those students who participated in more than one method. Finally, for some of the methods – such as the discourse analysis and the diary/mapping exercise – it has been more appropriate to base an entire chapter on their findings with only minimal contextualisation from other materials.

**Summary**

This chapter has sought to outline the ways in which the methodology employed in this project was developed not as a pre-planned systematic approach but as a sometimes
planned, sometimes experimental, sometimes spontaneous approach to understanding the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland. I have identified my shift in approach from a quite orthodox ethnography complemented by a questionnaire and discourse analysis to an experimental approach that included methods like diary-writing, mapping exercises, online research and a series of unsuccessful methods that were eventually abandoned. The approach to analysis in this project was identified in conceptual, personal and practical terms. Finally, I have offered a brief introduction to each of the fieldwork chapters that follow and the themes that they pursue. The next two chapters begin the process of constructing this research narrative. Chapter Five outlines important connections between South Korean international students and other forms of circulation between South Korea and Auckland. Chapter Six interrogates the media discussions around international education in Auckland and in particular the racialisation of the sector, the students involved, and a cohort of young New Zealanders of similar descent.
Chapter Five

BRIDGES TO LEARNING

Migration, Tourism and International Education

There are two aims to this chapter: to identify some important changes in Auckland that are connected to the arrival of South Korean international students and to outline the general characteristics of student experience in the city. In the first half of the chapter I introduce a demographic snapshot of contemporary Auckland with emphasis on the ways that immigration is now central to its changing character. Following this, I focus on the specific connections between South Korea and Auckland through a discussion of the increasing numbers of South Korean long term migrants, tourists and finally international students. In the second half of the chapter the discussion builds on this general demographic picture by discussing three important aspects of student experience: their pathways to Auckland, their living and learning spaces during sojourn, and their impressions of Auckland and New Zealand.

A Snapshot of Auckland

Auckland is the largest urban agglomeration in New Zealand, located on an isthmus between the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean in the northern part of New Zealand’s North Island (see Figure 5.1). In governance terms it is divided into four cities – Auckland, Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere – and three districts – Franklin, Papakura and Rodney. The greater metropolitan area of includes the four cities and Papakura (Friesen et al. 2000). At the 2006 census the regional population of Auckland accounted for nearly one third (1,303,068) of the total population of New Zealand (4,027,947). Auckland is also the fastest growing region in New Zealand. In the last inter-censal period the regional population grew by 12.4%, a rate that is significantly higher than both the New Zealand average of 7.8% and the next highest region, Canterbury at 8.6%. Indeed, nearly 50% of New Zealand’s total population growth occurred in the Auckland region (Statistics New Zealand 2006).
In large part the continued growth of Auckland reflects its position as the largest economic centre in the country but also the fact that in the last two decades it has been the most important destination for immigrants. At the 2001 census, for example, the overseas born population in Auckland was 32.1%, compared to a national average of 19.5%. Moreover, Auckland’s position as the major settlement area for new migrants, particularly migrants from outside of the more traditional European source countries is reflected in the diversity of the city’s population. Of the Auckland population in 2001, those identifying within the Pacific and Asian ethnic categories accounted for 14% and 13.8% respectively compared to national averages of 6.6% and 6.5%; while Maori and Pakeha (European New Zealanders) constituted 11.6% and 68.5% respectively, notably
lower than the national averages of 14.7% and 80.1% (Statistics New Zealand 2003). Initial counts from the 2006 census available at the time of writing suggest that the overseas born population and the Asian and Pacific populations in Auckland have continued to increase (Statistics New Zealand 2006).

The ethnic diversity that characterises contemporary Auckland is a direct result of recent shifts in New Zealand’s approach to immigration. Up until the middle of the 20th century immigration to New Zealand was almost completely European – a reflection of a race-based immigration policy that emphasised the importance of ‘traditional source countries’ (essentially Britain and Ireland). Since the 1950s however, immigration from the Pacific Islands has increased, encouraged at certain times by the state as a means of filling shortages in un-skilled and semi-skilled labour. In the 1980s New Zealand’s immigration policy changed radically. It shifted from a selection regime that emphasised nationality to a policy that emphasized skills and investment potential – what has been called the ‘human capital’ approach. This was followed up in 1991 by the implementation of a points system for measuring skills and investment potential. Together, this legislation has had a considerable effect on the ethnic makeup of New Zealand and nowhere more so than Auckland (Bedford, Bedford, Ho, & Lidgard 2002; Friesen 1996; 1997; Hiebert et al. 2003; Ongley & Pearson 1995).

The immediate effect of these legislative changes was a marked increase in migrants from new source countries and, significantly, visibly new migrants from East-Asian nations including China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. This increase was particularly apparent in Auckland. Between the censuses of 1986 and 2001 the usually resident ‘Asian’ population for the whole of New Zealand increased from 47,979 to 238,176 or 1.5% to 6.1%. In contrast, during the same period, the ‘Asian’ population in Auckland increased from 19,212 to 151,605 or 2.2% to 13.8% reflecting the fact that two-thirds of new migrants from this region have settled in the city (Friesen et al. 2000; Friesen et al. 2005). In the longer term, however, these changes have led to an increasing level of ethnic concentration in Auckland. Ward Friesen, Laurence Murphy, Robin Kearns and Edwin Haverkamp (2000), for instance, have illustrated how ethnic segregation appears to be increasing not just between minority groups like Maori, Pacific and Asian communities in comparison to the majority Pakeha population but indeed within these groups. They note in particular that Pacific peoples (a group that tends to have a lower socio-economic status in general) are particularly segregated from
Asian populations (who, by comparison, tend to be of higher socio-economic status). Moreover, even though the general level of segregation amongst Asian populations was lower than that of Maori and Pacific Islanders at the time of their study the authors noted that ‘the fact that [these rates] are rising highlights [the fact] that Asians are a growing part of the population and as their presence grows the potential for residential clustering increases’ (Friesen et al. 2000: 23).

These changes are not unique to New Zealand. New Zealand’s shift to a more open immigration policy is similar in many regards to earlier shifts that occurred in Canada and Australia, although it is notable that New Zealand has maintained a bi-cultural rather than multi-cultural emphasis in legislation (Hiebert et al. 2003). Moreover, the centrality of Auckland in these processes reflects the experiences of a number of other Pacific Rim cities like Sydney and Vancouver (Ley & Murphy 2001). They have led, as elsewhere, to the multiplication of individual, community and institutional cross-border relationships – processes that constitute one aspect of what might be called globalisation. These ‘transnational’ networks have, and are likely to continue to have, a significant role in the transformation of the social, physical, economic and political landscape both within and across the borders of Auckland and New Zealand.

**Connecting South Korea and Auckland: Migration and Tourism**

The history of South Korean migration to New Zealand is relatively short and intimately connected to the transformation of New Zealand’s approach to immigration described above. To illustrate this, Hong-Key Yoon (2003: 293-4), himself a South Korean migrant to New Zealand, recalls that ‘[w]hen my wife and I first arrived in Auckland in 1976, there were only two other Korean families we knew of, and until the later part of the 1980s, there were probably less than one hundred Koreans living in Auckland’. Census data from 1986 indicates that there were only 426 Koreans living throughout New Zealand in that year (Yoon & Yim 1997). Since the late 1980s however, the numbers of South Koreans choosing to migrate to New Zealand has increased rapidly so that by the 2001 census the population had reached nearly 20,000. During the same period the number of South Koreans visiting New Zealand as tourists has increased from a few thousand in the late 1980s to over 100,000 by the mid 1990s. In addition to
the aforementioned changes to New Zealand’s immigration legislation, changes in South Korea have also played a significant role in this increase (Kim & Yoon 2003).

At the same time as New Zealand was re-positioning itself vis-à-vis the rest of the world at the end of the 1980s (Le Heron & Pawson 1996), South Korea was also transforming its cross-border relationships in a whole raft of ways (Kim & Kong 1997; Park 1998; Yi 2002). One change that is of particular significance to connections with New Zealand was the South Korean government’s decision in 1989 to lift the travel restrictions that had been in place on its citizens since the Japanese colonial period (Lee 2006). This change led to a sharp and continued rise in overseas travel by South Koreans that was only briefly interrupted by the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. Indeed, between 1985 and 2001 the number of South Koreans temporarily traveling abroad rose from an annual figure of 484,000 to 6,084,000. Similarly, between 1985 and 2001 the number of persons of Korean descent permanently living outside the Korean peninsula1 increased from 1,905,181 to 5,653,8092 (Lee 2006). In New Zealand the first major increase in South Korean migrants occurred after the implementation of the immigration points system in 1991. In the census of that year the number of persons identifying as South Korean was recorded at 908 but by the next census in 1996 this figure had increased to 12,657 persons. By 2001 the number of usually resident South Koreans had increased further to 19,023 (Statistics New Zealand 2002a) and in 2006 the resident population was more than 30,000 (Statistics New Zealand 2006).

There are a number of distinguishing features to the population of South Koreans now resident in New Zealand. Firstly, South Koreans in New Zealand tend to be both more affluent, at least on arrival, and younger in comparison to a number of other migrant groups (Kang & Page 2000; Yoon & Yim 1997). Perhaps as a reflection of these factors South Korean migration to New Zealand has tended to be motivated by non-economic factors. Doo-Chul Kim and Hong-Key Yoon (2003: 85), for instance, notes that the two main reasons for Koreans to migrate to New Zealand have been ‘good quality educational opportunities for their children and cleaner, less crowded living conditions’ (see also Lee 2006). Like many other recent migrant groups, South Koreans have settled predominantly in Auckland with strong residential concentrations in North

---

1 This includes individuals of both North and South Korean descent.
2 It should be noted that a significant part of this increase reflects the inclusion in official statistics since 1991 of approximately 2,000,000 ethnic Koreans living in China (Lee 2006).
Shore City (see Figure 5.2). Also comparable to other recent migrant groups in New Zealand the South Korean community has had to deal with considerable unemployment and underemployment, which has led to high-levels of self-employment and investment in economic activities that service the temporary and permanent Korean community in Auckland (Kim & Yoon 2003).

Alongside the increasing number of South Koreans choosing to migrate to New Zealand, tourists from South Korea have also risen significantly since the early 1990s. In 1991 a total of 6400 South Koreans arrived in New Zealand on visitor visas. In 1996 this figure had increased to 127,400. Following a sharp decline after the financial crisis in 1997 the number of visitors from South Korea has again steadily increased and now stabilized at around 110,000 per year (Statistics New Zealand 2005a, see also Figure 5.3). Although the liberalisation of overseas travel in South Korea and the increasing visibility of New Zealand as a tourist destination are important factors in this increase the presence of a growing South Korean population in New Zealand has also played a pivotal role (Woo & Page 2002). Indeed, in a point that highlights both the investment
of Korean-New Zealanders in co-nationally oriented businesses and the centrality of transnational networks as the social and economic basis of international travel Malcolm Cooper (2002: 74) describes the relationship between tourists and migrants in Australia and New Zealand in the following way:

Businesses run by Japanese, Taiwanese, and Korean entrepreneurs, and employing their nationals/language speakers, dominate many of the critical economic relationships within the tourism industry… Ranging from travel agents, through tour operators to souvenir shops, these businesses provide both an avenue for communication in the tourist’s own language, and an insurance policy with respect to correct social mores as well as with respect to the retention of economic returns in origin country hands.

![Figure 5.3: Overseas Visitors from the Republic of Korea, 1985-2005(Source: Statistics New Zealand 2005a)](image)

Another marker of the changing levels of migrant and tourist circulation between South Korea and New Zealand is illustrated in the number of international flights offered between the two countries. It was in 1993 that both Korean Air and Air New Zealand began operating direct flights between Seoul and Auckland (Air New Zealand 2006; Korean Air 2006). Air New Zealand subsequently ceased their service in the months following the 1997 financial crisis while Korean Airlines continued. In October 2003 Asiana Airlines (also of South Korea) began operating services four times a week between Seoul and Auckland. This became a code-share operation with Air New Zealand in June 2004 (Air New Zealand 2006). However, this service was ceased in March 2005 reportedly because of decreasing migrant, tourist and international student movement between the two countries (Auckland International Airport Limited 2005).

3 I use the term ‘Korean-New Zealander’ rather than ‘South Korean-New Zealander’ as a reference to these individuals’ position in New Zealand, which is clearly that of ‘Koreans’ both in terms of self-identification and state ethnic categorizations.
The same year Korean Airlines started a seasonal service to Christchurch from Seoul in December, January and February offering direct flights three times a week (Korean Air 2006).

**South Korean International Students in Auckland**

Statistics on the number of international students studying in New Zealand are notoriously unreliable. In most previous research they are based dissimilarly upon immigration arrival numbers, irregular education returns and a range of surveys conducted by the Ministry of Education, Education New Zealand or other bodies whose figures rarely correlate. This is particularly the case with statistics prior to 1999 and for statistics on specific nationalities, sub-national areas in New Zealand, or different types of educational providers. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a numerical and proportional increase in the number of South Koreans holding student permits from the mid-late 1990s until around 2003 (see Figure 5.4).⁴

![Figure 5.4: Student Permits. Principal Applicants Who Held Student Permits in Top Seven Countries from 1999 to 2003. (Source: Statistics New Zealand).](image)

---

⁴ It should be noted that students may be granted more than one student permit in any 12 month period and some students, like those on short term English language courses, do not require a student permit at all.
In addition, data based on various sources from 1999 onwards provides further indication of the numbers of South Korean international students in public tertiary, PTE (Private Training Establishment) and language schools specifically (see Table 5.1 and Figure 5.5).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tertiary Students</th>
<th>PTE Students</th>
<th>Language Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>3837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>12280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>7811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.5: Number of South Korean International Students Enrolled in Tertiary Institutes, PTE and Language Schools between 1999 and 2005. (Source: as above Figure 5.1)

Caution must be taken in interpreting these numbers. Nevertheless, at a general level these numbers indicate a consistent increase in the number of South Korean

---

5 Based on enrolment data from tertiary institutions provided in (Ministry of Education 2005).
6 Based on enrolment data from PTEs provided in (Ministry of Education 2002b; 2005).
international students studying in New Zealand since the mid-late 1990s. This increase peaked in 2002 and 2003 (depending on the sector) in a similar manner to the total numbers of international students (see Chapter Two). Based on these statistics, in 2004 there were over 9000 South Korean international students studying in these three sectors (in addition to approximately 6500 students studying at primary and secondary schools (Ministry of Education 2005)).

It is likely that the majority of these students study in the Auckland region but this is hard to establish because of a lack of published statistics at the sub-national level. Based on inferences from the percentage of all international students studying in Auckland, however, we can suggest that around 5000 South Korean public tertiary, PTE and language students study in this city.

Demographic characteristics of the questionnaire sample
As noted in Chapter Four, a questionnaire survey of 118 South Korean international students was conducted as part of this project. This survey provides further demographic information on South Korean international students living and studying in Auckland. In the results I have distinguished between tertiary students, PTE students and language students as well as providing total results. There were 53 tertiary students, 11 PTE students and 52 language students in the sample. The low number of PTE students reflects the fact that there are fewer of these students generally (see Table 5.1) but also means that the results for this category are only indicative. The results for selected demographic measures are displayed in Table 5.2.

The total sample had a slightly higher ratio of female to male respondents of 1:0.9. This was particularly apparent amongst language students where the ratio was 1:0.7. In terms of age, over 80% of all respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30 (based on the fact that the survey was conducted in 2004 and early 2005). The median year of birth was 1981 or 23 years of age in 2004. Although not shown in this table, male respondents tended to be slightly older – median year of birth 1980 – than female respondents – 1981. This probably reflects the compulsory military service that men must complete in South Korea, something they usually do before studying.

---

8 Two students marked “other” as the response to the question about what type of institute they studied at – the data from these students is included in the total count.
Table 5.2: Percentage Distribution of Selected Demographic Characteristics of Respondents. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tertiary Students (%) (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE Students (%) (n=11)</th>
<th>Language Students (%) (n=52)</th>
<th>Total Students (%) (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of birth(^9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤1970</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1980</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1985</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in Auckland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Town or City(^10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busan</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daegu</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyeongsang-do</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeolla-do</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chungcheong-do</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangwon-do</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeju-do</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) Students were asked to provide their year of birth rather than their age because of differences between South Korean and western methods of counting age. At birth, South Korean children are considered one year old. They also become one year older on the first of January rather than the anniversary of their date of birth (traditionally it was the first day of the lunar calendar).

\(^10\) Go-Hyang, or Home town/city is a term used to indicate the place of birth of an individual and in most cases also refers to the part of Korea where the oldest living male resides. Respondents were provided with a free-text box for this question. Responses have been coded into four major regional cities – Seoul, Busan, Daegu and Gwangju – and the provinces of South Korea – Gyeonggi-do, Gyeongsang-do, Jeolla-do, Chungcheong-do, Gangwon-do and Jeju-do (see Appendix G for a map of South Korea).
Tertiary students – median year 1982 – were younger than both PTE and language students – median year 1980 – perhaps reflecting the fact that the latter students have often completed university courses in South Korea before coming to Auckland. As expected, tertiary students had spent a much greater number of years in Auckland than the other students with 58.5% having spent three or more years and 75.5% two or more years. By comparison the majority of PTE students and nearly 90% of language students had been in Auckland for less than one year (although 45.5% of PTE students had been in Auckland for between two and four years). In terms of respondents’ home town and city in South Korea the overall results were unsurprising – 50.5% from Seoul, 15.3% from Gyeonggi-do (the area around Seoul) and a scattering in other locations. What was notable however, was the difference between tertiary and language students on this question. While over 64.2% of tertiary students (and 63.6% of PTE students) came from Seoul only 34.6% of language students did. Language students also came from a much more diverse range of localities in South Korea.

In terms of the time spent in Auckland and New Zealand these results suggest that international students from South Korea lie somewhere along the blurred line between migrants and tourists (Hiebert & Kwak 2004; Kang & Page 2000; Kim & Yoon 2003). Additionally, within those international students included in this study there is considerable variation in these factors. Some (international) tertiary students, for example, will spend five or more years in New Zealand studying at secondary schools and then tertiary institutions. In contrast some language students stay for less than three months and may simply remain on a visitor visa. Put rather crudely, there is a continuum that runs between permanent/longer term and quite short term experiences in Auckland and New Zealand that can be illustrated graphically (see Figure 5.6). Moreover, these are not simply independent categories. Rather, individuals are likely to move between these categories. Three examples that were common amongst the individuals involved in this research are as follows: from (5) ‘Tourist’ to (4) ‘Language Student’, (4) ‘Language Student’ to (3) ‘PTE Student’, and (2) ‘Tertiary Student’ to (1) ‘Migrant’.

In the remainder of this chapter I offer a general introduction to the experiences of South Korean international students in Auckland. Primarily based on results from the questionnaire survey conducted with students and discussions with key informants this introduction draws a general picture of students’ lives in Auckland. I begin by
discussing the pathways that students take to Auckland, their living and learning arrangements, and students’ impressions of Auckland and New Zealand.

![Figure 5.6: A Continuum of Migration: Tourist – Student – Permanent Migrant. (Source: Author)](image)

**Pathways to Auckland**

Like all movement across international borders, the pathways that South Korean international students take from their home towns and cities to Auckland are influenced by a whole range of factors. At the level of nation-state practice, for instance, their movement can be connected to the removal of overseas travel restrictions on South Koreans in 1989 as noted above. Conversely, from the New Zealand perspective, we might also note the importance of the state’s liberalisation of international education regulations also in 1989 (see Chapter Two). Equally, at the societal level it can be useful to recall the transformation of South Korean society and economy during the last half century and in particular the increasing emphasis that has been placed on education and the resulting demand for places in good universities in South Korea. Moreover, the increasing value that both the South Korean government and many employers in that country are placing on both English language skills and international experience are also crucial factors (see Chapter One). Finally, at a much more local level it is also important to note that the different socio-economic positionality of families and individuals also exerts significant influence not only on the choice of what and where to study (Pimpa 2003) but on the very possibility of studying overseas. Indeed, a real absence in the scholarship on international education that cannot be considered in this thesis is the effect that the overseas study of some individuals has on those who are unable to do so.
This is particularly relevant in countries like South Korea where certain parts of the population increasingly view this as a normative part of an individual’s education (J. K. Lee 2004).

The pathways that South Korean international students take to Auckland illustrate elements of all these quite general factors. In addition, there are a number of other factors that are specific to the pathways made to Auckland that are perhaps more important to understanding the specific context of this thesis: the reasons why South Korean international students choose Auckland and New Zealand specifically; the kinds of transnational networks that facilitate international education; and the important interpersonal connections that influence educational journeys between South Korea and Auckland. Each of these factors is considered in order below.

**Making a Choice about where to Study**

There is a wide variation reported in previous studies on what motivates international students to choose particular countries and/or cities as study destinations (Pimpa 2003; Ward & Masgoret 2004; Waters 2005a). Research specific to New Zealand has suggested that perceptions about the relative cost of the education, the environment and issues around safety are most important (Aston 1996; Malcolm et al. 2004; Ward & Masgoret 2004). These findings contrast with experience in other places, like Vancouver, Canada for example, where Johanna Waters (2005a) has found that the perceived value of education is of significant importance. In the questionnaire for this research the respondents were only asked for one main reason for choosing to study in New Zealand and one main reason for studying Auckland rather than other locations in New Zealand. Students were also only provided with a small range of quite general options including cost, environment, quality of education, presence of friends and family, size of city, presence of Koreans and agency recommendations. The results for these two questions are shown in Table 5.3.

These results mostly confirm the findings of other surveys conducted across nationalities of international students in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret 2004). The cost of education is considered one of the most important factors in respondents’ choice to study in New Zealand. Tertiary students, perhaps unsurprisingly, placed slightly more value on the quality of education than both PTE and language students (although at 20%
this can still be considered quite low). In contrast, over 30% of language students identified that the presence of friends or family was a motivating factor in coming to New Zealand. Concerning Auckland, the fact that it is the largest city in New Zealand was the most significant reason why students chose to study here (c.f. Butcher 2004b) – for PTE and language students this was as high as 72.7% and 62.7% respectively. By comparison, tertiary students placed slightly higher value on the presence of friends and family in Auckland and the educational institutions in the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why study in New Zealand?</th>
<th>Tertiary Students (%) (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE Students (%) (n=11)</th>
<th>Language Students (%) (n=52)</th>
<th>Total Students (%) (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The cost</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of education</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in New Zealand</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family in New Zealand</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why study in Auckland? (not elsewhere in New Zealand)</th>
<th>Tertiary Students (%) (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE Students (%) (n=11)</th>
<th>Language Students (%) (n=52)</th>
<th>Total Students (%) (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is the biggest city</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in Auckland</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family in Auckland</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of Koreans in Auckland</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency sent me here</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key informants in this research also confirmed these factors as the most important reasons why South Korean international students choose to study in New Zealand and Auckland:

I think the first reason is economical. It’s cheaper than other English speaking countries…. But they don’t want to go to Philippines, something like that, [they] only think about Canada and – the most popular countries are Canada, Australia, New Zealand and US. So [out of those countries] New Zealand is maybe [the] cheapest. (Pers. Comm. 1: KS / PTE)
Chapter Five: Bridges to Learning

Why? ... Because they think New Zealand is the very clean, like they’ve got an image of pure, clean and... people, nice people, and I think that’s it... low crime also... Auckland is the biggest city in New Zealand. Because Korean people tend to go to big cities. Even though New Zealand is not a big country they think if you want to... learn more things you go [to a] big city. That’s why a lot of, [the] majority of Koreans are living in Seoul. The big city, they think they can learn more things in the big city and meet more people [during] their time. (Pers. Comm. 6: KS / ELS)

So everyone goes ‘ooh pretty lovely NZ, isn’t it clean and green and fabulous and the scenery’s great’ but whether or not that makes much of a difference to Korean students I would be a little doubtful. There’s two kinds of markets, you’ve got the Korean students who come here on their working holiday visa they might be just here for language study and a lot of fun, in which case that probably does have a really big impact that we’re the Lord of the Rings country you know and all that goes with that. But for long term serious students who want a qualification I don’t think that makes much of an impact in which case we really need to get the perception of our quality back up where it was. (Pers. Comm. 13: NKS / IEO)

These comments point to the sometimes overlapping reasons that motivate international students to choose Auckland and New Zealand as study destinations. Moreover, they illustrate that students’ individual reasons cannot be separated from their own motivations and long term objectives of studying overseas. Where language students and to a certain extent PTE students may be satisfied by perceptions about the environment and relative costs of Auckland and New Zealand, tertiary students are more likely to illustrate concern for the quality and reputation of a University’s qualifications and the potential for long term migration.

**Transnational Economies of Export Education**

Although these perceptions around costs, the environment and education are clearly important elements of students’ choices I want to propose here that these factors only become relevant because of the presence of significant numbers of relatively settled South Koreans and the consistent flow of tourists through Auckland and New Zealand. This argument suggests that the experiences of international education in Auckland are thoroughly inseparable from experiences of shorter term, longer-term and permanent migration. This is not just apparent at the general level of policy where legislative changes around international education and immigration (in both South Korea and New Zealand) appear to be based on similar state-centred motivations. Nor is it simply a reflection of what has been called educational immigration (Belich 2001; Butcher 2004b). Rather, this mutual constitution of migrant, student and tourist experience in

114
Auckland occurs at the level of individual economic and social activity. Put simply, Korean-New Zealanders are involved in a range of activities, both official and unofficial, that promote, facilitate, and assist the arrival and settlement of South Korean international students in Auckland.

Again, this interdependence between different forms of transnational movement is not unique to Auckland. Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak (2004), for instance, have addressed just this issue in regards to the ‘transnational economies of export education’ that operate amongst South Korean migrants, tourists and international students in Vancouver. These authors have argued quite effectively that the kind of activities enacted in the export education industry often defy and/or blur the categories of migrant, tourist, worker and student that nation-states use to measure and regulate movements of individuals across their borders. Moreover, they have shown that far more than any state or industry body it is the ‘immigrant-owned firms that facilitate the transnational circuit of international students’ (2004: 26). These include transnational ethnic businesses like education, immigration and travel agencies, language schools, accommodation providers as well as more traditional ethnic businesses like restaurants, grocery stores, beauty parlours, and internet cafes. The services they offer differently facilitate arrival, access to educational services and the maintenance of everyday cultural and linguistic familiarity for individual international students.

In Auckland many of the issues that Hiebert and Kwak discuss have resonance. In particular, the arrival of students in Auckland is thoroughly imbued with activities of migrant businesses here, particularly education agencies. Like Canada, New Zealand operates a visa free policy for South Korean nationals. This policy means that intending students do not need to apply for a special visa before arrival but can receive a visitors permit at Auckland international airport. This is particularly significant for English language students who are unlikely to have pre-arranged a school to attend or even accommodation. Instead, upon arrival many students find their preferred course through Korean education agencies, several of which are located in the inner-city area of Auckland. One language school manager described this pattern as follows:

What that [Visa policy] means is that a lot Koreans read about New Zealand and schools on the internet in Korea and they have more options, better flexibility to come to New Zealand with nothing planned. [They] visit one of the locally based Korean education agents and usually because they’re operating in the New
Zealand environment they’re cheaper, they don’t have the rental, the overheads that an office in central Seoul has. So they are able to offer better value or better deals after they’ve already arrived. There are a lot of Korean students actually coming from locally based Korean agents and in my sort of experience a lot of schools [the] majority of their students are coming from that way. (Pers. Comm. 11: NKS / ELS)

The businesses referred to by this informant as ‘education agents’ do far more than just direct new international students to language schools. Rather, they offer a complete package of services that includes travel and visa/permit arrangements, homestays, counselling and other settlement issues. Moreover, these agencies usually have a far broader customer base than just international students. Known as Yuhakgweon in Korean, these ‘agencies’ will usually deal with a whole range of issues relating to the movement and (where relevant) settlement of tourists, students and migrants. The manager of one agency described this business in the following manner:

We provide placement service and we provide counselling service and visa process service; somebody who applied for the New Zealand visa and also the Australia visa or US visa or Swiss visa, UK visa or Canada visa, things like that. We provide settlement service for migration and also for student[s] who come here with [their] family. Like young kids they have to come here with their, with one of their parents so they [the parents]… have to find out [about] house[s] and cars, or electronic[s] or bank account[s], things like that. So we provide all service[s] for them to be settled in well. (Pers. Comm. 15: KS / IEO)

In the transnational economies of export education then, the Yuhakgweon, dissimilarly translated to English as immigration, education or travel agency is the key facilitator of a series of differentiated but interrelated forms of circulation between South Korea and cities like Auckland. These agents operate through their cultural and linguistic specificity to access the whole community of South Koreans living or studying in New Zealand or those with plans to come here. This new form of immigrant entrepreneurialism in its very operation blurs the boundaries between the categories of migrant, student and tourist that the nation-state employs to restrict the movement of individuals across its borders. Yuhakgweon not only provide the same services across these categories but actually help individuals move between them. Moreover, in a reflection of the overlapping allegiances at work here these agents will not only facilitate the arrival of international students to New Zealand but will also assist their departure to travel, study or migrate to third countries. In short, the activities of Yuhakgweon create a type of ‘bridge-space’ (Adams & Ghose 2003), a set of geographic and cultural connections between South Korea, New Zealand and elsewhere.
Interpersonal Networks

Yuhakgweon are not the only way that Korean-New Zealanders are involved in the practices of international education. Indeed, all forms of immigrant entrepreneurialism from restaurants to hairstylists and bookshops to (Korean) homestays play a role in the arrival and settlement of international students. However, it is not just these somewhat official business practices that are important. Just as important is the role played by family and friendship networks between potential students in South Korea and Korean-New Zealanders or students and tourists who have visited Auckland and/or New Zealand previously (c.f. Conradson & Latham 2005a). These networks are the means by which information about Auckland and New Zealand is sought or confirmed. This much is apparent in the results from Colleen Ward and Anne-Marie Masgoret’s (2004) general study of international students which found that direct marketing by the government or industry bodies was all but irrelevant in the choices that students make. It is also quite apparent in the following excerpt from an interview with a group of tertiary students:

**Francis:** Why did you guys choose to study in New Zealand, or, if your parents chose, why did your parents choose New Zealand?

**Min-Gyeong:** I think generally that people want to study English but America, um like a little bit dangerous and then price is quite expensive, I think that’s the major reasons. And in my case my cousin was here so my parents wanted me to come, that was a reason. (TS, Gwangju, 23)

**Su-Mi:** for me at that time my father heard that New Zealand is good, it was good English and one of his friend’s sons is studying in Auckland. So he heard that and he asked me to study English in New Zealand and at that time it was cheaper than any other country for exchange money. I heard that it’s safe and that’s about everything. (TS, Seoul, 23)

**Sang-Hee:** Not really different my father’s friend was here in New Zealand. So I stayed at his house for 2 months. (TS, Seoul, 23)

**Rebecca:** My cousin was here as well and the small population is good and also we heard from her the school is better than Korean so that’s why we chose to come to New Zealand. (TS, Seoul, 22)

Both Su-Mi and Rebecca specifically state that they ‘heard’ about these favourable characteristics of New Zealand through interpersonal networks – the other two students’ comments imply the same thing. Their statements suggest that even though students may choose Auckland and New Zealand because of issues related to cost, environment, safety or educational reputation/standards the ways in which this information is gained...
relies on the experiences of other South Koreans in New Zealand. These types of explanations were quite common in student interviews. In almost every case, tertiary, PTE and language students spoke about the importance of prior connections to Auckland or New Zealand as pivotal in their choice of destination and/or arrival process. This is so much the case that in some (rare) instances individuals relied on information from friends and family that was incorrect or out of date rather than following official information. In one interview, for example, I was told by a student how they had come to New Zealand because a friend who had studied here in 2002 had told her that it was a very cheap place to study. This student arrived in February 2004 to find that things were far more expensive than expected as the New Zealand dollar averaged around 800 Korean won (in comparison to the 600 Korean won that her friend had experienced).

These interpersonal networks illustrate the central role played by what might be usefully called ‘the bridges to learning’ - the cross-border relationships that are pivotal in the continuing circulation of a whole range of individuals. Indeed, although this research has not addressed the experiences/practices of South Korean migrants in New Zealand it is highly likely that interpersonal relationships are crucial in the decisions they make about movement. It might also be presumed that the continuing arrival of South Korean international students in New Zealand will assist with the economic, social and cultural settlement of South Korean migrants, especially if they have relationships with these students. Some research on tourist practices has already suggested this interdependence is important (Cooper 2002; Kang & Page 2000). Moreover, when viewed alongside the fact that many students arrive on visitor visas, the ways in which the practices of international education circumvent the strategies of the state becomes quite apparent. Despite efforts to regulate the flow of students and to conduct offshore marketing the ways in which these transnational networks operate means that the ‘success’ of international education is actually beyond the reach of the New Zealand state. Potential South Korean international students rarely make choices about studying in Auckland and New Zealand on the basis of marketing material but are more likely to rely on word of mouth (from migrants as well as current and former students and tourists) and the advice of ethno-national businesses like Yuhakgweon.
Living and Learning

*Educational Spaces*

Once students arrive in Auckland there is a significant spatiality to their living and learning trajectories. In particular, this spatiality is characterised by a major concentration of many aspects of international education activities in the inner city area: universities, PTEs, language schools, agencies, student focused services and housing. The extent of this concentration is particularly apparent amongst educational institutes catering for international students (see Table 5.4). Indeed, Queen Street, the main thoroughfare of the Central Business District (CBD), is the most important location for language schools (see Figure 5.7). In part this reflects the equally concentrated presence of tourist services in this area and the efforts by the Auckland City Council to encourage the growth of the export education industry here. However, it also reflects the fact that at the time that international education was growing in Auckland in the late 1990s there were relatively high-rates of vacancy in this part of the city and, as a consequence, low rentals (Paetz 2003; Wakefield 2003). Moreover, there is a tendency amongst international students, and this is particularly the case with South Korean students, to wish to live, socialise and hence study in the inner city – an area that is both far more convenient in terms of service provision but also far more familiar to the urban environments they are accustomed to in South Korea.
Table 5.4: Distribution of Educational Institutions Catering for International Students in Auckland (Source: Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and Author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tertiary Institutions (%) (n=9)</th>
<th>PTE (%) (n=97)</th>
<th>Language Schools (%) (n=62)</th>
<th>Total Institutions (%) (n=168)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Business District</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland City (non-CBD)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland City (total)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manukau City</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shore City</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitakere City</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.7: Location of English Language Schools in Auckland’s Central Business District (Source: Author)

Many PTE are focused on the domestic market and have low numbers of international students. In 2004, for example, only 8032 international students studied at PTE compared to over 50,000 students at language schools (even though there are fewer language schools). Only 677 South Korean international students studied at PTE throughout New Zealand in 2004 (compared to 7845 students at language schools).
**Housing**

The housing choices of South Korean international students also reflect a preference for location in, or near to the CBD. In addition to a question about accommodation location, students were also asked about their accommodation arrangement (homestay, rental etc), the number of people they live with, and the time spent in that accommodation. The results to these questions are illustrated in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Accommodation Arrangements of Respondents in Auckland. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tertiary Students (%) (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE Students (%) (n=11)</th>
<th>Language Students (%) (n=52)</th>
<th>Total (%) (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Business District</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland City</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manukau City</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Shore City</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitakere City</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation arrangement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental accommodation</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel/dormitory</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of people in accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time spent in accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 months</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 months</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 months</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 8 months</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results illustrate a number of general characteristics to respondents living arrangements as well as highlighting differences between tertiary students and language and PTE students. In general the largest number of students lived in the inner-city of Auckland although a considerable number also lived in North Shore City. The respondents were most likely to be living in rental accommodation with a much smaller proportion living in a homestay. There was variation in the number of people respondents lived with and the period of time they had lived in their current accommodation.

Within the student groupings there was some interesting variation. Tertiary level students, for instance, were much less likely to be staying in a homestay (only 17.1%) although there was a notable number who were staying with family. Almost one quarter of tertiary level students were living in North Shore City. Tertiary students also tended to live with fewer people and remain in their accommodation for much longer periods than both language and PTE students – nearly 50% had been in their accommodation for eight months or more. By comparison both language and PTE students were much more likely to be staying in a homestay and in addition to living in the inner-city nearly a quarter of these students lived within the Auckland City area. Very few language and PTE students lived alone and a considerable number lived with 3 or more people. Finally, most of these students had only been in their accommodation for six months or less.

**Homing**

Although these results offer valuable insight into the living arrangements of respondents at the time of the survey they are also limited because they only offer a snapshot of students lives. Many of the key informants in this research, for instance, spoke about the movement between different types of accommodation. Often students’ housing arrangements would follow a pattern that began with school or agency allocated homestay arrangements. After one or two months, however, students would grow weary of these arrangements and seek out rental accommodation with their peers – usually other South Korean international students:

First of all they should find out their homestay for one month or two months and they prefer to leave after to share accommodation or flat accommodation. (Pers. Comm. 15: KS / IEO)
When they first come here usually they stay with homestay family. Yeah, but a lot of students find their own accommodation flat or city apartment. So I guess especially Korean students they don’t stay with host families for long. (Pers. Comm. 2: KS / ELS)

There is a slight difference, however, in tertiary students’ experiences. While students are studying at secondary school (which most tertiary students do before enrolling in degree courses) they are usually required to stay at approved homestays or with legal guardians. Often this will mean that these students spend up to two years in one or more homestay(s). Once tertiary students enrol in tertiary courses, however, they do often change these arrangements quite quickly – something that is apparent in the high number staying in rental accommodation.

The reasons students move out of homestays are multiple and do vary between students. For some students they are simply seeking greater convenience in terms of proximity to their place of education. In other cases students seek greater freedom and independence. Nevertheless, the most cited reason by students and key informants alike was the significant differences between New Zealand and South Korean homes and home-life. These differences included issues about behaviour, food or even heating:

In homestay Korean students are not really used to sharing a place with kiwi people and they find having to adjust themselves to a new environment very challenging... and also their behaviour I guess the way we use the bathroom, the way we use the bed, all those small things yeah I think [they’re] quite different (Pers. Comm. 2: KS / ELS)

Cultural difference and especially food, food problem is really difficult. Korean food ah yeah Korean food culture there is no difference breakfast, lunch or those stuff. But here just some cereal and some milk that’s all, that’s all for breakfast. I think it’s quite different for us. They are not interested in what we want to eat; they don’t want to know about Korean food. (James, LS, Seoul, 27)

Again it’s based on cultural difference. Especially around this time of year the students are feeling cold at home because [there is] no heating system\(^\text{12}\). The homestay families don’t understand and they don’t let the students keep the heaters overnight and no blanket. That kind of thing and also food... and kiwi families they go to bed very early, we go to bed like midnight (Pers. Comm. 1: KS / PTE)

\(^{12}\) In contemporary South Korea almost all houses have an ondol, or under-floor heating system. ‘Ondol, also known as gudeul, is an innovative Korean heating system that integrates a building’s floor and heating structures’ (Joo 2004). Traditionally ondol piped heat from a kitchen furnace through pipes under the floor of houses. In contemporary South Korea heated water is piped under the floor of all types of residences from tenement housing to apartment complexes. This heating system makes it possible to keep the Korean house efficiently warm throughout the sometimes bitterly cold winters (Joo 2004).
These differences in that most intimate of spaces, the home, appear to be the cause of significant difficulties for students and homestay families alike. Indeed, they suggest that there is a rupture between the meanings associated with ‘home’ and the practices and experiences of home-stays. They also serve to highlight the centrality of home and home-life in the re-production of culture and cultural difference (Hage 1997; Yoon 2003). Indeed, while writing about migrant experiences of home, Ghassan Hage (1997: 103) has suggested that the home should be a ‘space where one possesses a maximal practical know-how: knowing what everything is for and when it ought to be used’. In their New Zealand homestay experience many South Korean international students feel that they do not possess this ‘know-how’ and as a result do not feel at home even amongst the surrogate-family of the homestay. One interesting development in the immigrant businesses that support international education that is connected to these issues is the increasing popularity of homestays with Korean-New Zealand families. These homestays, which cost considerably more than regular homestays, might then be a much more recognisable surrogate-home for sojourning South Korean students – a home that is enacted through cultural practices that are likely to be much more familiar. Although I did not meet any students who were staying in this type of homestay arrangements a number of key informants suggested that students who stayed with Korean families were much more satisfied and tended to stay in this accommodation for a much longer period of time.

It should be highlighted that these kinds of difficulties in the homestay environment are not universal. Indeed, some students find that the homestay environment is a good place to learn about and make connections that cross the apparently fixed borders between cultures. This was the case for one language student, Pedro, who became good friends with his homestay mother, was introduced to aspects of the family’s social life and introduced the family to aspects of Korean culture through trips to Korean restaurants. Pedro remained in his homestay for six months. After this time he left because he wanted to live closer to the city. When he left he arranged for a Korean friend to take his place in the homestay. However, despite examples such as this the majority of homestay experiences seem to be problematised by the different expectations of students and families and the financial motivations that underpin the choice to host international students (see Chapter Six).
As the results from the questionnaire indicate when students leave homestays they often move to rental accommodation. Typically this accommodation is located in the inner-city area and is with other South Korean international students.

Because it’s more free for them. And also… [it’s] comfortable for them to enjoy the[ir] life in the city. You know in Auckland the public transportation is not good to move to somewhere so [it’s] really hard for them to [go] to [the] city and back to their accommodation. That’s the reason I think the people like to stay nearby the city. (Pers. Comm. 15: KS / IEO)

Most of students they use the flat with other friends with other Korean friends, that is more convenient and economical… They can share the money [for things] like buying some Korean food, rice and kimchi… because that is quite expensive here in New Zealand. So most of Korean students they share with other Korean students (Pers. Comm. 12: KS / ELS)

This choice to move to the inner-city and live with co-nationals appears to be an attempt to create a more familiar home-space during students’ sojourn. It is an example of ‘homing’ (Ahmed et al. 2003) or ‘home-building’ (Hage 1997: 102) – ‘the building of a feeling of being at home’. In the student residences that I visited this feeling of home was nurtured through familiar behaviours (like taking shoes off at the door), through the production and consumption of familiar foods (see Chapter Eight for more detail), spatial arrangement (placement of furniture, eating and socialising spaces), and sociality (including a gendered division of household labour). As the above key informants note, this type of accommodation offers both more freedom and more comfort – it allows students to be closer to the parts of the city they are likely to study and socialise in and allows them to re-produce a version of Korean home-life that is more familiar, that is able to be made familiar and as a result brought under some sense of control (Douglas 1991).

**Impressions of Auckland/New Zealand**

New Zealand is too healthy. It’s like a huge broccoli~! Of course I like NZ and NZ life. But, sometimes I miss Seoul. Seoul is so crowded, polluted, and busy, Seoul is very different from Auckland.

I can see the stars in Auckland at night, but I can’t see the stars in Seoul. It’s so moving watching the stars in the sky in Auckland. ♥_♥ But, watching the stars

---

13 I use this textual conflation of ‘Auckland/New Zealand’ as a reflection of the fact that students, in general, did not see a distinction between the two.

14 ‘_’ indicates ‘falling in love’.
through the sky scrapers and between the high buildings in Seoul is more romantic to me. (Anonymous diary entry)

Home is not simply the house we live in. Rather, it is simultaneously the spaces that we inhabit and an idealised space of belonging (Brah 1996). In the act of migration, even the temporary migration of international students, there is a splitting of these two senses of home (Ahmed 1999). This splitting of the home that is known and the home that is inhabited is most apparent in the intimacy of household spaces like homestays and apartments. Yet, it also occurs in the broader spaces of the neighbourhoods, towns and cities that migrants journey to. These are spaces that, at least initially, lack memory, meaning and familiarity— the very things that make everyday life knowable. The lack of these things is not necessarily negative; the very pleasurable act of tourism and engaging in the touristic gaze is based upon the desire to experience difference (Urry 1990) as is the act of consuming the apparent authenticity of different cultural cuisines (hooks 1998; Nguyen 2005). However, the continued encounter with unfamiliar spaces and unfamiliar senses can lead to feelings of estrangement, feelings that ones body is out of place in this space (Ahmed 2000).

In the final section of this chapter I discuss the impressions that South Korean international students have of Auckland and New Zealand. These perceptions, like the foregoing diary entry, are often characterised simultaneously by a sense that the perceived differences between life in South Korea and life in Auckland are both positive and negative. This much shouldn’t be surprising; extensive research under the auspices of measuring ‘socio-cultural adaptation’ and ‘cultural-shock’ (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham 2001; Ward & Kennedy 1999) within psychology has established that experiences of different countries and cultures is usually characterised by conflicting feelings. Moreover, earlier research with international students in New Zealand has also pointed to the contradictory nature of students’ ‘worlds of perception’ (Butcher 2003). For South Korean international students in this project the conflict between the idea and the reality of Auckland/New Zealand usually revolved around two characteristics: Auckland/New Zealand as the simsimhan cheonguk, the boring paradise (Waghorn n.d.), and negative encounters with the apparently kind host population.

As we have seen above, the journeys that individuals make from South Korea to Auckland/New Zealand are based upon particular perceptions about what this city and country are like. These perceptions usually oscillate around tropes that suggest New
Zealand is the last paradise on earth with untouched environmental beauty and a friendly, kind and open population. They are produced in the promotion of films like *Lord of the Rings*, the marketing activities of the New Zealand tourism board, and in the everyday language of the New Zealand and Korean publics who, contrary to significant evidence, have come to believe and reproduce these tropes. These tropes are also reproduced in the marketing strategies used by Education New Zealand (see Figure 5.8). An example of these tropes – New Zealand as paradise and New Zealanders as a kind people – are illustrated in the following quotes from this marketing material:

New Zealand [is] a country that offers a unique blend of quality city lifestyle on the doorstep of an easily accessible outdoor paradise.

New Zealanders are genuinely hospitable people who cherish kindness and share a real interest in people of different cultures.

However, it should be noted again that, by and large, South Korean international students rely on word of mouth through interpersonal networks of family and friends rather than this official marketing when they make their choice about studying in New Zealand. Yet, those family and friends who recommend Auckland and New Zealand as good places to study also deploy these tropes. This much became evident during interviews conducted in South Korea, when former students, even those who had disliked their time in Auckland, told me how they had recommended that all their friends go to New Zealand because it was a beautiful place where the people were kind (see Chapter Eleven). This highlights the importance of nostalgia in the production of memory. The myths about this country are reproduced for students before they come to New Zealand but are then reproduced again by those same students when they depart and return to South Korea. In contrast to the tropes about Auckland/New Zealand that students engage with before and after their journeys here, encounters with Auckland/New Zealand in sojourn tend to be characterised by a sense of unease about the environs they occupy. Certainly students continue to perceive that, at least in comparison with South Korea, the ‘natural’ environment appears to be far less affected by human development:
New Zealand is a beautiful and welcoming country to live, work, and study. The environment is clean, the people are friendly, and the lifestyle is relaxed. In New Zealand, you can expect a high standard of living, excellent healthcare, and top-quality education. The climate is mild and the natural scenery is stunning. From the mountains to the coasts, there is something for everyone. You will have the opportunity to travel and explore, both within New Zealand and around the world. The educational system is world-renowned, and many students choose to study in New Zealand for its reputation and the global recognition of their degrees.
Ah well, it’s not too developed city it’s good to me. Not crowded and not violent and not usually… Really, really clean air and clean environment and everything is in Auckland city. Lots of public place and easier to get there. (Jin-Yeong, LS, 26, Busan)

However, for many students, while their initial encounter with Auckland/New Zealand was positive, characterised by an enjoyment of the different environment, they soon found themselves increasingly uneasy with the slow pace of life even in Auckland, New Zealand’s biggest city. One key informant believed that this was the biggest problem for South Korean international students, a problem that is based upon the very real experiential differences between everyday life in South Korean cities and everyday life in Auckland.

Do they enjoy living in Auckland? Not really. Because they often find here so boring, not much to do. Because Korean students when they go to high-school they don’t have spare time to do [any] activities, they are focussed on study, study to get into university so they don’t maybe… [have] much idea [about] what to do with the outdoor activity. If they have spare time they go to Karaoke, and they go to play pocket ball, things like that, indoor activity. They are not very familiar with outdoor activity so they have no idea where to go and what to do… That’s why they don’t really have the way to enjoy lifestyle here… They always say here is so boring but they enjoy natures and environment here. (Pers. Comm. 1: KS / PTE)

Auckland/New Zealand is conceived, then, as simsimhan cheonguk, the boring paradise: an idyllic part of the world, perhaps, but also a place where there is nothing happening and nothing to do.

Tropes about the apparent friendliness of New Zealanders are also often challenged during students sojourn:

When they leave their country for New Zealand they heard from people that Kiwi people were kind or from reports, articles stuff like that. New Zealand is quite peaceful; you know, that [the] nature’s great, the people are great. But once they arrive here their day to day life is quite difficult… (Pers. Comm. 3: KS / PTE)

Francis: Can you give me an example?

Well, they can’t even make a phone call. They’d like to. But once they call for something, they have a problem. With their tenancy agreement or their flat, they would like to speak to their property manager. The property manager is really unkind on the phone knowing that it’s an international student, it’s a non kiwi. They know [from] the caller’s accent that they’re Asian, then they just write [it] down, record it [the problem] and don’t do their job properly or when the tenant asks for a repair man they provide another service and try to get away with it,
that’s pretty common. They feel these things, racism, they know they’re not stupid and that’s when they get really frustrated [and] feel like going back to Korea. They say ‘I’ve had enough of New Zealand’, something like that. (Pers. Comm. 3: KS / PTE)

These experiences of boredom and negative encounters with the host population lead to a sense of estrangement for many South Korean international students. Such estrangement is based upon that very common feeling amongst migrants, particularly migrants who are also visible (and aural) minorities. It is based upon that sense that one’s body (and voice) is out of place, that one does not belong in this space (Ahmed 2000). For South Korean international students this sense of estrangement is related to the general environmental differences between South Korean cities and Auckland – a difference based upon perceived binaries of urban/rural, fast/slow and indoor/outdoor. However, this sense of estrangement is perhaps more powerfully induced by the very daily activities of individual members of the host population in Auckland. These actions, based upon a series of stereotypes that are the topic of the next chapter, remind individual students of the ‘fact’ that they are different here, that they do not, and cannot ever belong here.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has, firstly, discussed a series of interconnected population changes in the greater Auckland area that has provided the groundwork for the arrival of significant numbers of South Korean international students. Resulting from the radical shift in New Zealand’s approach to immigration in the late 1980s and early 1990s these changes include significant increases in the ethnic diversity of Auckland’s population, with a particular increase of individuals that are conceived within the ‘Asian’ ethnic category. New migrants from South Korea have been a significant part of this changing population as well as the concentration of these changes in the Auckland region. Moreover, increasing numbers of migrants settling in Auckland from South Korea have also been accompanied by a general rise in circulation between South Korea and New Zealand that was first characterised by a rapid increase in tourist numbers in the 1990s and now the growth of international students.

In the second half of this chapter I addressed some broad characteristics of the South Korean international student population in this research and some important
features of their pathways to Auckland, living and learning arrangements and impressions of this city. This discussion has revealed that there is a strong connection between the increasing number of South Korean migrants settled in Auckland/New Zealand and the growth of South Korean international student numbers. Despite the fact that students have different reasons for coming to New Zealand and Auckland I have suggested that it is the very presence and circulation of South Korean migrants and tourists here that constitute the ‘bridges to learning’ that facilitate the possibility of considering Auckland/New Zealand as a study destination. This is apparent both in terms of the economic practices of Korean-New Zealanders who are involved in the export education industry and the transnational economies they sustain and the very daily production of a general South Korean imaginary of what Auckland/New Zealand is like and why it is (or isn’t) a good place to study. I have also outlined the housing arrangements of students and in particular the common shift from homestay arrangements to rental accommodations and the feelings that motivate this shift. Finally, and returning again to the issue of how Auckland/New Zealand is conceived by South Koreans, I have illustrated some of the generalised impressions that students have of this city and country. These impressions suggest that their experiences often conflict with pre-arrival ideas about Auckland/New Zealand, ideas that, while similar to marketing material, appear to be produced primarily by other South Koreans who live in, or have been to Auckland and New Zealand.

The final point I made about the estrangement that South Korean international students often feel because of their impression of and treatment in Auckland is a useful bridge to the next chapter. In this chapter I offer a critical analysis of the ways in which South Korean international students, conceived within the larger, more amorphous category ‘Asian student’ have been produced in Auckland’s print media. This chapter illustrates the way that a series of overlapping and sometimes contradictory tropes have been created in the representations of international students from East-Asia and illustrates the ways that these representations have had a significant effect on the lives of South Korean international students during their sojourn.
Chapter Six

MAKING ASIAN STUDENTS, MAKING STUDENTS ASIAN:

The Racialisation of the Export Education Industry in Auckland¹

Why you giving me that Chinese look like you can't speak no English? You Chinese?

No, I am not Chinese, nor am I Japanese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, dirty knees or look at these. I am a Korean-American. They sneered at me with their what-the-difference look. The difference is apparent as night and day, rich and poor, salvation and damnation, heaven and hell, awareness and ignorance, literate and illiterate, you and me.

Patti Kim (1997: 111), *A Cab Called Reliable*

In the above passage, Ahn-Joo, the protagonist of Patti Kim’s highly acclaimed novel, *A Cab Called Reliable*, reminds us of the all too common encounter with essentialism in contemporary western societies. In particular, she speaks about an encounter with perceptions of the ‘fact of yellowness’ (Ang 2001: 28) – the malediction of individuals through reference to a particular skin colour – yellowness – and its connection to a fantasy of sameness and geographical origin (Bhabha 1994). These ‘facts’, like Frantz Fanon’s (1968: 79) ‘fact of blackness’, are ‘woven out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories’ that take form in sometimes overlapping and often contradictory ways.

In a like manner South Korean international students are faced with such malediction in their everyday lives in Auckland. It is a malediction that marks them not as individuals, nor even as South Korean or Korean, but simply as the Asian in ‘Asian student’². In this chapter my objective is to bring together some materials that illustrate the ways that the essentialised figure of the ‘Asian student’ has been constructed

---

¹ This chapter is largely based upon an article that was published in *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 47(2), 2006, pp.217-234.

² In this chapter I use the term ‘Asian student’ (as opposed to ‘Asian Students’) when speaking about the representations of Asian international students as a way of highlighting the ways in which this referent constructs singularity out of multiplicity.
through the print media in Auckland. In particular I investigate the manner that the majority of international students in Auckland, including students who have come from South Korea, and a cohort of young New Zealanders, have been fixed within a singular racial identity that is known by stereotypical economic, cultural and social characteristics.

The material included in this chapter is drawn from a survey of print media available in Auckland between 2000 and 2004. Although there has been some brief comment on the media racialisation of New Zealand’s export education industry elsewhere (Butcher & McGrath 2004; Spoonley & Trlin 2004) there has been no explicit discussion of the ‘ideological labour’ (Hall 1990: 11) that these representations do. By way of addressing this gap in the literature this chapter identifies the ways that the young Asian body – the body of the South Korean international student – has been fixed by the overlapping and contradictory stereotypes that are used to describe it.

Taking up some of the issues that were discussed in Chapter Two I begin by making a connection between some of the issues around international education and a recent programme of immigration in New Zealand. Then, some of the important academic literature on media representation of immigrants and minorities is outlined. The main body of the chapter identifies the representations that produce three different, but overlapping, discourses of the ‘Asian student’ as an economic, cultural and social other. The different voices in these representations characterise the ‘Asian student’ in dissimilar ways that range from celebratory to condemning. However, beyond such differences all the representations are mimetically fixated upon a fantasy of the geographical origin of the ‘Asian student’. By fixing so strongly on the process of constructing this racial identity such discourses are indeed not simply about Asian international students but about Asian students, or perhaps more accurately young Asian bodies and their effect upon Auckland. To exemplify the real essentialism that characterised these representations the following part of the chapter considers the way that New Zealand citizens and permanent residents have also been implicated in these discourses and the way that it is played out spatially in Auckland. Finally, I indicate what some of the consequences of these representations might be including the effect they have on the everyday practices and experiences of individual South Korean international students.
International Education, Immigration and the New Zealand Media

As noted in the previous chapter, there are important connections between different forms of transnational circulation between South Korea and New Zealand. However, these connections are not limited to the networks that connect different groups of migrants in their movement and settlement but also relate to the ways in which these groups are conceived by the wider public in New Zealand. Indeed, there is already a considerable literature on the representation of migrants, particularly those identified as Asian, in New Zealand’s media (McKinnon 1996; Spoonley & Trlin 2004; Vasil & Yoon 1996) that overlaps considerably with the material presented here. Specifically, a considerable amount of media representations on both groups, sometimes simultaneously, have sought to illustrate the social differences between a singular discursive Asian other (student or migrant) and the New Zealand self (a self that is inevitably Pakeha/White/European). As I will illustrate later in this chapter these representations argue that Asians have poor driving skills, that their presence is causing an increase in foreign crimes and that they are putting increasing pressure on public resources like health and education. Contemporaneously, the discourses around the cultural differences of the category Asian student do not simply fix international students but also New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who are young and Asian. It is through such an overlap between the Asian student, the Asian migrant and the Asian New Zealander that the very appropriative violence of such representations becomes evident. These representations are part of a process of racialisation in which the objective is to create and/or maintain an essential racial category, Asian, that can be known and controlled in the New Zealand context.

The media response to international education has taken some time to develop. Indeed, during most of the 1990s there was little attention paid to the consistent growth of the sector. However, like academic responses (see Chapter Two), media accounts of international education grew significantly inline with the recent growth in student numbers. In print media that are widely available in Auckland – the subject of this chapter – the growth in articles published on issues relating to international education have, since 1998, followed a trend line not dissimilar to the growth in international student numbers (see Figure 6.1). As this chapter illustrates the consistent focus on the ‘Asian student’ in these media accounts has been part of a racialising process that has invested this category with significant economic, cultural and social meaning. Indeed,
the practice of identifying the ‘asianisation’ (White 2002: 32) of international education has become so pervasive that many print media reports allow the terms ‘export education’, ‘international education’, ‘overseas students’, ‘foreign students’ and ‘Asian students’ to overlap in a manner that fosters metonymy. The article, Foreign Feet on the Footpath (Perrott 2003b), which was published in Auckland’s main daily newspaper, the New Zealand Herald, is a useful example. The author of the article begins by informing the readership that ‘international students are here to stay’ but then only refers to ‘Asian students’ for the remainder of the article (Perrott 2003b: A2). The implication, although subtle, is that ‘international students’ equal ‘Asian students’. The absence of an explanation of this shift in terminology serves to naturalise the linguistic relationship between international and Asian while simultaneously also fixing the ‘Asian’ in ‘Asian student’ as a singular category void of internal differentiation.

The construction of minorities through mediated racial stereotypes is of course not limited to the New Zealand context. Indeed, there is an extensive international literature on the role that media play in producing racial categories (Campbell 1995; Iyengar & Reeves 1997; Jakubowicz 1994; Kobayashi & Peake 2000; Philo & Beattie 1999; van

---

3 ‘The data in this [graph] refers to the number of student permits and student visas issued, not the number of individuals granted such permits and visas. It is possible for a person to be granted more than one student permit in a 12 month period.’ (Statistics New Zealand 2005 - http://www.stats.govt.nz)
Dijk 1991). Much of this literature addresses migration debates either directly or indirectly through the ‘problem of race’. Stuart Hall (1990: 11), for instance, notes that ‘amongst other kinds of ideological labour, the media construct for us a definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the ‘problem of race’ is understood to be’. Tuen A. van Dijk’s (2000) analysis of ‘new racism’ is a useful discussion of this ideological labour. van Dijk suggests that contemporary forms of racism opt for subtle description of minority groups in popular media instead of outright legislative or physical violence. This ‘new racism’ works through language and media by employing description that ostensibly reveals facts but only does so in reference to racial, ethnic, national or cultural difference and in contrast to the self perception of the dominant population. The product of such techniques is representations of racial groups that are accepted as common sense and as a result normalised in everyday language use. Although not all media representations describe migrants and other minorities in negative ways, positive multiculturalist renderings may also ‘serve to reinforce culturally sedimented views of ethnic minorities as “other”’ (Cottle 2000: 11). Essentially what binds virtually all representations of minorities, particularly in mainstream media, is that by focussing on a specific minority category, primarily distinguished through embodied difference, they serve to essentialise the difference and distance between the dominant population and the given ‘other’ (Law 2002).

The consequences of these sorts of representations are multiple, overlapping and often contradictory. It is useful to focus, as Sara Ahmed (2000; 2002) does, on the impact such representations have on two spaces; the body and the city (see also Jacobs 1996; Pile 1996). To consider the first of these implications we must at the outset eradicate the distinction made between race and ethnicity (Fuss 1989). Beyond this somewhat arbitrary distinction, race is not considered the intrinsic property of bodies and the precursor of ethnicity, but rather race is the consequence of ethnicity, ‘the cultural inscription of group identity’ (Ahmed 2002: 46). As such the practice of racialisation is the very constitution of a racial category through ‘the process of investing skin colour with meaning’ (Ahmed 2002: 46). The product of this practice is bodily others who can be seen, and because they can be seen, can be known through continuous recognition and reading of difference. In this sense racialisation is, however, an incomplete process. It is a ‘failed translation’ (Ahmed 2002: 55) that always reveals a gap between the construct of the racial body (produced through representations) and
the lived experience of such a body. This is not to say that media representations do not act out violence on the body nor that they do not restrict the body but rather that this process, through its very need to know and objectify all details of difference, can never be complete and is always open to challenge and resistance.

Steve Pile (1996: 174) argues that ‘bodies and cities produce one another’ and it is through this co-production that the geographies of difference, meaning, identity and power are enacted in urban experience. In the city almost all bodies are necessarily strange, because the city is indeed the very ‘being together of strangers’ (Fincher & Jacobs 1998). However, the bodily encounters that determine our experience and understanding of the city are differentiated between those that are ‘familiar (assimilable, touchable) and [those that are] strange (unassimilable, untouchable)’ (Ahmed 2002: 60). The differently racialised body is necessarily unassimilable and untouchable because its very recognisable bodily difference and the meaning that is invested in such difference construct a boundary between bodies. In New Zealand one such boundary can be conceived through the production of some bodies as Asian and other bodies as New Zealander, which by implication actually means Pakeha/White/European (McKinnon 1996; Spoonley & Trlin 2004; Vasil & Yoon 1996). This is not to argue that borders and boundaries of difference are always limits; there are of course many examples where such boundaries exist as contact-zones where differences can meet and intermingle (Wise 2005). However, this is to argue that when other bodies are recognised as having a racial identity they are already necessarily separated along the lines of the difference that such identity is made to mean. The consequences of such difference is inscribed into urban experience as specific places, practices and characteristics that are ascribed to individuals carrying particular racial identities (McCann 1999). More often than not this does not result in the creation of contact-zones where such borders can be challenged but in the maintenance and re-creation of difference and distance through encounters with the other.

The Economic, Cultural, and Social Construction of the ‘Asian Student’

The media representations that were surveyed in this research can be placed in three categories – economic, cultural and social. There is significant overlap between these categories. Indeed, many accounts, regardless of their focus, include some mention of the economics of international education and the ‘Asian student’, often as a way to
legitimate the representation itself. In this sense, representations of the economic value of the ‘Asian student’, the changing fortunes of the industry, and the prospects for its future were the most consistent feature of the representations. This incessant concern for the economic value of students is a feature that serves at once to legitimise the media accounts themselves and provide a context for the reporting. More importantly however, it creates and maintains the notion that the only value of international education is economic while also contributing to a characterisation of the ‘Asian student’ as an economic object.

Economic Representations

The newspaper article *Smart farmers grazing Asians* (Editorial 2003) is a useful place to begin. While it is not an example of media representations in Auckland (it is an editorial that was published in the *Waikato Times* the daily newspaper for the Waikato region that lies south of Auckland) it does provide imagery that is useful for understanding the economic representation of the ‘Asian student’ more generally. The headline and the article that it precedes focus on the potential economic benefits of shifting efforts from traditional outputs (e.g. farming) to the new export education sector. The article goes on to illustrate how the emergence of New Zealand’s new ‘national livestock’ has led to a situation where ‘middle class New Zealanders… buy in young Asians, get their parents to fork out fortunes for letting them graze in our paddocks, and send them back fattened’ (Editorial 2003: 5). The concept of ‘grazing Asians’ is rarely stated as explicitly as it is in this article, however it is implied in a large number of media representations. Indeed, while the explicit anthropomorphism employed here will be noticed by many readers the more common approach of linking the ‘Asian student’ to economic facts is likely to be more effective as an essentialising device. The following examples are useful:

A significant number of the immigrants and international students here are Asian. The students, mostly at secondary and tertiary level, pay thousands of dollars a year to study here (Jellard 2002: 1).

Elwin says the influx of Asian students has sent rents for inner city apartments skywards with some paying as much as $475 a week for two bedrooms, financed by wealthy families back home (Corbett 2002: B1).

The influx of Asian students into New Zealand, mainly Auckland, contributed $1.15 billion to the nation's gross domestic product in 2001, putting them in the top five contributors to the economy (Barnett 2003: C2).
Economic terminology is also commonly employed in representations that seek to compare this industry and its resource (the ‘Asian student’) to other areas of the economy. Such accounts regularly employ language that suggests students rise and fall in ‘boom’ and ‘busts’ (Smith 2001: 3), that they contribute to ‘budgets’ (Gamble & Reid 2002a: B3) and, that they are susceptible to changes in the world economic climate. In addition to this language of economic comparison, many articles also mimic the concept of ‘grazing Asians’ by aligning students to other export sectors.

Foreign students are making a bigger contribution to the economy than the wine industry and are set to provide more than $1 billion to New Zealand's GDP… Most students came from Japan, China, South Korea, Thailand and Taiwan (Smith 2001: 3).

New Zealand attracts students from a narrow range of countries - about 40 per cent from China, 20 per cent from South Korea, and 17 per cent from Japan… The sudden awareness of the scale of education was like finding a fully formed automobile industry had quietly sprung up in Penrose (Perrott 2003c: A5).

Alternatively, other accounts emphasise the money that is spent outside of educational institutions. These accounts inform readers that the ‘Asian student’ also spends money ‘on accommodation, food, telecommunications, recreation and travel’ (Gamble & Reid 2002a: B3). The perception of the ‘Asian’, student or migrant, as being consumer-focused is so strong that one article suggested that they are ‘100% Pure Consumers’ (Docot 2003: 42). The benefit of having such subjects in Auckland is very clear: ‘For the many inner city businesses that have missed out on the dividend from the agricultural boom it is indeed a vein of gold’ (Morgan 2002: 22).

In these discourses, what is not said is as important as what is said. The economic focus of these articles rarely mentions the educational service that students are purchasing or any variance in the economic status of students. Similarly, concern for the pastoral care of students is rarely mentioned in media representations even though it has been of considerable importance in academic debates (Butcher 2002b; McGrath & Butcher 2003). Consider, as an example, the following article entitled Overseas students keeping state schools afloat (Gamble & Reid 2002b). The first half of the article introduces the demographics and economics of the industry by discussing one 18 year old Chinese student whose parent’s pay ‘$10,000 annual fees’ (Gamble & Reid 2002b: B1). Eventually the readers are introduced to the principal of a Howick primary school.
She is studying the figures and recognises there is a market out there waiting to be tapped, but she also considers herself an educationalist and doesn't think of students as financial assets. 'Whatever we do has to be carefully managed because all our students are entitled to the best education we can give them (Gamble & Reid 2002b: B1).

The potential for discussing the paradox between wanting to expand the school’s ‘market’ and identifying as an educationalist is quickly passed by. The article promptly moves to compare with a ‘successful’ school.

If McLiesh [the principal] is looking for a model, she doesn't have to go far. Nearby is Owairoa Primary School, a decile 9 school and the largest primary school in the country, with a roll of 950 plus 100 overseas fee-paying students. It has had an expansionist policy since principal Alan McIntyre arrived in 1990 (Gamble & Reid 2002b: B1).

Questions regarding quality or different experience of education are soon passed by for more discussions of the successful expansion of Owairoa primary school. The article continues to discuss the growth of export education in different schools without making any more deviations away from the economic imperative. In the final line of the article the readers are reminded of what is really at stake: ‘New Zealand schools can't survive and be effective educational institutions without the input from international students. And yes, that's mostly about money’ (Gamble & Reid 2002b: B1).

The way in which the readers are reminded of this fact is exemplary. It emphasises the role of international students, who have been introduced in this article by reference to one Chinese student, in bringing in finance and underwriting the New Zealand education system. It is via this combination of mimetic statement, detailed analysis and silencing of other voices that these representations create a discourse that characterises the ‘Asian student’ within a generalised category. The generalised economic facts about the ‘Asian student’ are as follows: they are wealthy, consumption obsessed, able to be measured like other inputs and outputs, and as such can be moulded, marketed and purchased and have value added through practices like investment, accountability and marketing (c.f. Lewis 2005). The discursive weight of the economic information about the ‘Asian student’ leaves little surprise that they are represented as ‘the goose with the golden eggs’ (Morgan 2002: 22). It seems that this

---

4 Primary, intermediate and secondary schools in New Zealand are rated according to deciles 1-10 with 1 indicating that a school is in the lowest socio-economic area and 10 the highest. Although the intention of the system is to allocate funding to schools it also serves to identify and reinforce perceptions about quality and is often connected to place based race and class distinctions.
goose like the cow and the sheep that preceded it, can be grazed to the maximum benefit of individuals, (educational) businesses or the national economy.

Cultural Representations

The cultural representation of the ‘Asian student’ in Auckland’s print media differs in a number of notable ways from the economic representation. In the first instance, there are very few of these types of articles. Indeed, during the period that print media was surveyed for this research I was only able to identify three such articles; two were published in national magazines, *The Listener* and *Remix*, but focussed on the Auckland experience and one was published in *Metro*, an Auckland magazine. Secondly, these articles are also far more nuanced in their representation of the ‘Asian student’ than the articles focussed on economic issues, something that reflects in part the publications’ genre and intended readership. Finally, these articles also (briefly) include the voices of international students themselves and their opinions about life in Auckland. The combination of these differences might be considered to present space for challenging the tendency towards racial categorisation. Conversely however, I would argue that these articles are better considered as ‘enlightened racism’ (Jhally & Lewis 1992) or ‘multiculturalist representations’ (Cottle 1993) that serve simply to (re)create fantasies about the cultural difference of ‘others’ and in doing so reinforce the strength of borders between individuals.

The cultural representation of the ‘Asian student’ that occurs in these articles seeks to celebrate the ‘diversity’, ‘cross-cultural experiences’ and ‘ethnic richness’ (White 2002: 38) that this new population brings. In these articles the singular ‘Asian student’ - and it is only the figure of the ‘Asian student’ that is referred to – has served to add cosmopolitan flavour to Auckland. Their presence has contributed to the development of new, more exciting inner-city residences, the diversification and intensification of culinary pleasures, and invigorated our sense of fashion with a new exotic influence. In this representation their presence is welcomed, they are introducing new experiences of difference into Auckland. However, like the discussions of students as economic entities, these more descriptive accounts also objectify Asian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean as ‘signifier[s] of stability’ (Said 1978: 206). These signifiers represent a static image of culture that has been transferred to our doorstep by the wonders of political, economic and technological globalisation (Appadurai 1997).
The discourses in these articles objectify the attributes of the ‘Asian student’. The first of these attributes is that students arriving from Asia have an exciting but strange sense of fashion.

They teetered on platforms, loafed in Gucci, bushbashed through Burger King in oversized camel Timberlands. Makeup was immaculate; or immaculately distressed. Hair was theatre; smoking film noir (Philp 2001: 19).

The ‘Asian student’ is also immersed in a kitsch consumer culture that constitutes them as an economic as well as cultural other.

The Asianisation of downtown Auckland is as obvious as a bright pink toy. Shop windows are stuffed with ‘Pucca’ merchandise, that moon faced kid made famous in a Korean cellphone game, and ‘Mashimaro’ merchandise, an animated white rabbit also famous in Korea. There are fluffy steering-wheel covers, fluffy clocks, fluffy things to hang in your car and, as if in a parody of that precipice between adolescence and childhood, rows and rows of cigarette lighters (White 2002: 32).

They bring with them exciting new landscapes that cosmopolitanise the city. No longer is downtown Auckland ‘just a concrete canyon’ (Starrenburg 2003: 77), it is filled with the excitement that ‘Asia’ brings with it.

Their presence is manifesting itself in noodle bars, pool halls, karaoke bars, hair salons and weird photo booths where you can get photos of yourself surrounded by tulips, stars, cartoon cats or any one of several hundred kitsch environments (White 2002: 19).

Asians are a very image oriented culture, more so than European culture. This accounts for the influx of Asian hair salons, beauty salons, retail and clothing stores throughout the city, and it is reflected in their music videos, films and particularly their fashion (Starrenburg 2003: 77).

Throughout these articles the authors employ the signifier ‘Asian’. This signifier is used to mark out the representations in regards to a particular region, activating a geographical imaginary about origin and identity (Said 1978). Existing discourses on ‘Asia’ and ‘Asians’ are combined with new reflections on their presence in Auckland to reconstitute this generalised other. At times, the articles employ more specific signifiers of stability like Chinese, Japanese and Korean. When these signifiers are employed they are used to refer to locations, like Karaoke bars, comic book rooms or restaurants. However, the manner in which they are employed refuses to challenge any discourse about the knowable ‘Asian’. This point becomes obvious during Margo White’s article, Orient Express. White describes a location called K2, which is ‘a grungy Japanese café
which sells secondhand Japanese books and where a $3 coffee entitles you to spend hours reading Japanese comics’ (White 2002: 33). However, the photo of K2 also includes another location, Seoul Book Shop (‘Seoul Seo-Jeok’ in the Korean language that marks the store’s windows), which, not surprisingly, is Korean. The caption for this photo indicates that these adjacent shops are the same business. This mistake, although not particularly significant for the article, suggests underlying assumptions about the nature of a generalised ‘Asian’ culture. While the author did attempt to name different locations in Auckland as Chinese, Korean or Japanese, she did not describe any material or imaginary differences between these cultures. Rather, the author employs a generalised geographical imaginary of (East) Asia that acts as a signifier of stability. Such moments in this cosmopolitan discourse make clear that any differences that might exist between China, Japan and Korea (the only three countries mentioned) do not supersede the generalised attributes of the category ‘Asian’.

In each of these articles a touristic gaze (Urry 1990) is employed. In this all-seeing gaze, Asia or Asian becomes immediate, tangible (although maintained through imaginaries) and also controllable in an Auckland setting. All of (East) Asia is neatly packaged in an environment Aucklanders can dominate – for as one of the articles points out Asia *is here* (Philp 2001 emphasis added). The employment of ‘Asia’ as a signifier of stability is not a survey of the different cultures or even nationalities of Asia, rather it engages simply with a geographical imaginary of the Far East (Said 1978). The generalised other in this case seems to be constituted through the apparent universality of the evidently singular cultures that are Chinese, Korean and Japanese. The mis-description of K2 in White’s article is exemplary in illustrating that the lived experience of different cultures is not what is important here, let alone individual identities, but rather the pleasurable experience of a category of strangers.

**Social Representations**

The third type of article that was identified in this research focuses primarily on the social problems that are caused by the increasing presence of the ‘Asian student’. Although there are some instances of these articles in 2000 and 2001, most were published contemporaneously with or following the rapid increase in mostly Chinese and South Korean international student numbers in 2002 and 2003. They also continued to have a significant presence in 2004 even as numbers of these students decreased. As a
discourse these representations construct the attributes of the ‘Asian student’ in a manner that encourages derision. It is suggested that the ‘Asian student’ cannot drive and is causing accidents on Auckland roads, that they are criminally inclined, and what they bring to the city is not exciting and exotic, as described above, but ‘cheap and nasty’ (Orsman 2003b: A2). These discourses combine with and utilise the representation of the ‘Asian student’ as wealthy and culturally different but use these caricatures as a means to construct a negative rather than positive description.

One of the major attributes associated with the ‘Asian student’ and indeed Asians in New Zealand more generally is that they cannot drive. It is boldly stated in a headline that *Asian students and fast cars [are] a bad mixture* (Middlebrook 2001: A5). Elsewhere, readers are informed that ‘young Asian students are driving without licences’ (Grunwell 2002: 5). An article entitled *Foreign drivers in 684 crashes last year* (Alley 2004) focuses entirely on the legal outcome of one incident involving a Chinese international student. Another article, *Accidental Tourists* (Wellwood 2002), begins by briefly suggesting that tourists and international students might be causing an increasing number of serious accidents; however, the body of the article only discusses the skills of the ‘Asian student’. A different article acknowledges that there is only ‘anecdotal evidence of bad driving habits among international students’ but still somehow demands a response to the ‘burdens the mostly Asian students are creating’ (Perrott 2003a: A5). Finally, one article even suggested, somewhat ironically but nonetheless racially, the emergence of a new condition, *Driving while Asian* (Stirling 2003).

According to these representations crime is also an attribute of the ‘Asian student’. ‘Weekend Herald investigations have found a thriving gang-like scene in downtown Auckland’ (Gower 2003: A5). Other articles indicate that Asians are ‘either the target or the instigators’ of foreign crimes like kidnapping and extortion (Booth 2003). According to one article, ‘[w]e have a real problem in this country with Asians and crime’ which is ‘as plain as the nose on our face’ [emphasis added] (Mcleod 2003: C8). The same article goes on to suggest that the evidence is plain to see, ‘as a quick perusal I made of newspaper reports on kidnappings and homicides over the past two years suggests’ (Mcleod 2003: C8). The author provides neither context nor comparison to the information that is provided. This is unnecessary as the author of the article is certain that there is no better proof than the quantity of newspaper clippings on Asian
crime. This article is exemplary because it illustrates so explicitly how ‘the material presence or weight [of Asian student representations] not the originality of a given author is really responsible’ (Said 1978: 94) for the creation of what this author suggests is a ‘fact’.

The final condemnation of the ‘Asian student’ surrounds their impact on urban space in Auckland. Unlike the ostensibly multiculturalist discourses identified above, these discourses construct a dirty, cheap and tacky characteristic in Asian culture. The article *Students’ smoking forces storeowner from arcade* (Thompson 2004) is a useful example. This article describes how a long term retailer in a central city arcade has been forced to leave because of the habits of ‘Asian’ students: ‘The pall of smoke, which made her once-joyful working days miserable, came from groups of Asian students, who gathered on the footpath’ (Thompson 2004: A16). The retailer laments for the arcade that used to be ‘the loveliest arcade in the city’ (Thompson 2004: A16). Now, however, ‘it looks as if one was in a different country’ (Thompson 2004: A16). Other articles illustrate similar disgust.

The monstrous regiment of language schools and tenement flats and the convoy of cheap convenience stores, game arcades, internet cafes and fast food outlets they drag in their wake are changing the nature of the CBD. And given the transient nature of their populations, not for the better. (Keith 2003: 2).

Asian students are by far the biggest litterers (Kiriona 2004: A2).

The spatial modality of the ‘Asian student’ is also represented as having negative impact on the urban experience.

Other concerns include the lack of detailed information on the industry, the sustainability of its impact on inner-city infrastructure, public transport, rental accommodation, and recreational and retail facilities, as well as the social and community impacts of thousands of predominantly Asian students in the CBD (Perrott 2003c: A5).

They pack the buses, cram the libraries and horde the footpaths... the majority [are] from north-east Asia. (Clarke 2003: 11)

We are entitled to walk along our main street as proud citizens, not simply harassed consumers or jostled hosts to foreign students on brief homestays. (Keith 2003: 2).

These articles aim to construct a sense of the negative social impact of the ‘Asian student’. Like the articles that celebrate the cultural difference of students these articles
do not see any variance within the student population. Furthermore they attribute socially unacceptable practices directly to the signifier ‘Asian’ in ways that inscribe the characteristics they represent into the everyday experience of driving, crime and urban life.

In response to the media attention on international education and the ‘Asian student’ in 2002, 2003, and 2004, there were, particularly in 2004, strategic attempts to challenge the representations of the industry that were making it difficult to maintain student numbers. In many cases there were articles published from government press releases on changing approaches to students, like the Ministry of Justice establishing provisions to revoke the visas of international students who commit more than one driving offence (Cleave 2004). Other articles, often based on press releases from or authored by industry insiders, inform the public that the industry will try to diversify its student population by replacing the ‘Asian student’ with more acceptable ‘others’. The following statement from the chief executive of Education New Zealand, Robert Stevens, is informative:

China is an important market for our institutions, but it is by no means the only one. All institutions in the education export industry are very aware of the educational, social and business benefits that come from a diverse range of international students. (Stevens 2004: 17).

Finally, some articles attempted to inform the public of another, more positive social side to international education. One example, and indeed the only example of an article that identifies South Koreans separately from the amorphous ‘Asian’, is an article entitled Young Koreans clean up image. This article is based on a press release from a private tertiary institution that details the volunteer work of a group of South Korean students to change the impressions about the ‘Asian student’. I take up the subject of this article and the individuals involved in much greater detail in Chapter Ten. The article discusses how this group of Korean or Asian students (these words are used interchangeably) spend two hours every week cleaning up the inner city (Walsh 2004). Although the article seeks to highlight a positive side to the presence of the ‘Asian student’ it does so in a manner that suggests these individuals need to amend their behaviour – they need to clean up there image. Moreover, it also mimicks the same essentialist discourses that seek to distinguish between these individuals and the
dominant population, a strategy that does nothing to challenge existing racial categorisations (Cottle 2000).

**Auckland’s Changing Face**

The process of racialisation that these representations of international education engage in constructs a spatial imaginary of the Asian student body. This body is firstly distinguished by a ‘fantasy of [its] origin and identity’ (Bhabha 1994: 67) that makes the linguistic referent ‘Asian’ evoke a specific racial identity. This racial identity is not, in this case, the entire continent of Asia but rather a specific region within this continent, the Far East. As such the racial identity that is constructed here is distinguished by its very ‘fact of yellowness’ (Ang 1999; 2001). By invoking this signifier the representations do not exist in isolation but rather connect the meaning that they are producing to historical meanings about Asia and Asians. This will be likely to include long-held western stereotypes about Asians (Anderson 1990; Dunn 2003; Hamilton 1990) as well as discourses that are specific to New Zealand (Chui 2004; Ip 2003; Ng 1993; Vasil & Yoon 1996). Once the Asian student has been defined through reference to ‘where they are from’ (Ang 2001: 35), these representations then begin to inscribe their new meaning onto this body. Amongst other things these new meanings inform the readers that Asian students are ‘wealthy’ (Corbett 2002) ‘pure consumers’ (Docot 2003) who are ‘image oriented’ (White 2002), and ‘litterers’ (Kiriona 2004).

Through the inscription of such meaning the Asian body, or perhaps more accurately, the young Asian body becomes appropriated as a spatial imaginary by the producers and consumers of such discourses. The fact that it is difficult to distinguish between who is legally an international student and who is not, and because the linguistic referent ‘student’ is legally ambiguous means that the term ‘Asian student’ and all it is made to mean will also include New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who are young and Asian (see also N. Bennett 1998). Thus when a newspaper article suggests that ‘Asian students are boosting enrolments at Auckland University’ (New Zealand Press Association 2000: A3) it is referring to all students who are recognised as being Asian not just international students. However, when another article discusses the economic and cultural characteristics of ‘Asian students’ (White 2002) it is referring only to Asian international students but will invest this meaning in any young Asian body in Auckland – student, resident, citizen, tourist or otherwise. This
malediction of individuals who are not international students in a discourse that is ostensibly about international students illustrates the full force of the racialisation process. It shows that the representations of the ‘Asian student’ are founded first and foremost on constructing a spatial imaginary of a body, the young Asian, that can then be inscribed with meaning that is not reliant on the lived experience of such bodies. Paralleling Frantz Fanon’s (1968) famous narrative, Asian students’ bodies are given back to them sprawled out, distorted and recoloured.

The appropriative violence of these representations is not simply acted out on the space of the young Asian body. In addition these representations also inscribe meaning into the imaginary of urban space through both the sight/site of the Asian student body and through the explicit representation of parts of the landscape as racialised. Eugene McCann’s (1999) analysis of the production of racialised urban space in Los Angeles provides a useful reference point here. McCann contends that the creation and maintenance of the character of different urban spaces is ‘fundamentally related to representations of racial identities and to an ongoing process in which subjective identity and material urban spaces exist in a mutually constitutive relationship’ (McCann 1999: 164). In the context of this research the mutual constitution of racial identity and urban space is most apparent in the representations of students’ cultural and social characteristics. The assertion in these representations is that Auckland’s inner city is indeed changing because of the presence of large numbers of Asian students who are shopping, eating, living and studying there. The affect of the presence and practices of these bodies is an ‘Asianisation of downtown Auckland’ (White 2002: 32).

In addition to these implicit connections made between the Asian student body and urban space there have also been some representations that have dealt specifically with the changing landscape of the inner city. In this regard a special feature, entitled *Auckland’s Changing Face*, in Auckland’s main daily newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*, is a useful example (see Figure 6.2). This feature included four articles which described the impacts of the export education industry with specific reference to Asian students in Auckland’s inner city. Throughout the feature body and movement metaphors are used to describe the impact of ‘Asian’ students and the education sector. It is suggested that ‘the education sector is creeping into the heart of the CBD’ creating a ‘negative impact on the commercial and retail communities’ (Orsman 2003a: A2). The education sector is characterised in two forms, firstly in a animalistic way, for which
Asian students are only implied, that ‘gobbles up office space’ as it ‘sprawls down Auckland’s Queen St.’ (Orsman 2003a: A2). Alternatively characterisations are explicitly about Asian students like the ‘thousands of mainly Chinese students (who) rode across Newton Gully astride a white Jumbo (jet)’ (Perrott 2003b: A2). ‘This parade of big spenders’ is described as out of control (Perrott 2003b: A2). City planners are having difficulty judging where this ‘Asian student boom will next snake within the CBD’ (O'Sullivan 2003: A2). Asian students’ ‘footprints are everywhere along Queen St.’ which has resulted in ‘a wave of Asian-focused stores sweep[ing] down the hill and into the midcity’ (Perrott 2003b: A2).

![Figure 6.2: Auckland's Changing Face - New Zealand Herald 23 December 2003](image.jpg)

The explicit objective of this feature is to contend that Auckland’s face is indeed changing and that this change is negative. To make this contention the writers employ
the spatial imaginary of the young Asian body that has been constructed during this period and argue that its presence and practices are inscribing new meaning into the inner city of Auckland. They also make it explicit that this body and the changes that it is creating are ‘foreign’ (Perrott 2003b: A2) and by doing so invoke a fixed relationship between two unitary categories, ‘us’ and ‘them’. In this relationship the ‘Asian student’ (them) are presented as a threat to the present and historical spatial organisation of Auckland. In contrast the former category, ‘us’, assumed to be the newspapers’ readership, is symbolically associated with Auckland. In this way the changes occurring in Auckland are also a threat to the presence of ‘us’ in this city. The marking of these bodies as coming from another place (Asia) reinforces the perception that they are out of place and that their effect, while perhaps economically beneficial, is unwanted and dangerous.

Consequences: Difference and Distance in Auckland

In 1998, on the cusp of the massive increases in students from East-Asia, Neville Bennett pointed out that in New Zealand ‘[r]ecruiting international students also met a hard core of resentment, with about a third of people believing Asian students displaced local students’ (N. Bennett 1998: 4). This attitude to students from the Asian region, international or otherwise, has intensified in the intervening years as their visibility has increased. The representations that have been discussed in this chapter, and in particular the feature Auckland’s Changing Face as one of the most perverse examples, are the discursive evidence as well as being a cause of this intensification. While the attitudes of the mainstream media and the attitudes of the general public will not be identical there is likely to be a strong correlation between the two. Equally, it should be expected that minorities who have little personal contact with the majority of the population will view the attitudes of the mainstream media as the voice of the host community (Spoonley & Trlin 2004). To put it bluntly, while the media do not construct racial identities in isolation from broader societal discourses, ‘[i]ndividual understandings and community identities are shaped by media practices and intergroup relations are affected as a result’ (Spoonley & Trlin 2004: 8). It is in this context that the consequences of these representations can be identified.

The primary representation of the Asian student is an economic one. It constructs the Asian student in terms of the monetary value that they offer to Auckland and New
Zealand. Indeed, even when representations discuss the cultural and social characteristics such discussions are almost always qualified or questioned by the economic value of students. In some ways these economic representations, often based upon government or industry press releases, are an attempt to shore up support for the industry by justifying its existence on the basis of revenue generation. Nevertheless, it is the imposition of economic borders on the Asian student body that seems to have created the greatest difference and distance in the everyday spaces of Auckland. While such representations might lead readers to believe that the industry is important it will also lead them to ignore the human side of international education. In addition, positive and negative representations of cultural and social difference that are based on racial essentialism are hardly likely to improve understanding. The result of this is perhaps most apparent in the increasingly common assertion that students from Asia feel more isolated, are less likely to have relationships with New Zealanders, and perceive discrimination (Berno & Ward 2003; Ward 2001; Ward & Masgoret 2004).

These representations, then, do not exist external to everyday experience. Rather, they have pervaded everyday experience and actions. In this research, for example, it has become apparent that these representations are regularly enacted in everyday life in ways that problematise the relationships between international students, particularly those from Asian nations, and members of the host community in Auckland. In particular it was often suggested by interviewees that the attitudes of ‘New Zealanders’ or ‘Kiwis’ (again read Pakeha/White/European) towards international students, particularly those from Asia, had shifted in recent years. One manager of an education agency who had been an international student in Auckland in the mid 1990s reflected on the differences between his past experience and the current situation:

I don’t know. I have been here for two and half years. I was here in two months in 1996 and the rest of time I spent all my life in Korea so I don’t know. Probably human mental is changed from the kindness, I really felt that Kiwi people is most kind people in the world because even though I had a homestay in the US, in the UK, in Australia and in New Zealand, New Zealand people is most kind. But actually now about my feeling is that not any more there are no more of those old people… [Now] they are accommodating international students for their financial benefit or problem. They do not want to exchange their life or their culture with the international students. That’s the biggest change (Pers. Comm. 15: KS / IEO).

This sentiment was echoed by a number of key informants interviewed for this research – many of whom had also come from South Korea as international students to Auckland
before choosing to live here. Students also often discussed the fact that they had ‘no Kiwi friends’ or that ‘New Zealanders are unkind and rude’. In one interview Dong-Su (LS, Seoul, 25) illustrated that he was all too aware of the dynamics of these representations:

I think if one Kiwi call me Korean or Asian I feel if they call me Korean it’s a positive thing, if they call me Asian I think this word means negative. Because, I think, most western people especially here most western people call Asian and… ahhh but Asian phrase has an Asian problem because they make people really in other country. Still they think of… I understand too that they think about bad things… in my case I would imagine it has bad meaning.

Many key informants and students also spoke about incidents of verbal or physical assault by members of the public that appear to be actions targeted at young Asians specifically. The following two comments from students are illustrative:

I and my friend went to some clothes shop and we need to buy some trousers and t-shirts and we took and we paid and the cashier stared at me like this [gave example]… and she paid and she threw the bag. I was crazy and if I have hot temper maybe I would break anything. She threw the bag! It’s unbelievable! (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27)

I think especially Friday night or anyway late time when I go to go my home or somewhere, sometimes I heard like a slang from youngster, that’s these things make me angry or disappointed. I think racism is a yeah, racism about. Sometimes one of my friend met like a robber, Sunday night at 11 o’clock when he went home some people like a robber, they need a wallet – “Give me your wallet!” Fortunately my friend just drop the coin s and runaway. Racism is problem living in Auckland, yeah, living in New Zealand (Jang-Ho, LS, Gwangju, 24)

There is a connection between incidents of this kind and the representations discussed in this chapter. In the case of Sang-Taek’s encounter at the clothing shop and the ‘slang from youngster’ that Jang-Ho regularly hears this connection is quite explicit. The instigators of this abuse appear to be expressing their frustration about the (negative) presence of Asian students, young Asians or just Asians generally. The connection between the mugging and these representations is also quite apparent. Even if the crime itself is opportunistic it is likely that the actions are based on a presumption that young Asians are wealthy and carry large amounts of cash with them. The reality in this situation was quite the opposite; the young man who was mugged worked for below minimum wage in a local restaurant to pay for his rent while studying English. Perhaps most importantly however, both of these selected encounters are examples of how the difference produced in everyday practice both inside and outside of the media are
materialised in ways that have significant impact on the individual lives of many of the participants in this project.

As a qualification to these consequences it is worth noting Sara Ahmed’s (2002: 55) assertion that ‘there is always a gap, to be filled as it were, between how we construct the racial body, and how it is lived’. It is for this reason that the representations that have been discussed in this chapter can so effectively invest different meanings onto the spatialised imaginary of the Asian student body. However, this also means that the imaginaries that are constructed in these representations are open to challenge. As an example, at times industry insiders have called for a more measured approach and understanding in relation to students and export education (see for example Dye 2004; Lyons 2004). Although these representations seem to be motivated by attempts to stop the decrease in student numbers they still have a role to play in challenging dominant representations. Additionally, in Chapter Ten I discuss in detail an example of one group of students’ efforts to challenge these representations of the singular ‘Asian student’ through collective action. Finally, as comparable work overseas indicates the difference and distance that is created between Asian student bodies and New Zealand bodies (by implication Pakeha/European/White) may also present the opportunity to overcome other experiences of bodily difference. An example of this is the opportunity to overcome the difference between the colonised and coloniser imaginaries that can exist between some Japanese and South Koreans (Matthews & Sidhu 2005). These gaps within, between and across the categories that representations create are a reminder of the possibilities for different experiences that reject, bypass or indeed even challenge such racial categorisation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have illustrated the manifold ways that a spatial imaginary of the ‘Asian student’ has been constructed in representations of international education in Auckland’s print media. These representations work by focusing first and foremost on creating knowledge of, and as a result the very substance of, a racial identity, the Asian student. In my analysis I have identified three categories of difference – economic, cultural and social – that make the category ‘Asian student’ equal wealth, exotic difference and social problem. The full malediction of these representations is however only made clear in the ambiguity around the use of ‘student’ in the term ‘Asian student’.
This ambiguity means that persons who are not international students at all are also implicated in a discourse that is ostensibly about international students from Asia. Indeed, the inclusion of individuals who should be considered New Zealand citizens or permanent residents reveals that this discourse is much more part of a general othering of the category Asian in Auckland and New Zealand rather than being about international education itself.

The consequences of these representations are evident firstly in the negative experiences and perceived discrimination that international students from Asia feel in interactions with the general public. Initial research on young New Zealanders identified as Asian suggests that they too may encounter similar experiences (Bartley 2003). Moreover, these representations have cemented the connection between Asian and foreign in the Auckland setting by seeking out and fixing difference to the very racial category that they create. This consequence above all else reflects exactly the ‘problem of race’ that the media so often serves to create. By producing the Asian student as a problem that must be known and attended to, these representations simply reinforce (or in fact extend) the difference and distance that exists in Auckland rather than illustrating the multiple opportunities for shared experiences and understanding.

The essentialism that has been illustrated in this chapter provides important contextual background to the discussions that follow. It is this essentialism that South Korean international students encounter on a daily basis in their everyday lives in Auckland and their actions and interactions are affected as a result. The next chapter begins the process of introducing the different practices and experiences of South Korean international students through a series of narratives developed from students’ written diaries and maps. These narratives illustrate students’ experience of urban space in Auckland and the different ways that students navigate everyday worlds during their sojourn.
Chapter Seven

INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS IN AUCKLAND

If we are to understand how cities are used by ordinary people in their everyday lives, we need to pay attention to the differentiated ways in which their relations to urban space are organized by the urban trajectories, maps and itineraries that arise from their differential relations to a range of economic, social and cultural associations and forms of life.

Tony Bennett, (1998: 80-81), *Culture: A Reformer’s Science*

In the previous two chapters the discussion has been at the level of generalisations. In Chapter Five such generalisations took the form of the factors surrounding the arrival and initial experiences of South Korean international students in Auckland. In Chapter Six, the focus was the media representations of these students within a larger more amorphous body of ‘Asian students’. Such generalisations, although useful for the broad introduction they offer, are also problematic because of the manner in which they shroud the individuality and incompleteness of encounters. Each of these chapters presented what, following Michel de Certeau (1984: 93), we might call ‘the panorama city… a ‘theoretical’ (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of [the very] practices’ that constitute it. This is not to suggest that such discussions are not useful – they clearly provide valuable insight into the general conditions within which individuals travel from South Korea to Auckland to live and study. However, a panoramic view also tends to avert attention from the ways that cities, and different experiences of cities, are constituted on an everyday basis by individuals.

As a route to a less generalised sense of students’ experiences I present in this chapter detailed accounts of four individuals who came from different cities and towns in South Korea to live and study in Auckland. Through these accounts I hope to show some of what Tony Bennett is trying to highlight in the passage above – ‘how cities are used by ordinary people in their everyday lives’ or, in this project, how different spaces in Auckland are used by individual South Korean international students in their everyday lives. To accomplish this task, I draw directly on the written diary and mapping exercises that a small number of students were involved in (see Chapter Four...
for a full description of this technique). From the diaries and maps produced here I have developed accounts that integrate daily itineraries, ideas raised in interviews and diaries, photos provided by these students and the map produced by each student. The accounts that are presented offer a unique insight into the everyday lives of these individuals and their responses to particular encounters. Contemporaneously however, they also offer valuable reflections on the more general experience of South Korean international students. They do this not by suggesting that all students’ experiences naturally have commonalities but because these stories illustrate some of the places, peoples, struggles and negotiations that individual students might encounter.

To draw attention to the kind of everyday encounters that are to be illustrated in this chapter, I begin by offering some reflections on how we might think about everyday pathways in cities. In particular I argue that much can be learnt from a re-working of Michel de Certeau’s (1984) conceptualisations of walking in the city with an emphasis on migrant experience. To do this I draw on the recent approach to conceiving migration as an ongoing process of uprootings/regroundings (Ahmed et al. 2003). Through this fusion I suggest that there may be considerable value for understanding everyday transnational lives by thinking about the politics of encounter that occur when individuals are trying to re-ground their uprooted lives through everyday activities like walking in the city. Following this general discussion the four individual students’ accounts are presented. Then, I consider with caution what might be learnt from the differences and similarities in these accounts.

Finding a Way to Understand the Transnational City

The passage from Tony Bennett previously is useful for the way that it focuses our attention on the importance of everyday negotiations of urban spaces by ‘ordinary people’. Yet, at the same time, his comments reveal a problematic element in many of the discussions of everyday practice, and, in particular those discussions that, like his, are based upon the work of Michel de Certeau. This problem is the question of who is conceived within the category ‘ordinary people’ and what do we include when we think about the everyday practices of these ‘ordinary people’. In de Certeau’s original, for instance, there appears to be an implication that there is ‘a universal relationship between the body and subjectivity, the body and society’ (Morris 2004: 683). Indeed, much of the scholarship that employs de Certeau’s approach appears to do so as a
means of illustrating some kind of overarching model or definition for what constitutes everyday practice (Morris 1990; 1998). This suggests that while individuals might walk different routes, and hence make the city in different ways, their embodied relationship with city space is for the most part undifferentiated (for notable exceptions see Morris 2004; Morse 1990).

In a sense this problem is the result of a focus on the everyday itself. Certainly, this focus has cast attention on those everyday practices that have been overlooked in the longer history of mainstream urban studies. However, it has often remained characterised by the motivation to uncover the underlying ‘nature’ of the urban (Morris 2004). This has resulted in a strangely ‘normal’ and undifferentiated notion of what constitutes everyday practice. In this section I want to present one way of thinking around this temptation towards ‘singularity’ (Morris 1990: 15) by considering the different sorts of ‘ordinary’ everyday practices that might be engaged in by migrants – individuals who may not possess the same cognitive knowledge of urban space as is assumed of every walker in de Certeau’s treatise. To this end I begin by drawing out some more detail from de Certeau’s original conception of ‘walking in the city’, detail some other approaches that recognise some difference between cities, before introducing the notion of uprootings/regroundings (Ahmed et al. 2003) as a way of opening the possibility for different sorts of walking in the city.

**Walking in the City**

Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it “speaks”. All the modalities sing a part in this chorus, changing from step to step, stepping in through proportions, sequences, and intensities which vary according to the time, the path taken and the walker. These enunciatory operations are of an unlimited diversity. (de Certeau 1984: 99)

One of the central elements of Michel de Certeau’s treatise on the *The Practice of Everyday Life* and his chapter ‘Walking in the City’ is to suggest that space and place are not simply the intrinsic features of the built environment. Rather, following Henri Lefebvre (1971; 1991), de Certeau argues that space is produced by the interrelationship between its form, function and practice. In particular, he suggests that space must be ‘enunciated’ by the rhetorical practices of city users. In other words, urban space is brought to life by the practices of the individuals who inhabit it, indeed by the very act of inhabitation itself. To draw out this conceptualisation de Certeau speaks about the
walker as the quintessential actor in the city by making the rather evocative analogy that the ‘act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered’ (1984: 97). Within this analogy he argues that walking like speech, and indeed writing, has a triple enunciative function:

[I]t is a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on the language); it is a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting-out of language); and it implies relations among differentiated positions, that is, among pragmatic “contracts” in the form of movements (just as verbal enunciation is an “allocation,” “posits another opposite” the speaker and puts contracts between interlocutors into action). (1984: 97-98)

This analogy with language is useful for the ways that it highlights the manner that space is always being made in new and creative ways by the very individuals who inhabit it. Like speech, the practices of spatial enunciation are learnt over time but they are also always re-created in subtle ways through a constant ‘chorus of idle footsteps’. The city then, enunciated through spatial practices like walking, is always at the crossroads of the past, the present and the future – a point that again reminds us of de Certeau’s indebtedness to Lefebvre’s (1991) understanding of The Production of Space.

At the core of this conception is de Certeau’s distinction between individual practices like walking as tactics and the organisation of urban space as strategy. Through this distinction he posits what has come to be seen as a rather problematic binary between strategies as ordering and controlling space and tactics as constituting and sometimes transgressing or resisting space (Morris 2004; Thrift 2004). Within this conception strategies are conceived as ‘the calculus of force-relationships’ (de Certeau 1984: xix) that become possible when powerful subjects (he lists the proprietor, enterprise, city, scientific institution) exert control over space that is external to themselves. Conversely, tactics are much more partial, they are part of the making of space, a fragment that does not (or indeed cannot) take over the entirety of a space from a distance. Strategies, then, attempt to control by exerting power and discipline on space while tactics negotiate, transgress or even actively resist such disciplining of space. The problem with this distinction is that everyday spatial practices like walking rarely ever conform to the either / or that de Certeau is offering. Indeed, even quite obvious resistance in space, a protest march for example, is constructed and maintained through routines and practices that may be quite conformist, based upon a subtle disciplining of
what it is to protest. Likewise, some strategies may seek to break up the hegemony of
spatial practices, like gay and lesbian maps of cities that are founded on a process of
coding often promoted by commercial alliances yet still disturb hetero-normative
notions of everyday spatial practices (Morris 2004). In short then, power in de Certeau’s
world has been portrayed as a top-down process that conceives the everyday spatial
practices of individuals in the street against the power of officialdom. As both Brian
Morris (2004) and Nigel Thrift (2004) argue, de Certeau’s work needs to be reframed in
a way that is attentive to the dispersion of power and discipline and aware of the fact
that different practices may in fact be simultaneously both strategic and tactical.

In addition to this problematic distinction between strategies and tactics de
Certeau’s work also appears to imply a certain singularity to the everyday practices he
describes – perhaps the result of the fine line he is walking between a solid definition of
everyday practice and his acknowledgement (above) of the ‘unlimited diversity’ of
practices. This singularity becomes apparent in his analogy of walking with speech
exemplified in the fact that language itself is never singular. Certainly, de Certeau is
aware of this and he in fact makes use of it to suggest that spatial practices, like
linguistic forms will vary between city users. However, the implication that he makes
about this kind of difference appears to suggest something akin to different accents,
styless or forms of linguistic use rather than the significantly larger difference that exists
between completely different languages – like Korean and English for example. We
might assume that individuals who have not learnt the language (literal or metaphorical)
of a particular city might find the ‘alphabet of spatial indication’ (1984: 115) that is
expressed in urban form strange, confusing or even impenetrable. de Certeau’s non-
recognition of this kind of difference becomes particularly apparent in the concluding
section of ‘Walking in the City’ where he discusses childhood and the metaphor of
places. Here he suggests that it is ‘childhood experience that determines spatial
practices later’ (1984: 110). If this is so then it might be fair to ask: what are the spatial
practices of individuals whose childhood experience is of quite different urban form,
that has been produced through interactions between different types of built
environment and different types of spatial practices? To this question, de Certeau’s
work seems to offer no answer.
Walking in Different Cities

There are other urban theorists concerned with everyday practice who do offer slightly more than de Certeau in terms of differences between cities. Walter Benjamin, for example, illustrates considerable awareness of the issue of difference in urban form. Indeed, his essay on Moscow is particularly attentive to the fact that the city may appear different to ‘the newcomer’: ‘the city turns into a labyrinth for the newcomer… The whole exciting sequence of topographical dummies that deceives him [sic] could only be shown by a film: the city is on its guard against him [sic], masks itself, flees, intrigues, lures him [sic] to wander its circles to the point of exhaustion’ (Benjamin 1979: 179). Moreover, Benjamin’s vision of urban life as ‘innumerable, simultaneously animated theatres’ (cited in Caygill 1998: 178) suggests space for innumerable difference in the production of the various dramatic events of city life. Yet, despite these implications in Benjamin’s work, he does not provide any way of understanding how difference might be involved in producing a different sort of city.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Roland Barthes (1987) also have propositions for how urban form might be different in different places although both are much more concerned with structural issues than de Certeau. Lefebvre, for example, quotes at length the words of a hypothetical Japanese philosopher to suggest that urban form in ‘Asian’ cities illustrates quite different characteristics (resulting from quite different everyday practices) than what is found in western cities. In particular he identifies that the ordering of space in Asian cities is not concerned primarily with the need to create a rational abstract modelling of space (like a map) that can be read in isolation from the experience of space itself. Instead, the ordering of space in Asian cities is articulated as inseparable ‘from its form, its genesis from its actuality, the abstract from the concrete, or nature from society’ (Lefebvre 1991: 154). Barthes (1987) echoes this point in his description of the street addressing system in Tokyo. He suggests that instead of being based upon a rationalised, sequential addressing system Tokyo’s spatial layout is reliant on experience and memory, encounters with material space of the city, and interaction with other inhabitants. These propositions, although characterised by a kind of essentialism that belies the point I am trying to make, are suggestive of the kind of difference in the language of spatial practices that has not been discussed in de Certeau’s work. Indeed, de Certeau speaks explicitly of the naming of streets as a crucial part of the built environment in a manner that suggests it applies to all cities.
whereas it more likely applies only to western metropolises. His suggestion is that the naming of streets ‘make[s] sense’ of the spaces of a city – ‘proper names carve out pockets of hidden and familiar meanings’ (de Certeau 1984: 104). If we are to follow Lefebvre and Barthes the naming that de Certeau speaks about is in fact a quite culturally specific spatial practice.

**Walking Differently in the City**

These insights from Benjamin, Lefebvre and Barthes are useful for the ways in which they remind us that the ‘alphabet of spatial indication’ that concerns de Certeau will always be different in different cities. However, they are only suggestive of the difference between places, ignoring for the most part the fact that the kind of differences in spatial practices that they identify may actually take place within the same cities. In part the silence on this issue is a product of the time at which these authors were writing: Benjamin the early twentieth century, Barthes in the 1960s, and Lefebvre and de Certeau in the 1970s. The extent of the kind of migration and transnational practices that are the concern of this project were not as great a characteristic of these times as they are now. Given this, how might we open up de Certeau’s very productive understanding of spatial practices so that it is more attentive to different languages of everyday practice? The suggestion I want to make here is that the broad guiding concept of uprootings/regroundings proposed by Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier and Mimi Sheller (2003) offers a useful starting point.

The collection *Uprootings/Regroundings: questions of home and migration* (Ahmed et al. 2003) is one recent example of approaches to transnationalism that offer a more contingent vision of the experiences and practices of migration. In particular, this volume addresses questions of home and migration – not as mutually exclusive issues but as concepts that become meaningful only when considered simultaneously. This is an important intervention, not least because the emphasis in much of the early scholarship on transnationalism has concerned movement and fluidity at the expense of stasis and belonging (see Chapter Three). This volume challenges this bias by arguing that mobility and belonging are fundamentally interdependent issues – movement is not simply leaving home and neither is home something that is left behind in movement.
According to the editors of this collection the concept ‘Uprootings/Regroundings’ is concerned with the ways in which different bodies and communities inhabit and move across familial, national and diasporic locations’ (Ahmed et al. 2003: 1, emphasis in original). As a guiding concept it seeks to destabilise the assumption that grounded-ness is necessarily connected to being fixed and consequently that mobility is always characterised by detachment. In place of this binary opposition between grounded and mobile, home and away the authors suggest that greater focus is due to the practices involved in the always intertwined experiences of migrating and homing. Such an approach should be characterised by questions about ‘how uprootings and regroundings [which are both simultaneously about migrating and homing] are enacted – affectively, materially and symbolically – in relation to one another’ (Ahmed et al. 2003: 2). This, then, is an approach that like de Certeau’s relies on an understanding of the world as enunciated by the actions of individuals. At the same time it is also attentive to the fact that the process of uprooting and regrounding homes is dissimilarly enabled and disenabled by ‘immigration laws, border police, socio-economic inequalities and prejudice (racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and so on)’ (Ahmed et al. 2003: 5).

Central to the notion of uprootings/regroundings is the idea that ‘homing desires’ (Brah 1996), the desire to make oneself feel at home, is not only the effect of migration but is indeed a fundamental aspect of everyday life. The authors describe the practices of homing in the following manner:

Making home is about the (re)creation of what Eva Hoffman would call ‘soils of significance’ (1989: 278), in which the affective qualities of home, and the work of memory in their making cannot be divorced from the more concrete materialities of rooms, objects, rituals, borders and forms of transport that are bound up in so many processes of uprooting and regrounding. Homing, then, depends on the reclaiming and reprocessing of habits, objects, names and histories that have been uprooted – in migration, displacement or colonization (Ahmed et al. 2003: 9, emphasis added).

It is here that the potential link with de Certeau emerges. He too is concerned with the ‘reclaiming and reprocessing of habits, objects, names and histories’ when he refers to walking as a speech act; making objects exist as well as emerge; the importance of names in cities; and the role of memory in conceptions of place. Indeed, these are the very everyday spatial practices that de Certeau reckons to be the enunciation of space. The difference with de Certeau (apart from the fact that uprootings/regroundings is not explicitly about cities) is that the habits, objects, names and histories that are involved
in everyday spatial practices in many contemporary cities are often not simply about what is ‘here’. Yet, neither are they simply about ‘there’. Rather, the *reclaiming* and *reprocessing* here and now through reference to another time and space (there and then) means that such practices are always at the borders between here and there, home and away. This point is illustrated with reference to Ghassan Hage: ‘Inherent to the project of home-building *here and now*, is the gathering of “intimations” of home, “fragments which are *imagined* to be traces of an equally imagined homely whole, the imagined past “home” of another time and another space”(Hage 1997: 106)’ (Ahmed et al. 2003: 9).

Drawing on this relational concept of uprootings/regroundings offers a useful corrective to de Certeau for two reasons. Firstly, it illustrates that the city can no longer be conceived, as it is in de Certeau (and Benjamin, Lefebvre and Barthes), as simply the product of localised flows. Amin and Thrift (2002) have made this point quite explicitly in relation to the influence of global social, economic and political networks. However, as the work of scholars in *Uprootings/Regroundings* illustrates, there is much more to the global/transnational connectivity of cities than simply these official channels. Attention is also due to everyday spatial practices of individuals who may not possess some of the names, memories and histories of the city they inhabit and may equally be drawing on names, memories and histories of other places in their negotiation of the urban environment. In a second corrective, uprootings/regroundings also remind us that everyday practices, and in particular everyday practices of individual migrants cannot be taken simply as resistant to the existing orderings of space. Certainly, it is crucial to acknowledge that the different sorts of everyday spatial practices that migrants engage in have considerable effect on the spaces that they inhabit as the gap between here and there is bridged in the ‘reclaiming and reprocessing of habits, objects, names and histories’. However, such practices may also be part of the construction of different sorts of orderings over space. An explication on some of the possibilities of uprootings/regroundings emphasises that these practices ‘may be a labour of love, or hatred; it may involve conservative nationalist desires or claims to homelands as historical reparation; it may be haunted by fear or loss or filled with hope for different, more peaceful and equitable futures’ (Ahmed et al. 2003: 10). In other words, the everyday spatial practices of migrants, like any other inhabitants of cities, have the potential to be both resistant to and creative of the disciplining of urban space.
This focus on the everyday spatial practices of uprooting and regrounding is central to my aim of illustrating how individual South Korean international students negotiate and enunciate the urban environment in Auckland. It seeks to combine de Certeau’s understanding of how urban space is brought to life by those individuals who inhabit it with Ahmed et al.’s discussions of uprootings/regroundings in migration, or, in this case, temporary migration for educational purposes. Together these ideas point to the way that bodies and behaviours that are conceived as ‘other’ might disrupt the normative order of urban space while also recreating new orders in urban space. Although this has particular purchase in this chapter where I draw out some detail on individual stories it also has strong resonance in the chapters that follow on the practices of culinary consumption, communication, voluntarism and returning home. All of these discussions are located at the level of everyday practice in the urban environment and concerned with exactly these issues of uprooting and regrounding.

**Individual Stories, Itineraries and Maps**

The different accounts discussed below are an attempt to elicit a picture of a small number of students’ everyday journeys. Of course, it goes without saying that these representations are merely flawed transcriptions of the sort of walking and other spatial practices that de Certeau is trying to get us to think about. They are only traces of the actual pathways, movements, gestures, names and memories that they seek to illustrate – like words on a page, they are not the act of writing itself but rather ‘the absence of what has passed by’ (de Certeau 1984: 97). Nevertheless these accounts do offer a useful insight into that which has passed by, the everyday urban encounters of a few South Korean international students.

It is not possible to illustrate the individual accounts of all the students who took part in this part of the research. Partly this is because there is not sufficient space in this chapter. Perhaps more importantly however this is because presentation of all 11 accounts would avert attention from the individuality of each one. In these individual accounts there is, unsurprisingly, much overlap (many students encounter similar experiences), and the repetition of the form of presentation 11 times would certainly distract from what is most important here – the individual accounts of students.
From the 11 accounts created in this part of the research four have been selected based upon gender and length of time in Auckland (for the maps that have not been used here see Appendix G). These include one diary and map completed (together) by three female students who stayed less than 12 months, one male student who stayed less than 12 months and one female and one male student who stayed in Auckland longer than 12 months. The rationale for selecting students who had stayed in Auckland for different periods of time reflects the different influence that length of stay is thought to have on the experiences of migrants (Bond 2006; Guarnizo et al. 2003) as well as the fact that this distinction allowed for the different experiences of English language, PTE (Private Tertiary Establishment) and public tertiary students to be included. Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1 illustrate the selection matrix and student details (the selected students are circled and in bold):

![Selection Matrix of Students Involved in Diary and Mapping Exercises](image)

**Table 7.1: Details of Students Involved in Diary and Mapping Exercises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student(s) details</th>
<th>Student(s) details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Joanne, LS, Busan, 25</td>
<td>G Paul, LS, Jeolla-do, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Diana, LS, Seoul, 22; Min-Hee, LS, Daegu, 23; Min-Jeong, LS, Seoul, 22</td>
<td>H Sang-Hee, TS, Seoul, 22; Min-Gyeong, TS, Gwangju, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Ha-Na, LS, Seoul, 26</td>
<td>I Su-Mi, TS, Seoul, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Jin-Yeong, LS, Busan, 26</td>
<td>J Won-Sik, PTE, Jeju-do, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Dong-Su, LS, Seoul, 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.1: Selection Matrix of Students Involved in Diary and Mapping Exercises
Jang-Ho

12:00 – I’m usually sleeping until 12 o’clock. Listening radio for half an hour – it’s good for English. 1:00 – Breakfast. 2:00 – Reading newspaper. 3:00 – Take a shower. Talk to my flatmates. 4:00 – Study text book until half past 4. 6:00 – Lunchtime. 7:00 – I work at a small dairy shop 7pm to 11pm except for Thursday and Saturday. 12:00 – I come back home at 12 o’clock from work. Dinner and use computer until 3 – 4 o’clock, or watch TV, or talk to my flatmates.

Jang-Ho, LS, Gwangju, 24

Jang-Ho came to Auckland when he was 24 years old. In South Korea he lives in Gwangju, the industrial urban centre of Jollamnam-do, which lies in the south-western corner of the Korean peninsula (see Appendix F). He had done his military service in South Korea and had studied at university for three years and had one year remaining to complete his bachelor’s degree in engineering. Jang-Ho decided to study English overseas because he had heard that it was impossible to get a good job in South Korea if you didn’t get a good score in the TOIEC¹ test. His main reason for coming to New Zealand was the low-cost of the education here – he came to Auckland because the yuhakgweon (agency) he went through recommended Auckland as the biggest city.

Jang-Ho was initially surprised by the people he encountered in Auckland – ‘when I got off the plane I think, I thought it’s the same as Korea because I think there are too many Asians’. Later, however, he saw this observation in a more positive light – ‘there are many culture like India, just for example on Queen Street when I went to like my school I saw the many Indian restaurant or Mexican or Korean or Japan or Chinese, you feel the culture’. These experiences in Auckland challenged Jang-Ho’s pre-arrival perceptions of Auckland and New Zealand, a place that had been represented in promotional material as a country peopled by Europeans with only token, exoticised references to Maori.

Like many South Korean international students Jang-Ho began his sojourn by staying in a homestay with a ‘Kiwi family’. He found this experience very difficult, not least because of differences in the physical feeling in the house and in particular it’s heating:

When I went to New Zealand, Korea was summer and I feel, I felt cold and the style of house is quite different… very thin and made of wood or something yeah, even glass, too cold… I don’t have any heating equipment, homestay just uh,

¹ Test of English for International Communication.
homestay they didn’t give me the heating equipment they just give the blanket or something.\(^2\)

Along with these heating problems Jang-Ho also found the food that the family ate difficult to stomach – ‘it has no flavour and so heavy’. After one month he decided to leave the homestay and live with some friends he had made at the language school he was attending. He moved into an apartment with eight other South Korean students and one Japanese student. Although Jang-Ho had his own single room most of his flatmates were sharing with one or two others. A few months later, he moved again to live in a studio with one Korean friend from his language school.

At the time that I met Jang-Ho he had stopped attending his language school because he didn’t feel like he was making any progress due to the number of South Korean students at the school. As the diary entry above notes, Sun-Jong’s everyday life oscillated around two poles – work and home. He worked for a small grocery store owned by a Korean-New Zealander. Although he was legally allowed to work (he was on a working holiday visa), Jang-Ho was, like most students who work, paid ‘under the table’ and well below the legal minimum wage.

\(^2\) In contemporary South Korea almost all houses have an \textit{ondol}, or under-floor heating system. ‘\textit{Ondol}, also known as \textit{gudeul}, is an innovative Korean heating system that integrates a building’s floor and heating structures’ (Joo 2004: 70). Traditionally \textit{ondol} piped heat from a kitchen furnace through pipes under the floor of houses. In contemporary South Korea heated water is piped under the floor of all types of residences from tenement housing to apartment complexes. This heating system makes it possible to keep the Korean house efficiently warm throughout the sometimes bitterly cold winters (Joo 2004).
Figure 7.3: Map Drawing, Jang-Ho
Jang-Ho’s map reveals his sense of isolation in his everyday life in Auckland. In particular, when matched with his diary entry, we can see that Jang-Ho’s life primarily took place at home and at work. Indeed, the minimalist approach to drawing this map (in stark contrast to many of the other drawings) seems to highlight a sense of unease about the pathways that run between these places (see Figure 7.3). In the map we can also see that locations like the church and AUT (Auckland University of Technology) library seem to offer places where he feels safe, either to interact with other people (at the church) or to quietly be present (at the library). Key locations for purchasing food that he is familiar with are also an important characteristic of the map. Sun-Jong’s only comment that relates to the street further emphasises that he wishes to get between places as quickly as possible and that what he encounters in the urban landscape is often quite striking. ‘Walking this way it’s faster than otherways. When I go back to house I see Drag queen in front of church it’s such a totally opposite image’.

This sense of isolation was further exemplified in Sun-Jong’s weekly diary. He recorded very little, informing me that none of the things he did were important. The entries regularly included responses like: ‘nothing special’; ‘just stayed at home’; ‘alone’; ‘everyday is the same as usual’; ‘in my room’. Some entries in his diary mentioned conversations with flatmates: ‘Did you like it? Yes. Why? We talked to each other’. One entry mentioned a trip to see Auckland’s annual Santa Parade which he described as ‘Interesting. There were many people and event’.
Jang-Ho clearly had difficulty adjusting to his life in Auckland, both in terms of the differences between this city and Gwangju and in terms of the disconnect he felt from people around him. This sense of isolation or loss appears to have had a significant impact on his use of the urban spaces that he inhabits. In interviews and in the map and diaries he implied quite strongly that he felt uncomfortable or even out of place in the different urban environments he encountered in Auckland. This is not, of course, uncommon but what seems to have made a difference in this case is Jang-Ho’s lack of friendship networks that would help him deal with these issues. Jang-Ho came to Auckland with the intention of spending a full year studying English, working and travelling but in the end he departed after seven months. Jang-Ho sent me this email after he returned to South Korea:

```
hi !!how are u doing?..it's me ~ Jang-Ho !! .. now i'm in korea ~ i decided to go back to korea. i arrived in korea in 1 / 27 it's too cold in korea about below over 10 degree ~ ! when i was in there, i thought nz was quite boring place. ironically i'm missing nz in here~ sometimes i'll send e-mail ~ see u ~!!
```

Email from Jang-Ho after returning to South Korea

**Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong**

7:30 – Wake up and eat breakfast. 8:30 – Attend class. 12:00 – Eat lunch at the school café. 1:30 – Go back to class. 3:00 – School finishes. 4:00 – We sometimes go to St Lukes, City, Pak’n’Save with friends. Sometimes play at dormitory – it’s good to play board games with friends. 6:00 – Eating dinner. Sometimes at dormitory, sometimes at Korean restaurant. 8:00 – We hate doing homework >^<. 9:00 – Playing. 12:00 – Go to sleep.

Diana, LS, Seoul, 22 – Min-Hee, LS, Daegu, 23 – Min-Jeong, LS, Seoul, 22

Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong studied English together at a private tertiary provider in the Auckland suburb of Mount Albert. All three came to Auckland between three and five months prior to my meeting with them. They did not know each other before coming to Auckland. They each planned and eventually stayed twelve months in New Zealand, primarily studying in Auckland but also travelling around other parts of New Zealand. Diana and Min-Jeong live in Seoul and Min-Hee lives in Daegu, the third largest urban centre in South Korea. In Auckland, Diana and Min-Hee lived in a private dormitory affiliated with the institute they studied at. Min-Jeong lived in a nearby flat with classmates.
Chapter Seven: Individual Pathways in Auckland

What marks the experiences of these students from those of many of the other participants in this research is that they were studying outside of the inner city of Auckland. Mt Albert, the part of Auckland where their institute is located, could be described as a middling suburb (c.f. Friesen et al. 2005) that lies approximately eight kilometres to the west of the central city. It is, like many suburbs in the central-western areas of Auckland, characterised by a large stock of middle-class family homes with relatively large property sizes. Even more than the inner city this part of Auckland differs starkly from the urban experiences of cities like Seoul or Daegu where the built environment is characterised almost exclusively by medium and high-density residential apartments and office blocks (Gelezeau 1997; Kim & Choe 1997; W. B. Kim 1997).

Initially these environmental differences were a pleasant change. Min-Jeong for example noted that ‘In Korea… uh… environment is very… Firstly environment, that’s very better than Korea. When I arrived here for the first time I said “oh very good stuff”, admired, admired about things in the landscape’. Indeed, all three students noted that in addition to New Zealand being recommended by friends that the environment was a major factor in their decision to study here. Min-Hee in particular stated that ‘I like green place. I like plants. I don’t like some cities are very noisy. Here I can live quietly, I can go to mountain and relax’.

Figure 7.5: Photos, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong (1)
Figure 7.6: Map Drawing, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong
At the same time that the students enjoyed the environmental differences between Auckland and Seoul/Daegu they also expressed a certain unease with these differences. This much was apparent in their choice to come to Auckland, New Zealand’s biggest city as opposed to other parts of the country: ‘Auckland is biggest city in New Zealand, because biggest city is better I think’. Moreover, Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong at times found the apparent serenity of Mount Albert suburban life quite estranging: ‘Seoul has more activities and more crowded and noisy atmosphere. Actually we want study English so we came here but sometimes we want to play at night but we can’t; ‘Many stores [around Mount Albert] close time is very fast’; ‘There are no trains at night, not after eight o’clock and the bus station is two times the train station walking… At night it was very far from here, and we are girl’; ‘When we walk around here [Mount Albert] we feel afraid’.

The distinction made between the suburban environment where Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong live and study, and the (more) urban environment of the inner-city is made quite clear in their map drawing (see figure 7.6). Here the students chose to draw a map that was divided between areas around Mount Albert and the inner city area. The area around Mount Albert is shown to be large with long walking distances and not many familiar things in it whereas the inner city is drawn as a much more dense area with numerous places and associated
activities including eating, shopping, meeting friends and going to *Noraebang* (singing rooms). Curiously, considering their statement that they felt unsafe only around their school, there was reference to encounters with racism in both the Mount Albert and the inner city part of the map: in Mount Albert ‘we were walking near St Lukes [a shopping mall], some Kiwi throw mud at us’; and ‘in downtown one of man block the Asian people… walking and the walking and the Asian people he wants they can’t go forward’.

In the diary, which was written primarily by Diana, this preference for the urban over the suburban, the more familiar over the less familiar is again apparent. When speaking about activities where she was able to leave the suburban environment Diana recalls that ‘at that time my feeling was great’, ‘it was very funny time’, ‘it was very good time’. In contrast her thoughts on spending time going to shops in Mount Albert were ‘I don’t mind’ and climbing Mount Albert itself was merely ‘a good experience for us’. Her final entry on the Sunday made this preference most apparent: all three students went with some friends to the inner-city and saw an Indian festival and then went to a Korean restaurant for lunch. ‘We saw many Indian and unique food which came from India. It was very crowded and looked interesting. After we had a lunch which is Korean traditional food… it has been a long time since I ate the Korean food so I really like it’.

What the experiences of Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong illustrate is the different understandings of space that South Korean international students bring with them to their
temporary lives in Auckland. Auckland, particularly outside the inner city, is an urban environment that is starkly different from the urban environments of South Korea. It is characterised by considerable open space, large property sizes and relatively sparse opportunities for social encounters. These three students found this difference both interesting and challenging. It was interesting because it fulfilled some of their perceptions about what Auckland and New Zealand was and should be like. However, at the same time the apparent serenity and peacefulness of life in suburban Auckland was in fact not always as comforting as the students initially thought it would be. In particular they quite regularly longed for the kind of activities that they were familiar with. To engage in these activities they had to leave the suburban and go to the urban inner city, which presented at least a more familiar kind of environment than the area they were living. These thoughts were summed up quite appropriately during the map drawing exercise by Min-Hee when she said that ‘Auckland is not like city. Not like Korea’ – the fact that it is not like Korea appears to be both positive and negative in this case.

**Won-Sik**

7:00 – I wake up at 7:00AM, have a morning coffee and breakfast, then take a shower. 8:00 – I watch morning news on TV1, then I go to school. 9:00 – 1st Class. 11:00 – I have a break for 15 minutes, then 2nd Class. 1:00 – I have a lunch at the café is located on Wyndham Street. 2:00 – 3rd Class. 4:00 – I used to go to shopping (usually cloth shop). 5:00 – I take a shower and prepare dinner. 6:00 – After dinner, I watch TV. 8:00 – I do web surfing and chatting on MSN messenger. 10:00 – At this time period, I study or do my homework. 12:00 – I go to sleep. c.f.) It’s applied only for normal day like weekdays. Sometimes, I go to night club or bar on weekdays.

Won-Sik, PTE, Jeju-do, 24

Won-Sik first came to Auckland and New Zealand when he was 19 years old to travel as a backpacker for two months. It was during this time that he decided that Auckland would be a good place to study. When he returned to Auckland in 2004 he studied for a diploma in business at a private training establishment in the inner city. Although Won-Sik was born in Seoul and had lived in Seoul prior to coming to Auckland he had spent the majority of his life in Jeju City, the provincial capital of Jeju-do, a small island lying slightly south-west of the Korean peninsula (see Appendix G). Unlike many other students, Won-Sik did not find Auckland that unfamiliar. In fact, he commented to me on a number of occasions that he thought Auckland was very similar to Jeju City both in
initially, won-sik had stayed in a homestay but had decided it was too far from the inner-city and that the family were not interested in communicating with him. as a result he moved into an apartment in the inner city with some other korean students that he had found through an advertisement on the new zealand iyagi website (see chapter nine). however, as the korean students moved out of the apartment won-sik decided not to advertise on new zealand iyagi and instead tried to find flatmates through advertising in english, at language schools in the inner-city. by the time i met won-sik he had lived with japanese, chinese and french flatmates. at the same time won-sik also often emphasised that he was in auckland to learn english and so he was always seeking out experiences with ‘foreigners’. in his entry for friday, for example, won-sik ‘cooked some chinese food and i invited some of my friends. we had a small party at home… i had a very nice time with them. i always like to have a party. especially with foreigners’. moreover, on his map a reference to a favourite night-club is also insightful: ‘margarita – it was my best night club last year. but now more than 90% of customers are asian and especially chinese’.

in addition to activities intentionally with ‘foreigners’ won-sik also identified that he regularly engaged in other, different activities intentionally with ‘koreans’. one of these activities is a korean inline skate club that won-sik was involved in establishing through the new zealand iyagi website. this group meet at least once a week to go inline skating and then have a meal together either outdoors, at a members’ apartment or in a korean restaurant/bar. in his entry for saturday won-sik recalled that ‘i skated for the whole afternoon with my club members. after that, we had a korean bbq party… inline skating is a part of my life. in addition, i like to being with my korean friends’. similarly, won-sik regularly meets other korean students for soccer matches (also established through new zealand iyagi) on most sunday afternoons (although not in the week of his diary). the map drawing indicates the location of both of these activities. it also illustrates important knowledge about where to access korean goods and services that suit won-sik’s tastes: sansugapsan, bobos, e-mart and say hair 2 (see figure 7.9).
Figure 7.9: Map Drawing, Won-Sik
Won-Sik’s efforts to engage with those he considers ‘foreigners’ are not insignificant. In general, research in New Zealand (Butcher 2003; Ward & Masgoret 2004) and Australia (Matthews & Sidhu 2005) has found that most international students live with and socialise primarily, if not exclusively with co-nationals. In this research also most students lived with and socialised primarily with other South Korean international students and when they didn’t cross-cultural connections were more likely to be with students from Japan and China rather than with individuals of less familiar nationalities (like Won-Sik’s French flatmate). In this context Won-Sik’s experiences are a useful example of how international education might live up to its often hailed cosmopolitan potential (Matthews & Sidhu 2005). Interestingly, however, Won-Sik tended to enact the different relationships in his life in mutually exclusive ways – either with ‘foreigners’ or with ‘Koreans’. This might suggest that part of the difficulty with cross-cultural encounters of this kind is the engagement between groups, as opposed to individuals, where culture becomes the defining factor of difference and hence distance.
Su-Mi

8:00 – Wake up and have breakfast. 9:00 – Go to university. 10:00 – 4:00 – Classes, meeting friends, lunch and study. 6:00 – My sister usually cooks dinner for me so I go home and then go back to uni later if I want. 7:00 – Sometimes there are AKSA meetings, especially if there is an event coming up. 9:00 – Usually I just go home and watch TV or Korean videos with my sister, sometimes I go out with friends. 11:00 – Sleeping.

Su-Mi, TS, Seoul, 22

Su-Mi came to Auckland with her younger sister when she was 17 years old to study the final two years of secondary school as preparation for entering the University of Auckland. She has now been living and studying in Auckland for five years although she returns to stay with her parents during the New Zealand summer. The decision to come to Auckland was made primarily by her father – (as noted in Chapter Five) he had ‘heard that New Zealand was good, it was good English and one of his friend’s sons was studying in Auckland. So he heard that and he asked me to study English in New Zealand and at that time it was cheaper than any other country for exchange money. I heard that it’s safe and that’s about everything’.

When she arrived, Su-Mi attended a secondary school in west Auckland. In line with rules at her school for international students she stayed in a homestay in a nearby suburb. In her first year of university she continued staying with a homestay family in west Auckland while her sister completed the last year of secondary school. At the time Su-Mi ‘wanted to leave [the homestay]’. However, she stayed on for another year to remain with her sister: ‘I stayed one more year with a homestay family because my sister was still going to college and I want to… she wanted to stay with me so I stayed at the homestay’. Now Su-Mi lives with her sister in a one bedroom apartment located very near to the university campus. She is in her third year of a bachelor’s degree at the University of Auckland with a major in management and marketing.
Figure 7.12: Map Drawing, Su-Mi
At university Su-Mi has been active in the Auckland Korean Students Association (AKSA) and in 2005 she was one of the executive members. AKSA is the main Korean club at the University of Auckland. It had approximately 800 members in 2005, most of whom are Korean-New Zealand citizens and permanent residents rather than international students. Su-Mi was in charge of marketing some of the big events that AKSA organises including dance parties, first-year orientation days and cultural events. In addition Su-Mi is one of the hosts on an access radio show called ‘Happy Hour’ presented by a group of Korean students every Thursday evening. When she first moved into the apartment she worked part-time, three days a week at a Japanese style restaurant owned by a Korean-New Zealander. In 2005 she decided to stop working to focus more on her studies.

While drawing her map Su-Mi emphasised that she spent most of her time either at home, at university, or doing things associated with AKSA or church (see Figure 7.12). Indeed, in regards to home she indicated that she spent a lot of spare time just relaxing or studying at home with her sister. She also stressed that they rarely ate out at restaurants: ‘I usually go home for dinner’; ‘My sister cooks ramyeon [Korean noodles], bap [rice], kimchi jjiggae [kimchi stew]’, and ‘I’m not used to going to Korean restaurants because we cook lots of Korean food at home’.

Figure 7.13: Photos, Su-Mi (2)
University was the other central place on Su-Mi’s map. Besides her daily attendance at classes she also indicated that she spent other time at university as well. On the map she wrote: ‘often study after classes’, ‘use the internet here’, ‘lots of AKSA meetings until 11pm’. On Saturday she also often goes to university: ‘I usually come to uni on the weekend as well, a lot of fun in here… not really!! I don’t have a telephone line at home so I can’t play on the net so I usually come to uni to read a book or study’.

Most of Su-Mi’s other activities are also connected in some way with her home and university life. Her regular Thursday radio show is ‘one of the highlights of [her] week’. She got involved in the radio show through AKSA: ‘It’s on Thursday nights. My friends are interested in doing radio. I was also interested in joining. It started last December but I was away [in South Korea] so I joined this year’. On Sundays she usually attends a church in the Auckland suburb of Takapuna with her sister. Again she found out about this church through university friends: ‘I went to church with my sister. We were picked up by a member of the church and they took us there’.

It is clear that Su-Mi has a much more settled lifestyle in Auckland than some of the other individuals discussed in this chapter. In large part this seems to be the result of the length of her stay in Auckland and the presence of her sister here. After five years in Auckland, attendance at a high-school and university and involvement in different organisations Su-Mi clearly feels more ‘at home’, or at least more comfortable in her daily life than
students who stay for a shorter period of time. Indeed, the word used by Su-Mi to describe her living arrangements was ‘home’ and her discussions of these arrangements suggest that Su-Mi and her sister have been active in home-making practices. It also seems that the length of time she has spent with friends at secondary school and university and the depth of these relationships has helped her to feel more settled. In contrast, students who come for brief experiences of English language programs (like Jang-Ho) may not have this kind of contact as classmates, roommates and friends continuously circulate in and out of their lives in a manner that appears to be quite disconcerting. Their’s is perhaps an experience that is more unstable where Su-Mi is always likely to have much more attachment to people and things that are here in Auckland.

**Ways of Walking in Auckland**

*What do the accounts produced through these itineraries, diaries and maps suggest about the practices and experiences of the individuals involved? What do they suggest about the practices and experiences of South Korean international students in general?* These are not easy questions to answer. While it is clear that the accounts allude to particular ways of walking and acting in Auckland they also elude any conclusion about what this all might mean. Indeed, from one perspective the accounts already speak for themselves in ways that are far more illustrative than any analysis could offer. These accounts are, by their nature, also bound up in the constitution and presentation of self (Goffman 1969; Latham 1999; 2003a). As such they are characterised by literally countless absences and silences – they are partial in a manner that is utterly belied by their coherent presentation above. They are also tied to the conditions of their production, the places where they were made, the relationships maintained between researcher and participant and the joint selection process that was carried out. There is, then, much that remains unwritten here.

Yet, despite all that we cannot know about these accounts, it is possible to identify certain traces of practice. We can see for example that each student has, during their time in Auckland, created spaces that are familiar, spaces that are known because they are the location of particular sorts of practices. Moreover, it is possible to identify certain similarities in each of these accounts as well as in the data collected but not presented here (Appendix G). This is particularly apparent in the importance of
Auckland’s inner city in the lives of all students (even students, like Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong who do not live or study in this area). In the final part of this chapter I am going to dwell on a few of the differences and similarities in these accounts. I do this with great caution and an understanding that there is only so much that can be ‘known’ through an analysis of the traces that exist here. The traces of practice in these accounts are indeed only suggestive and not conclusive of the kind of differences and similarities that exist in student experiences in Auckland.

**Differences in Practice and Experience**

There are considerable differences between the accounts of these four students. At one level, for example, we might note that, as in previous chapters, there are notable differences in the everyday lives of language students, PTE students and tertiary students. This contrast is greatest when we consider the different trajectories of Jang-Ho and Su-Mi. Jang-Ho found life in Auckland very difficult. In particular it appears that he was unable to bring the spaces that he inhabited under any control (c.f. Douglas 1991) and as such never really felt at home in Auckland. In stark contrast, Su-Mi established a range of different spaces where she was able to reclaim and reprocess habits and memories in productive ways: home, university, the radio show and church. Such places constituted the Auckland that she knew, the everyday life that she enacted. Indeed, Su-Mi has now completed her studies at university and is working in Auckland. Further, in a point that highlights the blurred line between some international students and migrants (see Chapter Five), she is considering making Auckland a more permanent home. Time then, is a significant factor in the sort of experiences that individuals have and the kinds of practices that they engage in. The length of time that both Won-Sik and Su-Mi had spent in Auckland, for instance, is illustrated in the ‘regularity’ of particular activities that they engage in: roller-blade and soccer clubs, the radio show, church, AKSA. In contrast the experiences and practices of Jang-Ho and Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong appear to be much more fleeting, more like those of a long-stay tourist than of migrants seeking to establish long(er)-term lives in the city.

Beyond these differences between different types of students, however, it is also possible to note differences within categories – between Jang-Ho on the one hand and Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong on the other. Unlike Jang-Ho, the latter students established important interpersonal-networks amongst themselves in Auckland. These
networks did not exist prior to coming to Auckland but were rather established through encounters in place, namely the language school they attended. This is something that Jang-Ho found difficult to do, perhaps partly by virtue of his own personality and perhaps because of the spaces that he engaged in, or didn’t engage in (note again that he changed his place of residence regularly and eventually stopped attending language school). Interpersonal-networks also appear to be crucial in both Won-Sik and Su-Mi’s accounts. I have already noted above that Su-Mi, for example, made much of the relationship with her sister and the ways in which this relationship has been used to create a personal home-like space in their place of residence. For Won-Sik too, interpersonal-networks appear to be important. When he wasn’t trying out new experiences with ‘foreigners’, his scheduled activities with ‘Korean friends’ contributed in important ways to his daily/weekly life in Auckland. These networks between individuals in sojourn are important. They allow individuals who share a sense of estrangement to negotiate urban spaces together. They also highlight the differences in individual student experience because these networks, although relevant to all students, have been enacted in different places, in different ways and have quite different outcomes in each individual’s life.

Like time and networks, prior experience (memories and histories) also contributes significantly to the everyday lives of individuals in cities. At the broadest level, the six individuals profiled in this project come from different places in South Korea, places that are likely to have affected their perceptions of Auckland in important ways. It was, for example, Jang-Ho, the student who came from the small (in Korean terms) industrial city of Gwangju that was most surprised by the diversity of individuals he encountered in Auckland. Indeed, he had commented previously to me that he had never seen individuals who were not ‘White’ or ‘Asian’ before coming to Auckland. The diversity of this city’s population clearly surprised him. For other students, like Won-Sik, this diversity was already a normal part of life. Not only did Won-Sik come from Jeju-do, one of the most popular tourist destinations in North-East Asia, but he had also already visited Auckland on a prior occasion. The different faces that he encountered in Auckland were, hence, not surprising and he actively sought to engage with those he perceived as ‘foreigners’. Memories and histories also appear significant in the experience of urban form. Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong made much of the differences between the cities of Daegu and Seoul, and Auckland. Their perception and
experience of Auckland was always guided by its relation to these cities so that they enjoyed the environmental opportunities here but also found the very slow pace of Auckland quite unfamiliar and disconcerting.

**Similarities in Practice and Experience**

There is also much that is shared, or that can be conceived as being shared, between the individuals involved in this exercise. Such similarities are not the product of the essential nature of South Koreans who travel to Auckland to study but rather the fact that the lives of these individuals are influenced by similar circumstances and certain shared cultural practices. One of the important circumstances that students must all face in Auckland is the ways in which they are perceived simply as an Asian student with no recognition of their difference as South Koreans, let alone as differently situated students or as differently positioned individuals. Although this issue is not addressed directly in the above accounts each of these students raised the spectre of racism in Auckland during interviews. They each recalled experiences of being marked as ‘Asian’ in public or private space in Auckland and the very negative emotions that this experience evoked. This is an important similarity in the experiences of individual students and one that has significant affect on student actions.

Each of these students also had to cope with the experience of encountering Auckland for the first time. This encounter is clearer in Jang-Ho and Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong’s accounts because it is much more recent. Nevertheless, the difficulties and pleasures of finding a way in Auckland is something that all the individuals experienced at some point. As part of this initial encounter and every encounter since, each of these individuals has gone through a process of learning about Auckland, or about the particular Auckland that they inhabit and know. Although the Auckland that each of these students comes to inhabit is quite different it also illustrates similarities. In particular, I have already noted the importance placed on the inner city by all students. There are practical reasons for this including the concentration of schools, education agencies and Korean focussed services (although we might question whether these facilities pre-date the presence and practices of students). However, this also reflects the general differences between urban life in Auckland and urban life in South Korea, differences that surpass the differences between individual cities in South Korea. South Korean international students, and these students are good examples, clearly feel more
comfortable in the inner city area of Auckland, the only part of Auckland that is characterised by a density and concentration of physical, social and economic aspects of the city that even slightly resembles the norms of urban form in South Korea.

The other important similarity in the experiences and practices illustrated in these accounts is the individuals’ engagement with ethno-nationality. On every map, including those that were not presented here, participants marked out places where they met Korean friends, ate Korean food, rented Korean dvds/videos, accessed Korean language materials on the internet, bought Korean products, found Korean-focussed services, and engaged in Korean associations (formal and informal). In each student’s diary account these engagements with Korean people, objects, habits and memories were significant. This should not be surprising. Indeed, it is commonly asserted in ethnographic accounts of migrants that the engagement with familiar practices, objects and places and people is an important part of the process of inhabitation (Choo 2004; Law 2001; Pratt 2004). These engagements are some examples of the ways that students can reclaim and reprocess elements of their everyday lives before they came to Auckland. In different ways they offer familiar sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches that brings a sense of home, or at least an idealised Korean home, here into lives in Auckland. Ethno-nationality is engaged with differently by different students however. Jang-Ho, for example, appeared to almost exclusively engage in Korean practices: he lived with Korean flatmates, worked in the business of a Korean-New Zealander and ate Korean food. Won-Sik and Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong, by comparison, also engage in ethno-national practices but do so in a manner that appears to be far more selective and based on satisfying particular desires for familiarity at particular times. Su-Mi also engages in these practices but again in a different way. For her, engagement with Korean objects, places and people appears to constitute a significant element of her everyday practice but it has not led to a sense of isolation or estrangement. This is, perhaps, because her engagements with things Korean is not simply connected to the transience of international student life: ‘buying’ Korean services and meeting similarly transient Korean friends. Instead, her engagement with ethno-nationality has some sense of fixity in Auckland, connected as it is with the Korean-New Zealanders that make up AKSA, the friends who do the radio show and the church she attends.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to shift the focus in this project from the general, aggregative and definite approach employed in previous chapters to one that is more particular, individual and always partial. In making this shift we are reminded that beyond the averages that can be measured and the shared circumstances that can be conceived there are always individual, everyday and uncertain actions involved. These actions often come together in ways that help develop general understanding of student experience. However, this does not mean that such actions are intentionally collective. Rather, they are rarely anything more than the everyday negotiation of urban space. This reiterates one of the most important points in de Certeau’s treatise. That those individual, everyday and uncertain practices like walking have the power to enunciate the very spaces they occur in. However, the different sorts of individual actions described here also reinforce the fact that there is no one subjective relationship to urban space. Indeed, in the contemporary world of increasing forms of transnational migration like international education the ways in which urban space is enunciated are both theoretically and practically unlimited.

The four accounts discussed in this chapter are examples of the incompleteness and uncertainty of urban life – the ways in which individuals make the city through their everyday practices. The accounts also illustrate quite adeptly the manner that individuals who come from other cities or towns, like those in South Korea, negotiate in dissimilar ways the differences between the urban spaces they ‘know’ and those they come to inhabit. In other words, these accounts are exemplary of the individuality of different experiences of uprootings/regroundings, of the splitting between the home/city that one imagines and the home/city that one comes to inhabit and the ways that individuals negotiate this experience.

The next two chapters continue this exploration of the processes of uprootings/regroundings in the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students. The focus of these chapters is at once more specific and more general than the focus presented here. In terms of specificity they focus on particular practices – culinary consumption and communication – and the ways in which these constitute elements of students’ transnational lives in Auckland. Contemporaneously, however, these chapters also move to a slightly more generalised focus on common
student experiences and practices. While making this shift, the individuality that constitutes what can deceivingly appear to be shared practices and experiences should be kept in mind.
Chapter Eight

OF KIMCHI AND COFFEE:

Familiarity and Culinary Consumption Choices

It is easiest to see how food choices reflect the eater’s identity when we focus on culinary conservatism. Humans cling tenaciously to familiar foods because they become associated with nearly every dimension of human social and cultural life...Food thus entwines intimately with much that makes a culture unique, binding taste and satiety to group loyalties. Eating habits both symbolize and mark the boundaries of cultures.

Donna Gabbacia, (1998: 8), We are What We Eat: ethnic food and the making of Americans

In this quote Donna Gabbacia highlights the central role that familiar foods play in everyday life and the creation and maintenance of group identities and affiliation. As an example, we might note, following David Bell and Gill Valentine (1997: 2), that ‘an American in Paris, eating at McDonald’s, is someone (whether self-consciously or not) who is connecting with “home”’. Conversely, the same practice in that same individual’s home city or town may appear to be just an engagement in normal everyday activity. Yet, in both situations the individual is enunciating ‘familiarity’ through food consumption. They are engaging with the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch of something that they ‘know’. Culinary consumption of this sort is of course not the only way that such familiarity is enacted. However, it is a particularly potent example because of the manner that food sustains everyday life both literally and metaphorically for individuals and the cultures of families, neighbourhoods, communities, cities, regions, nations and indeed the world.

A focus on culinary consumption also provides a useful route to understanding the transnational lives of South Korean international students and the ways that they negotiate culture and identity in sojourn. In this chapter I focus on certain aspects of students’ culinary consumption as a way to consider the production of familiar spaces and practices in Auckland. To this end I begin by discussing culinary consumption in the context of globalisation, the interplay between nationalism and globalism more
specifically in South Korean culinary worlds, and the role of consumption in transnational lives. In the main section of the chapter I discuss the culinary consumption choices of South Korean international students through a focus on three sites: Korean restaurants, students’ homes, and global franchises. In each of these sites the practices are part of students’ efforts to reprocess a set of familiar habits, objects, histories and memories in Auckland. The chapter concludes by illustrating the overlap between the local and the global in the production of familiarity and the interconnections between these practices and the transnational economies that facilitate them.

Globalisation and Food

Globalisation in its broadest sense refers to the increasing interconnectivity and interdependence of the world in political, social, cultural, economic, and environmental terms (Beck 2000). As a set of processes it encompasses different forms of increasing movement between different parts of world. One aspect of such movement, migrant transnationalism, was discussed at length in Chapter Three of this thesis as a means of locating this study within the increasing mobility of (certain) individuals and groups. More general academic accounts of globalisation have discussed in different ways the processes that lead to, and have implications for increasing global interconnectivity. Despite some notable exceptions (Held 2004; Hirst & Thompson 1999; Jackson 2004), these narratives generally fall into one of three somewhat problematic categories: those of a borderless world of ever increasing flows and networks (Bauman 2000; Castells 1996; Ohmae 1990); those that present a picture of conflict between the inevitable and dominant global and the resurgent local (Eade 1997b; Harvey 1989; Ritzer 1996); and those that identify hybrid and in-between cultural forms resulting from increased interconnectivity (Bhabha 1994). Each of these approaches has sustained criticism. While the narratives presented differ significantly it has often been argued that each relies upon somewhat idealised conceptions of what constitutes ‘global’ and ‘local’ and tend to be empirically ungrounded (Larner & Le Heron 2002; Smith 2000; Vertovec 1999).

Recently, many of the debates around globalisation have sought to overcome these limitations by moving away from the abstracted analyses typical of the above approaches towards a focus on the different material and symbolic lived experiences of contemporary society. One notable example of these new trajectories for understanding
global process has been focussed on that most essential but apparently rather banal object – food (Ashley, Hollows, Jones, & Taylor 2004; Freidberg 2003; Grigg 1995; Lupton 1996; Scapp & Seitz 1998). Indeed, much recent work under the auspices of globalisation has discovered that food, in either its consumption or production, serves as an excellent locus to analyse the experience of a globalising world (Le Heron & Hayward 2003). This work has included studies of the global production and distribution of food (Fine 2004); the transnational creation of symbolic meaning around food (Probyn 1998); and, of particular interest to this work, the consumption of food in different locales (Bell & Valentine 1997; Cook & Crang 1996; Freidberg 2003; Kearns & Barnett 2000).

The element of culinary culture that is of most importance in this chapter can be broadly described as ‘dietary globalisation’ (Cwiertka & Walraven 2002: 2). In particular I am concerned here with the movement of foods from one part of the world to another, either directly or via third countries, produced, marketed and sold through official economic channels or simply accompanying the individuals that physically cross borders. Ian Cook and Philip Crang (1996), through reference to Doreen Massey (1995), describe this process as ‘displacement’. This idea suggests that while food is physically consumed in local settings it is often materially and symbolically constituted by networks which are likely to extend well beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood, city or even nation that it is consumed in. David Bell and Gill Valentine (1997) have extended this description of displacement through their multi-scalar analysis of food consumption. Like Cook and Crang their work illustrates that, despite its seemingly banal physiological role, food implicates the consumer in a diverse range of networks that have local, national and global implications – something that Ulrich Beck (2002: 28, emphasis in original) has labelled ‘banal cosmopolitanism’:

[W]e must now, I believe, talk about banal cosmopolitanism, in which everyday nationalism is circumvented and undermined and we experience ourselves integrated into global processes and phenomena… Who can still feed himself [sic] locally or nationally? The product labels may still try to make us believe it, but from yoghurt, to meat and fruit, to say nothing of the globalized hotchpotch of sausage meat, as consumers we are irredeemably locked into globalized cycles of production and consumption.

Despite what Beck suggests here about the unavoidable globalisation of food however, culinary consumption continues to carry significant national and local symbolic efficacy.
Although there are likely to be multiple examples of this from numerous locales, South Korea’s experience offers a particularly indicative and relevant case.

**Culinary Nationalism and Globalism in South Korea**

In South Korea ‘dietary globalization’ has had significant effects on the everyday experience of culinary consumption. Indeed, despite considerable public discourse to the contrary, the style of the South Korean diet has changed immensely in the face of global influences and the country’s increasing inter-connections with other parts of the world. This much is apparent as early as the 18th century when the chilli, the crucial ingredient in so many contemporary dishes first entered the peninsula via trade routes from South America. White rice and meat, another two apparently timeless elements of the Korean diet, have also only come into common everyday usage in the last few decades alongside increases in average household incomes (Walraven 2002a). Despite the historical influence of foreign food-ways on the peninsula however, it is only in recent years that there has been a broad public recognition and reaction to the presence of non-Korean food. In large part this began as South Korea opened its borders to outside influences in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the arrival of visibly foreign food brands like McDonald’s (Bak 1997; 2004; 2005; Han 2005; Nelson 2000; Pemberton 2002). At times this increasingly visible connection to other parts of the world has been heralded by politicians, academics and others as the sign that South Korea was becoming a more globally successful nation (Park 1998). However counter-currents to such globalisation from within South Korea have also emerged to create highly nationalistic sentiments surrounding particular foods that are deemed uniquely Korean or to epitomise the Korean character. The phrase *Sintoburi* (body, earth, not two) best exemplifies these sentiments (Bak 1997; Nelson 2000; Pemberton 2002; Walraven 2002a).

*Sintoburi* originates as a Buddhist phrase that means that a person’s karma and their environment are inseparable. In more recent years the phrase has been employed by the South Korean government and foodstuff producers to build essentialised national identities and ideologies through companies and products that are seen as inherently Korean (Bak 1997; Nelson 2000; Pemberton 2002; Walraven 2002a). In this counter-current to global/foreign influences, *Sintoburi* is taken to literally mean that the ‘human body and the earth (physical environment) are so closely linked that a person should
only eat what is produced in his/her native land’ (Bak 2004: 35). In the Korean context, locally grown or produced products, particularly foodstuffs, are widely considered to be healthier for Koreans than imported products. However, because of the continued pervasive influence of foreign investment and food-ways in South Korea, Sintoburi has often been articulated in ways that are nothing less than paradoxical (Nelson 2000; Pemberton 2002; Walraven 2002a).

One product that has been associated with Sintoburi is Shikhye, a rice-based beverage that was historically made at home in South Korea but has now become more common as a canned consumer product available in shops. Shikhye advertisements employ the discourse of Sintoburi by referring to the drink’s traditional importance and by labelling it a ‘Nostalgia Drink’. It is worth noting however that Shikhye is now produced by the beverage maker Yakult Korea Co Ltd, a subsidiary of the Japanese parent company Yakult. Given that Sintoburi discourses are most commonly framed against the influences of South Korea’s former coloniser, Japan (or alternatively the United States) the financial networks, and corporate history of Shikhye’s production reveal the ambiguity of such consumer nationalism (for further discussion see Walraven 2002b).

This overlap between the global and local has not been ignored in South Korean popular culture. Indeed, there are numerous examples in literature, film and television that sometimes forthrightly and sometimes ironically illustrate the potency of discourses like Sintoburi. The excerpt from the film Attack the Gas Station (Kim 1999) in Figure 8.1 offers a rather humorous example.

This interaction illustrated in Figure 8.1 is in part an ironic reflection on the interplay between the national and the global in South Korea. Pepsi is of course an American brand and the audience knows this but Ddan-dda-ra’s suggestion that it is Korean because it is adorned with taegeuk, the symbol on the Korean flag, highlights the entangled nature of global and national symbolic capital. Put in another way, Ddan-dda-ra’s attraction to the taegeuk as a symbol of Korea on a product that is certainly not Korean illustrates the way that products, regardless of their symbolic or material origin, can be encoded through discourses like Sintoburi as local/national because they are familiar elements of the landscape of everyday lives. Even if only in jest Ddan-dda-ra’s purchase, and his defence of this purchase, simultaneously involves him in the practice
of banal nationalism (Billig 1995) via the taegeuk and the practice of banal cosmopolitanism (Beck 2002) because of his engagement in one element of a globalised economy. In short, it reflects the contention of Ulf Hannerz (1996: 5) that the contemporary world is composed of “an intense, continuous, comprehensive interplay between the indigenous and the imported”. This interplay is perhaps nowhere more the case than in the apparently fixed characteristics of national diet.

(KollaBbobneun Ddanddara)

Gyeongchal 1: Kolladeul johahagineun… Guksanpum jom aeyonhaera, jasika.
Gyeongchal 2: Hayeoteun yojeum jeolmeun saeggideuleun… Ya!! Bumodeuli saeb bajige beondon nideuleun dagajda waeguknomdeulhante banchinyam! Meori ggoraji hagoneun, e-I jaesueobsneun saeggideul
Ddanddara: Ajeossi, igeo guksani-eyo!
Gyeongchal 1: Meoga guksaniya. Im-ma, geuge? Pepsiga guksaninji mijenjido moreunyamma?
Ddanddara: Taegukmakeu an boyeoyo? Taegukmakeu…
Gyeongchal 1: I saeggiga igeo, neo jigeum narang nongdamchigi hajaneun geoya? Imma!

(Ddanddara gets a cola from the machine)

Officer 1: So you like Cola huh… use Korean products kid.
Officer 2: Ahh, young bastards these days… hey! Your parents work so hard for that money and you are giving it away to those foreign bastards! What a hairstyle, you freak…
Ddanddara: Sir, this is a Korean product!
Officer 1: How the hell can that be a Korean product, idiot? You don’t even know whether Pepsi is Korean or American?
Ddanddara: Can’t you see the Taeguk mark [the symbol on the Korean flag]? Taeguk mark…

Figure 8.1: Scene from ‘Attack the Gas Station’ (Kim 1999). © CJ International.1 This text was translated from Korean by Seunghee Pak.

---

1 CJ International has given their kind permission to use this scene from Attack the Gas Station.
Culinary Consumption in Transnational Worlds

If the consumption of particular food and drink plays a central role in the production of national cultures then it follows that food and drink will be of equal if not greater significance in the lives of transnational migrants. The consumption of familiar food and drink provides an intensely sensual way to recreate everyday life that occurs in an idealised national home (Brah 1996). Ghassan Hage (1997: 109) explains:

Home food not only provides intimations of security in that it represents a culturally determined basic need for nutrition, it also provides a clear intimation of familiarity in that people know what to do with it, how to cook it, how to present it and how to eat it, thus promoting a multitude of homely practices.

Food and drink then provide one way to bridge the sensual gap between ‘here’ and ‘there’ (Ahmed et al. 2003) through the very literal consumption of products that have been, or appear to have been, made or grown ‘back home’ (Duruz 2005; Hage 1997).

In Chapter Three I described two case studies of research conducted in Hong Kong (Law 2001) and Australia (Choo 2004) that illustrate this connection between food, sensuality and transnational life. In another example relevant to the discussion that follows, Katarzyna Cwiertka has discussed the eating practices of expatriate Japanese living in the Netherlands. Cwiertka (2002: 134) uses food ‘as a window to revealing their attitude towards their homeland’ and as a result argues that, through food consumed overseas, Japanese not only connect themselves to home but also reinforce the gender and class relationships that are present in Japan. She also notes that in her research Japanese expatriates tended to eat more Japanese food while abroad than they did at home. Indeed, she argues that ‘the Japanese do not just use their food as a means of strengthening their identity while living abroad, or as a remedy for homesickness. They, in fact, employ food to demonstrate their loyalty towards Japanese culture and society, which will eventually condition their safe re-entrance to Japan’ (Cwiertka 2002: 148). The participants in this research share some characteristics to these Japanese expatriates and in particular the awareness that most will eventually return ‘home’ to South Korea. Yet, as I will show in the research exposition that follows, the consumption practices of students do not simply involve ostensibly ‘Korean’ culinary items but often a much broader range of ‘familiar’ culinary items that include both Korean and non-Korean products. As such it may be worth questioning the extent to which the consumption of such generally familiar products is necessarily an intentional
declaration of loyalty rather than a general engagement with what is known and understood.

**Culinary Consumption Choices of South Korean International Students**

Three questions in the survey conducted with students were directly or indirectly connected to culinary consumption: the number of times students ate at restaurants; the type of restaurants they ate at; and where they usually met friends (one possible response was bars, cafes, restaurants). The results for these questions are provided in Table 8.1.

These results highlight some general characteristics to South Korean international students’ practices of culinary consumption in Auckland. In general they show that students regularly eat out at restaurants with only 4.2% of total students indicating that they did not usually patronise even one restaurant within a normal week. The largest number of students, 34.7%, ate at restaurants two times a week. However, the majority of students (54.7%) ate at restaurants three or more times a week and as many as 34.8% and 23.8% ate at restaurants four or more and five or more times a week respectively. The overall mean for this question was 3.19 and the median was 3. Within the student categories there were considerable differences. Tertiary students, for example, had a mean of 3.9 and a median of 4 compared to 2.7/2 for PTE students and only 2.4/2 for language students. These results are not altogether surprising given the likely differences in socio-economic status between these students (see Chapters One and Five). The second question regarding restaurant choice illustrates a clear preference amongst students to patronise Korean restaurants (58.5%). American fast food chains were the second most preferred type of restaurant but at 13.6% overall it is hardly comparable (slightly less amongst tertiary students (9.4%), more so amongst PTE students (27.3%)).

The final question on where students usually meet their friends is relatively evenly spread between four locations: house or friend’s house, public places,

---

2 During analysis it became apparent that this question was problematic. For one, the meals offered at fast-food chains (even locations like McDonald’s and Burger King) are not considered ‘meals’ in South Korea (see later discussion and Bak 1997; 2004). Moreover, it may have been more useful to ask students to rank the different options rather than choose just one because individuals are unlikely to attend only one type of restaurants.
bars, cafes and restaurants and school/university. Notably, university students met their friends at home more often than other students (43.4%).³

Table 8.1: Questionnaire Responses - Food Consumption Questions. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant preference</th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language Students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat at # restaurants per week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Fast-food Chains (e.g. Burger King, Starbucks, McDonalds)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand/European</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually meet my friends at...⁴</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My house or friend’s house</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Places</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars, Cafes, Restaurants</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/University</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Cafes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ I initially thought this might be connected to the fact that more tertiary students live in rental accommodation (see Chapter Five), however this was not apparent when the results were cross-tabulated with living arrangements for any group. There appears to be a problem with the phrasing of this question because it asks students about both their residences and friends residences.

⁴ A number of students gave a free-text response to this question in addition to selecting an option. The responses included church (7), workplace (2), Korean student event (1) and Jimjilbang or Korean public bath/sauna (1).
There were some important differences in the results of female and male students with regards to restaurant preference (see Table 8.2). Most notably, female students indicated that they patronised Korean restaurants considerably less than their male counterparts (51.6% to 66.1% respectively) and conversely patronised ‘New Zealand/European’ restaurants more than male respondents (14.5% to 1.8%). There were not any great differences between female and male respondents for the other two questions.

Table 8.2: Food Consumption Questions Defined by Respondents’ Gender. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant preference</th>
<th>Female % (n=62)</th>
<th>Male % (n=56)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Fast-food Chains (e.g. Burger King, Starbucks, McDonalds)</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand/European</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a general level these results reflect research on the culinary consumption of other transnational migrant groups and the importance of co-national restaurants in this practice (Choo 2004; Cwiertka 2002; Law 2001; Yoon 2003). However, as noted in footnotes three and four there were significant limitations on the kind of conclusions that could be made from these questions. Moreover, as I conducted interviews, participant observation, diaries, mapping and internet research with students it became quite clear that there was much more to students’ culinary consumption practices than the trends indicated here. In particular it emerged that students, perhaps unsurprisingly, engaged in quite different sorts of practices at different times and in different spaces. As a result the discussion of qualitative findings below is organised thematically into three sites: Korean restaurants, students’ residences and global franchise restaurants (particularly coffee shops). These are not the only sites and practices of culinary consumption that students engage in on an everyday basis. Indeed, for many students the quite specific practices discussed here may only constitute part of their weekly culinary encounters. The discussion here does not, for instance, dwell on consumption inside the homestay and nor does it consider, for the most part, the daily meals of breakfast and lunch. Instead the focus here is on a specific set of practices that play a role in producing a sense of culinary familiarity in students’ everyday lives. I focus on these practices not because they are representative of all practices that students engage
in but because they usefully highlight some of the ways that students negotiate the differences they encounter in Auckland while maintaining material and immaterial connections to the lives they lived in South Korea.

**Eating Out**

Reflecting the results from the questionnaire all but one of the 29 interviewed students stated that they regularly ate at Korean restaurants. Often students said that they went to restaurants for more than just dinner often spending an entire evening eating, drinking and socialising with friends. In Auckland’s inner city (where the majority of students live and socialise) there is a wide array of Korean restaurants available, many of which are almost indistinguishable in terms of appearance, menu and service (see figure 8.2). Unlike restaurants in South Korea itself, however, most of these restaurants do not specialise in one type or style of food production but rather provide a diverse range of Korean dishes. Unsurprisingly when I asked students which specific restaurants they patronised I received a wide range of responses that covered many different restaurants. Also unsurprisingly, most students referred to a number of restaurants that they usually went to. Nevertheless, there were a small number of restaurants that were consistently mentioned by almost all students, and one which was almost universally referred to – *San-Su-Gap-San*.

*San-Su-Gap-San* (Figures 8.3 and 8.4) is positioned on downtown Auckland’s main thoroughfare, Queen Street, directly opposite the Sky City Metro Cinemas (a large movie multiplex) and right on the doorstep of what Auckland City Council would like
to call the education precinct (Stroombergen 2003). To the uninitiated or the
uninformed San-Su-Gap-San may not even seem like a Korean restaurant. On the
canopy outside there are large Hanmun\(^5\) characters – which translate as San-Su-Gap-
San – and a small English sign saying ‘restaurant and sake bar’. A quick look at the
menu with photos in the window should correct any misconceptions that reference to
the Japanese drink, sake might have evoked. Projected from the entrance is Korean pop
music. The layout of San-Su-Gap-San is similar in many respects to most so-ju-bang\(^6\) in
Seoul or other South Korean cities. It has an expansive dining area that is surrounded by
large booths that can seat 6-8 persons. The main bulk of the room is taken up by basic
wooden tables and chairs that can be rearranged to suit different sizes of groups. Each
table has a small button that rings an electronic bell that will alert the waiting staff to the
customers requirements, these bells are commonplace in even small so-ju-bang in South
Korea. The sills above the tables all around the restaurant have empty soju\(^7\) bottles on
them. The kitchen is on the right side of the entrance. San-Su-Gap-San is often a very
busy, hectic environment with customers and staff criss-crossing the room. If you arrive
between 6 and 8 pm you are probably going to have to wait for a table, particularly late
in the week. One of my experiences at San-Su-Gap-San is described from research notes
and photos in Figures 8.3 and 8.4.

Participating and observing at San-Su-Gap-San and a number of other Korean
restaurants on several occasions revealed that these places are quite explicitly embodied
and sensual places. While San-Su-Gap-San is not solely patronised by young Koreans,
they are the predominant group here. Furthermore, the waiting staff and cooks are
unsurprisingly also Korean, many of them international students, and their bodies are
crucial to the production of this space as a Korean restaurant (c.f. Crang 1994).
Linguistically, the restaurant is awash with Korean language. The non-visual senses of
smell, taste and touch are also well attended here by the food, the way that it is cooked
and presented, and the utensils provided.\(^8\) It is clear from my many visits to San-Su-

\(^5\) **Hanmun** is the Chinese origin script that sometimes accompanies Hangeul (Korean alphabet) in writing.

\(^6\) **So-ju-bang** literally translates as soju (see footnote 7 below) room or house. These locations pervade the
urban landscape of cities like Seoul and offer relatively cheap beer, soju and basic Korean dishes (Nelson
2000).

\(^7\) **Soju** is the Korean national liquor; it is a potent potato based spirit that is drunk by the shot glass usually
along with spicy food.

\(^8\) As with most Korean restaurants in Auckland San-Su-Gap-San serves food with the uniquely Korean
metal chopsticks.
Gap-San that it is these embodied and sensual aspects of the restaurant that play such a crucial role in producing it as a ‘familiar place’.

During interviews, students often referred to the atmosphere, arrangement and service of San-Su-Gap-San as a restaurant. When I asked students about why they went to San-Su-Gap-San instead of other Korean restaurants most just referred to the restaurants’ popularity among students, its lively atmosphere or its central location. Many simply responded with statements like:

When I came here first one of my friends took me to there [San-Su-Gap-San], yeah, that’s it. (Dong-Su, LS, Seoul, 25)

I think it is the most famous Korean restaurant for Korean student because of Korean atmosphere, reasonable price and various foods. (Won-Sik, PTE, Jeju-do, 24)

Even for students who did not like San-Su-Gap-San specifically this popularity amongst their peers made it an important location:

Actually I don’t like San-Su-Gap-San, food is not good. Actually I hate side dishes but one of my co-workers always wanted to go there every time because she knows the owner. (Jin-Yeong, LS, Busan, 26)

When I asked students about why they went to San-Su-Gap-San instead of non-Korean restaurants their answers were much more suggestive of the perceptible reasons why this location is important. Students suggested the following:

We easily eat or have the Korean food there. (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27)

In a group it’s easily fine, because San-Su-Gap-San table is bigger. (James, LS, Seoul, 27)

Atmosphere is very similar to Korean pub, and we can drink soju so many people want to go there. (Joanne, LS, Busan, 25)

Because drinking was often a big part of going out for the evening, some students would often compare the Korean style of drinking with the New Zealand style.

Ahhh, well, I think just standing is just strange for Korean. You should be eating as well. Most Korean young people if they have a drinking they sit and eat, some of the people don’t know how to stop drinking until hangover, but if they drink alcohol standing they cant do that so most Korean people like sit and drink and eat. (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27)
The speakers above the entrance to San-Su-GapSAN are broadcasting Korean pop music onto the street as we walk into the restaurant. Inside the same music is playing at a quieter level but the din of customer, staff and kitchen interactions more than makes up the difference. It’s a Thursday night so San-Su-Gap-San is quite busy. The waitress at the entrance spoke directly in Korean to Seunghee (my wife) and Jin-Yeong (a language student). She let us know that we would be seated shortly.

After tables are re-arranged as other customers leave we are seated at a small table in the middle of the restaurant. All of the tables around us are full of groups, mostly Korean but notably some young Japanese and Europeans. There is no-one here alone and our group of three is much smaller than the average. Some of the groups are there to have a full meal while others seem to be socialising and drinking. Shortly after arriving we pressed the button on the table to get attention from the staff.

Soon a different waiter came and asked for our order. Again he spoke only to Seunghie and Jin-Yeong in Korean. Perhaps he does not feel comfortable speaking in English to me or perhaps he is maintaining an important part of the Korean restaurant experience. The fact that I am a Pakeha-Aucklander makes a difference. As we wait for, and then eat, our meal the restaurant continues to be lively. The groups who are just there for dinner come and go throughout the evening but those who are there to drink have apparently settled in – although individuals sometimes come and go from these groups.

While there are scatterings of English, Japanese and what I believe was Russian, Korean language dominates this environment. Interactions between staff and customers is little different from what I remember of local drinking establishments in Seoul – often short and non-conversant but nevertheless polite and structured in important ways. Overwhelmingly this is a Korean place. It is structured through language, bodies, tastes, smells and sounds of food and drink to replicate important aspects of the Korean bar and/or restaurant experience.
San-Su-Gap-San was not the only restaurant that students spoke about. Indeed, as noted above, there are a plethora of different Korean restaurants that students might patronise in the inner-city area alone. Yet, in all of these locations similar sorts of issues exist. While discussing another Korean restaurant/bar in Auckland, Po-Jang-Ma-Cha⁹, the president of AKSA¹⁰ somewhat succinctly summarised what all students seemed to be implying:

That’s [Po-Jang-Ma-Cha] the newest one isn’t it. And also because there’s lots of Po-Jang-Ma-Cha in Korea and so like there’s only one Po-Jang-Ma-Cha in here so to get that feeling of sitting outside and everything, that’s the closest. Even though it’s really cold outside and there’s a heater there but it’s go there because you want to feel that experience and Koreans when they go one place they keep going they don’t change anything because yeah, because they get close with the owner and they get service you know all those things. Those kind of place, really familiar to the shop, they really like them, Koreans really like them. (Pers. Comm. 14: KS, AKSA)

Interestingly, Korean restaurants in Auckland are generally not a replication of restaurants or eateries in South Korean cities. In South Korea, such places tend to specialise, providing a particular type or style of food often based on regional or class distinctions. Many of these restaurants are of a fairly basic design, looking and feeling much like a dining room with some advertising and pictures of menu items that are available (Nelson 2000). In Auckland, however, Korean restaurants are a veritable smorgasbord of the Korean culinary and cultural landscape. With few exceptions most restaurants in the inner city area provide an identical menu of Korean dishes that vary only slightly in cost and quality. San-Su-Gap-San is a good example of this. The interior of these establishments is also unlike their counterparts in Seoul or other Korean cities. In Auckland most restaurants have an amazing array of things Korean on their walls, including masks, paintings, calendars, advertisements, or even soju bottles, all expressing the very Korean-ness of the place. In an iconographical sense the interior design of Korean restaurants in Auckland constructs a landscape that is not based upon restaurants in Korea but rather is based upon signifying the very Korean-ness of these restaurants through national cultural symbols. Similarly the diverse menu at these

---

⁹ This is a name that many students used for this restaurant – in South Korea po-chang-ma-cha are a popular style of partially outdoor bar/restaurant that serve spicy noodles and soju, amongst other things. According to the signage the restaurant is actually called Shochiku Japanese restaurant however, like many Japanese restaurants in Auckland, this location is owned and staffed by Korean-New Zealanders (Song 2003a). For a period of time it was a popular night-spot for many South Korean students.

¹⁰ Auckland Korean Students Association (University of Auckland)
restaurants seeks to subsume regional variations in Korean food in order to identify the restaurant with the nation rather than with a local style of food. The final product of these elements is the Auckland Korean restaurant that is not associated with a particular region or class in Korea but rather with the nation itself. As such, while these restaurants are replete with national and sometimes local elements of South Korea they are, in effect, a product of the material and symbolic transnational connections between South Korea and Auckland. Similar sorts of locations might exist in cities like Sydney, Toronto, New York or Los Angeles but would be an unlikely sight in the urban landscape of Seoul. As such, the patronage that Korean students give these locations engages them simultaneously with the banal nationalism of South Korea and also with the banal cosmopolitanism that constructs and maintains an imaginary of the South Korean (culinary) nation. It is an example of how ethno-national cuisine ‘only becomes a self conscious, subjective reality when ethnic boundaries are crossed’ (Bell & Valentine 1997: 114).

**Eating at Home**

In Chapter Five I outlined the shifting living arrangements of South Korean international students during their time in Auckland. Although there was notable individual differentiation and distinctions between language/PTE students and tertiary students the general movement is characterised from homestay accommodation to rental accommodation. It was also briefly noted in Chapter Five that, alongside other cultural differences, the dissimilarity between food in South Korea and food provided in homestays was a leading motivation for students to move. It is worth commenting on this a little further.

Even in the face of significant changes brought about by increasing global interconnections the contemporary South Korean home-diet often relies on staples of rice, meat and pickled vegetables – *kimchi*\(^{11}\) (Walraven 2002a). In addition to being common dietary items these three foods also carry significant discursive meaning in

\(^{11}\) *Kimchi* is a pickled vegetable dish that has a number of varieties and is a member of the ‘fermented vegetable group’ that also includes sauerkraut and the Japanese *tsukemono* (pickles). It is commonly made through a process of fermenting salted cabbage with garlic, vinegar and chilli for a period two or more weeks. As well as possessing a spicy taste it often has a quite pungent smell (Walraven 2002a).
Chapter Eight: Of Kimchi and Coffee

South Korea. Rice, for example, is considered essential to any meal. Indeed, the common greeting phrase ‘bap meokeoseoyo?’ literally translates as ‘have you eaten any rice?’ (H. J. Lee 2004). Meat, by contrast, is still seen as a symbol of wealth as a result of its rarity until very recently. Kimchi, finally, is, according to Cwiertka and Walraven (2002: 13), a ‘symbolic connotation of [Korean] national identity’ due to its quite striking hot and spicy flavours and heady aroma (see also Bak 1997; Nelson 2000; Pemberton 2002). The discursive weight of these food products is, however, not limited to lives in South Korea. Rather, many students and key informants reported that these foods became symbolic of broader anxieties about the difference between ‘homestay’ and ‘home’ and a key motivation for departure:

**Francis**: Why do Korean students generally leave the homestay environment?

**Pers. Comm. 12**: The first reason is food. That’s quite difficult. You know if you stayed in Korea – all meals, if you eat kimchi I think you can’t endure. But here they miss kimchi a lot and they always [say] “kiwi people don’t like kimchi smell so I can’t bring it.” “I miss kimchi.” “I miss Korean food.” “I miss some kind of Korean food.” “I miss Korea.” So if they [want to] eat kimchi I think [the] most convenient thing is to stay with other Korean group. They eat kimchi and then some different style, different lifestyle. (Pers. Comm. 12: KS / ELS)

As noted in Chapter Five a significant number of students involved in this research eventually resided in flats or apartments with other South Korean international students. Although there are, as noted, a number of reasons why students choose to live with other South Koreans one of the most significant factors is food. In particular the comment from the informant above that ‘Kiwi people don’t like kimchi smell’ was hardly an uncommon finding. Indeed, a number of students reported that non-Koreans much more generally would not like living with Koreans because of the smells associated with the foods that they ate. In part this may be based upon practical experiences. However, it is also likely to be based upon representations of Korean-ness and non-Korean-ness. As an example of such constructions, one student I met insisted that she would never serve a particular Korean dish, *ddoenjjangchiggae* to someone who wasn’t Korean because they would be physically unable to eat it (c.f. Walraven

---

12 Indeed, Boudewijn Walraven (2002a) has argued that even in the face of some decline in the consumption of these foods they have actually increased in symbolic value in everyday life in South Korea.

13 *Ddoenjjangchiggae* is a soy bean based stew similar in some respects to but also much stronger than Japanese *Miso*. It usually contains garlic, chilli, tofu and seafood. It has a very strong taste and smell.
2002a). After I suggested to her that I quite liked this dish she thought that I was simply an exception to an otherwise universal rule.

In addition to these reasons why students felt that they could not live with non-Koreans there were also many perceived advantages to living with other South Koreans. Crucially, it allowed them to use the space of the home to engage in social activities with Korean food and drink. Most students living in rental accommodation cooked together and almost always cooked Korean food. Some groups of students told me that because they had their own place they could often invite friends around for Korean meals together, particularly social meals like Korean barbeques. When I asked these students where they purchased their food most indicated that they went to one Korean shop for specifically Korean products and went to a supermarket for more generic products. This was also apparent on many of the maps in Chapter Seven. During the period of fieldwork I was lucky enough to be invited to a number of dinners at the residences of different students – Figures 8.5 and 8.6 illustrate one example.

Not all students leave the homestay. In fact some students quite enjoy their time in the homestay (as noted in Chapter Five). Yet, even for these students the engagement in familiar culinary consumption practices remains important. In this regard there are different ways that students dealt with the shortfall of the homestay diet: by going to restaurants, by attending events like the one described in Figures 8.5 and 8.6 with friends who lived in rental accommodation or by making strategic changes to the food provided in the homestay (see quote below). For most students these practices were ways to feel better when they missed Korea, or just as a way to enjoy themselves in a more relaxed and familiar setting than the homestay:

Today’s dinner is Kiwi style rice. But I don’t like this rice. Because that is come from Thailand. So taste, shape and condition is quite different from Korean rice. I have ‘Gochujang’\(^{14}\) that my another Japanese friend give it to me. (she took it from KAL~[Korean Airlines]). So, I have dinner with this. It tastes quite strange \(+_+;\)^{15} but it’s little bit similar to ‘Bibimbap’\(^{16}\), about 0.004% ~ @.@.\(^{17}\) But, I feel much better. Because of the U.F.F~ [Unidentified Flying Food – non-Korean rice]. Also, after my evening school I’m getting better. I hope tomorrow will be good day for me ♥♥ and maybe I’m going to dream about original, huge, delicious ‘Bibimbab’ tonight. Zzz.

\(^{14}\) *Gochujang* is red chilli paste, an essential ingredient and condiment in many Korean dishes.

\(^{15}\) ‘+’ indicates exhaustion or feeling dead.

\(^{16}\) *Bibimbap* is a common Korean dish of rice, vegetables, egg, meat and, crucially, *gochujang*.

\(^{17}\) ‘@’ indicates feeling dazed or confused.
Chapter Eight: Of Kimchi and Coffee

Anonymous diary entry

Like the patronage of Korean restaurants in Auckland South Korean students’ preparation and consumption of Korean meals within their homes can also be considered a product of national and local identities that come into existence primarily because of their journey to Auckland. Lisa Law’s (2001) study with Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong is a useful comparison in this case (outlined in Chapter Three). Law illustrates the role that the preparation and consumption of familiar meals plays in the construction and then maintenance of these women’s local and national identities and connections. Like the Filipino domestic workers in Law’s study, South Korean international students also use the preparation and shared consumption of ethno-national food as a way to connect with practices and places that were part of their lives before they came to Auckland (see also Choo 2004). To parallel Law (2001: 278) it could be said that these practices incorporate ‘elements of history and memory, of past and present times and spaces, helping create a familiar place where memories of life in [South Korea] and migration to [Auckland] might be explored from another perspective’.

Like the women in Law’s study these students come from sometimes diverse class and regional backgrounds in South Korea. The shared practice of food preparation and consumption becomes a way to overcome these sometimes pronounced differences. Interestingly, however, food preparation and consumption also serves to reinforce other differences in Korean culture that seem to be more resistant to change, in this case gender. In the discussions and my own experience with students only women were involved in the preparation or clean up of meals. When I asked either male or female students to explain why this was the case they often reasoned that only the female students knew how to prepare Korean dishes. While this is perhaps practically accurate it serves to remind us of the way that normalised banal practicalities can reinforce social and spatial differentiation through the re-articulation of national or other identities. In this way while food preparation and consumption provides individuals with a new sense of belonging while sojourning in New Zealand it also reinforces existing differences in the experience of Korean national identity.
Chapter Eight: Of Kimchi and Coffee

My wife and I were invited to dinner by three language students who lived together: Helen, Paul and Ha-Na. Helen and Paul are brother and sister from Jeonju, a city of about 600,000 in the central part of the Jollam-do province. Ha-Na is from Seoul. They met each other at their language school and decided to move into an apartment together. They also live with another Korean student from the same school. All three students had taken part in an interview and Paul and Ha-Na had also completed a diary and map each.

We took off our shoes as we entered the apartment. Helen and Ha-Na were already cooking dinner and Paul was watching the television. They were making a number of Korean dishes for us: *chapjjaebab* – a noodle and soy based dish, *yukgaebokkeum* – a spicy fried pork dish, *kimchi* and a range of other side dishes and rice. Although they don’t always eat this kind of organised Korean meal at home they try to have a group meal with friends at least once or twice a week. Usually Helen cooks and Ha-Na helps her. Helen also did the cleaning up while Paul spoke with us before and after dinner.

Dinner is served at a low table surrounded by couches. They mentioned they don’t have a western style table but usually eat sitting on the floor instead. Dinner is served with characteristically Korean bowls and metal chopsticks. During dinner we talked about a range of topics – some were relevant to my research while others were not. All of the students thought that eating Korean food in a group at home was a very important part of their lives in Auckland. Without this kind of interaction they felt that they would miss Korea even more.

Figure 8.5: Observation Notes – Dinner with Helen, Paul and Ha-Na.

Figure 8.6: Photos – Dinner with Helen, Paul and Ha-Na

**Having Coffee with Friends**

It is clear in the above discussion that Korean food and the practices that surround its production and consumption play an important role in the everyday culinary encounters of individuals and groups of students. However, such practices are not the only notable feature of the culinary consumption of students in this research. Indeed, it is worth
noting in particular the importance of global/American franchise outlets in students’ daily lives. In the questionnaire, for example, ‘American Fast Food Chains (e.g. Burger King, Starbucks McDonald’s)’ was the second most popular choice of restaurant type although it was significantly less than Korean restaurants. More importantly however, many students identified in interviews that they regularly patronised locations like Starbucks and other coffee franchises, and to a lesser extent places like McDonald’s and Burger King, in ways that suggest these were also engagements with familiar sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches.

As noted earlier in this chapter, global food products exist in a rather dialectic way in South Korea. They are perceived at once as a pathway to, and a sign of that country’s increasing prosperity while simultaneously being regarded as a challenge to the purity of Korean national identity. It is for exactly this reason that the most well known American franchise, McDonald’s, struggled initially to gain a foothold in the South Korean market (Bak 1997; 2004). Not only did McDonald’s find that there was resistance to their presence in South Korea but they also discovered that their target consumer group, the young middle-class, subverted the intended operation of the restaurant. These customers did not, for instance, treat McDonald’s food as a complete meal (because it lacked rice) and as a result tended to spend very little money but lots of time in the restaurant, utilising the clean and comfortable environment to chat with friends. McDonald’s, in this way, provided an alternative to the ubiquitous coffee shop in South Korea (for description see Nelson 2000), where patrons also spend very little money but lots of time. More recently, American coffee franchises have also become very successful in South Korea (Bak 2004; 2005). Starbucks, in particular, has become a familiar sight in the urban landscape, particularly in Seoul but also in other major urban centres in South Korea like Busan and Daegu. Unlike McDonald’s however, Starbucks has for the most part not faced high levels of criticism because it is a between meal social location rather than a substitute for main meals (which would otherwise be Korean). As such, in the rather short period since the first Starbucks opened in South Korea (1999) they have become an essential location in the everyday

---

18 The only considerable criticism faced by Starbucks in South Korea occurred when the company suggested it would open a store in the main street of Insadong, a traditional craft selling area in the heart of old Seoul. It was argued that the presence of Starbucks in Insadong would disturb the perception of the area as a traditionally ‘Korean’ part of Seoul. In a concession to these protests the Insadong store was built with Korean designs in mind and boasted the only non-English Starbucks sign in the world – a feature that has made it a favourite photo spot for North American tourists in Seoul (Bak 2005).
lives of young urban residents, particularly in Seoul (Bak 2004; 2005). Indeed, Starbucks has been constituted as space in South Korea where fantasies associated with ‘the west’, ‘middle-class global identity’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’ can be played out in the lives of individual patrons.

In Auckland, students partake in similar practices. When I asked students where they usually met their friends, they either referred to public places or to locations like McDonald’s, Burger King or Starbucks. They never referred to Korean restaurants as a place to simply to ‘meet’ friends. The students said that they liked to meet at these places because they could purchase one item (unlike a restaurant or bar) and still sit and talk for a long time. Although these locations were notable in most students’ everyday lives they seemed to hold particular importance for female participants – perhaps as an alternative to the male dominated experience of Korean restaurants. In Chapter Seven Diana, Min-Hee and Min-Jeong said that when they went to the city they often went to Burger King to get a soft-serve ice cream. On their map they stated that ‘it’s cheap and we can easily talk’. In other cases many students enjoyed going to global coffee chains, usually Starbucks, but sometimes Gloria Jeans or Esquires. In reference to these franchises students made statements like ‘I went there in Korea so I go there now’, indicating that they found them to be familiar locations. Additionally they said that places like Starbucks were good places to meet friends because ‘everybody knows Starbucks’. When I asked students why they didn’t choose to go to local coffee shops (which I suggested were just as comfortable and had cheaper drinks) most students just said that they didn’t know about these local coffee shops so didn’t go there. One student said she went to Starbucks because it had a balcony where she could smoke, I responded by saying that most local cafes also had comfortable areas outside for smokers, her response was ‘I don’t know about them’. Finally, another student, Yu-Mi, spoke more generally about the importance of places like Starbucks coffee shops:

You know for Korean we don’t actually care about drinking the coffee or tea, they just want to have somewhere to sit and talk for a long time. I think you want to go after you finish your drink but we want to stay for a long time it’s a comfortable place to meet. In Korea if meet friend in coffee shop its comfortable than home. For me its same in New Zealand, there are lots of people in my home so it’s comfortable to meet in coffee shop. (Yu-Mi, LS, Jeonju, 21.)
Sangmee Bak (2005) has spoken about exactly these issues in regards to Starbucks and American coffee franchises more generally in South Korea. She has for instance noted that, unlike New Zealand, Starbucks was the first outlet to offer espresso style coffee in South Korea and, since then, successful establishments have only followed the Starbucks model. This contrasts significantly with the New Zealand experience where European style espresso coffee was first introduced and made popular by local independent retailers in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Liberty 1998). Moreover, despite the entrance of Starbucks and other American franchises these independents still hold a significant portion of market share. Bak (2005) has also found that there is a demographic specificity to the customers of locations like Starbucks in South Korea. In particular, she notes that customers are more likely to be middle-class urban residents in their twenties (exactly the demographic of international students in Auckland). They are also more likely to be women than men. Like McDonald’s in its early years, many people patronise Starbucks primarily for the social space that it offers – where groups of friends, workmates or classmates can meet and converse independently for long periods of time.\footnote{This contrasts significantly with the vision of Starbucks founder Howard Schultz who envisions Starbucks as a community-oriented ‘third-place’ where people would come and interact with other customers that they don’t know. As Sangmee Bak (2005: 49) has noted: ‘Korean customers also prefer a certain amount of privacy for their group, which is related to another unique feature of Korean Starbucks stores. In most places, there are partitions (which Starbucks calls “walls”) that visually and physically divide areas’.

Finally, Bak has also found in her research that many respondents actually noted that they disliked the taste of espresso coffee, preferring for the most part the much weaker
and sweeter form of instant coffee that is widely available in South Korea. As a result participants in her research stated that they only really went to Starbucks to socialise because it was a popular place to go and engage in different forms of global/cosmopolitan identities.

In contrast to the Korean restaurants in Auckland the different outlets of global franchises located here are not strikingly different from their counterparts in Seoul or other South Korean cities. In the case of Starbucks, the ‘third place’ design of the now ubiquitous café franchise intentionally replicates iconographic environments that will be familiar to patrons regardless of whether they cross a city or a national border (Laurier & Philo 2002). It is this familiarity that is expressed in the practices of students through statements like ‘I went there in Korea so I go there now’. Amongst the rise of consumer culture in South Korea Starbucks, like McDonalds before it, has become a part of everyday experience for many individuals in cities like Seoul (Business-Editors 2000; Hau 2002; Sung 2002), with only limited resistance (Bak 1997; Ha 2005). Indeed, in the case of Starbucks it has become apparent that where McDonald’s previously had difficulties adapting to the Korean market (Bak 1997) the coffee giant appears to be a much more welcome addition (Bak 2004; 2005). The place of Starbucks in the everyday lives of many young urban residents in South Korea exemplifies how ‘the foreign has become the familiar, [and] the different has become the domesticated’ (Scapp & Seitz 1998: 2). It is as a result of this normalisation of a global institution in the local environment that Starbucks should be understood as both global and local for South Korean international students in Auckland. Just like the patronage of Korean restaurants and the preparation and consumption of Korean food, students’ patronage of Starbucks coffee shops engages with Korean students’ ‘history and memory, of past and present times and spaces, helping create a familiar place’ (Law 2001: 278) in what is otherwise a foreign location.

Notes on Other Pathways

While it is useful to focus on these three characteristics of students’ culinary consumption a note of caution is also required. Although the practices discussed above were quite common amongst many students they were neither universal nor enacted in

20 Indeed, unlike McDonald’s, only one Starbucks in South Korea has a Korean language signboard on its exterior. This is the aforementioned Starbucks in Insadong where the signboard along with other design features was viewed as a concession to the presence of the American company in the area (Bak 2004; 2005).
identical ways. In the previous chapter I have already shown some of the multiplicity of experiences and practices that may be hidden by such generalisations. In the case of culinary consumption it is worth noting that some students relished the opportunity to expand their experiences of different foods while in Auckland:

But here in Auckland. But I can choose different country’s food – Chinese or Indian, Japanese. I have much choice for the different country’s food rather than Korea. (Rebecca, Seoul, TS, 22).

In other cases students expressed that while they wished to try different foods and eating styles they felt restricted because no one they knew could tell them where to go:

We want to know anywhere good to go; anywhere has different, good food. But because nobody recommended we can’t. All of the students are all students are Asian so nobody recommended. (Yu-Jin, Seoul, LS, 22)

Students also sometimes appeared to be restricted by the very forceful nature of familiar eating practices and the influences that friends had on their behaviour. They suggested that some of their Korean flatmates, classmates or workmates would resist the idea of eating at non-Korean locations and so they felt they could not go to such places. Indeed, in the comment above from Rebecca she was challenging statements from other students during the same interview about the lack of eating opportunities in Auckland. The full dialogue offers useful insight into these processes:

Min-Gyeong: Compared to like Korea, there are not much things to do, not much place to go, things like so boring. That is main problem. Even food, there are lots of many, many kinds and many kinds we can choose, but in Auckland there is nothing. (Min-Gyeong, Gwangju, TS, 23)

Sang-Hee: We only go few places. (Sang-Hee, TS, Seoul, 23)

Su-Mi: Yeah it’s very not many choice here. (Su-Mi, TS, Seoul, 23)

Rebecca: But here in Auckland. But I can choose different country’s food – Chinese or Indian, Japanese. I have much choice for the different country’s food rather than Korea. (Rebecca, TS, Seoul, 22).

Su-Mi: No, not really. And it’s expensive. (Su-Mi, TS, Seoul, 23)

In this conversation the discourses about ‘variety’ employed by Rebecca and her peers are notably different. From the latter’s perspective variety is understood primarily as the much greater selection of Korean food providers and styles available in a city like Seoul. From Rebecca’s perspective, however, variety is exemplified in the different
Chapter Eight: Of Kimchi and Coffee

Ethnic foods that are much more widely available in a city like Auckland (in comparison to Seoul). This was a distinction made by a few students that reflects different desires in sojourn – desire to consume difference in the form of other ethno-national cuisine and desire to consume Korean-ness in the form of Korean cuisine. Although both desires are based on essentialist discourses about what constitutes each of these cuisines and their attendant cultures the differences between them reveals the dissimilar trajectories that individual students might follow. It is an important contrast to the broader group of ‘South Korean international students’ that has been framed rather un-problematically in this chapter.

Although each of these were relatively uncommon assertions by students they are important for the exceptions that they provide. In particular they illustrate that there are likely to be gaps in the framing of a bounded group of ‘South Korean international students’ that I have constructed in this chapter. Moreover, these exceptions are also useful for the insight they offer about the manner in which familiarity is re-produced in Auckland amongst South Korean international students. In particular they point to the importance of social networks in the development of knowledge about the spaces that students live in. Indeed, they suggest that while such social networks might offer openings to expand experience they might also restrict such possibilities through the marking and policing of cultural and culinary borders.

Discussion: Familiarity and Transnational Economies

Two inter-related issues have emerged in this chapter that are of particular importance for understanding the transnational lives of students and the impact that their practices have in Auckland. They are the role of both global and local familiarity in students’ everyday lives and the impact these practices have on the transnational economies of Korean-New Zealanders.

Global and Local Familiarity

In each of the three sites discussed above it is quite clear that students are seeking out and/or creating spaces that feel familiar, providing a sense of security based upon the knowledge and enactment of everyday behaviour. One element of this familiarity – the patronage of Korean restaurants and production and consumption of Korean food at home – seems to map quite accurately onto the assertion that ‘routine practices and
habits (including cooking and eating) are a common way to shore up community identity when geographical proximity recedes’ (Bell & Valentine 1997: 91; see also Choo 2004; Cwiertka 2002; Law 2001; Yoon 2003). Yet, contemporaneously, the inclusion of ostensibly ‘global’ locations like Starbucks and the similar explanations given for patronage there suggest that there may be more than just an intentional shoring up of community or national identity taking place through these practices.

Certainly, it is clear in students’ responses that particular foods like *kimchi*, *gochujang* and ‘Korean style rice’ become symbolic of feelings of general longing for Korea as home(land) and that consumption of such foods can be a temporary reprieve from such loss. Additionally, the practices of ‘Korean’ food production and consumption appear to be performative of Korean national identities not simply in general ways but also quite specifically gendered ways as well (note the particular labour involved in home-cooking and cleaning). However, the consumption of foods and drinks at global franchises also appears to occur in a familiar space and also involves the performance of particular identities that, while not unequivocally ‘Korean’, are also based on prior experience and knowledge in South Korea. As such, it may be better to conceive of all of these practices as strategies that attempt to re-create in different ways everyday lives that existed in South Korea before students came to Auckland. At times this will involve the enactment of specifically Korean national identities and discourses, at other times however it will also include the re-creation of ostensibly ‘transnational identities’ that also exist in South Korea (Bak 2004). This is an important corrective to many arguments about the significance of food in transnational lives, which, at times, slip into a form of culinary essentialism through their heavy emphasis on the role of a ‘pure’ national cuisine in connecting migrants to homelands (see for example Cwiertka 2002; Gabaccia 1998). This recognition of the role of a ‘global’ product like Starbucks coffee in transnational lives then recognises the ‘inescapable impurity of all cultures and the porousness of all cultural boundaries’ (Ang 2001: 194; see also Duruz 2005). It also recognises that while these practices might help connect students to a sense of familiarity through elements of history and memory they are also part of the re-creation of culinary worlds and their attendant identities in sometimes new and unique ways.
Culinary Consumption and Transnational Economies

I have already noted in Chapter Five the connections between the presence and practices of South Korean international students in Auckland and the operations of different forms of immigrant entrepreneurialism – in particular the operation of Yuhakgweon. In addition, the student practices described in this chapter are also quite closely linked to immigrant practices in two much more traditional forms of business – the ethnic restaurant and food store. These businesses are examples of ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ (Bell & Valentine 1997) based on the creation of symbolic efficacy embodied in the spaces, peoples and products that they sell. Students’ patronage of Korean restaurants and their consumption of Korean foods at home offer the owners of these businesses an important way to establish themselves in Auckland and New Zealand. As one key informant pointed out this is not just because South Korean international students offer a familiar market but because the immigration regulations in New Zealand presently push Korean migrants towards this kind of self-employment:

Actually many Korean shop numbers [have] increased in the city. However, because I know some shop owners they complain about that [now]. Because a Korean shop owner told me: “Too many Korean shops in the street”. And then Korean students, maybe their target is Korean students [but] Korean goods [are] too expensive [here]… Actually I have been here for three years. Three years ago I think it wasn’t big difference with now. Surely [during] that time many Korean students moved here and now the number is decreased. However, many shop owners they are changed from Pakistan and Indian to Korean because of the immigration system. Many Korean people they have only business permit so they have to open new shop and they found many Korean students in the city so: “If I open up new shop in the city [I] can [make] money”. I find that many shop owners have changed to Korean, however Korean student numbers have decreased now so they [have experienced] difficult[y] too. (Pers. Comm. 12: KS/ELS).

South Korean international students are not simply the customers of these establishments however. As noted earlier they also form part of an informal labour market for Korean-New Zealand entrepreneurs. This is apparent in the significant number of employment advertisements offering jobs to students, working-holiday visa holders or other Koreans in certain Korean language media in Auckland. Many of these jobs pay below minimum wage and offer no legal protection for those employed:

I know a lot of students who work in restaurants and bars and places like that, they are working under the table and sometimes its really bad money. But it’s extra money that their parents often don’t know about so they are getting money
from two places at the same time. Are you sure you’re not from immigration? Yeah, it’s really small money and I heard its quite hard work too. (Pers. Comm. 10: KS / ELS)

In this sense students’ bodies are a key ingredient in the constitution of these businesses. Firstly they are the customers who consume the differently material and immaterial products produced by such businesses. At the same time however, students are also part of the production of such a space. In *San-Su-Gap-San*, for example, it is the bodies of mostly international students that wait on tables and make that space appear ‘authentic’ through the sights and sounds of Koreans and Korean language. Put in another way, the customers and staff at a location like *San-Su-Gap-San* are involved in ‘the meaningful daily practices which cohere in this food space: the ways in which people, as both producers and consumers, put together a food culture’ (Ashley et al. 2004: 10). In a similar way too, the shops that retail Korean goods to South Korean international students and others are also constituted by the bodies and practices of both staff and customers. These locations would be starkly different if there were no visually or aurally identifiably Korean bodies, either staff or customers, present.

There is, then, quite strong interconnection between the practices of migrant entrepreneurs in Auckland and international students in the realm of culinary consumption. In a similar way the practices described here are likely to have made a significant impact on the operation of global franchises like Starbucks, particularly those in the inner city. However, it is very difficult to establish exactly the extent to which individual South Korean international students contribute to the growth of these franchises either in contrast to the general population or more specifically other international students who may similarly patronise such locations. Nevertheless, we can assume, given the apparently high levels of patronage that students in this research indicate they gave to such locations that their influence is not insignificant.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have illustrated the ways that South Korean international students’ patronage of Korean restaurants in Auckland, their preparation and consumption of Korean foods at home, and their socialising practices at global franchises all constitute collective acts of remembrance. The purpose of such acts is to overcome the splitting of memory and lived experience that is so common for individuals who migrate, even
temporarily across borders (Brah 1996). These acts of remembrance serve to overcome
the estrangement of migration by remaking ‘one’s relation to that which appears as
unfamiliar, to re-inhabit spaces and places’ (Ahmed 1999: 344). Interestingly, for South
Korean international students in Auckland, this process of re-inhabitation is facilitated
by the presence of both Korean restaurants and food distributors and a number of global
franchises that are recognisable elements of both South Korean and New Zealand urban
landscapes. Students’ patronage of such locations, then, is not simply an act of cultural
familiarity but is very much entangled in the transnational economic strategies of both
Korean-New Zealand migrants and ‘global’ businesses like Starbucks. On the one hand
these practices reveal the ways that Starbucks Coffee, a version of one of the oldest
globalised products, has become localised in South Korea and has subsequently been re-
globalised through the journeys students have made to Auckland and the practices they
engage in here. On the other hand foods like kimchi, a highly localised part of the
Korean diet that has been influenced by earlier global connections, is re-globalised by
another wave of South Korean diaspora and is subsequently becoming increasingly
domesticated in Auckland’s urban landscape through the re-inhabitation practices of
students. These multiple and continual re-castings of what can be considered global or
local disturb the certainties of these terms because they remind us that while modernity
would have us include and exclude objects (and for that matter subjects) as either ‘here’
or ‘there’, most things are more likely somewhere in-between.

In the next chapter I extend this discussion of students’ engagement with
familiarity and their negotiation of the urban environment in Auckland by considering
the role of information communication technologies in the everyday urban encounters
of students. In particular I identify the ways that particular technologies serve to
simultaneously maintain connections with South Korea while also being an important
part of the ways that students establish themselves in Auckland.
Chapter Nine

CONNECTING ‘HOME’ WITH ‘HERE’:

Communication Practices

In this chapter I investigate the communication practices of South Korean international students with a particular focus on their role and influence in students’ everyday transnational lives. Although these practices are unsurprisingly dominated by recent technological developments like the internet they also include older and slower forms of communication like the telephone and even postal services. Before beginning this discussion I offer an introduction to some of the major concerns in existing research on transnational communication practices and the virtual geographies of migrants. I also offer a brief overview on recent experiences of the internet in South Korea. The main discussion draws on the themes raised in these introductory sections to interrogate the findings from the survey, interviews and other research methods. In order to draw out some more detail on one particular communication practice I then focus on the analysis of seven students’ personal homepages and the ways in which these communication tools connect home (South Korea) with here (Auckland) in ways that have both positive and negative implications for students’ everyday lives.

Transnational Communication Practices

Communication technologies are, arguably, the ‘social glue’ that facilitate the transnational actions and identities of individual and groups of migrants (Panagakos & Horst 2006; Vertovec 2004a). Indeed, it is the much greater speed and availability of contemporary communication technologies that has sometimes been identified as the difference between current and historical experiences of migration (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004). Such arguments suggest that while there might be some continuity in the communication practices of migrants, technological developments have meant that the present era represents a significant break from the past. Alejandro Portes’ (2001: 188) comments are exemplary:
Global capitalism has encouraged the invention and refinement of technological marvels in transportation and communication that greatly facilitate the implementation of long-distance initiatives... The advent of cheap and efficient air transport, telephone and facsimile technology, and above all the Internet, endows contemporary immigrants with resources entirely beyond the reach of their predecessors. While, with the wisdom of hindsight, it is possible to identify and study the ‘transnational’ ventures of earlier Italian, Polish, and Russian immigrants, such activities could never have acquired the density, realtime character, and flexibility made possible by today’s technologies.

While we might question the epochal and technologically determined character of Portes’ argument here, empirical inquiry into transnational communication practices seems to suggest that these technologies are having a significant affect on the everyday lives of individual migrants (Adams & Ghose 2003; Horst 2006; Ong 2003; Panagakos & Horst 2006; Parham 2004; Thompson 2002; Vertovec 2004a; Wilding 2006; Wilson & Peterson 2002). The implications of the rapid uptake of these technological developments have already been discussed in Chapter Three. They include the ability for migrants to be socially, politically and economically involved in their homeland while working and/or residing elsewhere (Parham 2004); the formation and maintenance of transnational familial relationships and households (Wilding 2006); and the development of new transnational identities and forms of association (Ong 2003). In Chapters Five, Seven and Eight I also discussed practices and interactions of South Korean international students that are bolstered by access to communication technologies. These include the operations of transnational businesses like Yuhakgweon as well as the maintenance of the family and friendship networks that facilitate the arrival, and assist in the settlement, of individual students. Such interactions are facilitated by what seem to be quite banal practices like sending letters and packages, making phone calls and perhaps most notably in this case the plethora of communication tools accessible through the internet.

Virtual Transnational Geographies

The development of digitised means of communication like the internet in the last two decades has had important implications for the study of social and spatial forms including those maintained by transnational migrants. For some academics these developments have marked a fundamental turning point in the ways in which culture and identity can be conceived and an irreversible deterritorialisation of everyday life (Clothier 2005; Rheingold 1994). At their most extreme these perspectives suggest that
interaction in what is called ‘cyberspace’ (Kitchin 1998) is disembodied, spaceless, characterised by unstable individual identities and potentially limitless freedom (Kroker & Weinstein 1994; Mitchell 1995; Morse 1994; Poster 1995). Geographers, generally, have offered more measured accounts of the impact of these new technologies by emphasising the spatiality of cyberspace (Dodge & Kitchin 2001; Kitchin 1998), the particularity of cyberspatial experience (Shields 1996), and the interrelationship between the ‘real’ and the ‘virtual’ (Crang et al. 1999). These are important interventions that question some of the boundless hyperbole and metaphor deployed in the often under-researched and overly-speculative scholarship on these new digital means of communication.

In addition to the general scholarship on virtual geographies there is also a growing field of study that intersects with research and writing on the experiences and practices of transnational migrants (Adams & Ghose 2003; Panagakos & Horst 2006; Parham 2004; Wilding 2006). This is hardly surprising given migrants’ long-standing use of older communication methods (Morawska 2001) and the possibilities offered by these newer technologies. Indeed, Portes’ words above point to just this possibility as does Arjun Appadurai’s (1997) discussion of the interrelationship of ‘ethnoscapes’ and ‘mediascapes’. Within this research the internet and its associated technologies are commonly given centrality in the process of forming new identities that bind individuals across the different places that they inhabit. In research on Indian migrants in the USA, for instance, Madhavi Mallapragada (2006: 209) makes the connection between the formation of ‘home’, ‘homeland’ and ‘homepage’ to suggest that ‘new media technologies’ play a central role in the negotiation of ‘popular narratives about nation, citizenship, global capital and transnational labour’. Here then, the internet is conceived as a key tool that (some) transnational migrants can draw on to cope with the distance between host and origin societies and the personal, social and economic difficulties that accompany that distance (see also Chan 2005; Gajjala 2006; Mitra 2006; Navarrete & Huerta 2006).

The centrality of technologies like the internet in the lives of transnational migrants also usefully illustrates the ways that the practices and experiences of the virtual arena are very much embodied. In this regard, Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin (2001: 52) suggest that ‘[a]lthough we can use the medium of cyberspace to play with our identity, our online personae are grounded in our overall experiences and memories’
and hence inseparable from our personal embodiment. This is apparent in the discussion by Mallapragada above as well as much of the other research on the use of the internet by transnational migrants. Indeed, embodied identity and the dissimilar languages, histories, affiliations and memories of individuals appear to become more, not less, important as physical place recedes in online encounters. This is also why diasporic websites, newsgroups and other media do not simply focus at the level of the origin nation but also focus on many other elements of shared embodied experience and practice like ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, place of origin and place of inhabitation amongst many others (Adams & Ghose 2003). Put simply, the internet does not extend the Cartesian mind/body binary as some authors have suggested (Benedikt 1991) but rather illustrates that even in those spaces where we do not physically rely on our bodies for encounter we still cannot escape them.

Digital technologies like the internet are not simply significant for their role in facilitating relationships across borders however. Rather, the ‘real’ world context of, and access points for, the internet and other technologies also play an important role in the everyday lives of transnational migrants. Scholars like Susie Woo (2004) and Ananda Mitra (2006) have addressed just this point. Woo observes through research with Korean-American youths, for example, that there are significant links between the territoriality of ‘real spaces’ like internet cafes, church and school and the spaces of the internet. Rather than the everyday lives of these teenagers being mediated through the internet she argues instead that their online practices were in fact mediated by their everyday ‘real world’ lives (Woo 2004). Moreover, the participants in her research were just as likely to use the internet to interact with local friends that they regularly met offline as they were to maintain long-distance relationships. Mitra’s research extends this to suggest that physical spaces like internet cafes that integrate the ‘real’ and ‘virtual’ constitute cybernetic places. For transnational migrants this is of particular importance. Not only do internet cafes provide access to virtual places of social and cultural reproduction but often the cafes themselves are run by co-national immigrant entrepreneurs and as such also offer a physical place of cultural, visual and linguistic familiarity and security (Mitra 2006). This is perhaps even more the case for migrants from countries like South Korea where access to computers that can read and write hangeul (Korean alphabet) are crucial to maintaining full online communicative practice.
In addition to highlighting the embodied character of the internet and the interrelationship between online and offline practice it is also important to note the many ways in which offline power relations resonate in online encounters. While it might be possible to identify examples of the internet facilitating progressive social projects (Warf & Grimes 1997) more often than not the same disparities of uneven access (Norris 2001), social and spatial polarisation (Graham 2002); and repressive practices like sexism, racism and homophobia (Hall 1996; Kobayashi & Peake 2000; Stone 1995) take place in virtual arenas. In the lives of transnational migrants two issues of power relations seem most relevant. Firstly, while the embodied identity associations noted above might offer familiarity and a sense of belonging to transnational migrants such associations can also be used for quite repressive purposes. The (re)production of these imagined communities online is characterised by the very practices of inclusion and exclusion that haunts the imagining and performing of national, ethnic and other affiliations offline. The borders of such identifications are more often than not fixed and produced through reference to essentialism. Moreover, and secondly, such associations are also the site of considerable surveillance that seeks to maintain the fixed nature of these formations online. At times this might include the reproduction of conservative discourses of self and other. At other times however it may also include the disciplining of particular bodies. Adams and Ghose (2003) for example note the way that internet match-making services facilitated by Indian diasporic websites constitute a virtual panoptican where the bodies of young women in particular but also young men are disciplined to the demands of ideal types of caste, skin colour and size (see also Brignall III 2002; M.-C. Kim 2004). In this manner, then, online practices must be conceived not only in terms of offline power imbalances but also for the ways that imbalances are accentuated and negotiated by individual and groups of users.

The Internet in South Korea

Academic literature on the growth of the internet in the 1990s primarily focussed on the North American experience reflecting the slightly delayed uptake of these technologies in other parts of the world. Today, although people in many parts of the world continue to experience uneven levels of access, the internet is now spread amongst a much larger and more diverse population. In East-Asia and in South Korea in particular internet use and access has grown phenomenally (Ciolek 2002). The emergence of cyber-culture in
South Korea is characterised by the rapid spread of advanced internet technology; it was estimated in 2004 that there was an astounding 31.5 million Internet users (out of a population of 45 million) and over 12 million households with broadband internet service (National Internet Development Agency 2004) alongside a nationwide infrastructure of an estimated 25000 internet cafes (Whang 2003). It has also been estimated that the average time an individual with access uses the internet is over 10 hours a week (National Internet Development Agency 2004). These figures dwarf the internet use of every other country in the OECD, particularly New Zealand which has lagged behind recent increases in broadband uptake amongst other wealthy nations (OECD 2005c). It is argued that the scale of the internet in South Korea has had a pervasive effect on society leading to the creation of new online lifestyles (Whang 2003); new discourses of sexual politics (Chang 2003); new educational and consumption practices (Kim 2003; Lee 2003); the development of virtual organisations (Baek & Kim 2003); and even the success of Roh Moo-Hyun in the presidential elections of 2002 (Yun 2003). These changes in the very routines of everyday life in South Korea also affect South Korean international students’ practices and experiences in Auckland in terms of levels and types of internet usage, points of access and the interrelationship between offline and online experience.

**Communication Practices of South Korean International Students**

Six questions in the survey conducted with students were directly or indirectly related to communication practices. These questions dissimilarly addressed students’ general means of communication with family and friends in South Korea and accessing information about Korea while in Auckland; time spent on the internet and place of access; and the web-sites that students visited most commonly.

**Communicating with South Korea**

The results in Table 9.1 illustrate the importance of two forms of communication with family and friends in South Korea: the telephone and the internet. Curiously, in a point that reflects Steven Vertovec’s arguments (2004a), the telephone remains the most significant overall means of communication for students (37.3%) when compared individually with email (22.9%), instant messenger services (22.9%) and personal homepages (16.1%). However, the total internet-based communication was much higher
at 61.9% across all students. Only one respondent indicated that they used postal services as their main means of communication. The ways in which students accessed information on South Korea were also dominated by the internet with 82.2% of respondents indicating this was their main approach. There were also notable differences between student groups. Language students, for example, used the telephone considerably less (30.8%) than both tertiary (41.5%) and PTE (45.5%) students. Indeed, the main means of communication for language students was personal homepages at 32.7%. Similarly, language students also used instant messenger services much less than tertiary students (13.5% compared to 35.8%). This difference may reflect the relatively recent popularity of personal homepage systems in South Korea (and the resulting decrease in instant messenger use) (Russo & Watkins 2005) and the generally much earlier arrival of many tertiary student respondents. Cross-tabulation of respondents’ time in Auckland with their means of communication reinforces this point as all but one respondent who indicated a preference for personal homepages had been in Auckland for less than one year.

Table 9.1: Respondents’ Methods of Communication with and Accessing Information on South Korea. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main means of contact with family/friends</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant Messenger</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal homepage</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet-based means (total)</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter/postage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main means of acquiring information on Korea</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines/newspapers</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/friends in Korea</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koreans in Auckland</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other international students</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Findings from interviews discussed below illustrate that it would have been more useful to ask students about their communication with family and friends separately rather than as a single question. Students often commented that their means of communication sometimes differed quite considerably depending on who they were trying to contact.
Interviews and other research with students supported the findings in the survey but also provided more detail on the distinctions between different types of use. Most notably students often reported that they used different means of communication to keep in contact with family as opposed to friends. The telephone, for example, was noted as the most important way to keep in contact with family and boyfriends/girlfriends. Conversely, contact with general friends was usually maintained on the internet through email, instant messenger services or personal homepages. Further, although many students stated that a personal homepage was not their main way of communicating with South Korea almost all students had a personal homepage where they kept photos and interacted with contacts in Auckland, South Korea and elsewhere (this is discussed in detail later in the chapter). When students did use the telephone to contact South Korea they usually purchased discount international calling cards (see Vertovec 2004a) or received calls directly from South Korea to their house telephone or mobile phone. Finally, it is worth noting that many students also reported that they did regularly send letters and/or packages to South Korea. In Won-Sik’s (PTE, Jeju-do, 24) map (see Chapter Seven), for example, he identifies the New Zealand Post Office and made the following notation: ‘I always get to here when I need to send any letters and parcels to my girlfriend’. Many other students also noted that they sent parcels to South Korea, particularly to their parents. Usually these parcels would include products made in New Zealand, especially health products like green lipped mussel extract, deer horn, royal jelly and propolis amongst other things. Indeed, the huge number of Korean-owned businesses selling these health products in the inner-city area primarily to tourists, but also international students and longer-term migrants, suggests that these practices constitute a veritable health remittance system operating between New Zealand and South Korea.

**Time and Location of Internet Use**

The results in Table 9.2 further emphasise the significant use of the internet by students during their sojourn. Very few respondents indicated that they used the internet between 0 and 1 hours a week (8.5%) although, curiously, many more language students (15.4%) responded this way than both tertiary (3.8%) and PTE (0%) students. Most respondents used the internet between 1 and 5 hours (39%) or 5 and 15 hours (31.4%) per week. A further 21.2% of respondents used the internet for 15 hours or more per week. Tertiary students were more likely to use the internet for longer hours with as many as 34%
indicating they used it for 15 or more hours compared to only 9.6% of language students. The place of internet access differed considerably between the groups of students. Tertiary and PTE students predominantly accessed the internet in their house or flat (62.3% and 72.7% respectively). In contrast, language students used the internet equally at their house/flat and school/university – both 36.5%. Around 20% of all students accessed the internet predominantly from internet cafés.

Table 9.2: Respondents’ Time Spent on Internet and Place of Internet Access. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent on the internet per week</th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 1 hours</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 hours</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 15 hours</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ hours</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.3: Respondents’ Place of Internet Access Defined by Place of Residence. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most common place of internet access</th>
<th>Homestay % (n=28)</th>
<th>Hostel % (n=14)</th>
<th>Flat/rental % (n=63)</th>
<th>Family % (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House/flat</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/university</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Café</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-tabulation of these results with respondents’ place of residence and gender also provides useful insight (see Tables 9.3 and 9.4). Here we can see that respondents staying in flats or rental accommodation and with family are most likely to use the internet in these places (60.3% and 75% respectively) in comparison to respondents in homestays and hostels who use the internet in these places much less (39.3% and 14.3% respectively). Correspondingly the latter were more likely to use the internet at either
internet cafés or their school/university. In terms of gender it is also worth noting that male respondents were much more likely to use an internet café (30.4% compared to 12.9% of female respondents) whereas internet use at school/university was more common amongst female respondents (25.8% compared to 17.9% of male respondents). Moreover, although most internet use by both female and male respondents was between 1 and 5 hours or 5 and 15 hours per week, male respondents were more likely to spend 15 or more hours per week on the internet than their female counterparts (26.8% compared to 16.1%).

Table 9.4: Respondents’ Time Spent on Internet and Place of Access Defined by Gender.
(Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent on the internet per week</th>
<th>Female % (n=62)</th>
<th>Male % (n=56)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 1 hours</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 hours</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 15 hours</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ hours</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most common place of internet access</th>
<th>Female % (n=62)</th>
<th>Male % (n=56)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House/flat</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/university</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Café</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results were similarly borne out in interview discussions with students. Interviews also illustrated some more detail on the location that students accessed the internet. It was often noted, for example, by key informants and students who lived, or had lived in homestays that the speed of internet commonly available in New Zealand homes (compared to that available in South Korea) added to students’ sense of isolation:

[The] internet is also [a] very big problem. Here it’s very slow and some homestays, they don’t even have internet. So [because of] the internet [speed] they’re almost crazy. [The] school is also very slow so they go to the internet café… The majority prefer to go to the city, I think Korean internet café may be preferable [also] but [they] just prefer to go to the city. (Pers. Comm. 1: KS / PTE).

A number of students also indicated that they would be happy to use the internet in their place of residence or school for certain activities like email, instant messenger services or accessing information on South Korea but not for activities that required greater bandwidth like uploading and downloading photos, videos and other material. In
particular students commonly noted that they had to go to internet cafes to update their personal homepages because it took too long to upload photos and other material elsewhere.

Internet cafes, then, appear to be an important location where students communicate with family and friends in South Korea. In Auckland’s inner city students have a plethora of different internet cafes that they can patronise many of which are owned and operated by Korean-New Zealanders. These culturally specific internet cafes, known as PC bang in Korean (literally PC room), appear to be particularly important when students want to communicate on the internet in hangeul, Korean language. Indeed, in Chapter Seven all but one of the participants’ maps included reference to at least one PC bang and many identified a number of them with notations that indicated why one might be better than another. Ha-Na, for example, makes the following notations:

Internet café and singing room: “They have a lock on the door, do you know? I prefer this one because it’s good but when I’m tired or lazy I go… → … here, because it’s nearer, it’s also next to a Korean video room” (Ha-Na, LS, Seoul, 26)

In this notation Ha-Na was speaking about the PC bang she usually goes to on Queen Street and another alternative closer to her apartment. The PC bang located on Queen Street offers an interesting example of the cultural specificity of this sort of business. As Ha-Na notes, this location had a lock on the door in the form of a code that patrons must use to enter. On the door there is a sign in Korean and Japanese script that clearly states the number and the procedure to enter the internet café. Originally there was no equivalent notice in English however more recently this has been changed so that there is a note that asks English speaking patrons to press the intercom – the Korean and Japanese script still provides the access code (see Figure 9.1). Here, then, the owners of this location were using linguistic specificity to restrict access to Korean or Japanese patrons or patrons who can read these two East-Asian languages. This was an extreme example. To my knowledge no other PC bang in Auckland actively excluded customers who do not speak particular languages. Nevertheless, most PC bang do construct familiar environments for their Korean customers through particular use of written and spoken language, visual elements inside the PC bang and the use of Korean language operating systems and software.
Chapter Nine: Connecting ‘Home’ with ‘Here’

Figure 9.1: Notice on the Door of ‘Net Bar & Rock Bar’. Korean Script Reads – ‘Secret number ****#’. The Japanese script makes the same statement.

*PC bang*, then, appear to confirm Ananda Mitra’s (2006) description of internet cafés as ‘cybernetic safe places’ where online and offline familiar practices can be acted out in safe environs. Sometimes this is simply produced through a subtle coding of the environment so that it is similar to *PC bang* in South Korea but in rare cases it also includes the active exclusion of bodies that are perceived to be foreign. In addition some *PC bang* are used for or offer other services that enhance students engagement with lives in South Korea. For example, some students mentioned in interviews that they would go to *PC bang* to download movies, TV dramas or music from South Korea because it was quicker and cheaper than doing this in their residence. Some *PC bang* even prepare the latest and most popular programming so that customers can easily access it. In other cases *PC bang* are sometimes attached to different Korean focussed services including *norae bang* (singing rooms), *bidio bang* (video rooms) and *manhwa bang* (comic book rooms). This kind of agglomeration of services does not occur in South Korean cities and seems to reflect a very explicit effort to create a space of familiarity for Korean students, migrants or others in Auckland (see Figure 9.2).
Internet Domains

The final questions in the survey that related directly to students’ communication practices asked respondents which internet sites they visited most commonly. Respondents were asked to list up to three websites. Most noted one or two. The results were recorded on the basis of web-domains rather than individual pages. The results are illustrated in Table 9.5 (for a description of the websites see Table 9.6).

The main thing that should be noted from these results is the dominance of a small number of Korean-based web domains in respondents’ answers: http://www.daum.net (88.1%), http://www.cyworld.com (55.9%) and http://www.naver.co.kr (18.6%). This is not surprising given the predominance of these domains in South Korea. However, this does illustrate that students use of the internet in Auckland relies on their experience and knowledge of the internet in South Korea thus highlighting the continued importance of place related factors in cyberspace including culture, language and content. The only non-Korean based web domain was http://www.hotmail.com for which 6.8% of respondents indicated they regularly visited but even in this case users who log-in from a computer with a Korean operating system are automatically provided with a Korean language interface. The only other web domains provided by respondents appear to be individual outliers.

During interviews students also highlighted a similar range of web-domains and specific websites. Most students also identified that daum and cyworld were the most important websites they used in Auckland. These two internet portals offer different services to their members that should be outlined in a little more detail:
Table 9.5: Respondents’ Most Commonly Visited Web Domains. (Source: survey data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most commonly visited web-domain (1)</th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.daum.net">http://www.daum.net</a></td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cyworld.com">http://www.cyworld.com</a></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.naver.co.kr">http://www.naver.co.kr</a></td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.hotmail.com">http://www.hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most commonly visited web-domain (2)</th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.daum.net">http://www.daum.net</a></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cyworld.com">http://www.cyworld.com</a></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.naver.co.kr">http://www.naver.co.kr</a></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.hotmail.com">http://www.hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.keb.co.kr">http://www.keb.co.kr</a></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.godpeople.com">http://www.godpeople.com</a></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most commonly visited web-domain (3)</th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cyworld.com">http://www.cyworld.com</a></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.naver.co.kr">http://www.naver.co.kr</a></td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.hotmail.com">http://www.hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most commonly visited web-domain (totals)</th>
<th>Tertiary students % (n=53)</th>
<th>PTE students % (n=11)</th>
<th>Language students % (n=52)</th>
<th>Total % (n=118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.daum.net">http://www.daum.net</a></td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cyworld.com">http://www.cyworld.com</a></td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.naver.co.kr">http://www.naver.co.kr</a></td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.hotmail.com">http://www.hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.keb.co.kr">http://www.keb.co.kr</a></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.godpeople.com">http://www.godpeople.com</a></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results are based on the cumulative sum of all responses as a percentage of students. As such they reflect the percentage of students who chose a particular website as either their first, second or third choice.
Table 9.6: Description of Most Commonly Visited Web Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web-domain</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.daum.net">http://www.daum.net</a></td>
<td>Korean language internet portal that provides a search engine, news, shopping and community websites called ‘cafés’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cyworld.com">http://www.cyworld.com</a></td>
<td>Korean language internet portal and community that provides fixed-format personal homepages called ‘minihompi’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.naver.co.kr">http://www.naver.co.kr</a></td>
<td>Korean language internet portal that provides a search engine, news, shopping and personal homepages called ‘naver-blog’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.hotmail.com">http://www.hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Free email service provided by Microsoft. It is available in different languages including Korean.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.godpeople.com">http://www.godpeople.com</a></td>
<td>Christian based Korean language internet portal that provides a search engine, news, shopping as well as community and personal homepages called ‘cafes’ and ‘blogs’ respectively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Nine: Connecting ‘Home’ with ‘Here’

**Daum**

Daum is the most popular internet portal in South Korea. In 2001 it had a membership that exceeded 21 million and received over 3.2 billion page views per month (Yoo, Suh, & Lee 2002). It was also consistently ranked in the top ten websites for global internet traffic between 2000 and 2005 (it is still ranked in the top 100). Given that the population of South Korea is less than 50 million and that daum is only available in Korean language these are quite significant accomplishments. Although daum provides a number of different services to its members the most well known feature is the provision of community websites called ‘cafés’. There are well over a million of these cafés on daum covering topics including alumni groupings, sports clubs, apartment collectives, music, gaming, film, workplaces, politics and many others. A number of cafés also relate to overseas locations including New Zealand.

Although there are a large number of cafés that have some relation to New Zealand (around 1300) one site in particular, *New Zealand Iyagi* (New Zealand Story) is dominant. This ‘cafés’ popularity speaks volumes for itself: during my research active *New Zealand Iyagi* members have averaged around 38,000. Given that there are approximately 14,000 international students and 30,000 South Korean permanent-residents and citizens in New Zealand such a figure is staggering. The *New Zealand Iyagi* site acts as a focal point for many different South Korean migrants in New Zealand: it offers classifieds, discussion forums, information on New Zealand, and the possibility to make smaller communities within the main cafe. Many students informed me that they used *New Zealand Iyagi* before, during and after their period of sojourn. It was a means to gain information about life in Auckland, access jobs, accommodation and services, share their experiences about life in Auckland, gain a sense of belonging and after returning remember their experience with others. *New Zealand Iyagi* also hosts smaller groups within its community. Two examples of this are the Korean Volunteer Team that will be discussed in the next chapter and the inline-skating group organised by Won-Sik (see Chapter Seven). These groups have a special part of the website where they can place notices and have online discussions about their activities.

---

3 South Korean internet websites usually require the use of individuals’ national identification number. Non-Koreans must use their alien registration number if they live in South Korea or provide verified passport information. This means that this figure will represent the total number of individuals who are members of daum and not the much greater number of multiple memberships that can occur elsewhere.

4 The administrators of *New Zealand Iyagi* state on this website that they actively review the membership and that members who are no longer active are removed.
New Zealand Iyagi is, then, not dissimilar from many of the diasporic domains, portals and websites that have been the main focus of research on the use of the internet by transnational communities (see for example Adams & Ghose 2003; Chan 2005; Mallapragada 2006; Navarrete & Huerta 2006). It provides a space for the sharing of information through Korean language and the re-creation of an overseas ethno-national identity. New Zealand Iyagi also offers a safe-space where members can express viewpoints that might have no outlet in mainstream media or everyday conversation. Because of this it can be expected that New Zealand Iyagi also has considerable significance in the formation of community networks and social capital. Although the sense of community developed through an internet site like New Zealand Iyagi is probably more significant for Koreans who intend to be in Auckland for a longer period of time it is clear in interviews that the presence of such a community gathering point online offers students a sense of security while abroad and access to important services. Indeed, many students indicated that New Zealand Iyagi was the first place they went to find information on anything to do with Auckland because this is what friends had recommended they do. As such this café, amongst other forms of Korean-language media, circumvents the official production of knowledge about Auckland by facilitating the formation of shared understandings of Auckland amongst Koreans resident here.

**Cyworld**

Unlike daum, cyworld is not primarily an internet portal although it does provide some news and shopping services. Instead, cyworld specialises in providing an advanced blogging and network system based on individual and some group homepages. Alongside daum, cyworld is one of the most high profile online communities in South Korea with over 13 million members (Kim 2005; Russo & Watkins 2005). Its popularity is based principally on the development of a new form of personal homepage that integrates audio-visual media in unique ways. Cyworld members each inhabit a personal space called ‘minihompy’ represented in a pop-up screen by a virtual room called ‘miniroom’ which can be decorated to express the individual’s personality (see Figure 9.3). The design of each minihompy has many levels which include visual, textual and aural items. One part of the minihompy, sajincheop (photo-album), allows users to leave photos which visitors can view, comment on or even place on their own minihompy. Another important function of the minihompy, called bangmyeongrok
(register of visitors), allows users to leave messages that can be responded to by the minihompy owner or other visitors.

Most actions in the cyworld environment can be traced by other users. Members of cyworld, for example, can locate other members using an individual’s surname and date of birth (which must be genuine because of the requirement to use the national identification system). Also, once logged in any message left by a cyworld member is accompanied by a link to that member’s minihompy. These features are an important part of the cyworld architecture: participation in any part of the cyworld community instantly connects users by their minihompy. The system has been tailor-made to create networks. Additionally, cyworld has a function whereby the owners of minihompy can register other users as il-chon. Although not commonly used in everyday Korean language il-chon is best understood as a marker of familial relationship – a proxy for members of immediate family. Owners of minihompy can grant special privilege and access to il-chon so that they can view restricted areas or even have modification rights. The nature of the relationships between individuals is often reflected publicly in the nickname that each il-chon uses. For example in one student’s minihompy the following nicknames are used:

5 For example sam-chon, which literally means third relative, is the word for uncle in Korean; sa-chon, fourth relative, is equivalent to cousin. As such il-chon, first relative, is best understood to mean brother or sister even though it is not used in this way.

The references to brothers and sisters here are not literal but reflect the common extension of the family archetype into Korean inter-personal relationships and language – seniors are often referred to as older brother or sister, juniors as younger siblings. In any case deference on the basis of age is mandatory. Cyworld, it appears, does not simply maintain this form of sociality but actually extends it. Indeed, research in South Korea has revealed that rather than circumventing societal mores cyworld has reinforced in particular ways existing hierarchies of age and status amongst users (Hwang & Kim 2000; Kim 2005; Lee 2001; Park 2003).

**The Uses of Cyworld Minihompy**

As part of the research for this thesis I conducted a content analysis of seven cyworld minihompy used by individual students. The aim of this analysis was to identify general patterns of use of these technologies and in particular consider the role that they played in the transnational lives of students. The focus was particularly on the contacts that were maintained in, and the images posted on, cyworld. This content analysis was complemented by discussions in interviews with all students about the role that technologies like cyworld played in their everyday lives. Table 9.7 provides the details on the students whose minihompy were included in this analysis.

---

6 The aim is not to undertake a comprehensive analysis of material on personal websites. Such a task is well beyond the scope of this thesis particularly because the nature of cyworld minihompy means that some have literally thousands of continuously growing entries and photographs so that even full analysis of one minihompy might require months of continuous research.
Chapter Nine: Connecting ‘Home’ with ‘Here’

Table 9.7: Cyworld Minihompy Start Date, Number and Location of Il-chon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arrival in Auckland</th>
<th>Cyworld Start Date</th>
<th>Il-chon Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin-Hye, TS, Seoul, 23</td>
<td>Oct 2003</td>
<td>Mar 2003</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su-Mi, TS, Seoul, 23</td>
<td>Jan 2000</td>
<td>Dec 2003</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin-Yeong, LS, Busan, 26</td>
<td>Aug 2004</td>
<td>Oct 2002</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu-Mi, LS, Jeolla-do, 21</td>
<td>Feb 2005</td>
<td>Mar 2003</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul, LS, Jeolla-do, 26</td>
<td>Nov 2004</td>
<td>Nov 2004</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Uk, LS, Seoul, 24</td>
<td>Jun 2004</td>
<td>Jan 2004</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cyworld as a Transnational Diary

The content of individual minihompy varies considerably – they are of course intentionally customisable. However, there is also a certain amount of similarity in the ways in which students use their minihompy in Auckland. In particular it appears that students’ use of their minihompy was an important way to record and remember experiences in Auckland. Indeed, Table 9.7 illustrates that three students, Su-Mi, Paul and Pedro, only started using cyworld after they arrived in Auckland. In part this reflects the time at which cyworld emerged as a popular internet tool in 2003 and 2004 (Russo & Watkins 2005). However, it also illustrates the fact that cyworld plays a role in the lives of transnational Koreans that probably differs from those resident in South Korea. Another student, Sang-Taek, noted that he only opened a cyworld minihompy because he came to Auckland:

Yes, I have one – I put pictures there. Actually, when I was in Korea I don’t have a homepage but most of my friends have that so I want to keep in touch with now that I have a homepage. (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27).

On many of the students’ minihompy analysed here images and discussion of life and experiences in Auckland are pronounced. In their sajincheop (photo-album), many students have whole sections dedicated to school, travel, friends and other categories. Anecdotally this differs from the material posted to cyworld minihompy of contacts I have in South Korea and Korean-New Zealanders. These minihompy tend to have fewer photographs and descriptions of everyday life and more often include images from movies, TV, music, comic books and other popular culture. It was also clear from the
number of comments left in relation to individual photographs on students’ _minihompy_ that friends in South Korea do actually look at and engage with the content of these images. Moreover, in cases where students didn’t update their _minihompy_ regularly they were often queried by friends in South Korea. The following text is a translation of one such query on Paul’s _minihompy_:

> I have setup the _il-chon_ relationships… I have gone inside [your _minihompy_]. But.. why are there so few pictures here? Are you living secretly? I have closed my _bangmyeongrok_ [visitor book] for a little while… I will come here often… If you are going to write… please send a message or a note~~

Entry on Paul’s Cyworld _Minihompy_

In addition to images of life ‘here’ most _sajincheop_ also contained sections that related to students’ life in South Korea. These would include images of family and friends as well as favorite places and foods in their hometowns. Notably these sections often had fewer comments as they appear to be more for the students themselves than visitors to the website – a form of remembrance. In these ways _cyworld_ appears to constitute a form of online transnational diary that can be used to share information between Auckland and South Korea as well as remember elements of lives lived ‘back home’.

Min-Gyeong explains:

> We used to have a diary each; like it’s a diary and you put like stickers and you would stick photos of friends, it’s like offline kind of thing, it’s like offline _cyworld_. [With cyworld] it’s changed to online trend now and everyone’s doing it and even the celebrity in Korea is doing it, so it’s becoming really really popular.

(Min-Gyeong, TS, Gwangju, 23).

The content of individual _minihompy_ reflects this use as a diary. Most of what is recorded either as images or text is simply the stuff of everyday life: places of residence, education, employment or leisure; individuals like friends, family and acquaintances; or activities that are both pleasurable and not so pleasurable. Indeed, in contrast to much of the literature on transnational migrants and the internet these minihompy were rarely used for political purposes. The one exception to this was Pedro’s (LS, Gyeongsang-do, 25) _minihompy_ which contained a background image opposing Japanese claims to the _Dok-do/Takeshima_ islets in the East Sea (see Figure 9.4).
Chapter Nine: Connecting ‘Home’ with ‘Here’

Interestingly, it is in this very banal everyday-ness that cyworld seems to become an affective place: the owners of and visitors to minihompy are able to construct a meaningful space of attachment that also serves to make sense of the differences and distances between South Korea and Auckland:

Everyone is using that [cyworld] and it’s about myself. I can put pictures and other things – how do I say… my friends… I can write about me and anything else on the internet. (Su-Mi, TS, Seoul, 23).

Two examples of the sorts of discussions that commonly appear on cyworld minihompy are illustrated in Figures 9.5 and 9.6. Put simply these sorts of discussions might seem pointless to those who are not involved. However, it appears that this is exactly why cyworld is such an effective tool in the transnational lives of students. The conversations that occur in their minihompy are rarely political, intellectual or spectacular. Instead, they are banal and meaningless to those not involved – just like most conversations that most people engage in most days. What is significant, however, is that cyworld constitutes a space not only where these conversations can safely and comfortably take place but also where they can include individuals who are physically separated by huge distances. In short, these minihompy allow differently located users to virtually inhabit the same space at the same time.

---

7 In 2004 and 2005 a dispute emerged between South Korea and Japan over the sovereignty of the Dok-do/Takeshima islets. In South Korean popular culture, including cyworld, expressions of national pride and ownership of the islets became both common and fervent during the period of this research.
A meeting between people born in 1983

Il-chon 1 (Korea): You seem to have lost some weight… you’re looking a lot better.

Il-chon 2 (NZ): Now I’m remembering this day…

Teacher and Students
Teacher.. he’s so kind.. k k [giggling]
He’s tall also.. but, he’s married.. his baby is three.. k k
His face is small too.. He’s my ideal type.. kya kya [giggling]

Il-chon 1 (Korea): If you see any man you always think he’s your type - -

Il-chon 2 (Korea): You have to meet a foreigner~~ the perfect height

Il-chon 2 (Korea): Then~ does your face work in foreign country? [Do they think you are attractive?] Su-Mi: Not at all. They don’t even take one look.. k k

Il-chon 3: I have taken this photo..

Cyworld and Inter-personal Networks

The different functions and features of cyworld that were described earlier are part of the reasons why it is such an effective way to maintain contact with friends and family in South Korea. Students are able to keep connections in either a real-time environment or an environment that simulates real-time experience. Jin-Yeong (LS, Busan, 26) explains:

Nowadays Korean, Korean cyworld is the best way keep in touch with each other. Because it has quite easier way, it’s way to keep in touch with il-chon and just click and I can visit. Maybe over 100 people just click and click and click. If I send an email, just ah you know email address I have to write down and blah blah and send and blah blah but click my il-chon’s name and I can visit their hompy and I can watch their photos because I’m here and I don’t know how they live so
cyworld is useful to take you to watch how they are living and how they are look like.

The ease with which users can move through their friendship networks means that cyworld can act as a window to lives that are now physically distant – as Jin-Yeong states cyworld can ‘take you to watch how they are living and how they are look like’. As such, cyworld constitutes a virtual connection or connecting space between the lives of students in Auckland and their friends and family in South Korea. In an interview after returning to South Korea another student, Sin-Hye (TS, Seoul, 23), highlighted the extent to which this connection impacts on the maintenance of relationships:

[It’s been] quite long time but my friends told me ‘oh we met just two years ago, we have two years gone, two years gone!’ But um she told me maybe she can’t recognise me that we had two years gone. Just she thought ‘two years? I can’t believe two years.’ She said ‘we just met last day, or two months ago’. Because we having met through the internet, cyworld or email feel like continuing or something like that.

The connectivity apparent in cyworld does not only help maintain inter-personal networks between Auckland and South Korea however. Rather, many of the minihompy analysed for this research had a significant number of il-chon in Auckland as well (see Table 9.7). Indeed, in a point that again emphasises the mediation of online encounters by offline experience, Su-Mi (TS, Seoul, 23), a student who has been in Auckland for six years has a much greater number of il-chon in this city than she does in South Korea. Finally, three of the seven students’ minihompy analysed here also had il-chon relationships with individuals who were outside of both Auckland and South Korea.

Figure 9.7 illustrates the transnationality of the relationships maintained in one cyworld minihompy.

In this figure we are presented with the particular transnational connections that are maintained through Pedro’s cyworld minihompy. As this figure illustrates, ten of Pedro’s il-chon live in South Korea, seven in Auckland and one each in Australia and Japan. The dotted lines illustrate separate connections between Pedro’s different il-chon. In addition to illustrating some of the transnational practice that manifests in this minihompy these relationships are also a reflection of the journey’s made by Pedro and others (see Figure 9.8).
Pedro originally came to Auckland in February 2004. He setup a cyworld *minihompy* to keep in contact with his friends and brothers in South Korea. In Auckland he made a number of *il-chon* relationships with individuals he met at school and amongst members of the Korean Volunteer Team that he established (discussed at length in Chapter Ten). After spending one year in Auckland Pedro returned to South Korea and made plans to get a working holiday visa to go to Australia. A few months later he left South Korea to work, study and live in Brisbane. In the meantime two other members of the Korean Volunteer Team left Auckland to return to South Korea in one case and live in Osaka, Japan in another. As well as maintaining connections with Pedro these individuals also maintained an *il-chon* connection with themselves and others in Auckland. Six months after going to Australia Pedro returned to Auckland to study English. In Auckland he also maintained regular contact with at least one *il-chon* that he met in Brisbane.

This map and description of Pedro’s *il-chon* networks illustrates two important points. Firstly, it highlights the particularly mobile experience of one individual and the centrality of co-national relationships in the arrival in, inhabitation of, and departure from particular locales. These relationships and the maintenance of them through cyworld are important grounding tactics. Indeed, Pedro’s *il-chon* networks are virtual manifestations of the face-to-face connections that he has made through all of this movement and the transnationality that he is able to exercise as a result. Secondly, the...
separate connections between his il-chon in South Korea and Japan point to the fact that this illustration only provides the faintest trace of the networks that might exist here. Given the purpose of cyworld and the way that the system architecture works it is highly likely that all of these il-chon will maintain a number of other connections through cyworld themselves. Moreover, it is likely that some of these connections will overlap with each other, particularly within specific localities like Pedro’s hometown in South Korea, Gyeongju, and Auckland. What this suggests then is that cyworld constitutes another ‘bridge’ (c.f. Chapter Five) that helps maintain contact regardless of the physical locale that individuals inhabit. This is not to suggest that cyworld creates these connections or the possibility for these connections – they all existed offline first – but rather that it serves to increase ‘the density, realtime character, and flexibility’ (Portes 2001) of these connections as they take shape within and between different localities.

**Connecting Home, Hompy and Here**

The analysis of cyworld minihompy so far has suggested that this internet tool is a means of communication that offers students a method of grounding their lives in Auckland through the maintenance of offline relationships online. As such cyworld offers a way to negotiate the positive and negative experiences of living abroad through friendships in Auckland, South Korea and elsewhere. However, like all other online activities, cyworld is not free of the constraints of offline experience. Rather, the practices that constitute the cyworld ‘bridge’ are thoroughly implicated in the offline realities of social interaction – surveillance, discipline, inclusion and exclusion. This much is already apparent in Korean-based research on cyworld and other internet activities that suggest online life tends to reproduce and sometimes extend rather than circumvent the uneven relationships that exist between individuals (Kim 2005; Park 2003). This is also the case for students in Auckland. In particular it appears to take shape in the connections that are made between ‘home’ (South Korea), students’ minihompy and ‘here’ (Auckland).

Home, as Mary Douglas (1991: 79) suggests, ‘starts by bringing some space under control’. Home is where we have the knowledge, skills and relationships to fully access and control space (Hage 1997). During their sojourn in Auckland South Korean international students are separated physically from home. They are ‘here’ as noted in
Jin-Yeong’s statement – ‘I am here’ – which implied that ‘here’ is not where family and friends are, here is not the place that I control, here is not home. Amongst other tactics like ethno-national relationships and culinary consumption, cyworld helps students to connect ‘home’ with ‘here’ through the virtual space of the minihompy. This connection takes shape in multiple ways. Not least is the fact that cyworld, as described above, allows students to maintain real-time or ostensibly real-time relationships that are visual, aural and highly expressive. Secondly, cyworld also allows students to create and control their own world – much time, money and probably emotion can be invested to produce the ideal minihompy just as much time, money and emotion can be invested in the production of homes. Minihompy are also like the diary that many students recall using in the 1990s but they are also so much more. They provide a space that is always accessible, that can store and display memories and where people can share feelings and ideas. It is very much a space that students can bring under control and one that connects South Korea, their hometown, neighbourhood and indeed home with here, Auckland, the locality they inhabit. To use the language of James Clifford (1992) and more recently Nick Clarke (2005), cyworld allows students to simultaneously ‘travel-in-dwelling’ while ‘dwelling-in-travel’ – it not only connects them to ‘home’ and all that is associated with that but it also brings a sense of home here.

The connection between ‘home’ and ‘here’ that is facilitated by cyworld is not simply benign however. Indeed, like any other experience of home the connection created in students’ minihompy is characterised by constraints as well as opportunities. In particular, cyworld appears to also act as a form of surveillance and by doing so facilitates the extension of Korean social norms to lives in Auckland through subtle and sometimes not so subtle disciplining of the actions of individual students. In subtle ways the similarities in the content of individual minihompy suggests that there are expectations about the kind of material that students will post and the kind of discussions that should occur in this space. There are also instances of much more explicit acts of disciplining in some students’ experiences. Ha-Na’s experience, described in Figure 9.9, is exemplary.
When Ha-Na first came to Auckland she was quite an active user of cyworld. She had already used the different minihompy functions quite extensively in South Korea but in Auckland she found it a great way to keep in contact with friends and family while abroad. However, about half way through her sojourn in Auckland Ha-Na was contacted by an old class-mate from her elementary school. This class-mate was not a friend of Ha-Na’s but had tracked her down using the search function (as noted above you only need a date of birth and name to find an individual). Once he found Ha-Na’s minihompy this individual started leaving abusive messages that were critical of the photos posted in her sajinceop. In particular, he seemed to take offence at photos of Ha-Na in bars and photos of her with non-Korean men. As a result of these messages Ha-Na closed her minihompy and created a new one where non-il-chon could not view her images. In addition she also started to self-censor the type of photos she posted and the discussions she had with contacts on her minihompy.

Figure 9.9: Ha-Na’s (LS, Seoul, 26) Experience of Surveillance through Cyworld

Ha-Na’s experience points to the kind of surveillance that the cyworld system not only allows but actually seems to encourage. In this case, her actions – recorded on her minihompy – were attacked through a form of patriarchal nationalism that seeks to discipline the Korean female body. Her choice to close and re-open her minihompy and more importantly censor the material that is posted there reflects her realisation that she could be watched by anyone at anytime. The extent of this experience of surveillance was exceptional but more subtle experiences were not uncommon amongst students. In particular a number of female students informed me that they had increasingly felt like they were constantly being watched through cyworld not only by strangers but also by their friends and family in South Korea and New Zealand. Sang-Hee (TS, Gwangju, 23), for example, noted that a friend of hers has ‘lots of random people coming on her hompy, lot of random never seen before in her life and they come and leave bangmyeongrok, anyway she doesn’t know who that is so we think that’s problem’. In another case a student admitted that they themselves used cyworld to watch their ex-boyfriend’s life while they were in Auckland. In this context, then, we might view the earlier statement from Jin-Yeong in a different light: ‘cyworld is useful to take you to watch how they are living and how they are look like’. The thing about cyworld is that it also allows others to come and watch ‘how [you] are living and how [you] are looking like’.

Finally, it’s worth highlighting here that cyworld can also play a role in the distance that students feel exists between themselves, home and here. Cyworld and the offline environments that students inhabit while using cyworld are characterised by particular forms of inclusion and exclusion. Most notably cyworld is a Korean language system and places like PC bang are also either explicitly exclusive or more commonly
implicitly coded towards particular ethno-national bodies. These online and offline spaces then include students and promote belonging through encounters with ethno-nationality and home. However, they do this principally at the expense of encounters with non-Korean individuals and spaces. Given the significant time spent on cyworld communicating with South Korea, the common topics and language, or indeed dominant social norms that are reproduced in this communication, internet activities are likely to also play a role in students’ feelings of estrangement in Auckland. For one, these practices only connect students to home through their minihompy by highlighting the fact that they are not in fact at home but are a great distance away (both physically and culturally) in Auckland. Secondly, the comfort that students may receive from cyworld and hence the significant time spent using it actually makes it more difficult for students to engage with individuals who are not Korean and learn English (in the case of language students) the very reasons why so many choose to study overseas in the first place (c.f. Clarke 2005). Like offline co-national friendship networks and the reinforcement of familiar everyday practices like culinary consumption (as discussed in Chapter Eight) these actions often play a significant role in drawing boundaries around the bodies of students by policing the border between what is Korean and what is non-Korean. As these borders are reproduced in this way students may well feel a greater sense of attachment but simultaneously they may feel that the differences between them and others are far too great to bridge.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to detail the role and influence of different communication technologies in the everyday transnational lives of South Korean international students in Auckland. I have illustrated here that students actually use a range of different technologies to maintain connections with South Korea ranging from older forms like postal services and the telephone through to a range of internet tools including email, messenger services and community and personal homepages. The infrastructure that maintains access to these technologies – PC bang, Korean shops selling phone cards, and health food businesses – are also another important feature of the transnational economies of Korean-New Zealand immigrant entrepreneurs in Auckland. Indeed, the operation of businesses that provide these services, alongside other immigrant operations like restaurants and grocery stores (see Chapter Eight), are
playing a role in the changing urban landscape of Auckland’s inner city. This is not just apparent at a general level but also in the ways that individual South Korean international students might construct their everyday lives differently as a result. The internal spaces of *PC bang*, for example, constitute ‘cybernetic safe places’ (Mitra 2006) that are familiar to students both in terms of their visual and aural features but also in terms of the online spaces they provide access to and as such play a role in the ways in producing ethno-nationally centred feelings of belonging in Auckland.

I have also illustrated in this chapter that that each of these technologies are used to communicate with different individuals in different ways or to access different kinds of resources. Nevertheless, all of these technologies play a fundamental role in the lives of students. On the one hand they ground students’ lives here in Auckland by facilitating inter-personal networks and sharing of knowledge and resources. However, they also serve to bring a sense of home – both the specific home and family lives of students and a more general South Korean home – here to Auckland. The significance of this should not be underestimated. As Sin-Hye’s comments reveal the use of such technologies allows students to maintain relationships in ‘virtually’ the same way that they did in South Korea. As such these technologies simultaneously provide the means to shrink the distance between here and home while also giving students a way to negotiate the differences and distances between Auckland and South Korea that materialise in both sojourn and return.

Generally, this process of connecting ‘home’ with ‘here’, which was most apparent in students’ *minihompy*, has positive outcomes. However, I have also identified the ways in which communication technologies and in particular advanced internet tools like cyworld can be problematic in students’ lives. Firstly, these technologies do not simply facilitate one-way traffic between here, Auckland, and home, South Korea. Rather, they work to bring home closer to here and by doing so extend both the opportunities offered by home and the constraints. In short, while students can certainly engage in the lives of friends in South Korea, individuals in South Korea can also engage in their lives, which in some cases can include attempts to discipline the bodies and actions of individuals students like Ha-Na. Furthermore, while cyworld certainly serves as an important way to establish and maintain social networks these can serve as limits as well as opportunities. Indeed, such social networks and the border policing work that they can sometimes do are likely to limit students’
opportunities for encounters outside of co-nationality – a fact that appears to make their objectives in Auckland more rather than less difficult.

In the next chapter I investigate some of the alternative spaces that South Korean international students produce during their time in Auckland with particular emphasis on the ‘Korean Volunteer Team’ (KVT), a group of individuals that met once a week to collect rubbish in the inner city. The discussion of communication practices here has important implications for qualifying this because the emergence of activities like the KVT relies on the social networks described here and their maintenance through both cyworld minihompy and the New Zealand Iyagi website. This chapter moves beyond a description of the activities of this group as exemplary of many of the other points made in this thesis to suggest that their actions can be conceived as a form of encounter that challenges the fixity of borders that many other parts of this thesis has illustrated.
Chapter Ten

VOLUNTEERING, SOCIAL NETWORKS, CONTACT ZONES AND RUBBISH

The Case of the ‘Korean Volunteer Team’

It’s Saturday afternoon and a group of Korean students have gathered outside Whitcoulls bookstore in downtown Auckland.

They are not here to shop or chat over coffee. As shoppers bustle by they pass around black rubbish bags, grab some oversize tongs – imported especially from Korea – and put on their backpacks.

They call themselves the Korean Volunteer Team and for the past few months they have helped clean up the central city streets.

International Student Won Joon Cho cleans up around a bus stop on Albert St. Picture / Amos Chapple

In this chapter I discuss the activities of the small group of students described in Figure 10.1. The Korean Volunteer Team (KVT), as they became known, were a group of South Korean international students who established an informal association that sought to make a positive contribution by volunteering time to pick up rubbish in the inner city of Auckland. For nearly two years this group of individuals gave up two hours of their personal time every week in an effort to engage with other inhabitants in Auckland through voluntary service. Their story is important to this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, the practical characteristics of the KVT provide a useful example of how the different practices discussed in this thesis (walking, eating and communicating) come together through the social networks that are maintained between individuals. Secondly, and more importantly, the experiences and practices of the KVT offers insight into the possibilities for encounters between South Korean international students and other
inhabitants in Auckland – how individuals might learn to negotiate, if not cross, borders. To address these issues the chapter proceeds in the following order: I begin by introducing some literature on the practices of voluntary work with particular emphasis on the long-standing recognition that migrants have a notable penchant for such activities. Secondly, I consider some of the literature around the cultural politics contact-zones. Then, using insights from these literatures I elucidate the story of the KVT through my own experiences as a member and through the words of its founder, Cho Won-Jun, or, as he was known in Auckland, Pedro.

**The Work of Volunteers**

In geography and many of its cognate disciplines there has been an increasing concern with the role played by volunteers in society (Brown & Lehto 2005; Bryson, McGuinness, & Ford 2002; Clary & Snyder 1999; Kendall & Knapp 1995; Milligan & Conradson 2006; Milligan & Fyfe 2004; Owen & Kearns 2006). In large part this research has been concerned with more formalised efforts to provide welfare and support services particularly in response to contractions of the welfare-state. These are important considerations; however, they are also tangential to my concerns here. In contrast to this growing interest in the place of the formal voluntary sector (Milligan & Fyfe 2004) there appears to be a relative dearth of research into the practices of more informal voluntary work (Roberts & Devine 2004; see however Milligan 2003). As Jose Moya (2005: 835) highlights this is primarily because the lack of records in informal and small scale associations means that ‘historians [and others] tend to focus on the larger and more institutionalised associations, particularly those that had legal personality, engaged in formal politics, or dealt with the state’. Indeed, much has been made of the framing of voluntary associations as the ‘shadow state’ (Wolch 1990) and the implications for their operations in the light of neo-liberal retrenchment of state services (Owen & Kearns 2006; Milligan & Conradson 2006). Conversely, informal voluntary associations like the KVT appear, on the surface at least, to be less significant in societal terms and relatively short-lived in nature. However, such a perspective overlooks the fact that there is probably a huge amount of undocumented and unrecognised informal voluntary work that takes place on an everyday basis under the auspices of neighbourliness that makes highly significant contributions to the lives of both donors and recipients. Indeed, John Michael Roberts and Fiona Devine (2004)
have suggested that recent moves by the British state to formalise voluntary work and integrate volunteers into state-led welfare provision may reduce the level of voluntary work, the pleasure gained by volunteers themselves and the positive outcomes for recipients. As such they argue that a progressive understanding of voluntary work needs to be open to the different contingencies of both formal and informal efforts.

There is also a significant literature that investigates the role that immigrant voluntary organisations play in the formation of social networks and communities both within and between sending and receiving states. Indeed, some of the earliest work within the framework of ‘transnationalism’ focussed specifically on the cross-border practices of groups like hometown associations that provided social, economic and political support for small scale development projects in migrants’ origin locales (Basch et al. 1994). Here too, however, the focus has been disproportionately on the formalised elements of immigrant associations and, particularly of late, on those whose actions or influence cross national borders (Babcock 2006; Itzigsohn & Saucedo 2002; Owusu 2000; Schrover & Vermeulen 2005). Nevertheless, this literature does provide useful insight into the reasons why migrants appear to establish a disproportionate number of voluntary groups (Moya 2005) and the perceived benefits from such civic involvement. In regards to the latter, for instance, Walter Lalich (2006: 210) suggests that:

Immigrant organisations are central to the process of adaptation to a new social environment; they play a key role in expression of identity, cultural transfer and maintenance… They are also places of social exchange and communication, not only with other co-ethnic immigrants, but also with other social groups in the host city.

Indeed, research with recent migrant groups in Auckland has confirmed these assertions to suggest that voluntary action, whether formal or informal, gives otherwise estranged individuals a way to be involved in the community (Tse & Liew 2004). By establishing social networks and a sense of identity in the host community (what has been referred to as belonging in previous chapters) migrants are likely to feel greater levels of social embedded-ness and engagement with society as a whole. In contrast however, some scholars like Marlou Schrover and Floris Vermeulen (2005: 824) argue that ‘[b]y forming an [co-nationally based] organisation, immigrants fence off their ethnic or national identity from others’ and may in fact feel greater distance between themselves and the host society (see also Marquez 2001). As such, it is worth noting that the
outcomes of involvement in voluntary organisations depends very much on the nature of the association itself and the practices that they are engaged in.

There are a number of reasons why voluntary organisations emerge in different locale in different ways. More often than not however, the particularities of the context of emergence play a significant role. This much is already apparent in the literature on migrant voluntary groups because their efforts are essentially responses to the migration process and the difficulties encountered within host societies (Moya 2005). More generally too, Christine Milligan and David Conradson (2006: 7) observe that ‘[v]oluntary action commonly develops in response to localised need and interests that change over time and space, hence the geographies of voluntarism are often uneven’. Indeed, I will argue later in this chapter that the voluntary activity of the KVT is thoroughly implicated in localised experiences of students in Auckland. However, we must also be careful not to place too much emphasis on the scale of locality at the expense of those who actually choose to volunteer, individuals. John Michael Roberts and Fiona Devine (2004: 290) counter this with a reminder that ‘[a]lthough it was rare for people to pursue an interest entirely on their own, in the sense that voluntary activity would be initiated through friendship and family networks, we also found that the mobilizing force of the event was often a highly personalized and in some instances emotional experience’. This individuality to voluntary action is also an important characteristic of the discussion in this chapter. As I will detail later, the establishment of the KVT and its relatively lengthy operation (given the transience of its members) were the result of one individual’s personal experience and motivations.

Cultural ‘Contact Zones’

The idea of a ‘contact-zone’ is a spatial metaphor employed to describe and interrogate inter-cultural contact in historical and contemporary contexts. The most commonly cited exposition is offered by Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 10) who, in relation to colonial encounters, is seeking out ‘contestatory expressions from the site of imperial intervention’ that might allow for alternatives to the forces of colonialism. In this regard, the ‘contact-zone’ is defined as ‘an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect’ (Pratt 1992: 7). Pratt is not alone in seeking out such possibilities. Indeed, the notion of alternatives to colonialism, disjunctures around
the constitution of borders, and the creation of hybrid spaces and identities have been
the backbone of much postcolonial theorising (Ang 2001; Anzaldúa 1987; Bhabha
1994; Giroux 1992; hooks 1990). These efforts have been useful not only for the ways
that they make space for encounters beyond fixed understandings like other/self, west/east, black/white and south/north but also for the attention that they draw to the
difficulties of lives on the borders between cultures. However, these approaches are also
problematic because they commonly slip into a utopic affirmation of hybridity as an
inherently progressive and resistant force. Ien Ang (2001: 17), one of the later and more
measured theorists of hybridity, points to just this issue when she argues that
‘[h]ybridity is not the solution [in itself], but alerts us to the incommensurability of
differences, their ultimately irreducible resistance to complete dissolution.’

In this chapter I employ the notion of a ‘contact-zone’ in a much more modest and
everyday fashion. Indeed, rather than following the abstracted theorisations of this idea
noted above I draw inspiration here from grounded empirical investigations of
encounters between individuals who conceive themselves as being separated by borders
– ‘a sense of embodied presence within geographical space’ (Yeoh & Willis 2005: 271).
Brenda Yeoh and Katie Willis (2005) offer a useful example of this kind of study in
their investigation of the cultural politics of encounter that occurs in the transnational
sojourns of Singaporean and British transmigrants in mainland China (see also Yeoh
1999; 2004). Here the authors suggest that the cultural politics of ‘contact zones’ is
characterised by a multiplicity of complex interactions between these transnational
sojourners and the ‘local’ Chinese that lead to different sorts of relationships between
differently positioned embodied beings. Moreover, they argue that the constantly
shifting nature of these relationships means that there is always the possibility, but not
inevitability, for cultural politics of a more cosmopolitan variety. Amanda Wise (2005)
has also written about this kind of grounded experience of contact-zones. Her work in
the multicultural-suburb of Ashfield in Sydney identifies the ‘hope’ for different sorts of
encounters amongst the everyday difficulties of difference. Despite the fact that most of
her research revealed continued expressions of racism and the maintenance of strong
and fixed borders between individuals, Wise notes in a hopeful way that different sorts
of encounters did take place. In particular, she found that individual efforts to reach out,
from both the longer-term Anglo-Celtic residents and newer ‘Asian’ arrivals, played a
part in opening up spaces of encounter, spaces of hope. These sorts of grounded
investigations of ‘contact-zones’ suggest that it is necessary to focus on the uneven power relations that characterise all encounters between difference. However, these approaches also highlight the fact that such encounters do not have to lead to continued difference and disjuncture but can in fact open up spaces for everyday examples of ‘togetherness-in-difference’ (Ang 2001) or the ‘multicultural real’ (Hage 1998).

**Contact-zones in Auckland**

In many ways the everyday lives of South Korean international students during their sojourn in Auckland are almost always enacted in ‘contact-zones’. As Ien Ang (2001: 89-90) notes, ‘[t]he global city, in this sense, is one large and condensed contact zone… because groups of different backgrounds, ethnic and otherwise, cannot help but enter into relations with each other, no matter how great the desire for separateness and the attempt to maintain cultural purity.’ There have been traces of these experiences in contact-zones noted throughout the different chapters this thesis. These traces include amongst other things: the racist representations of the ‘Asian’ student in Auckland’s print media, which result at least partially from one perspective on actual experiences of encounters (Chapter Five); the stories of individual students’ encounters with racism (Chapter Six); Won-Sik’s individual encounters with difference (Chapter Seven); both positive and negative experiences in homestays (Chapters Six and Eight); and efforts to overcome the rigidity of borders through culinary practice (Chapter Eight). In addition, perhaps the potentially most significant ‘contact-zone’ in students’ lives has not been discussed at all in this thesis because it is outside the bounds of the research. That is, the educational institute which individual students attend, whether tertiary, language school or private training establishment. Each of these ‘contact-zones’ offer opportunities for encounter. Yet, such encounters can be both positive and negative. They can lead students to seek out familiarity and often as a result reinforce the perceived impenetrability of borders. Alternatively, they can offer opportunities for shared experiences that while not absent of borders serve to circumvent or challenge the apparent rigidity of difference. All of these encounters could be analysed through the spatial metaphor of contact-zones. However, instead of re-iterating these stories through a different lens I offer in this chapter a new narrative that illustrates possibilities for hope in the everyday spaces of Auckland.
The Korean Volunteer Team

The Korean Volunteer Team was formed and originally led by one South Korean international student Pedro, who attended language schools in Auckland between 2004 and 2005. It was maintained as a group with regular weekly meetings for nearly one and a half years between May 2004 and August 2005 (I was a member of the KVT from January-August 2005). After spending one year in Auckland Pedro returned to South Korea in March 2005 (see also Chapter Nine). At that time another member, Seon-Jun (LS, Daegu, 25) took over leadership of the group. In addition to Pedro and Seon-Jun there were also two other members who always attended during the time that I was a member of the KVT, Jeremy (PTE, Seoul, 21) and Tyrell (South Korean on a working holiday visa), and a large number of other individuals who attended intermittently. The KVT eventually stopped meeting in August 2005, mostly because the members had lost enthusiasm for the rubbish collecting activities – something that had increasingly been the case since Pedro left Auckland. It seemed that it was always his personal drive and charisma that had motivated others. As such, it is appropriate to begin with Pedro’s story.

Pedro’s Story

Pedro came to study English in Auckland in February 2004. He comes from Gyeongju in the South-Western province of Gyeongsang-do. Gyeongju is a relatively small city in South Korea with a population of 280,000 but is quite famous as the historic capital of the Silla kingdom, which ruled the peninsula from 57BCE to 935CE. When he was thinking about studying English overseas Pedro considered going to Canada, Australia, the United States of America, New Zealand and the Philippines. He eventually decided to come to New Zealand because his uncle had suggested that it had the best mix: not as racist as Australia and the United States, safe, green and not too expensive. His father suggested he come to Auckland because it was the biggest city and was hence most likely to have the best schools. Pedro enjoyed living in Auckland, however he was also concerned with the way in which people seemed to treat him and the apparent distances that existed between different ethno-national groupings. It is partly for this reason that he decided to establish the Korean Volunteer Team. Pedro’s explanation is provided below:
My name is Cho Won Joon (called Pedro in New Zealand). I was the leader of the Korean Volunteer Team.

I organised the Korean Volunteer Team to clean Auckland city’s downtown and Queen Street every Saturday for 2 hours by picking up rubbish. We started it on the 29th of May 2004. At the beginning of this activity, the team was formed by five people who were all Korean international students. The reason why I started this activity is that I was extremely shocked by my home-stay granddaughter. She asked me "where is Korea in Japan?" She thought that Korea was a part of Japan because of the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup.

Furthermore, when a police officer visited my institute to teach international students, who were from China, Japan and Korea, about traffic regulations and how to drive in Auckland one of my English lecturers complained about why many Asian students came to New Zealand and made problems such as car accidents, making dirty, spitting and gambling. At that time, there was a serious problem which was that one Asian guy killed a Kiwi person in a car accident.

I realised that many Kiwi people do not know in terms of Korea and Korean people exactly and they have a stereotype that Asians are the cause of many social problems and dirty. I supposed that this is because some naughty Chinese international students performed badly. Therefore, I tried to find the way to change Kiwi’s idea about Asian people and Korean international students. Unfortunately, there were limited opportunities. For instance, when Asian people want to help the old people who are living in care houses we should have English license such as social welfare license from New Zealand because they do not want to have responsibility for any accident. Also, we did not have enough money to donate some somewhere. So I and my friends decided to make the cleaning team. This is because it was the best way to show our clean image to them.

Therefore, I advertised my team on Korean internet community [New Zealand Iyagi]. After that we could have more and more members. Especially, after our team was reported by the New Zealand Herald [see Figure 10.1]. Hence, it became bigger and bigger. The biggest number of volunteer member was approximately 25. Consequently, we had Chinese and Japanese members because they were interested in my team.

In conclusion, I guess that while we were doing this volunteering, there were some changes in native people's mind about Asian international students. It was a marvelous opportunity to international students who did not have any activity in the weekend. Sadly, after I came back to Korea, there is not the Korean Volunteer Team any longer. I am so sorry for that. In my personal opinion people should make these kind of activity groups because there are many chance to meet different people and help the society, which is the place we live in.
Korean Volunteer Team Activities

As Pedro’s statement indicates the KVT’s activities were mostly centred on picking up rubbish in Auckland’s inner city. The team would meet every Saturday at 2pm at the corner of Queen and Victoria Streets outside Whitcoulls, a large and well known bookstore. After meeting, exchanging greetings and handing out rubbish bags, t-shirts and tongs the group would start on one of three walking routes. According to Pedro when the KVT was at its peak (up to 25 members) they would divide themselves into groups that would each take a different route. However, for most of the time that I was involved there were only about 8-12 members and we always went on one route together. The three different routes of the KVT are illustrated in Figure 10.4.

The practice of collecting rubbish was usually quite relaxed and slow (see Figures 10.2 and 10.3). Members would catch-up on each-others’ lives, talk about things happening around them or discuss other items of interest. One of the characteristics of this interaction was that it was conducted in both Korean and English. This was partly because some of the members, including myself, were not completely fluent in Korean (there were, as noted in Pedro’s statement, Japanese and Chinese members). However, it was also because, as Pedro once said, this allowed the
KVT to ‘il jok, i jo’ — literally, ‘one stone, two birds’ but equivalent to the English language saying ‘killing two birds with one stone’. By speaking English in the KVT the members got an opportunity to practice the language they were in New Zealand to learn in the first place. Usually, completing each of the rubbish collecting routes would take two hours. The official KVT activities would end back at the corner of Queen and Victoria Streets near Whitcoulls.

Pedro notes in his statement that the KVT advertised for new members on the New Zealand Iyagi website. Indeed, as noted in Chapter Nine, there is a separate space within this website dedicated to the KVT where members can leave messages and photos, and describe their current activities. Usually one member of the KVT would leave a message on the front page of New Zealand Iyagi each week asking other students to take part. At times there were also stories in other Auckland-based Korean-language media about the KVT. In addition, new members were also recruited through personal contacts at schools, churches and through the arrival of friends from South Korea. All of the non-Korean members, excepting myself, were recruited because they were classmates, roommates or friends of existing KVT members.
Encounters with the Public

The activities of this group of students did not go unnoticed by people in the streets of Auckland’s inner-city. In fact it was quite common for people on the street to interact with members of the team in both positive and negative ways. Often this was just constituted by queries about their actions, smiles or looks of bemusement, and grateful or not so grateful comments. Sometimes, however, more notable encounters occurred. Four such encounters are described below.

- 19 February 2005: We had just begun the collection by walking up Victoria Street (Route A). There was always a lot of rubbish in this area because of the considerable number of bars and restaurants in the vicinity. At one point Seon-
Jun was collecting some glass from the kerb when a woman walking out of one of the nearby shops said ‘I’ve got a brush and shovel if you want it honey’. Seon-Jun, who had only arrived in Auckland one month prior, did not understand the women’s accent or expression. I nodded and she brought the brush and shovel to Seon-Jun who was able to clean up the glass in much less time and without the risk of getting cut. While he was cleaning the glass the women said that she saw the team go past every week and thought we were doing a wonderful job – Seon-Jun responded that he was happy that he could help with something.

- 26 February 2005: As we walked towards Princes Street (Route C) we noticed that it has been closed by traffic wardens to allow for preparations for the annual Chinese Lantern Festival in Albert Park. At the corner of Princes Street we stopped for a break and Seon-Jun asked me why the street was closed. While we were talking one of the traffic wardens walked towards our group and asked us what we were doing. Seon-Jun explained in his usual prompt and rehearsed manner – ‘we volunteer to pick-up rubbish in Auckland’. The warden responded in a positive but bemused way and returned to the other side of the road where his co-workers appeared to ask him the same question. Shortly after a different traffic warden came towards us with a bag – when he arrived he congratulated the team on doing a great job and gave each member an ice-cream from his bag. After a brief exchange the warden returned to his position watching the road and we continued on our route.

- 21 April 2005: It had been a pretty quiet day until we got about half way along Victoria Street (Route A). Jun-Seok, who had come to KVT for the first time, was collecting a pile of rubbish that was in the gutter. Two young men were walking along Victoria Street towards Queen Street – as they walked past Jun-Seok they said in a loud voice behind him ‘you can pick up the trash on your feet after that’. Jun-Seok was quite startled. Jeremy saw this and tried to explain what the KVT did but the men just ignored him and kept walking.

---

1The Chinese Lantern Festival is an annual festival held in Auckland’s Albert Park during February. For more information see [http://www.asianz.org.nz](http://www.asianz.org.nz).
• 02 April 2005: I was walking with Matthew along Victoria Street just before the entrance to Victoria Park (Route A). A short distance ahead of us a car slowed down and parked on the same side of the road. As we started walking past the car an elderly couple got out. The women had obviously been trying to figure out what we were doing. She asked me directly – ‘what are you doing?’ I answered, as I usually did, by deferring to the Korean aspect of the KVT and just said that I was trying to help them with their idea. She said that she thought there should be an article in the newspaper about them, to which I responded that there had been nine months earlier. She responded: ‘Well, I think it’s a wonderful idea. Please tell them that I am very grateful and that they are doing a wonderful job.’ I said I would. Notably, Matthew had been standing next to me the entire way through this conversation and that elderly women, despite her positive approach, never looked at him once or talked to him directly.

These are only a few of the encounters with the public that I saw during the time I was a member of the KVT. Every Saturday there would be at least one, if not many such encounters. As is the case in these four anecdotes, most of these encounters were positive in some ways. However, there were occasions when members of the public expressed in subtle and, as above, not so subtle ways their derision for the individuals involved in the KVT. At other times, reactions were more bemused than anything else – not comprehending why anyone would want to take part in such an activity.

Social Life of the Korean Volunteer Team

The KVT was not just about picking up rubbish. Indeed, many of the members told me at least once that they didn’t even want to pick-up rubbish, even if they respected Pedro’s intentions. For the most part they had joined the KVT because it gave them a social outing every Saturday afternoon, something that could become part of their weekly routine. This was particularly the case for long standing members of the KVT. Moreover, the activities of the KVT rarely concluded after we finished picking up rubbish. Rather, more often than not, we would find a place to have a meal, drinks and socialise together, sometimes for the entire evening (see Figure 10.5).
Chapter Ten: Volunteering, Social Networks, Contact Zones and Rubbish

The first day I attended the KVT is indicative of these social activities. While we were collecting rubbish I talked mostly to Pedro – partially because he was the most extrovert and also because he was always keen to promote the activities of the KVT. About one hour into the activity Pedro invited me to join everyone afterwards for some food and drink (see Figure 10.5). He said that they were having a little party because it was one of the member’s birthdays but as I found out in the following months this sort of socialising occurred virtually every week and was a big part of the KVT and the reason why people came along. Pedro also told me that this little event was going to be ‘Korean style’ so everyone would give some money and we would share everything together. After we finished collecting rubbish most of the team went to an inner-city backpacker hostel where we would have the party. Tyrell, a South Korean member of the KVT who was on a working holiday visa in Auckland, lived at the hostel in exchange for cleaning duties. We often met in the lounge or kitchen of the hostel for socialising activities. Everyone waited in the kitchen for Pedro and Seon-Jun to return with some food and drinks. When they returned they had some western snack foods, Korean and Chinese takeaways, beer and soju. We shared everything together and stayed talking at the hostel till quite late in the evening. That day there were Korean, Japanese, Chinese and (one) Pakeha members in attendance. Mostly we spoke in Korean and English, as well as some
Japanese (Tyrell is also conversant in Japanese). It was clear to me, even on this first day, that this socialising element was one of the strengths of the KVT.

The hostel where Tyrell lived was not the only place we socialised. Sometimes we would go to different members’ homes, including my own, or to outdoor areas in the city like Albert Park. On two occasions we also left the inner city area for ‘field-trips’, as they would call them, instead of collecting rubbish. On one occasion when there were only five people in attendance we decided to go to Western Springs Park (approximately five kilometres west of the city) for a barbeque picnic. We brought Korean cuts of meats, dipping sauce, side dishes and beer and used the public barbeques at the park to cook a meal (see Figure 10.5). On another occasion I organised with a friend, Steven, (who had attended the KVT a few times) to take the team to Piha, a famous surf beach on Auckland’s west coast (see Figure 10.6). Again we brought a picnic to share that integrated both Korean and New Zealand foods, something that is perhaps best exemplified in the crayfish (caught the day previously by Steven) that we dipped in chogochujang, a mixture of chilli paste and vinegar, a common accompaniment to meat and seafood in Korean cuisine. Later on, Steven and I taught the rest of the team how to play touch rugby.

Finally, KVT socialising would sometimes take place at Korean restaurants in the inner city. We did this less often because it would often cost
more than other activities, especially if members wanted to drink. On some occasions, however, the team was offered complimentary meals at Korean restaurants because of the work that they were doing. Jeremy described this arrangement in the following manner:

“They provide meal last week of month. When they saw the *New Zealand Herald* they think we are very good people. This chef said to me they will give to us food every week and we said ‘no thank you’. But he said, ‘this is for me, this is jeong’. 2 ‘Ok, I will give you every end of month’. (Jeremy, LS, Seoul, 21).

The genuineness of this gesture was highlighted to me further when I attended one such occasion. I was informed by Seon-Jun that this was the last time that they would be going to this particular restaurant. Apparently, the owners were returning to South Korea because the down-turn in the number of South Korean international students in Auckland meant that their business could not survive. Despite these financial problems the owners still wanted to offer the members of the KVT a reward for our activities. In addition to exemplifying the interconnections between migrants and international students that have been discussed in previous chapters, this highlighted the fact that this gesture was not about attracting more customers but a genuine feeling of gratitude and respect for the work done by the KVT. It should be noted that this was not the only gesture offered by Korean-New Zealanders to the KVT. In another example, some dairy owners would occasionally offer the members ice-creams or drinks after they had finished their rubbish collecting. Additionally, in a continuation of his conversation above Jeremy went on to note that:

Somebody at Goodday News Company 3 knew the chef. They saw the team. They gave $500 donation. This money we buy t-shirts and tongs… kind of jeong as well. (Jeremy, LS, Seoul, 21).

In addition to being expressions of jeong, Jeremy also informed me that the owners of these businesses were also interested in creating better relationships between themselves

---

2 There is no equivalent word in the English language for *Jeong*. It is described by Irene Kim, Luke Kim and James Kelly (2006: 152) in the following way: ‘Koreans consider jeong to be an essential element in human life, promoting the depth and richness of personal relations. With jeong, relationships are deeper and longer lasting. In times of social upheaval, calamity, and unrest, jeong is the only binding and stabilizing force in human relationships. Without jeong, life would be emotionally barren, and persons would feel isolated and disconnected from others. Jeong is more than kindness or liking another, jeong brings about the “special” feelings in relationships: togetherness, sharing, bonding. Jeong is what makes us say “we” rather than “I,” “ours” rather than “mine”.’

3 Goodday News Company is an Auckland-based Korean language newspaper and website. See http://www.goodday.co.nz.
and the broader community in Auckland. They saw the actions of the KVT as potentially representative of efforts by Koreans in New Zealand and hoped that it would lead to greater interactions with other groups in Auckland – something that was also part of Pedro’s motivation in the first place.

**Discussion: Volunteering, Social Networks and ‘Contact Zones’**

The emergence and activities of the KVT that have been described above conforms to Christine Milligan and David Conradson’s (2006: 7) observation that voluntary work is more often than not a ‘response to localised need and interests’. In Pedro’s statement about why he started the KVT he identifies two factors: New Zealanders lack of knowledge about Korea and perhaps more importantly their derision for ‘Asians’. Indeed, his ‘English lecturers’ complaints about ‘Asian students’ are almost a perfect utterance of all the different racialised tropes that are produced in Auckland’s print media (see Chapter Six). Not only does this reinforce the argument that I made in Chapter Six about the connections between media representations and public discourses and imaginaries but it also illustrates the ways that such discourses impact upon the lives of individual students. In this sense the KVT has clearly emerged as a response to localised needs and interests. However, it is also clear in Pedro’s account and in the eventual conclusion of the KVT’s activities after he stopped being involved that there was something very personal about this voluntary work. While it relied on networks of friends and classmates, mostly fellow ‘Asian students’, the ‘mobilising force’ (Roberts & Devine 2004) behind the particular actions of this group was Pedro’s own experience and his own personal outlook on life. The latter is made apparent in the concluding paragraph of Pedro’s statement where he laments the fact that other individuals, despite their efforts to continue his work, were unable to maintain the KVT in the ways that he did. Moreover, in my own personal contact with Pedro in both Auckland and South Korea I became aware that he has been and continues to be involved in a variety of different voluntary acts including advocacy for greater wheelchair access in South Korean cities and voluntary English teaching for individuals from low-income households. What this suggests is that while informal voluntary work like that of the KVT often has a particular local purpose such action usually only materialises because of the practices of individuals who can organise and lead groups of fellow volunteers.
It is also clear in the discussion above that the characteristics of the KVT’s organisation align it with observations about the role of voluntary groups in the lives of migrants more generally. In particular, the KVT appeared to facilitate a sense of identity and social embeddedness through the space it provided for social exchange. In fact, the social networks that were established between individual members of the KVT actually outlasted the group itself (when I visited South Korea in mid-2006 we had a small reunion of the longest serving members). In the case of the South Korean international students involved in the group, who were always the majority, these networks were formed in similar ways to those networks discussed in previous chapters. In particular, the Daum internet community *New Zealand Iyagi* played a central role as did ethno-nationally based relationships formed in language schools, dormitories and homestays as well as friendship networks that were re-located in Auckland from South Korea. Moreover, it is the use of Cyworld *minihompy* that allow these ex-members to maintain contact now between their different localities in South Korea and further afield. As Pedro notes in his statement the weekly meetings of the KVT provided a social outing for ‘international students who did not have any activity in the weekend’. The meetings and the socialising activities afterwards provided a regular space of exchange and hence social embeddedness or belonging for individuals whose lives are otherwise characterised by transient friendships and activities. The recreation of familiar practices of socialising, eating and drinking also played a significant role in this sense of belonging as it did in the lives of students discussed in Chapter Eight. Indeed, in my experience during this research I rarely encountered students who were as comfortable with their lives in Auckland as the regular members of the KVT.

The KVT also played a role in creating opportunities for encounter in what I have called ‘contact zones’ – the co-presence and interactions between different subjects in geographical space. There are two different aspects to this – those interactions within the KVT itself and interactions between members of this group and the wider public. In the first case the involvement of Japanese and Chinese members in this group should not be underestimated. Although media representations (see Chapter Six) and some social science research (Ward & Masgoret 2004) would suggest there is little differentiation between the practices and experiences of ‘Asian students’, this is rarely the case in reality. Indeed, in interviews both key informants and students informed me that there were often difficulties in the interactions between different nationalities of
Chapter Ten: Volunteering, Social Networks, Contact Zones and Rubbish

‘Asian students’ in Auckland. In the case of South Korean international students it was often suggested that some of the greatest difficulty occurred in interactions with Chinese in Auckland, something that is also made clear in Pedro’s statement – ‘I supposed that this is because some naughty Chinese international students performed badly’. However, there were also sometimes difficulties with other nationalities, like Japanese. Even Pedro recalled during an interview that he had distrust for Japanese before he came to New Zealand because of their colonial relationship with South Korea and the way that this is represented in the media, history books and the military. Although some of these difficulties are resolved in other contact-zones like language schools the KVT offered a quite unique way to bridge differences between these groups. Certainly, the KVT’s organisation and activities were maintained according to Korean socio-cultural norms but it was flexible enough that different individuals could take an active role in the group. The results of this is that even now after almost all the individuals in the KVT have left Auckland transnational and cross-cultural relationships are maintained between ex-members between the countries of South Korea, Japan, China and New Zealand. Moreover, both Japanese and Chinese ex-members have taken the opportunity to visit friends made in the KVT and both Pedro and Tyrell have taken the opportunity to visit another ex-member, Seisuke, in Japan. In addition, both Steven and I have maintained contact with a number of ex-members of the KVT and as noted above this contact gave me the opportunity to meet some ex-members again in South Korea in mid-2006.

Encounters between members of the KVT and the general public are obviously not as sustained as the contact maintained within the group itself. However, even the four, apparently fleeting encounters that I described above have some significance. The most negative of these reinforces some of the problematic elements of many students’ urban encounters in Auckland by illustrating the way that racism can materialise in small ways on an everyday basis, regardless of the actions taken by students. My encounter with the elderly woman, despite its positive nature, also illustrates problems. Although she clearly wished to express gratitude her avoidance of eye contact and conversation with Matthew suggested that she perceived the distance between herself and this ‘Asian student’ as far too great to bridge without an intermediary. In contrast, however, the two positive encounters noted above suggest, as Amanda Wise (2005) has, that behind the everyday difficulties of cross-cultural encounters there is sometimes
‘hope’ for a ‘real multiculturalism’ (Hage 1998). Certainly, these encounters are not the kind of sustained inter-personal relationships that would suggest that students are totally included in society. However, I believe that they are the kind of small gestures that offer the possibility for cultural politics of a more cosmopolitan variety in Auckland (Yeoh & Willis 2005; Matthews & Sidhu 2005). Indeed, even supposedly smaller gestures like smiles and kind words can open up space for more significant encounters between individuals who might otherwise be separated by great distance. In the lives of many students it is the absence of these kinds of small everyday gestures in their homestays, classrooms and in public spaces that really exacerbates their feelings of isolation and estrangement in Auckland. Even if the KVT’s activities only offered a small time and space for a few such hopeful moments to emerge then I would argue that it has been a huge success.

**Conclusion**

There have been two central objectives in this chapter. Firstly, I have sought to tell the story of the Korean Volunteer Team and to identify what insight the emergence and activities of this group offers to a broader understanding of the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students in Auckland. In addition this story has also highlighted some small but significant ways in which the borders between individuals might begin to be negotiated in hopeful ways.

The emergence of the KVT and the experiences of its members are exemplary of many of the different themes discussed throughout this thesis. In the first instance the KVT emerged quite clearly in the context of the racialised landscape of Auckland and Pedro’s experience of this through his English lecturer’s complaints. In his attempts to do something about this problem Pedro utilised the kind of ethno-national networks that have been a central theme in many of the student experiences discussed in previous chapters. In particular, the KVT used the *New Zealand Iyagi* website as a way to publicise themselves amongst fellow Koreans resident in Auckland and developed a space within that web community where their activities could be recorded and promoted. Moreover, the particularities of the activities that the KVT engaged in, especially their socialising activities are resonant of many of the arguments made in Chapter Eight about the importance of familiarity in culinary consumption. Through all of these activities the KVT has been able to act as a space where those involved could
feel a greater sense of social-embeddedness and belonging in Auckland than many of the other participants in this research.

In addition to creating a space of belonging I have also noted here how the KVT and the interactions both between different members and between the group and the wider public illustrate examples of encounters in Auckland’s ‘contact-zones’. In the first case, I have noted how the KVT effectively produced a space where different ethno-national groups of international students, namely South Korean, Japanese and Chinese, could overcome some of the difficulties in their interactions. Indeed, the transnational friendships that have formed in the KVT are excellent examples of how actual cosmopolitan exchange can occur as a result of international education (c.f. Matthews & Sidhu 2005). Finally, the encounters with the general public described here also offer insight into some of the challenges and possibilities for a much more open urban life in Auckland. Although there were negative encounters, and encounters that seemed marred by distance, many of the exchanges that members of the KVT had with the general public suggest that there is the possibility for a cosmopolitan cultural politics in Auckland. Curiously, such hope does not derive from grand schemes and policies for integration but from simple gestures and acts of gratitude or kindness. Put simply, this is what the KVT and its encounters with the public offers – hope.

It is useful to note at the end of this chapter that all of the regular members of the KVT, excepting myself, have now returned to South Korea, Japan and China. Some, like Pedro, wish to return to Auckland and New Zealand to live in the future, while others are following different trajectories in other towns, cities and nations. In the next chapter, the final fieldwork chapter, I consider the experiences of those individuals who return to South Korea at the end of their study.
Chapter Eleven

FINDING A WAY (AT) HOME

The Onwards Journeys of South Korean International Students

Min-Hee: ‘Older sister’ Jeong-rae… She went back to New Zealand. I heard she would live in New Zealand permanently. Now we have to go there if we miss her. She was leaving for New Zealand because she had a difficult time since she came back to Korea. Additionally, she couldn’t forget New Zealand because she met such nice people there. But, she left like a wind, “shook~”. No one knows when she left. I went to her cy[world] and it looked like she left. I envy her braveness and her life. I remember she cried every night when she went to New Zealand for the first time. It’s the same for everyone. Everything is difficult for the first time… k k? I am talking rubbish… Anyway let’s go to New Zealand. We should go. We have to go to Angus [steakhouse]. Where was it? The place we always had ice-cream. I already forgot – not Takapuna… De… Devonport? Oh, no it’s not. Where was it? What a memory. However, oh we can’t forget “Chi”, I miss “Chi”… Polly… the cat… I wonder if she died… Oh, and I miss my teacher, Lynda… and I miss… the drag queen Tamara. It doesn’t matter I have to walk for one hour to get to “Pak & Save”. Cooking for 25 people… I don’t mind at all… k k… Gospel every Monday… it doesn’t matter if we study English through the bible… No, I don’t like this though… ha ha… I don’t know why. I feel gloomy. If I earn a lot of money, I can go, just like ‘older sister’ Jeong-rae. Anyway, how have you been? I miss you stupid pyjama Yu-Jin. I miss the sushi roll. California roll is not better than the salmon sushi roll which costs only $7 or $8… What kind of rubbish am I talking? See you. I will drop by you again. Take care~ When are we going to meet anyway??

Figure 11.1: Cyworld Entry by Min-Hee (LS, Daegu, 23) on Yu-Jin’s (LS, Gyeonggi-do, 22) Minihompy. This text is translated from Korean by Seunghee Pak.

The passage above is taken from the cyworld minihompy (see Chapter Nine) of one participant in this research. It illustrates the tensions that are involved in the re-entry of international students to their home country. Indeed, it shows that friction of movement is not something that is experienced exclusively by those who travel away from their country of birth or residence. Rather, the issues around home and away, longing and belonging, familiarity and estrangement that have been central to understanding

---

1 The word ‘eoni’ (‘older sister’) in Korean is used by younger females to older females – although it indicates a certain level of intimacy it does not necessarily indicate familial relationship. In this case ‘older sister’ is a close female friend who is older in age.
2 ‘k k’ indicates laughing.
3 ‘ㅠㅠ’ is a crying face often used online to express emotions.
students’ everyday urban encounters in Auckland are also relevant to understanding such encounters after they physically return to South Korea.

In this chapter I consider the practices and experiences involved in the re-entry of (former) international students to South Korea as a route to broaden and deepen the understanding of the temporary migration involved in international education so that includes not only experiences in the country of education but also the onward journeys of returnees. I begin by introducing the literature on re-entry of (former) international students and the related literature on return migrations. Commonly these literatures have been framed, like earlier migration scholarship, through a linear conceptualisation that begins at departure and ends as students/migrants re-assimilate into their ‘home’ culture. In contrast to these approaches I propose a non-linear way of thinking about re-entry and return that draws on themes in transnationalism and the ongoing processes of ‘uprootings/regroundings’ that have been discussed in other chapters. Through this lens I investigate the experiences of 15 returnees focussing on their accounts of departure and arrival, everyday life back in South Korea and renegotiating relationships with friends and family. Through these returnees’ experiences I then consider the ways that re-entry into South Korea is often imbued with continuing transnationality in terms of planned or desired future trajectories, maintenance of cross-border relationships and contribution to the ongoing movement of international students. In addition to offering insights into the processes of re-entry these discussions also return the focus of this thesis back to where it began – the arrival and settlement of international students in Auckland and the networks and relationships that facilitate this.

International Student Re-entry and Migrant Returns

There is an extensive international literature investigating the re-entry experiences of (former) international students into their countries of origin (for an overview see Butcher 2003; Ward et al. 2001). However, there is a real scarcity of conceptual understandings of this process and its implications for returnees and other individuals in the countries of origin and education (Ward et al. 2001). Indeed, like the broader research in the field of international education (see Chapter Two), this line of inquiry is characterised by forms of functionalism and reductionism that make it highly problematic. In large part this research has relied upon psychological measurements of adaptation and acculturation. Unsurprisingly then, one of the few conceptual
understandings to emerge from this research is the idea of ‘reverse culture shock’ – ‘the process of readjusting, reacculturating, and reassimilating into one’s own home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period of time’ (Gaw 2000: 83-84). Like ‘culture shock’, the original concept this idea is drawn from, ‘reverse culture shock’ implies a linear movement in individuals who experience re-entry from feelings of exclusion to (re)inclusion that pay little if any attention to the role of social networks, experience in sojourn and life-stage. Moreover, this literature is thoroughly framed in an internationalist discourse that sees the countries of origin and education as separately bounded places. As such, they view the re-entry process as the final stage in a movement that began in the decision to study overseas rather than as part of practices and experiences that might take place in more than one locality.

In the New Zealand context there are only three examples of research into the re-entry of (former) international students. These include Joy Rogers and Colleen Ward’s (1993) study of returning secondary school students, Terry McGrath’s (1997; 1998) study of tertiary students re-entry to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and Andrew Butcher’s (2002a; 2003; 2004a) more recent work on South-East Asian university graduates. Of these only Butcher’s study moves beyond those psychological empiricisms and ‘reverse culture shock’. In contrast to the two earlier projects Butcher offers an in-depth qualitative investigation of the feelings of grief, homelessness and longing associated with re-entry as a route to considering the ways in which returnees’ identities reconfigure during this process (for another discussion of these themes see Robinson 2005). Butcher (2004a) also integrates aspects of a transnational approach in some of his scholarship as an attempt to move away from emphasis in much of the research in this field on the ‘stages’ of re-entry (for example Ward et al. 2001). Despite this however, Butcher shies away from conceiving students’ practices and experiences as interconnected with broader transnational social networks and strategies and instead appears to reinforce a sense of finality at the conclusion of the process of return.

There is also an extensive literature on the process of return-migration (some examples include Böhning 1975; Gaillard 1994; Gmelch 1980; 1992; Wyman 1993). Until recently, however, this literature has framed migrant returns primarily through an extension of the linear model of migration and assimilation to a circular model of eventual re-assimilation into the country of origin. As such, while ‘[r]eturn migration has provided a [useful] sidebar to the historic immigration narrative of departure, arrival
and assimilation’ (Ley & Kobayashi 2005: 112) it has until recently been framed in a way that suggests it is also a final and complete, albeit alternative, trajectory (see also Guarnizo 1997). Certainly, this kind of extended-linear model of departure and return is unsustainable in the current era of increased mobility of (certain) individuals between (certain) parts of the world (as discussed in Chapter Three). Indeed, more recent accounts of migrant returns tend to conceptualise these movements within a transnational framework (Guarnizo 1997; Ip & Friesen 2001; Iredale, Guo, & Rozario 2003; Moore 2003; Spoonley et al. 2003). However, it is also questionable whether the extended-linear model is appropriate in the light of historical return-journeys that may have contributed significantly to the desire for migration and general levels of movement amongst members of returnees’ origin locality (Guarnizo 1997). The following passage from Kim Ronyoung’s (1987: 108) novel Clay Walls, provides some insight:

> No one would let Haesu forget America. Everyone she met asked about the country she had left behind. She gave in to their persistent inquiries and told them about the running water and flush toilets, about department stores and their bountiful goods, about paved streets and automobiles, about the varieties of food and opportunities to make money. Whatever they asked, she answered. It sounded like paradise to them, but she said, “there's no place like home”.

In this passage, Haesu, who has just re-migrated from America to Korea in the early 20th century, illustrates an example of a returnee’s reluctant promotion of the rewards of migration. It points to the ways that re-migrants might act as vessels of knowledge about emigration destinations in an era before high-speed communication was available. In a sense, Haesu is contributing to the production of a collective imagination of living abroad (Appadurai 1997). Despite her insistence that America is not home, and her profession of all the problems in America, Haesu is, unwillingly perhaps, opening up space for the potential future migration of her friends and family. Finally, in a point that highlights the need to re-think return-migration and re-entry in both historic and contemporary contexts, Haesu eventually leaves Korea because she feels out of place. She realises that this is not because anything in Korea has changed. Rather, ‘[i]t was she. She was out of sorts in her homeland, homesick in Korea without being homesick for America.’ (Kim 1987: 125)
Towards a Non-linear Approach to Re-entry and Return

More recent scholarship on return-migration and onward migration more generally have moved away from this sort of conventional analysis. In particular, the work around transnationalism that was discussed at length in Chapter Three suggests that a focus on fixed and final movements obscures the ways that migration is rarely, if ever, complete either in terms of physical arrivals and departures or the social, cultural, political and economic implications of such movements. David Ley and Audrey Kobayashi (2005) have offered considerable insight in this regard. Their research with individuals living between Hong Kong and Canada challenges the conventional understanding of return-migration by revealing the considerable onward movement from and through both of these locations. In their study individual migrants and families would dissimilarly move to Hong Kong for career reasons, to Canada for educational purposes, maintain family relationships across borders, return to Canada for retirement and even return again to Hong Kong to be buried. Ley and Kobayashi (2005: 113) argue that this ‘casts light on the space-time positioning of returnees whom, [they] argue, are at a station now that may well not be permanent, but rather represents one point in a lifelong trajectory of moves across the Pacific Ocean’.

Johanna Waters (2005b; 2006) too, has illustrated similar strategies amongst Hong Kong international and migrant students in Vancouver who use the cultural capital acquired through foreign education as a catapult to careers in Hong Kong while leaving the option of return to Canada open. Other research like Hasmit Ramji’s (2006) study of the retirement of London-based Hindu Gujarati’s in India and Anastasia Christou’s (2006) work with second generation Greek-American re-migrants also offers useful insight. These authors suggest that the ideas of home and belonging play an important role in individual choices about transnational migration, particularly return and onward migration. Moreover, the ways in which ‘home’ and ‘away’, ‘here’ and ‘there’ are conceived are also likely to shift considerably through, and as a part of, ongoing movement. Ramji’s (2006: 660) conclusion on the shifting outlooks of the retirees in her study is particularly useful:

The realization of the return saw not only a re-evaluation of Gujarat as home but also of London, the place of their lived experience. London was increasingly appreciated not just as a place where they had lived for the past 30 years but as a
place that had become a home to them. London became part of what was desired in India.

Obviously, the circumstances of movement that longer-term migrants and international students encounter are considerably different, particularly for the short-stay language students who form a significant part of this project. Moreover, these latter students are less likely to have either the financial or skill base to freely move between different locales in the same way as the migrants discussed by Ley and Kobayashi (2005), Waters (2006), Ramji (2006) and Christou (2006). Nevertheless, many of the same issues raised by these researchers are likely to resonate in the experiences of the participants in this project particularly the shifting understandings of home that students encounter and the actual or possible continuation of movement, not just between South Korea and New Zealand but indeed further afield.

A useful approach to (re)viewing ‘re-entry’ and ‘return migration’ is a focus on the ongoing processes of uprootings/regroundings that was introduced in Chapter Seven (see also Ahmed et al. 2003). Here the movements involved in migration and the belonging associated with notions of home must be viewed as interdependent. Crucially then, the practices and experiences of re-entry or return migration cannot be simply conceived as a final return journey home. Rather, home has always been in the making throughout processes of movement and stasis that individuals engage in. In Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten in this thesis, for example, we have seen that South Korean international students create a sense of home and belonging while sojourning in Auckland through intimations and habits that are familiar to them. While these practices were clearly about creating a sense of belonging in one geographical territory, Auckland, they were also part of a process of re-thinking a more mythic ‘diasporic imagination’ of home as another geographic territory, South Korea. Such practices reinforce the point made in earlier chapters that ‘home’ is something that is simultaneously lived and imagined, a place of practice and a place of memory. This has significant consequences for the ways that we might conceive the processes of re-entry and return. Avtar Brah (1996: 192) explains:

Where is home? On the one hand, ‘home’ is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of ‘origin’. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of locality, its sounds and smells.
Considered in this manner the real difficulty and likely friction of ‘re-entry’ and ‘return migration’ become quite apparent. It suggests that migratory processes may be equally difficult, regardless of whether an individual or family is leaving the geographic territory of origin in the first instance, or returning after a period away. This is because in either situation the individuals involved are encountering that ongoing process of uprootings/regroundings that makes the practices of homing a continuous and always incomplete necessity. Indeed, it would appear that this is exactly the reason why concepts of ‘reverse culture shock’ have become popular psychological measures of such processes. When we understand home and migration as inseparable and that home is always in the making in material and immaterial ways it becomes apparent that movement is always imbued with friction, even if this differs amongst dissimilarly positioned subjects and the different origins and destinations that individuals and families travel between. The practices and experiences of participants’ ‘re-entry’ that are discussed below are a good illustration of these difficulties and the continuous re-thinking and re-making of home and away.

**Returnees**

As noted in Chapter Four, in September 2005 I conducted a series of interviews in South Korea with 15 returnees. These included 12 returnees who had been involved in at least one aspect of this research in Auckland and who had subsequently returned to South Korea at the conclusion of their studies. It also included interviews with three returnees who had not been involved previously: two were recruited through the University of Auckland alumni association in Seoul and one returnee was recruited through personal contacts. Table 11.1 provides further information on these participants.
Table 11.1: Details of Participants Involved in Re-entry Interviews in South Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returnee</th>
<th>Participant in Auckland</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Home-town/city</th>
<th>Study type</th>
<th>Year Depart</th>
<th>Year Return</th>
<th>Time away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jang-Ho</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Uk</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Busan</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyeon-Ji</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha-Na</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin-Yeong</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Busan</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>11 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min-Hee</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Daegu</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji-Eun</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu-Jin</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sang-Taek</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin-Hye</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2 years, 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Yeong</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2 years, 4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sang-A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ju-Hee</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se-Yun</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Departures and Arrivals

The process of ‘re-entry’ is never simply about moments of departure and arrival. However, these points in space-time when individuals physically depart one geographic territory to arrive in another can be significant moments in the ways in which the process of ‘re-entry’ is understood. Indeed, in a manner that parallels the significance of students’ initial and early impressions of Auckland (see Chapter Five), feelings at departure from this city and arrival in South Korea also seem to have considerable impact on the longer experiences of re-entry. Most returnees, for instance, noted that their final days or weeks in Auckland and their initial experiences back in South Korea led to either confirmation or reconsideration of their overall feelings about life in Auckland and South Korea. In terms of departures from Auckland, this was often apparent in the realisation of positive feelings. Such expressions often focussed on enjoyment of the environment in Auckland and New Zealand. In some cases, however, they reflected concerns about return to South Korea and in one case feelings of greater
social and cultural affiliation with Auckland and New Zealand than with South Korea. The following two excerpts are useful examples of this scope:

Ahhhh last day?... I went to the park in Parnell with my colleagues and friends and we had a barbeque party for me, it was so, so… impressed. That’s the first time to have, see a barbeque party for a farewell. It was quite, how can I say?... amazing, wonderful. And, when I in the Auckland airport… ahh… I was so, I felt just sad things because, I just started to like Auckland and New Zealand. I should go, just go. That’s quite sad. The memory is good memory, I always think of it. (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27).

I felt like. I mean, even before I finished my school I came back to Korea once a year for about two weeks or one month and every time I came back to Korea I felt like New Zealand is my country and even it is not my country. Because I feel more comfortable in New Zealand because I have all my friends there and all my, I mean all my experiences with friends and other people are all from New Zealand. So, when I left there I felt like I don’t want to go, I was like I want to stay here and do something. Yeah, so I felt I will somehow come back to New Zealand and live here. (Se-Yun, TS, Seoul, 28).

These sorts of positive accounts were quite common amongst returnees but they were not universal. Indeed, a few students expressed negative feelings that ranged from desires for a return to life in South Korea through to quite emotional longing to escape from life in Auckland:

I really wanted to meet my boyfriend first. He was waiting for me at the airport and just, yeah, I was happy to meet my parents, my family and my friends. Just I had only one day, at that time, the last day, so just there was nothing to do, just one day. There was nothing to do, I had to wait for my flight, that’s all. So I couldn’t think about my Auckland life at that time I was just looking forward to going back to Korea. Yeah. (Jin-Yeong, LS, Busan, 26).

So, so I just, I was thinking, I wanna to home, I wanna go back home, I wanna back home. (Ha-Na, LS, Seoul, 26).

Although the feelings of returnees differ quite significantly here, in both positive and negative expressions the tension between feelings about imagined (South Korea) and lived (Auckland) places is quite apparent. This tension is also apparent in the accounts of arrival in South Korea that returnees offered – although in this moment the place that is imagined and the place that is lived had clearly begun to shift. In many cases the positive or negative feelings expressed about departing Auckland were carried through into returnees’ evaluations of arrival in South Korea. For those returnees whose focus was on the environment in Auckland, for example, the arrival back into the stark urban landscapes of South Korea re-affirmed perceptions of difference between these two
places. In contrast, those students who desired to escape from the difficulties of life in Auckland saw arriving back in South Korea as a resolution of these issues: ‘I feel like my heart is all full. Like, very happy and very comfortable’ (Sang-A, TS, 27, Gwangju).

In a few cases however, arrival in South Korea is what caused a re-evaluation of impressions about life in Auckland. The most obvious example of this was offered by Jin-Yeong (LS, Busan, 26):

Francis: So tell me, what were your impressions when you first came back to Korea?

Jin-Yeong: I got one. I think I got used to seeing the New Zealand scenery, yeah. But I didn’t know New Zealand scenery is really beautiful because I stayed there for 11 months. I got used to seeing the beautiful scenery. So my flight was getting down – ‘what the! Oh it’s very bad, its very bad scenery in Busan’. I was really disappointed. I didn’t know Busan scenery was really bad. I was really disappointed. That one was my first impression…

Francis: Ok. Then what were you expecting to see when you got back to Korea?

Jin-Yeong: Many friends were waiting for me and they would be really really happy to meet me and some of them would cry and something like that. Like romantic image with my boyfriend and I would hug with me. But it didn’t happen. One of my friends cried but my boyfriend didn’t hug me. Just, I just imagined very romantic things like this but it didn’t happen.

Jin-Yeong’s account is useful because it illustrates the moment at which the imagined place of South Korea engaged for the first time with the lived experience of life in South Korea. Not all returnees recalled such moments of realisation in re-entry. Nevertheless in all accounts, even those who were pleased with their arrival back into South Korea, returnees noted differences in their expectations and initial experiences in South Korea. These differences suggest that arrival in South Korea, not unlike earlier arrivals in Auckland, is at least partly characterised by a tension between the differences in the nostalgic imaginings of South Korea as ‘home’ that were constructed during their time away and the reality of everyday lived experiences in South Korea that they must encounter once they return.

---

4 This is an interesting parallel with the work of Mingsheng Li, Trish Baker and Ken Marshall (2002) who have measured a similar mismatch between expectations and experiences of life in New Zealand for incoming international students (see also Chapter Two).
Regrounding Everyday Life in South Korea

One of the most important parts of the ‘re-entry’ process for all of the returnees interviewed in this research was the regrounding of everyday life in South Korea. Although most returnees had thought about how this would happen when they were in Auckland, the tensions between the imagined and lived experiences of South Korea meant that in every case there were challenges to overcome. These included learning about changes in their hometown/city or South Korea more generally as well as re-negotiating relationships with friends and family. Unsurprisingly the level of difficulty that returnees experienced in this regard varied almost exclusively on the length of time that they had spent in Auckland. As such, returnees like Jang-Ho (seven months in Auckland) found only minimal difficulties regrounding their lives in South Korea. At the other end of the scale, Se-Yun, the returnee who spent the longest period in Auckland (eight years), found himself still living between Auckland and South Korea in 2005, four years after he had returned.

The Spaces of Everyday Life

At the most basic level the regrounding of returnees’ everyday lives was a matter of refamiliarising themselves with the spaces of their hometown or city. Given the short periods of time that most of these returnees had been away this was not as great a challenge as it might be for longer term migrants (Ramji 2006) but neither was it seamless. Some returnees noted, for example, that physical changes in their hometown/city gave them a feeling of being out of place, at least for a short period of time. The following excerpt from Hyeon-Ji’s (LS, Gyeonggi-do, 22) interview is a useful indication:

Francis: So do you think that Pyeongtaek has changed since you went to Auckland?

Hyeon-Ji: Mmmm… yes, oh yes. Before I went to Auckland my hometown doesn’t have subway, subway yeah. And, also and lots of buildings, new buildings, not tall because my hometown is very small but new buildings and new apartments. Lots of.

Francis: Do you think that made a… does it feel different now because of those things – subway, new buildings?
Hyeon-Ji: Not so different, but yeah a little bit. Especially first time a little bit strange. In downtown lots of new stores, new interior, new people, people, lots of people, new stores. It’s a little bit strange, that’s one.

In addition, a number of returnees noted that adjusting to the different routines of everyday life in South Korea was also difficult, even if these things had not actually changed significantly in the time that they were away:

Actually the traffic was really terrible. It was pretty hard for me to get to the work from my place. It took about, at least one, around two hours. So it took, I have spent about four hours on the street. So I seldom experienced such a thing over in New Zealand so it’s a pretty hard thing even though I spent only two years in New Zealand but it’s very, very, it’s very strange to me – spending about two hours on the street. Ohhh, it’s terrible. (Jae-Yeong, TS, Seoul, 27).

The sign it looks weird for me. I’m still Korean but I lived in Auckland for a few years, so back in again in Korea even it’s weird talking in Korean, bit weird for me. Even the people on the street are talking in Korean, it’s also weird. Even though in Korea I know that already but it’s… different, another country. (Ju-Hee, TS, Gwangju, 22)

So when I came here I was, I was very confused and I was stressed because I couldn’t adapt to life in Korea so I couldn’t study very well, so I couldn’t concentrate my work. But if I live, if I live in Korea I have to change, change again. So now, now I’m possible because I’m getting changed to my own life, my Korean life. So, now is okay but when I came to here I was stressed and confused. Just I wanted to go back to New Zealand. (Yu-Jin, LS, Gyeonggi-do, 22).

These excerpts are good examples of the ways that returnees must adjust to things in South Korea that may have changed since they were away or that they did not consider when they thought about South Korea during their time in Auckland. Ju-Hee’s words are exemplary in this regard. Even though she felt like she knew South Korea and what it should be like when she was in Auckland, her encounter with the lived realities of everyday life makes her feel like she is in a different country. In some ways there is a sense of estrangement in these encounters. Certainly, it is not the same as the estrangement that students encountered in Auckland’s starkly different environment but the very real tensions between imagined and lived places means that it is significant, especially in the first few days, weeks and months of return to South Korea.

Re-negotiating Friendships

Another important aspect of returnees’ efforts to re-ground their lives in South Korea is the renegotiation of inter-personal relationships. For most returnees there were
significant differences between the renegotiation of such relationships with friends compared with family. Indeed, many returnees reported that where their friends’ lives seemed to have changed significantly while they were away, family and family homes remained a site of stability in their ever changing lives. Moreover, these discoveries were not limited to returnees who had stayed in Auckland for long periods of time. Even Jang-Ho (LS, Gwangju, 24), who spent only seven months in Auckland noted that his friends were doing different things and that their relationships were not as close. In part this was because his friends were at a stage where they were completing their final university tests and preparing for employment searches:

I think, ummm, when I was in Gwangju, I feel because, I feel a little bit that it’s difficult from relationship for me or my friends. Because as I told you my friends are, most of my friends they are really busy to get a job or to study or to teaching. But I was in New Zealand for seven months so we can’t any relationship for the time so I think our close our relationships little bit stopped down, something like that.

Other returnees noted that their friends’ expressions of interest in their overseas lives turned to resentment after they met again in South Korea. This was particularly, but not exclusively, the case for those returnees who had completed tertiary studies in Auckland – Sin-Hye, Jae-Yeong, Sang-A, Ju-Hee and Se-Yun. In these cases it was quickly apparent to both returnees and their friends that with overseas tertiary qualifications the returnees’ ‘cultural capital’ (Waters 2006) were significantly higher than many of their friends’. This meant that they could potentially live overseas if they wished and also had access to a much greater range of employment opportunities in South Korea. Sang-A (TS, Gwangju, 27) explains:

They think, I think I am, I feel like they are jealous. It’s so mean, right? Sometimes I feel very thankful for my parents. Because they have money and try quite rich level to invest money to myself so I can go overseas to study and to learn English and to speak this much fluent English. But because my parents, their parents couldn’t help them, support them to go overseas or to study English and even like this and they are still like, their English level is still the same and they feel like I can do much more tempting, much more good job in Seoul. But they cannot you know even submit their CV to better company, they feel like that.

These changes in relationships with friends upon return had different effects. In the lives of some of the returnees who had been away for shorter periods renegotiating these relationships just took time to fill the gaps in their shared lives. In other returnees’ experiences however, particularly those who had spent more than a year in Auckland, it
was very difficult to renegotiate these relationships in a way that made them anything like the relationships that had existed previously. Indeed, Sang-A, Ju-Hee and Se-Yun, returnees who had been in Auckland between five and eight years, found that it was impossible to ever have the same relationships. In all three of these cases the returnees had left South Korea either during or at the end of high-school. They each felt that the changes they had undergone growing up in Auckland meant that they just couldn’t connect with people who had stayed in South Korea.

Francis: Do you still have good relationships with your friends who stayed in Korea?

Ju-Hee: No. Changed.

Francis: How?

Ju-Hee: At the first time I came, I stay close to every person, just I met every time. But as times went by it’s been decreased.

Francis: Why?

Ju-Hee: I ever thought they didn’t give friendship to me.

Francis: Why did you guys have less contact?

Ju-Hee: Because we were not much closer and I, finally I can figure it out. (Ju-Hee, TS, Gwangju, 22).

Often the manner in which returnees dealt with these differences was by re-connecting with lives outside of South Korea. In some cases this meant finding spaces to socialise where others might have had similar experiences. For some participants, like Sang-A, Se-Yun and Jae-Yeong, this came naturally as they took up employment in companies where significant numbers of the staff had also been educated overseas. In other cases, even those situations where problems with friends were resolved over time, returnees often sought out experiences and contact with either non-Koreans living in South Korea, or South Koreans who had travelled overseas, particularly for study. This included meetings of former international students and returned migrants from Auckland that were actively organised through websites like *New Zealand Iyagi* (see Chapter Nine) and other community forums. Furthermore, many returnees also noted that they activated the networks of South Korean friends they had had in Auckland as an important way to reground their lives back in South Korea. When this was not possible because of distance in South Korea, friendship networks could be maintained through
cyworld minihompy and other forms of communication. These practices of regrounding through friendship networks are a useful parallel with practices in Auckland. The depth of feeling in these networks was expressed best by Sang-Taek (LS, Seoul, 27):

We are all family, Yeong-Mo and Myeong-Ho and other students. We are all used to live in same apartment. I think, we think we are kind of family. Yeah, it’s really good to meet with them.

This is, then, another way in which returnees can reground their everyday lives in South Korea. Curiously, the re-placement of friendship networks from Auckland to life in South Korea suggests that an important part of this regrounding involves intimations of life in Auckland, just as regrounding in Auckland involved intimations of life in South Korea. Although this research did not focus on the specific practices of these re-placed friendship networks it is highly likely that they involve some form of reminiscing about life in Auckland or perhaps even re-creation of aspects of lives there. Indeed, if the cyworld entry at the beginning of this chapter is anything to go by, returnees use these friendship networks as a way to foster their memories of imagined places of their everyday lives in Auckland.

Re-negotiating Family Relationships

Like relationships with friends, many returnees noted that renegotiating relationships with family was also a significant part of the process of ‘re-entry’ into South Korea. In contrast to experiences with friends however, virtually all returnees, even those who had been away for a significant period noted that their family had remained the same. The only exceptions to this were Ha-Na and Hyeon-Ji, who noted that their sisters were pregnant and had given birth respectively. Even in these cases, however, the changes were not perceived as significant in terms of the relationships that returnees had with family but rather as a normal and expected part of the life-course. Family, then, was often experienced as a site of stability for returnees:

Well, I have no, I didn’t feel anything because they are all same, same. And, they live same house, they work in the same shop so I don’t have to feel surprised, so I think this is better than surprise I think, because I feel calm down. (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27)

In addition, the return to family homes was also often quite an emotional experience, particularly for those who had been away for long periods of time. Ju-Hee (TS, Gwangju, 22), for instance, noted that meeting family again reminded her of all those
times in Auckland when she had missed the support that family often provides. As an example she recalled a racially motivated incident that had occurred in Auckland. She found this incident particularly difficult to deal with at the time because her parents were not there to support her and she felt she could not tell them on the phone because they would worry about her safety. Ju-Hee further noted that living with her family brought emotions that she had kept hidden to the surface and reminded her of the importance of family and family life.

Although most returnees expressed similar sentiments about family, many also noted that there was still a process of re-negotiating these relationships upon return. In particular, some returnees noted that they found it difficult to live in the family home again and under the control of their parents. Returnees noted that in Auckland they had adapted to living independently (even if they lived with others). They had learnt to cater for themselves both physically and emotionally and it was sometimes difficult to fit themselves into the routines of family life. Moreover, returnees recalled that they felt particularly restricted once they returned to the family home because in Auckland their independence had allowed them much greater freedom, particularly in terms of social activities:

My parents are really strict. They, I have like a time curfew. I have to come back by like 12. But when I was in New Zealand nobody told me like that. So now they are telling me I have to come back by 12 and when I drive they worry too much because I used to drive on the right side and now I have to drive on the left side so they worry about me having an accident or something. (Se-Yun, TS, Seoul, 28).

I have to go home quite early. I have to tell my parents every time I want to go to my friend’s house. Like this, every time I should call them. But in Auckland just stay at a pub until three o’clock, four o’clock nobody care and I can meet my friends as long as I want. (Jin-Yeong, LS, Busan, 26).

These experiences with family are a useful indicator of broader tensions that take place during the re-entry process. Although families represented a site of stability in South Korea – something that had not changed or had only changed in small ways while returnees were away – this very stability also presented a challenge. Put simply, in their efforts to reconnect with family in South Korea returnees started to recognise that they themselves had changed during their time in Auckland. At the very least they had adjusted to a life away from everything that was familiar to them but in many cases returnees also recognised that as a result of this their personal outlook had changed:
Chapter Eleven: Finding a Way (at) Home

My mind is also changed. I am foreigner. When I went to New Zealand I felt like free, I got a freedom. And, actually before I want money or success or like this is, are very important in my life but when I went to New Zealand it was, it was not all of my life. Because New Zealand, New Zealander is very, look free, very free because they didn’t care their appearance… [laughing]… they didn’t care their clothes or like this. Just say I think they, they can usually I think they can enjoy their life very well. But in Korea, we have to, I think we have to care our appearance and like care our faces like this. I thought, I thought, success is, success is not all of my life. So I changed. (Yu-Jin, LS, Gyeonggi-do, 22)

She [my wife] says when I came to New Zealand for the first time, everyone could tell you are very Korean but after two years even though it is still easy to notice that you are still Korean but you’ve changed a lot. I think I can understand what she means it’s not the saying, just you know, I mean about the hairstyle or fashion it’s about the way of thinking, lifestyle. I’ve begun to see things from different perspectives; I mean which was broadened after I studied in Auckland. So I think it’s a very good change. I think I can feel that even though no one has told me that I have changed a lot. (Jae-Yeong, TS, Seoul, 27).

Such changes are also apparent in the challenges that returnees faced renegotiating relationships with friends and re-encountering everyday life in South Korea but their realisation of it was never this stark. Rather, it was in contact with family that they became more generally aware that they had developed different perspectives and approaches to living that made everyday life in South Korea seem, at least initially, strange.

Transnational Trajectories

As I have noted previously, conceiving the re-entry process of former international students simply as a conclusion of their (temporary) migration to Auckland for study is problematic. This is partly because the uprootings/regroundings involved in travelling to and living in Auckland, and returning to South Korea do not ‘begin’ or ‘conclude’ at any fixed point in space-time. Indeed, I have noted above that the movement students have engaged in has significant, ongoing, consequences in their relationships with friends and family as well as the ways in which they encounter everyday life in South Korea. There are however, other consequences of these movements between South Korea and Auckland that further emphasise the importance of viewing re-entry, alongside the journey to study in Auckland, as part of broader trajectories of life. These include the ongoing transnationality exercised by returnees both in terms of plans or desires for future movement and the maintenance of cross-border relationships, as well
as the role that returnees play in maintaining the ‘bridges to learning’ (see Chapter Five) that facilitate the movement of other potential international students in the future.

**Transnational Desires and Contacts**

Throughout this thesis I have written about the ways that South Korean international students engage in forms of transnationality while they live and study in Auckland. These practices do not conclude when returnees re-enter South Korea. Indeed, if anything, the potential transnational trajectories of individual returnees – their outlook on the world – and the maintenance of transnational relationships often expands rather than contracts (c.f. Butcher 2004a), at least in the initial period after return when this research was conducted. This much is apparent in the discussion of departure and arrival experiences above where many returnees reported that they did not wish to leave Auckland and, if it were possible, would stay longer. It was also apparent when I questioned returnees about future plans to travel overseas or to New Zealand specifically. Many students, for example, noted that, in contrast to their feelings before travelling to Auckland, after return they had a much greater desire to spend time overseas – travelling, studying further or even living. For some, like Sin-Hye (TS, Seoul, 23), this was a significant shift both in her own personal trajectories and her opinions about others:

> Before, I little bit you know – ‘oh, why they are decided to leaving Korea, maybe they are rich or I don’t know’ – something like that. But now I can understand if someone doesn’t have enough money but the people, the person has experience about the live in overseas maybe they can start, the people, person, to try to live in other countries.

This shift was also often a realisation of different possibilities:

> I think, I met lots of different kinds of person so I have… mmmm, my person is a little bit changed. More open, I have open about different person. Other kind of countries but like Japanese, Chinese… Before I just thought I want to work in Korea. After that I want, I thought there is lots of chance to get jobs in other countries. If have chance I want to work in other countries. I get some confidence. (Jae-Uk, LS, Busan, 24).

All but one of the returnees expressed a desire to spend time outside South Korea in the future. However, the desires varied considerably and perhaps more importantly the possibility for making such desires reality diverged depending on the kind of study that returnees had completed. As above, the tertiary graduates – Jae-Yeong, Sang-A, Ju-Hee
and Se-Yun – all recognised that it was possible to migrate to another country if they so wished. Indeed, Jae-Yeong currently lives with his wife in Australia and Se-Yun explained at length to me his ten year plan for migration to New Zealand. Others like Sang-A and Sang-Taek are seriously planning for retirement in New Zealand. Such trajectories resonate significantly with the accounts of highly-skilled Hong Kong migrants offered by Ley and Kobayashi (2005). In contrast however, a number of returnees had the desire to travel, study and in many cases live overseas but felt that the latter in particular would be very difficult because their qualifications and language skills would not match the strict requirements of immigration in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and other potential settlement countries. This was particularly the case amongst language students. Nevertheless, even in this situation the current desires still reflected a shift from pre-Auckland feelings. Most returnees had planned at that stage to either study in Auckland to get a better job in South Korea or at most were uncertain about their future. Two returnees, Ha-Na and Jin-Yeong, even recalled that they had been reluctant to go to Auckland in the first place because they were afraid of living outside of South Korea. Curiously, the only student who expressed absolutely no desire to leave South Korea again, Ju-Hee, recalled that when she originally left for Auckland she wanted to migrate to New Zealand or another country. Table 11.2 contains the details for each individual returnee.

What Table 11.2 illustrates is that the period of time that returnees have spent in Auckland has had a significant impact on their desired or actual trajectories. Each returnee, except Ju-Hee, shifted from a position where they either planned to live in South Korea or were uncertain of their future, to desires to spend more time overseas or actual plans to do so. This shift likely has less to do with Auckland per se than it does with the actual experiences of living abroad for a period of time and the new trajectories that are opened up as a result. Indeed, it appears to reflect rather well, Arjun Appadurai’s (1997: 7) contention that as a result of increased migration and access to globalised imaginaries ‘more people than ever before seem to imagine routinely the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born’.
Table 11.2: Returnees’ Plans before and after Leaving Auckland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returnee</th>
<th>Plans before Auckland</th>
<th>Plans after Auckland</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jang-Ho</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Get an overseas posting with a South Korean company</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve English and job prospects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Uk</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Work and possibly migrate overseas – perhaps Taiwan (studies Mandarin).</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyeon-Ji</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea. Wants to live in New Zealand but feels it is impossible.</td>
<td>New Zealand. Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did not like travel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin-Yeong</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Further study or working holiday travel to New Zealand or Australia. Will probably live in South Korea.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afraid of travelling.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min-Hee</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea. Wants to live in New Zealand but feels it is impossible.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea. Would like to travel but cannot afford it.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji-Eun</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea. Wants to live in New Zealand but feels it is impossible.</td>
<td>New Zealand. Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu-Jin</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea. Wants to raise a family in New Zealand but feels it is impossible.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve English and job prospects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin-Hye</td>
<td>Live in South Korea.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea. Wants to live in New Zealand but feels it is impossible.</td>
<td>New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve English and job prospects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Yeong</td>
<td>Uncertain.</td>
<td>Living in Australia. May live in Australia, New Zealand or other country.</td>
<td>New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ju-Hee</td>
<td>Migrate to New Zealand or other country.</td>
<td>Live in South Korea close to family. Does not want to leave South Korea again.</td>
<td>New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se-Yun</td>
<td>Uncertain.</td>
<td>Work in South Korea for ten years. Migrate to New Zealand permanently.</td>
<td>New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to the other returnees however, Ju-Hee (TS, Gwangju, 22) did not express a desire to live outside of South Korea. Here, the time spent overseas and the return seems
to have highlighted the important role played by family in her life and the desire to remain close to her parents. She explains:

**Francis:** So why did that change since I talked to you in Auckland?

**Ju-Hee:** Yeah, that’s really important. Because it’s a long time since I left my home. Although I thought I become independent, kind of I changed my attitude. But honestly I want stay with my parents because I think I spend a long time with myself. Even getting, getting job maybe I get pressure as well, pretty much. So, I don’t want to be alone at that time so if I can stay with my parents it’s good.

**Francis:** When did your feelings change?

**Ju-Hee:** After one month getting back. Being back here since the last day of July, since then I can feel getting changed and I can feel getting used to family. ‘So that’s why friends don’t want to leave’ – but I can understand just right now. I think it’s really important.

Ju-Hee’s account is a useful qualifier to Appadurai’s (1997) somewhat enthusiastic assumption that life outside the space where one is born is always to be desired. In contrast to this, Ju-Hee’s experience suggests that the challenges faced in migration, both personal and familial, may in fact discourage rather than encourage some individuals to desire living elsewhere. Moreover, it is possible that a greater number of the returnees in this research would have expressed similar sentiments if the decision to live overseas was as immediate as it was for Ju-Hee. Indeed, most of the returnees who are language students are aware of the fact that they will find it very difficult to live overseas even if they want to. As such this ‘routine imagination’ of life elsewhere can remain just that, an imagination, and need not be assessed in terms of the physical, social and emotional necessities that it would actually entail.

Table 11.2 also provides an indication of the continued contact that returnees have with individuals outside South Korea. These included contact with individuals in New Zealand as well as Japan, Europe, Thailand and Mexico. Of these contacts it was useful to note that all the returnees who had positive experiences in homestays in Auckland maintained regular contact with their homestay parents/families. Other contact was with former teachers, agency staff, friends and classmates. It was also notable that all of the five returnees who had been in Auckland for more than one year still maintained contact with individuals there, often Korean-New Zealanders. The means by which contact was maintained parallel those used by students in Auckland. In general, communication was primarily internet based with returnees using cyworld to keep in contact with Korean
friends in addition to messenger services, email and sometimes phone calls. Two students noted that they sometimes sent and received photos by post with their homestay families. Although the maintenance of these contacts suggests a certain amount of transnationality on the part of returnees, the fact that most of this research was conducted within a year of arrival back in South Korea means that it is hardly conclusive in terms of the long-term maintenance of these relationships. As an indication, Sang-A and Se-Yun, the two returnees who had been back in South Korea for a longer period only maintained regular contact with Korean friends in Auckland and former homestay parents (in Se-Yun’s case). Both recalled that they originally kept regular contact with non-Korean individuals when they first returned to South Korea but that the regularity of contact in these relationships had decreased over time. Nevertheless, even if the transnational contact that is maintained by these returnees only includes other Koreans that are in Auckland these contacts are still based upon shared experiences in Auckland and as such are part of returnees ongoing efforts maintain aspects of lives lived there. Moreover, the maintenance of these relationships is also significant for the final aspect of returnees’ transnationality that I will discuss here, the re-building of the ‘bridges to learning’ that facilitate the movement of international students from South Korea to Auckland in the first place.

The ‘Bridges to Learning’

In Chapter Five I discussed at length the different ‘bridges to learning’ that facilitate the arrival and settlement of South Korean international students in Auckland. These included the services provided by businesses run by Korean-New Zealanders and the very presence of a significant population of Koreans in Auckland. The actions of returnees also play a significant role in creating and maintaining these ‘bridges to learning’ in South Korea through the deployment of imaginaries about Auckland/New Zealand\(^5\) and the provision of specific information that will assist in the movement and settlement of potential students.

During their time in Auckland South Korean international students continually negotiate the differences between South Korea as an imagined place and Auckland as the place of everyday encounter. After return this duality of imagined and encountered

---
\(^5\) As in Chapter Five, I use this textual conflation of ‘Auckland/New Zealand’ as a reflection of the fact that students and returnees, in general, did not see a significant distinction between the two.
places switches so that it is South Korea that is the place of everyday encounter and Auckland/New Zealand is the imagined place. At this stage, then, Auckland/New Zealand becomes the product of memory and, more often than not, nostalgic imaginings that focus on the positive aspects of returnees’ experiences there. In particular, as noted in the discussion of departure and arrival above, much is made of the ways that life in South Korea is perceived to be less desirable than life in Auckland/New Zealand: the environment, the pace of life and the restrictions on personal expression. Indeed, very few returnees noted anything negative about their experiences in Auckland even when prompted to do so. The only less than positive opinions that were widely expressed by returnees related to educational factors – that the reputation of universities in New Zealand was not as good as other countries, or that the number of Koreans in Auckland made it difficult to learn English. In terms of life experiences in Auckland/New Zealand only one returnee held a negative opinion, Ha-Na (LS, Seoul, 26). She recalled her problems interacting with ‘kiwis’ and her feeling that people in Auckland were not open to other cultures. Despite this however, Ha-Na still expressed positive memories of life in Auckland and longed to be there again because it was a ‘beautiful place. Beautiful sky. It’s like… uh,… umm… pictures’.

These nostalgic renderings of life in Auckland/New Zealand are not necessarily a reflection of the feelings that returnees had when they were actually in Auckland. Rather, they reflect the fact that most returnees’ lives are now much more stressful and difficult than they were in Auckland as they are pursuing careers and other longer term objectives in South Korea. Just as South Korea was imagined through experiences in Auckland when they were there, now Auckland/New Zealand is imagined through present experiences of life in South Korea. As such, the positive memories of Auckland/New Zealand are likely to be as much a reflection of the difficulties of their current lives as they are any indication of actual experiences. However, the fact that returnees engage in this sort of nostalgic imagining of Auckland/New Zealand does crucially contribute to the future movement of potential international students that they come into contact with. The first way that this happens is that returnees often participate in the production of shared imaginings that draw on some of the same tropes about Auckland/New Zealand that were discussed in Chapter Five:

Sometimes my friends asked me which country is good for learning English. Many people want ask me so I said New Zealand is good and so Australia is not
so good. New Zealand is more peaceful and a good place to study English and its very good scenery and so I recommend New Zealand many, many times. About 30 people I recommended but they have no money and not enough money, just I say it’s good. (Ji-Eun, LS, Seoul, 23).

You know, in my memory New Zealand is quite good country. In my memory so I will never forgot myself in New Zealand. So you know if someone wants to go to abroad I always say – ‘Go to New Zealand. Go to New Zealand’.

…

Because, because I don’t know any country so I always say to very relax. I don’t any country and I know New Zealand about the life there, like the beach, like the, you call it. Actually, not my friend, my friend of friend they went to New Zealand last month. He has good choice. Good choice. (Hyeon-Ji, LS, Gyeonggi-do, 22)

I would tell them… mmm… First of all I would tell them, New Zealand is a very safe country and they have a nice environment to study and the people are nice. There’s not, I haven’t met anyone who’s racist and mmm… comparing to like USA, Britain not even that much money and can learn English and can meet a lot of people from other countries. (Se-Yun, TS, Seoul, 28).

The similarity between these sorts of discursive constructions of Auckland/New Zealand and the reasons why South Korean international students choose this city/country is no coincidence. As it was noted in Chapter Five more often than not potential students rely first and foremost on exactly these kinds of recommendations from friends and family. Put simply, the regular discussion of Auckland/New Zealand in these ways plays a central role in producing the imaginary of Auckland/New Zealand that encourages potential students in the first place. Moreover, even in the cases where returnees had reservations about some aspect of life in Auckland/New Zealand they still produced these tropes. Returnees like Ha-Na, Diana, Sang-A and Ju-Hee, for instance, noted that they recommended Auckland/New Zealand because of its environment, relaxed lifestyle, relatively low-cost and opportunities for travel even while they questioned whether it was the best place to learn English or whether the universities had significant reputation to make the investment worthwhile. In this sense while they may be discouraging potential international students from studying there in the future, they are not in any way challenging the most common tropes and imaginaries that are deployed about Auckland/New Zealand.

In addition to contributing to the production of imaginaries about Auckland/New Zealand some returnees also noted that they provided specific information that would assist their friends, family, classmates or others to pursue a period studying in
Auckland. This included information about: aspects of life in Auckland – places to live, shop, eat etc, good and bad schools, agencies and other services in Auckland. It would also often include contact information of Koreans living in Auckland who they could meet when they arrived. Usually such information is provided informally to friends and family who enquire about Auckland/New Zealand:

   My agency, well especially I love them… When some people want to go to New Zealand for English I recommend them to meet them because they are so kind and they are always care about. And, and when, when someone has problems they always help them because [even if] they are not their agency’s students. (Sang-Taek, LS, Seoul, 27).

At other times such information may be solicited in more formal settings. Min-Hee, for example, was asked to speak about Auckland and New Zealand to her university classmates when a representative of the institution she studied at in Auckland visited:

   First of all. April. Kind of April I recommended in front of many people because [School X] Korean counsellor visited our university and she asked. I went there in front of many people I said ‘you should go there’ and I recommend in front of many people. I said ‘[School X] is very good’. I said about that school and Auckland. (Min-Hee, LS, Daegu, 23).

The role of returnees in (re)producing these ‘bridges to learning’ is significant. Firstly, it illustrates the ways in which imaginations of place are as likely to be the product of specific desires and hopes in the present space-time as they are to be about actual experiences in the place that is imagined. This applies to both imaginings of South Korea while students are in Auckland or to imaginings of Auckland by returnees. Additionally, these imaginings also illustrate the interconnectedness of students’ re-entry to South Korea and the departure of other South Koreans to study in Auckland and New Zealand. In a sense it brings this thesis full circle back to where it began – the arrival of students in Auckland and the inter-personal networks that facilitate it or otherwise. The discourses that returnees engage in are an important part of this process. Indeed, even those students who have reservations about certain aspects of their experience in Auckland also contribute the re-production of these tropes by insisting that even if Auckland/New Zealand wasn’t a good place to study it was certainly beautiful and worth visiting. Like Haesu, the protagonist in Kim Ronyoung’s *Clay Walls*, these returnees act as vessels of knowledge about other places that plays a significant role in motivating others to follow their pathways. Put in another way, they contribute to the ongoing transnationalism between South Korea and New Zealand.
Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have discussed the everyday urban encounters of South Korean international students during their time in Auckland. Broadly speaking, these discussions have shown that while there is physical, social and emotional friction in such encounters there are also specific practices that students engage in to overcome these difficulties. This chapter has provided an important extension of these discussions. Most importantly it has shown that the friction involved in movement and migration is not restricted to these everyday urban encounters outside of the place that is nominally known as ‘home’ – South Korea. Rather, the friction in movement that individuals encounter and negotiate as both students and returnees is a product of the tensions between imagined and lived places, desire and reality, and the past and present. In Auckland, many students desire a return to or at least reconnection to South Korea that will allow them to feel more belonging and less longing. As noted in Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten these desires are often fulfilled, at least partially, through engagement with practices, objects, places and people that remind students of South Korea as home. Yet, such intimations are not a purified version of ‘home’ – South Korea – transported to ‘away’ – Auckland – but are rather constituted in the spaces in-between both localities. Indeed, many returnees found upon re-entry to South Korea that things were not as they had imagined them in Auckland and that certain aspects of everyday life had either changed or were not as pleasurable as they remembered. Relationships with family and friends that had been longed for in Auckland had also changed or were not the same as returnees had imagined while they were away. In fact, many returnees realised as a result of renegotiating these relationships, particularly those with family, that they themselves had changed their personal outlook on the world such that the routines of life in South Korea no longer suited them.

In addition to illustrating these interesting parallels between the everyday encounters of students in Auckland and those of returnees in South Korea this chapter has also considered some of the transnationality that students continue to engage in after return. Firstly, it was noted that most returnees re-activated friendships networks with others who had been in Auckland where this was possible. Even where this was not possible many also found spaces where they could interact with others who had similar experiences overseas, either in New Zealand or other countries. The building of such networks is a useful parallel to those built amongst co-nationals in Auckland that
suggests while language and culture maybe a factor in the value of such networks similar or shared feelings of estrangement are also crucial. The accounts of returnees also illustrates that many desire further migration after returning to South Korea and some have even begun to make plans for such movement. Many returnees also maintain transnational contact with friends and others in New Zealand and elsewhere. At the same time however, the return and the desire for further migration also highlights the different positionalities of returnees vis-à-vis both other returnees and individuals who remained in South Korea. Put simply, those returnees with foreign tertiary qualifications have much greater choice in their future trajectories than those who do not. However, even those who have completed language studies noted that they felt resentment from friends who remained in South Korea because they (the returnees) had much greater career opportunities within South Korea or possibly beyond. In this sense then, it is highly likely that returnees play a significant role in promoting the practice of studying overseas either more generally or specifically in Auckland/New Zealand. Indeed, I finished this chapter by noting that the discussions that returnees engage in with friends and family in South Korea is significant in the movement of future international students to Auckland, New Zealand more generally, or elsewhere. The stories that these individuals tell, the imaginaries that their stories construct and the specific information they provide are some of the fundamental factors that facilitate the choice to study overseas and in Auckland/New Zealand specifically. This final point illustrates more than anything else that it is not sufficient to view the re-entry of international students through an extended linear model of migration and return. Instead, it is crucial to focus on the ways in which returnees engage in and promote the continuing transnational movement of international students between South Korea and Auckland.
Chapter Twelve

LEARNING TO CROSS BORDERS

Summary and Conclusions

This thesis has been concerned with the movement of international students from cities and towns in South Korea to Auckland, New Zealand and back again. More specifically, I have been concerned with the borders, processes of bordering and border crossings that are part of South Korean international students’ everyday urban encounters between Auckland and South Korea – encounters that are so often a difficult process of ‘Learning to Cross Borders’. Conveying some of these encounters has offered insight into broader issues relating to international education and the global movement of students, the practices and experiences of transnationalism, and the role that everyday practices and experiences play in the constitution of urban space. In this final chapter I draw together the divergent themes that have emerged in the thesis through a summary of the major findings and a discussion of what implications this might have for the way we think about international education, transnationalism and cities. I conclude the chapter by noting some future directions for research in this area.

Summary of Findings

International education is big business in New Zealand. This ‘fact’ is mimetically proclaimed in central and local government analyses, reports and reviews; statements and press releases by industry organisations; academic research and scholarship; and in countless newspaper articles. Curiously, the individuals for whom international education ostensibly exists – international students – are often absent in these discussions. When they do appear it is rarely in a recognisable form. Rather, international students are represented as economic figures, head counts, averages in psychological measures, ‘customers’ or simply as resources for profit. Put in another way, international students’ bodies are ‘sprawled out, distorted, [and] re-coloured’ (Fanon 1968: 80).
One of the key aims of this thesis has been to attend to the overly reductive renderings of students that have been common to date. In place of these accounts I have presented students as *individuals who are crossing borders to learn and, in the process, learning to cross borders*. In this thesis the practices and experiences of students have not been a matter of balance sheets and pie charts. Rather, I have highlighted the very contingent everydayness of students’ practices and experiences while also maintaining a focus on the broader implications of international education. To summarise the findings of the thesis I focus on five themes that have emerged within and across the different chapters: the ‘bridges to learning’ that facilitate the arrival and settlement of students; the encounters students have with Auckland and the ‘host population’; the familiar practices, objects, places and peoples that students engage with; the individuality and ethno-nationality of student practices and experiences; and the tension between imagined and lived experiences in transnational movement.

**Bridges to Learning**

The movement of international students is not an isolated phenomenon, although it has often been treated as such. Rather, this movement is thoroughly embedded in transnational economic and social practices and inextricable from other forms of movement ranging from tourism to long-term migration. In Auckland the increasing number of South Korean international students in the late 1990s and early 2000s cannot be separated from the growth of both a Korean-New Zealand community since the early 1990s and the increased circulation of tourists from South Korea. Together these developments have had two effects. Firstly, they have increased awareness in South Korea and amongst individual South Koreans about New Zealand, and within that awareness, Auckland as the largest urban centre. Knowledge has often taken shape through a series of tropes about Auckland/New Zealand that reify this city/country’s social and environmental factors. Curiously, although these tropes have considerable similarities with the marketing material that is used to officially promote New Zealand to tourists and international students this does not appear to be their primary source. Rather, these tropes are more often produced in personal accounts of place, often based upon comparisons with life in South Korea. This was apparent in the reasons why many students chose to study in Auckland in the first instance. Often they were directed here by friends and family who had visited, studied or were living in this city. Moreover, in interviews with returning students it was clear that even those who had negative feelings
about their time in Auckland still reproduced these tropes and recommended this place to their friends and family, if only with qualifications. This fact highlights the centrality of imaginaries of place in the process of international students’ movement.

The other notable effect of these developments is the growth of ethno-nationally specific forms of business that facilitate connections between South Korea and Auckland. Korean-New Zealanders have engaged in forms of immigrant entrepreneurialism that are crucial to the choices that potential students make about study destinations, their actual movement to Auckland and their adaptation to everyday life in this city. This is most apparent in the activities of Yuhakgweon, the education-immigration-travel agency that acts as the linchpin in a range of differentiated but interrelated forms of movement between South Korea and Auckland. More traditional forms of immigrant entrepreneurialism are also significant however. This includes businesses like restaurants, video parlours, internet cafes, singing rooms, bars, grocery stores and hairstylists amongst many others. They target the concentration of South Korean international students in the inner-city areas of Auckland providing them with easy access to practices, objects and places that are familiar both linguistically and culturally. On the flipside, the concentration of these businesses in the inner-city area are also part of the reason why this is a crucial part of Auckland for individual students. In this way the relationship between the Korean-New Zealand community in Auckland and South Korean international students is mutually reinforcing. The presence and practices of students provide individual migrants with an easily accessible source of customers (and labour) through which cultural and linguistic specificity is an asset, rather than a liability (as it might be in relation to other inhabitants in Auckland). Moreover, in a social sense, it can be assumed that the presence of international students and their contribution to the success of these ethno-national businesses increases levels of cultural and linguistic familiarity for longer term migrants and, potentially, their sense of belonging in this city. Together, these social and economic connections between South Korea and Auckland constitute what I have called the ‘bridges to learning’, the various cross-border relationships and activities that facilitate the continuing arrival and settlement of South Korean international students in Auckland.
**Encounters with Auckland and the ‘Host Population’**

If these ‘bridges to learning’ are an example of the ways that the frictions of international mobility can be reduced, discussions of the encounters that students had with Auckland and members of the ‘host population’ tended to demonstrate the exact opposite. In Chapter Six, for example, I illustrated in considerable detail the manner in which South Korean international students are represented in the media within the category ‘Asian student’ through perceptions about their bodily attributes. This spatial imaginary has not simply erased South Korean international students’ individual and ethno-national specificity however. Rather, it reconstitutes individual South Korean international students, signified by their ‘Asian’ body, according to economic, cultural and social characteristics. These characteristics suggest that the category ‘Asian student’ equals wealth, exotic difference and social problem. Moreover, I have shown how these representations have materialised in the everyday experiences of individual students through encounters with racism on the streets of Auckland, in homestays, shops and even in the classrooms of educational institutes. In every case, students’ explanations of these encounters suggest that while the specific motives of perpetrators were unclear the discourses surrounding the ‘Asian student’ were undoubtedly the vehicle through which such racism operated.

In a different way, South Korean international students also experience friction in their movement to Auckland because of the experiential differences between this city and South Korea. In particular, students often felt isolated in Auckland because in comparison to the density and pace of life in even smaller South Korean cities, Auckland was perceived to be slow and boring. This feeling was particularly the case for students who were living outside of the inner-city. Indeed, the general movement from homestays in the suburbs to apartments in the inner-city was one way that students dealt with these experiential differences. Differences in ‘home’ environments in South Korea and Auckland were also the cause of difficulty. Those students residing in homestays often noted that the different feelings and practices within this surrogate home made them feel out of place. These included differences in the warmth between the homestay and home, different uses of particular rooms like the bathroom or bedroom, as well as differences in food and drink and familial interaction. In a sense, the difficulties that students face in the ‘homestay’ reinforce the centrality of home in the production of familiarity and belonging. Where the features of the homestay were
disconnected from expectations of ‘home’ in South Korea students often felt estranged in their everyday life, something that was only resolved through finding new, more home-like accommodation.

Not all students’ encounters were negative. A few students developed close relationships with their homestay families, teachers and others that offered opportunities for shared experiences across borders. The account of the Korean Volunteer Team offered in Chapter Ten also illustrates that there are opportunities for encounters in the ‘contact-zones’ that might be more cosmopolitan in character. Despite these exceptions however, the majority of students involved in this research had negative encounters with Auckland and the ‘host population’. While feelings of estrangement in the different urban environment were overcome through choices made about accommodation, racist encounters with the ‘host population’ were an issue that was rarely resolved. These encounters, more than anything else, make students feel out of place and reduce the possibility of developing a sense of belonging and attachment to Auckland or New Zealand.

**Familiar, Practices, Objects, Places and People**

One of the crucial ways that South Korean international students attempt to resolve the differences between South Korea and Auckland and the feelings of being out of place is by engaging with familiar practices, objects, places and people. In Chapter Eight, for example, I discussed the ways in which the consumption of familiar foods plays an important role in reducing the distance and difference between South Korea and Auckland. Curiously, this involved not just foods that are ostensibly ‘Korean’ but also the products of global franchises like Starbucks. While there is significant precedent for the former in scholarship on the consumption practices of transnational communities the latter is rarely discussed in an academic context. The fact that Starbucks, and other global brands, exist as familiar places for students in Auckland is therefore significant. It illustrates firstly the fact that belonging need not be based on supposedly pure forms of ethno-national culture, as is often implied. Rather, belonging can be created through the reproduction of familiarity while abroad based upon the enactment of practices and experiences that were a normal part of everyday life before migration. In the case of migrants like these students, this familiarity will often include ethno-national food but it may equally involve other elements of the lived experience in the place of origin. This,
then, highlights the second point of significance from this finding. The importance of Starbucks in students’ lives reinforces existing research on the rise of globalised identities and consumption practices in South Korea, particularly amongst urban middle-classes, or those who aspire to that identity (Bak 2004; 2005). Although the particularities and enactment of such globalised identities do continue to vary between places, the significance of Starbucks in students’ lives suggests that these locations offer spaces of familiarity that appear to be increasingly global in their reach.

In a similar way to the consumption of familiar foods, South Korean international students’ communication strategies also appear to facilitate a sense of belonging while in Auckland. There are two aspects to this observation. On the one hand communication with friends and family in South Korea offers students a way to connect their lives in Auckland to lives that are being lived in South Korea. Cyworld, the internet domain that was the main focus of Chapter Nine, is a particularly effective tool in this regard. The audio-visual possibilities and the simulated spatial aspects of cyworld make it ideal for creating a virtual feeling that lives separated by great distance can remain connected and reliant on each other. Cyworld, however, is not just a tool for connecting ‘home’ with ‘here’. In addition, cyworld, alongside other internet domains like New Zealand Iyagi, also facilitates the formation of communities of shared interests amongst South Koreans in Auckland. In this respect these internet tools, like the consumption of foods, integrates aspects of a Korean identity into the everyday world of students in Auckland and by doing so re-creates a sense of home and belonging while away.

There is a recursive relationship between these efforts to create familiarity and the encounters that South Korean international students have with Auckland and the ‘host population’. In many ways the combination of negative encounters with the ‘host population’ and the experiential differences between Auckland and South Korea are part of the reason why students seek out familiar practices, objects, places and people. At the same time however, this continued engagement with familiarity also seems to exacerbate the estrangement that students feel. Firstly, it may contribute to the lack of contact that students have with the ‘host population’ and as a result be one factor that is tied to students’ bodily features and used in the production of racist representations of the ‘Asian student’. Moreover, students’ engagement with familiarity also seems to contribute to the feeling that they are a long way from home, with such activities being only a passing reprieve from estrangement they may experience elsewhere. Finally, it
must be noted that the experience of these familiar things is not always positive for students. In particular, it is apparent that as much as familiar practices, objects, places and peoples promote a sense of belonging they are also a process of bordering that draws boundaries around students’ bodies through the reassertion of what purports to be a purified Korean identity. This was apparent both in regards to culinary consumption and communication strategies where it appeared that for some students, particularly those who wanted to move beyond these fixed identities, interactions with co-national friends and family actually restricted their practices and experiences in Auckland. Moreover, the Korean identity that students engage with is often not singular. Rather, as noted in Chapter Eight, there are differences in the ways this identity is acted out for male and female participants that highlight the role of gender differences in the reproduction of social and cultural norms. Although this research was not focussed on socio-economic status of students there are likely to be differences in the articulation of Korean identity in terms of class as well.

**Individuality and Ethno-nationality**

While it is clear that individual South Korean international students have a lot in common with each-other as a result of shared cultural and linguistic background and shared experiences it has been one of the aims of this thesis to illustrate the individuality of students’ practices and experiences. This was expressly addressed in Chapter Seven via an analysis of four ‘individual pathways’ through a fusion of Michel de Certeau’s (1984) focus on everyday practices and a concern for the ‘uprootings/regroundings’ (Ahmed et al. 2003) involved in transnational migration. In the discussion of these pathways it was clear that the students had much in common. All four of these students, for example, engaged in practices of familiarity through association with other South Koreans and various practices, objects and places that were identified as ‘Korean’. Yet, the manner in which each student engaged in such activities differed significantly in ways that reflected their own positions and dispositions rather simply a generalised ‘South Korean-ness’. This distinction was most noted in a comparison of the accounts of Jang-Ho, the student who stayed only seven months in Auckland, and Su-Mi, the student who has been in Auckland for five years and is now aiming for permanent residency. While both engaged in everyday practices and experiences that were familiar because they included ‘Korean’ objects, places and people they did this in quite different ways with quite different effects. Most importantly, Su-Mi was able to
successfully ground her life here through associations with familiarity that seemed more connected to Auckland and New Zealand compared with Jang-Ho’s more temporary associations. What this suggests is that ethno-nationality, like other aspects of life in Auckland, is something that must be negotiated on an individual level by students; it is not simply a natural outcome of their presence here.

The individuality of student practices was also apparent in other parts of the thesis. I have already noted above, for instance, that while many students prefer to consume Korean food and drink where possible others are seeking out different experiences during their time in Auckland. The fact that these students might face some resistance or friction from other South Koreans in their attempts to consume difference reinforces the fact that ethno-nationality is not a natural outcome but is rather created and maintained through everyday practices and experiences. Indeed, in a point that illustrates the significance of the processes of bordering, it is often the boundaries of ethno-nationality that are most stringently policed. Another student, Ha-Na, also experienced this in regards to her use of cyworld to connect her life in Auckland with the lives of friends and family in South Korea. Her online encounter with boundary policing practices of patriarchal nationalism made it clear that experiences of familiarity are likely to vary considerably between individuals.

Finally, it is also worth noting the significance of the actions of the Korean Volunteer Team (KVT). This group of students, and in particular the individual who established this team, Pedro, engaged in a set of weekly activities that intentionally challenged perceptions of the ‘Asian student’. Through these weekly activities the team also established a regular space of exchange between similarly positioned individuals that enhanced the feelings of social embeddedness and belonging. While the activities utilised familiar objects, places and people they did so in a way that produced a particular set of practices and experiences for these individuals that differs from that of other participants in this research. As noted in Chapter Ten, the members of the KVT were some of the most well adjusted individuals I met during this research. Moreover, the activities of the KVT were not just about students’ lives. Rather, they were also an attempt to engage with a range of other inhabitants in Auckland including different nationalities of international students and the ‘host population’. In short, their particular actions created the opportunity for encounters in the ‘contact-zones’ that while fleeting offered hope for a different sort of multiculturalism in Auckland.
Each of these examples of individuality is an important qualifier to the common perceptions presented in media and academic accounts alike that suggest all students are the same. In contrast to such perspectives these illustrations of individuality remind us of the contingency of categories like ‘South Korean international students’ and ‘Asian students’. They highlight that while from a distance students and their practices might all look the same, they are the product of individual actions. As such they are also subject to change through actions of individuals and collectivities that enforce, submit to, subvert or resist the processes of bordering from both within and without.

The Tensions between Imagined and Lived Experiences

The final finding that I wish to highlight here is the tension between lived and imagined experiences in the lives of South Korean international students. This has been apparent throughout the fieldwork-based chapters of the thesis through students’ encounters in both Auckland and South Korea. In Chapter Five, for example, the arrival in and first impressions of Auckland often challenged the ways that this place is imagined by students before they arrived here. While the lived experience of Auckland possesses some of the postcard-like images that are produced by tropes about Auckland/New Zealand, it also includes much more and less than what students had imagined. In Chapter Eleven too, accounts of re-entry suggested that the ways in which South Korean international students imagine South Korea and their hometown/city while in Auckland differs significantly from their lived experience after they return. At times this was because their memories of place in South Korea were static and they were surprised by the way things had changed while they were away. In other cases however, there was a much greater parallel with the imaginings students had of Auckland before arrival. Often, students imagined South Korea in opposition to their lived experience in Auckland in ways that idealised the positive attributes of ‘home’ versus the negative attributes of ‘away’. Upon return however, students encountered the lived experiences in South Korea that included the things they had imagined plus much more and less than what they had imagined while they were in Auckland. In between these two poles students also negotiated this tension between imagined and lived experiences. In particular, the efforts to create a sense of familiarity through intimations of South Korean life was based on those imagined aspects of lives lived elsewhere and attempts to integrate them into lived experience in Auckland.
At many times during the thesis I have referred to the scholarship of Sara Ahmed (1999; 2000), Avtar Brah (1996) and Ghassan Hage (1997) as a route to making sense of this tension between the lived and imagined. Theirs has been a useful frame of reference. Yet, their contribution focuses primarily on ‘home’ and the different experiences of imagining and living ‘home’ as being the centre of this tension. In Chapter Three, for example, I offered the following quote from Sara Ahmed (1999: 341): ‘[t]he journeys of migration involve a splitting of home as place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience’. The tensions exhibited in students’ experience of migration reinforce this. However, the fact that the tension between lived and imagined is not limited to experiences of ‘home’ – either as South Korea, their hometown/city or indeed their physical residence – but actually includes aspects of ‘away’ – imaginings of Auckland/New Zealand both before arrival and after return – suggests that this tension is much more general than these authors propose. Indeed, while home will undoubtedly be one of most emphatic places through which this tension is experienced all places that individuals travel between are likely to be conceived through both imaginings of place and lived experiences of place. To paraphrase Ahmed then, the journeys of migration involve a splitting of place as imagined and place as the sensory world of everyday experience. Moreover, the tension between imagined and lived that is experienced in journeys to ‘home’ and ‘away’ suggests that ‘the journeys of migration’ also involve the merger of imaginings and lived experiences of the place that one is travelling to.

**Implications for International Education, Transnationalism and Cities**

At the outset of this thesis international education was framed as a topic of great significance that has only had limited attention from critical scholars. Moreover, most non-critical research on international education appears to be focussed on improving the economic benefits of selling education to international students or managing the problems that they apparently present. This thesis has taken a different tack. I have focussed on the everyday practices and experiences of international students themselves as a route to developing a broader and deeper understanding of this form of migration. To this extent the study is the first of its kind to engage in highly detailed qualitative research on the everyday practices and experiences of international students during
sojourn. It is certainly the first account of South Korean international students in New Zealand.

What I have illustrated in the different chapters in this thesis is that international education is much more than it appears to be from a distance. International students are not simply neo-liberal individualised subjects who float between countries of origin and education and act in the same way as their fellow international students or conationals. Rather, the process of crossing borders to learn is much more textured. It may be that some students move quite easily between the places they grow up and the places they are educated, but for most of the participants involved in this research there have been as many negatives as there are positives in studying abroad. Certainly, the chance to study overseas has broadened many students’ horizons and presented new opportunities but it has also involved considerable longing and estrangement during their time in Auckland and indeed after returning to South Korea. Moreover, this thesis has also shown that the activities of South Korean international students in Auckland are not reducible to an expression of their ethno-nationality, let alone the signifier ‘Asian student’ that is popular in academic, policy and media accounts. Rather, this research has suggested that there is a much more contingency to the practices and experiences of these students than is often recognised. Students’ everyday urban encounters and their impact on Auckland can only be understood through perspectives that acknowledge the differences within the student population and recognise that their activities are a constant negotiation of place and identity.

South Korean international students are transnational actors. In Chapter Three it was noted that some of the leading scholars in the field of transnational studies would have a problem with this kind of statement. Authors like Alejandro Portes, Luis Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt (1999), for example, have argued that to include subjects like international students within the frame of transnationalism is simply cluttering the field with groups whose transnationality is at best fleeting and of little significance. At the conclusion of this thesis the transnationality of international students is no longer in doubt. South Korean international students’ everyday urban encounters do not exist simply in reference to their physical presence in Auckland. Rather, they are a constant negotiation of place between cities and towns in South Korea and Auckland. At certain points the transnationality of students is apparent in quite explicit ways like the communication strategies that virtually bridge the gap between South Korea and
Auckland. Indeed, the internet domain cyworl d, whilst designed for use within South Korea, exhibits features that make it nothing less than a ‘window’ between these two worlds through which life in Auckland can be lived through reference to South Korea. Participants’ engagement in the economies of immigrant entrepreneurs is also strong evidence of the transnational field within which students operate. The consumption of food and other ‘Korean’ objects here reveals not only the ways that Korean-New Zealanders are creating intimations of South Korea in Auckland through the production of ethno-nationally familiar spaces. It also points to the transnational commodity chains that make Korean goods available to students here in Auckland. Finally, the movements of students have also highlighted the emergence of what I have called the ‘bridges to learning’ – those transnational economic and social processes that facilitate the continuing arrival and settlement of students in Auckland. In all these ways South Korean international students are transnational actors. Their activities do not simply engage in aspects of life that exist here in Auckland but rather both materially and immaterially are bound to aspects of life in South Korea and in some cases even further afield.

The effects of the presence and transnational activities of South Korean international students in Auckland’s urban landscape, particularly the inner-city, have also been significant. In a general physical sense these effects include the growth of apartments and educational facilities as well as the increasing number of Korean focussed businesses. Such effects are not limited to changes in the ‘look’ of the inner-city. They also include the different senses associated with these changes, something that is most notable in the different smells and tastes of Korean food that is now more widely available. The sounds associated with the increasing use of the Korean language in this part of Auckland have also had an effect on everyday experiences of place.¹ In this way, the significant numbers of South Korean international students, alongside others, partaking in everyday activities in the inner-city has changed the experience of that space. The presence and practices of students has also led to opportunities for encounters with cultural difference. Unfortunately, more often than not such encounters have resulted in a process of racial stereotyping that is perhaps best exemplified in the media representations of the ‘Asian student’. These representations and the stereotypes

¹ As such this thesis has also engaged with the broader call for more research into the sensuous geographies of everyday life (Rodaway 1994; Wise & Chapman 2005).
that support them have a spatial element that locates them in the inner-city and the result has been to associate that part of Auckland with all that is perceived to be negative about the ‘Asian student’. This representation of the city is not universal however. For students this part of the city offers a space to engage in familiar practices while also more generally representing an urban form that has much greater similarities to that which they are accustomed to in South Korea. Moreover, this meaning is not immediate but rather enacted over time through everyday practices like walking, the experiences that take place in particular spaces and the spatial imaginaries that are subsequently developed and deployed.

Finally, and in conclusion, this thesis has also illustrated that there is a crucial link between the transnationality of international education and cities. Although there are particularities to the everyday urban encounters discussed here, there are also likely to be considerable similarities with the experience of international education in other urban centres. Indeed, initial research by Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak (2004) on the transnational economies of international education in Vancouver illustrates immense similarities with the experience in Auckland. There are a number of reasons why cities and international education appear to be inextricably linked. In the most obvious ways, cities are the point of arrival and departure into different countries that physically facilitate the movement of students, regardless of whether they will study in the city of first arrival or not. Additionally, cities possess the kind of social and economic infrastructure that makes large-scale international education possible: significant population, concentration of educational facilities and access to urban amenities. What this thesis has shown however, is that more than the sum of these parts cities like Auckland are also nodal points in transnational networks of migrants and the businesses that they operate. Such networks are crucial because they provide students with information on Auckland and New Zealand and assist with movement and settlement. On the flipside, international education now appears to be an inextricable element of the social and economic fabric of cities like Auckland. The practices associated with international education have transformed the everyday experience of certain parts of the urban environment, most notably the inner city; assisted in the economic and social integration of Korean-New Zealanders in Auckland; led more generally to increases in associated economic and labour practices (homestays, English teaching); and resulted in increased opportunities for encounters with cultural difference in the urban environment.
and their positive and negative consequences. In conclusion then, international education is not something that coincidentally takes place in cities or is simply the result of their relative size – although this is important. Rather, the realities of international education and cities are intertwined through the social, cultural and economic transnationalism that they both rely on.

Further Research

Several possible future directions for research have emerged during the course of this thesis. In the remainder of this chapter I will highlight four such possibilities. Firstly, as I noted in Chapter Five, there is a significant gap in the literature around international education in regards to the effects that this phenomenon is having on those who do not study overseas. Indeed, although most research on international education notes the increasing numbers of students who choose to study internationally most fail to recognise or point out that much greater numbers are actually remaining at home. Moreover, it is likely that the line between those who study overseas and those who do not is primarily a socio-economic one and that international qualifications only exacerbate existing inequalities. This observation was apparent in Chapter Eleven where some students reflected on the different opportunities that they had comparable to their peers who had remained at home. Johanna Waters (2005a: 313) has also alluded to this by suggesting that the return of international students ‘serves to devalue locally derived social capital and reinscribe social stratification based on educational differentiation’ (emphasis in original). There is, therefore, important research to be done that investigates what long term effects international education will have on the nature of local education in and the overarching social structures of major sending countries like South Korea.

Remaining in South Korea and the experience of education at home rather than abroad, it appears that significant work could be done on other educational exchanges between South Korea and New Zealand. In particular, the movement of New Zealand graduates, amongst those from Canada, Australia and other nations, to South Korea as English teachers. As I noted at the outset of this thesis, this is a form of migration that is characterised by many similarities to that of South Korean international students, particularly with regards to the practices and experiences of creating familiarity and belonging while abroad. Research on the teaching of English in South Korea by foreign
nationals is also likely to draw light on the role of the English language in ongoing uneven power relations at global, national and local scales.

In Auckland and other locales where international education is becoming increasingly important there are also a number of further research possibilities. Two of particular note are the transnational economies of international education and more detailed work on the practices and experiences of encounter in homestays and language schools. In the first instance, there is a need for further research into the practices of South Korean and other migrants involved in the movement of international students. Dan Hiebert and Minjung Kwak (2004) have addressed some of these issues as have I in this thesis but much remains to be done on the role that these migrants and their entrepreneurialism has in the practices of international education. Secondly, it is clear from the findings in this research that locations like the homestay and language school have significant impacts on students’ lives. Moreover, the homestay and language school are also spaces where encounters with ‘cultural difference’, either in the form of the ‘host population’ or other nationalities of students, are inevitable. As such there is a need for much more detailed research on the dynamics of these spaces both from the perspectives of differently positioned students in language schools and the families and students who come together in homestays. Alongside other research into the politics of international education, the long term consequences of this phenomenon and more general issues of transnational activity and urban spaces there remains much to be done in the field of international education, transnationalism and cities. For the present however, this thesis has highlighted the importance of thinking critically about borders in the quest to understand the place of international education and those who give it embodiment in the city.
List of References


Butcher, A. (2003). *No Place Like Home? The Experiences of South-East Asian international students in New Zealand and their re-entry into their countries of origin*. Unpublished PhD, Massey University, Albany.


Hwang, S. M., & Kim, Y. S. (2000). *Saibeogonggane ddo dareun itda [There is another me in Cyberspace]*. Seoul: Kim Young Press.


Kim, S.-J. (Writer) (1999). *Juyuso Seubgyuksageun (Attack the Gas Station) [DVD]*. South Korea: SpectrumDVD.


Morris, B. (2004). What We Talk About When We Talk About 'Walking in the City'. *Cultural Studies, 18*(5), 675-697.


Rogers, A. (2000). Mexico's Historic Elections Spill into the USA. *Traces, 10*.


List of References


Intercultural Studies, 26*(1-2), 171-186.

*Journal of Intercultural Studies, 26*(1-2), 1-3.

New York: Foundation Center.

Woo, K. S., & Page, S. J. (2002). Tourism demand in East Asia Pacific: the case of the
South Korean outbound market and activity patterns in New Zealand. In C. M.
Hall & S. J. Page (Eds.), *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation:
Environment, Place and Space.* London: Routledge. pp. 78-84


Wyman, M. (1993). *Round-trip to America: the immigrants return to Europe, 1880-

Yeoh, B. S. A. (1999). 'Heart' and 'Wing', Nation and Diaspora: gendered discourses in
Singapore's regionalisation process. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of

Studies, 41*(12), 2431-2445.

and Costs of Simultaneity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 31*(2), 409-
413.

transnationalisms: studies on transnational societies, multicultural contacts, and

and the Cultural Politics of 'Contact Zones'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration


Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire Schedule (English and Korean).. 364
Appendix B: Generic Key Informant Interview Schedule ........ 372
Appendix C: Participant Interview Schedule (Auckland) ....... 373
Appendix D: Participant Interview Schedule (Re-entry) ....... 374
Appendix E: Details of Interviewees ........................................ 375
Appendix F: Map of South Korea ........................................... 377
Appendix G: Unselected Map Drawings ........................... 379
Appendix A

Questionnaire Schedule (English and Korean)

Learning to Cross Borders: Everyday Urban Encounters between South Korea and Auckland.
Researcher: Francis Leo Collins

Instructions: Please write your answers in the space provided or tick the circle before what you think is the best answer. If you are unable to answer a question or don’t want to answer it, please just leave it blank and go on to the next question. Thank you for your time.

SECTION A

1. What is your home City or Town? (please specify)

2. Why did you choose to study in New Zealand?
☐ The Cost
☐ The Environment
☐ The Quality of Education
☐ Family
☐ Friends
☐ Other (please specify)

3. Why did you choose to study in Auckland City (instead of somewhere else in New Zealand)?
☐ It was the biggest city
☐ I have friends in Auckland
☐ I have Family in Auckland
☐ There are many Korean International Students here
☐ Agency
☐ Education
☐ other (please specify)

4. I am studying at a
☐ Polytechnic
☐ University
☐ Private College (PTE)
☐ Language School
☐ Other (please specify)

5. What are you studying?
☐ English Language
☐ Other Languages
☐ Business or Commerce
☐ Computer Science
☐ General Science
☐ Art or Design
☐ Social Science
☐ Humanities
☐ Other (please specify)

SECTION B

6. How many years have you been studying in NZ?
☐ Under 1 year
☐ 1 to 2 years
☐ 2 to 3 years
☐ 3 to 4 years
☐ Over 4 years

7. While I am studying I currently live in a
☐ Home stay
☐ Hostel
☐ Flat/rental accommodation
☐ With my family
☐ Other (please specify)

8. This accommodation is a
☐ House
☐ Apartment
☐ Other (please specify)
9. I have lived in this accommodation for
- Less than 2 months
- 2-4 months
- 4-6 months
- 6-8 months
- Over 8 months

10. How many people do you live with (in flat, homestay, apartment, hostel room, house etc)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6+

11. Where is this Accommodation?
- CBD, Downtown, City area
- Auckland Central Area (i.e. Remuera, Mt Eden, Grey Lynn, Mt Albert, Greenlane etc)
- North Shore
- Waitakere City, West Auckland
- Manukau City, South Auckland
- Other (please specify)

12. Have you lived anywhere else?
- No
- Home-stay
- Hostel
- Flat/rental accommodation
- Other (please specify)

13. In Korea I lived
- At home with my family
- With flatmate(s) or roommate(s)
- Alone

14. In Korea I lived in a
- House
- Apartment
- Hostel
- Other (please specify)

15. What year were you born in?

16. How many friends do you have who are New Zealanders?
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6+

17. How often do you speak to New Zealanders in public?
- Never
- Once a Week
- Some Days
- Everyday

18. How easy or difficult do you find English conversation? (Please rate from (1) very easy to (5) very difficult)
- (1) Very Easy
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)
- (5) Very Difficult

19. Where do you prefer to meet your friends?
- My house or my friends house
- Bars, Cafés or Restaurant
- Internet Cafés
- Public places (Queen st, Aotea Square etc)
- School/University
- Other (please specify)

20. What part of Auckland do you usually socialise? (please specify) (e.g. downtown, St Lukes etc)

SECTION D
21. Gender?
- Male
Female

22. How many times do you eat at restaurants or café’s in a week?
☐ 0
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ 6
☐ 7+

23. What style of restaurants do you usually eat at?
☐ American Fast Food Chains (e.g. McDonalds, Burger King etc)
☐ Other Fast Food outlets (e.g. Fish’n’Chips, Local Burger outlets)
☐ Korean Restaurants
☐ New Zealand/European restaurants
☐ Other (please specify)
☐ I Don’t eat at restaurants

24. What is your main source of transport?
☐ Walking
☐ Bike
☐ Bus, Train or Ferry
☐ Car
☐ other (please specify)

25. On average, how much would you spend on accommodation a week?
☐ Less than $50
☐ $50 to $100
☐ $100 to $150
☐ $150 to $200
☐ Over $200

26. On Average, how much would you spend on entertainment a week (at shops, restaurants, movie theatres, bars, internet cafés etc)
☐ Nothing
☐ Less than $50
☐ $50 to $100
☐ $100 to $150
☐ $150 to $200
☐ Over $200

27. How much do you spend on fees per year?
☐ Less than $2,500
☐ $2,500 to $5,000
☐ $5,000 to $10,000
☐ $10,000 to $15,000
☐ Over $15,000

28. Travelling in New Zealand (outside Auckland)
☐ I have already travelled outside Auckland
☐ I have plans to travel outside Auckland
☐ I have no plans to travel in New Zealand

SECTION E
29. When I have finished studying, I want to
☐ Return to Korea
☐ Stay in NZ
☐ Go to (please specify)

30. How often do you hear about fashion, style, culture, news or other information from your home country?
☐ Never
☐ Monthly
☐ Weekly
☐ Daily
☐ More than once a day

31. How do you usually get this information?
☐ Internet
☐ Magazines/Newspapers
☐ Friends or Family in Korea
☐ Koreans in Auckland
☐ Other International Students
32. How do you usually keep in contact with your friends and family?
- Email
- Internet Messenger
- Telephone
- Letter/Postage
- Homepage (Cyworld, Daum etc)
- Other (please specify)

33. Please list any associations or clubs you have joined since arriving in Auckland (i.e. Korean Students Associations or clubs)

34. How did you find out about these?
- Friends or Family
- The Internet

35. How much time do you spend on the internet per week?
- 0-1 hours
- 1-5 hours
- 5-15 hours
- 15+ hours

36. What are your favourite websites (please specify 1 or more)
1) ______________________
2) ______________________
3) ______________________

37. Where do you access the internet?
- My house/flat
- School/University
- Internet Café
- Other (please specify)
설문 응답 방법

본 설문은 응답을 적어 주시거나 자신의 생각과 가장 근접한 번호나 답에 동그랗게, 혹은 체크를 해주시길 바랍니다. 만약 응답을 할 수 없을 경우나 응답하기 곤란한 질문은 빈칸으로 남겨두시고 다음 질문으로 가셔도 됩니다. 본 설문을 위해 시간을 내 주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.

SECTION A

1. 고향이 어디입니까? (예. 경기도 수원)
_________________________ 

2. 왜 뉴질랜드에서 유학하기로 결정하셨습니까?
☐ 비용
☐ 환경
☐ 교육의 질
☐ 가족
☐ 친구
☐ 기타<자세히>__________________

3. 유학지를 왜 뉴질랜드 도시 중에서도 오클랜드를 선택하셨습니까?
☐ 뉴질랜드에서 가장 큰 도시 이므로
☐ 오클랜드에 친구가 있어서
☐ 오클랜드에 친언척이 있어서
☐ 다른 한국 유학생이 많기 때문에 유학원을 통해
☐ 교육의 질
☐ 기타<자세히>__________________

4. 본인이숙해 있는 교육 기관은 어디 인가요?
☐ 전문대<Polytechnic>
☐ 대학교<University>
☐ 사립 대학<Private Training Establishment>
☐ 어학원
☐ 기타<자세히>______________

5. 현재 무엇을 공부하고 있습니까?
☐ 영어
☐ 그 외 언어학
☐ 비즈니스/통상
☐ 컴퓨터 공학
☐ 일반 과학
☐ 미술/디자인
☐ 사회 과학
☐ 인문 과학
☐ 기타(자세히)-

SECTION B

6. 뉴질랜드에서 몇 년 동안 유학하고 있습니까?
☐ 1 년 미만
☐ 1 년 이상 2 년 미만
☐ 2 년 이상 3 년 미만
☐ 3 년 이상 4 년 미만
☐ 4 년 이상

7. 현재 유학하면서 거주하시는 곳이 어디인가요?
☐ 홈스테이
☐ 호스텔
☐ 플랫 혹은 렌트
☐ 가족과 함께
☐ 기타<자세히>______________

8. 거주하는 곳의 건물 형태는 무엇입니까?
9. 현재 함께 살고 있는 사람은 몇 명입니까?
   □ 1(명)
   □ 2(명)
   □ 3(명)
   □ 4(명)
   □ 5(명)
   □ 6(명 이상)

10. 거주 지역이 어디 입니까?
    □ CBD, Downtown, City area
    □ Auckland Central Area(i.e. Remuera, Mt Eden, Grey Lynn, Mt Albert, Greenlane etc)
    □ North Shore
    □ Waitakere City, West Auckland(i.e. Henderson)
    □ Manukau City, South Auckland
    □ Other________________________________________

11. 현재 거주지에 얼마나 계셨습니까?
    □ 2 개월 미만
    □ 2~4 개월
    □ 4~6 개월
    □ 6~8 개월
    □ 8 개월 이상

12. 지금 살고 계신 곳 외에 다른 곳에 거주하신 적이 있습니까?
    □ 아니요.
    □ 홈스테이
    □ 호스텔
    □ 프랫/렌트
    �□ 기타<자세히>_____________________

13. 한국에서는 어떻게 사셨습니까?
   □ 가족과 함께 살았다.
   □ 프랫메이트나 룸메이트랑 자취를 했다.
   □ 혼자 자취를 했다.
   □ 기타<자세히>_____________________

14. 한국에서 사셨을 때 주거 형태는 어떠셨습니까?
   □ 주택
   □ 아파트
   □ 하숙/고시촌
   �□ 기타<자세히>_____________________

SECTION C

15. 태어난 연도를 적어 주십시오.
    __________________________________________

16. 뉴질랜드 친구가 몇 명이나 있습니까? 숫자에 표시 하세요.
    □ 0
    □ 1
    □ 2
    □ 3
    □ 4
    □ 5
    □ 6+

17. 공공 장소에서 얼마나 자주 뉴질랜드 사람과 대화할 기회가 있습니까?
    □ 전혀 안 한다.
    □ 일주일에 한번
    � □ 가끔
    � �□ 매일

18. 영어로 대화하는 것이 얼마나 어렵다고 생각되십니까?
    □ 매우 어렵다
    �□ 좀 어렵다
    � � �□ 보통이다
    � � �□ 조금 쉽다
    � � □ 주 싫다
19. 어디서 주로 친구들이나 아는 사람들을 만납니다?
  □ 친구 집이나 우리 집
  □ 식당, 카페 혹은 술집
  □ PC방
  □ 공공 장소 (광장, 공원 등등)
  □ 학교나 여학원
  □ 혹시 다른 장소가 있으시면 기재해주세요<자세히>

20. 오클랜드 어느 지역에서 주로 친구들을 만났습니까? (예: Aotea 광장, Queen St, 다운타운 스타벅스 등등)
<자세히>

SECTION D

21. 본인의 성별을 고르세요.
  □ 남
  □ 여

22. 일주일에 얼마나 자주 음식을 밖에서 사 먹습니까? 숫자에 표시하세요.
  □ 0
  □ 1
  □ 2
  □ 3
  □ 4
  □ 5
  □ 6
  □ 7+

23. 어디를 주로 이용합니까?
  □ 미국 페스트 푸드 체인점 (예, 맥도날드, 버거킹, 기타 등등)
  □ 기타 다른 페스트 푸드 음식점 (예, 피쉬 앤 칠스, 동네 햄버거 가게)
  □ 한국 식당
  □ 뉴질랜드/서양 레스토랑
  □ 기타<자세히>________________

24. 주로 이용하는 교통 수단은 무엇입니까?
  □ 자전거
  □ 버스, 기차 혹은 페리
  □ 자가용
  □ 기타<자세히>________________________
  
25. 일주일에 평균적으로 지출되는 방세는 얼마나 입니까?
  □ 50 달러 미만
  □ 50~100 달러
  □ 100~150 달러
  □ 150~200 달러
  □ 200 달러 이상

26. 일주일에 잡비(쇼핑, 영화, 식당, 술집, 인터넷, 카지노 등등)로 얼마나 지출 됩니다?
  □ 0
  □ 50 달러 미만
  □ 50~100 달러
  □ 100~150 달러
  □ 150~200 달러
  □ 200 달러 이상

27. 1년 등록금 비용으로 얼마나 지출 됩니다?
  □ 2,500 달러 미만
  □ 2,500~5,000 러
  □ 5,000~10,000 달러
  □ 10,000~15,000 달러
  □ 15,000 달러 이상

28. 뉴질랜드(오클랜드 밖) 여행에 대한 계획이 어떻게 됨니까?
  □ 이미 오클랜드 밖 뉴질랜드를 여행했다
  □ 여행 할 계획이 있다

□ 외식을 일체 하지 않는다.
SECTION E

29. 뉴질랜드에서 유학이 끝나면 계획이 어떻게 됩니까?
☐ 한국으로 돌아가고 싶다
☐ 뉴질랜드에 계속 머물고 싶다
☐ 다른 곳으로 가고 싶다
<자세히>____________________

30. 패션, 스타일, 문화, 뉴스 등등 한국 소식을 얼마나 자주 접합니까?
☐ 전혀 안듣는다
☐ 한달에 한 번
☐ 일주일에 한 번
☐ 하루에 한 번
☐ 하루 한 번 이상

31. 한국 소식을 어디서 주로 접합니까?
☐ 인터넷
☐ 잡지/신문/정보지
☐ 한국에 있는 친구나 가족
☐ 오클랜드에 있는 한국 사람
☐ 다른 한국 유학생
☐ 기타<자세히>____________________

32. 한국에 있는 친구나 가족과 주로 어떻게 연락 합니까?
☐ 이메일
☐ 인터넷 메신저
☐ 전화
☐ 편지
☐ 썸웨어 인터넷 홈페이지
☐ 기타<자세히>____________________

33. 오클랜드에 오신 후 가입한 단체나 클럽 등등의 모임이 있다면 적어 주세요.(예, 뉴질랜드 이야기.daum.net, Korean Students Associations or clubs)

34. 어떻게 이 모임을 알게 되셨나요?
☐ 친구나 가족을 통해
☐ 인터넷
☐ 잡지나 신문
☐ 벽보
☐ 기타<자세히>____________________

35. 일주일에 인터넷을 얼마나 이용합니까?
☐ 0~1 시간
☐ 1~5 시간
☐ 5~15 시간
☐ 15 시간 이상

36. 가장 많이 이용하는 인터넷 사이트는 어디 인가요?
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

37. 주로 어디에서 인터넷을 이용하나요?
☐ 집/플랫
☐ 학교/대학
☐ PC방
☐ 기타<자세히>____________________
Appendix B

Generic Key Informant Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many Korean students study at School X? Is this an increasing, decreasing or reasonable stable number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your experience where do Korean students live while they are studying in Auckland?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think attracts Korean (and other) international students to Auckland as a city?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What support services does School X provide to international students? To Korean students specifically? Do students utilise these?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your experience do you think that most Korean students enjoy their time living in Auckland?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your experience who with, where, and how do Korean students spend their leisure time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your experience do Korean students confront many social/personal problems at school, at home or in the city generally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways do you think that Korean (and other) students contribute to Auckland?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any other comments, questions or suggestions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Participant Interview Schedule (Auckland)

Introduction:
- Welcome
- What is the research about?
- Why I am doing this research?

Please Introduce Yourself
- What is your name?
- Where did you live in Korea?
- How long have you been living in Auckland?
- Where do you live in Auckland?

Why did you choose to study in New Zealand?

Why did you choose to study in Auckland?

What is good about living and studying in Auckland? Why?

What is bad about living and studying in Auckland? Why?

What do you usually do when you are not studying?
- Where?
- When?
- Who with?
- Why do you like doing this?

Where do you usually meet your friends in Auckland?

What do you usually do on the weekend?

What is different about Auckland and cities in Korea? Your hometown/city?

Would you like to take part in some other parts of this research?
- Writing a journal for one week
- Taking photos in the city
- Spending two hours visiting places you know in Auckland
- Volunteering your cyworld minihompy for the research.
Appendix D

Participant Interview Schedule (Re-entry)

(For participants who were not involved in the research in Auckland)
When did you start studying in Auckland? How long were you studying there? Why did you choose Auckland?

What did you study in Auckland? Where did you live while you were studying in Auckland?

Did you have much contact with South Korea or South Koreans (in Auckland) when you were living in Auckland? If so how?

(For all participants)
Tell me about your last day in Auckland?

When did you arrive back in South Korea? Please tell me about this day - what happened?

What did you expect when you came back to South Korea? Did this happen? If not, why?

Do you think that South Korea (or your hometown) has changed since you went to Auckland? How?

Tell me about meeting your family and friends after you came back?

Tell me about living and studying in Auckland? What was it like?

What are you doing now? Did your study experience in Auckland help you with this?

Do you miss living and being in Auckland? Do you miss any people in Auckland? Do you have any contact with anyone in Auckland or New Zealand (including Koreans) still? Do you want to have any contact with Auckland or New Zealand? What sort?

Do you still have good relationships with the friends who stayed in South Korea when you went to New Zealand?

Do you think that you have changed as a person because you studied in Auckland? In what way? What made you change? How did you know you had changed?

If you could choose again, would you still study in Auckland? New Zealand? Somewhere else? Why? Do you want to go back to New Zealand in the future? How?

Would you recommend other South Koreans to study in Auckland or New Zealand? Why or why not?
### Appendix E

**Details of Interviewees**

**Key Informants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Communication #</th>
<th>Korean / Non Korean Speaking</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview Recorded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 1</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Private Training Establishment</td>
<td>Counsellor, Student Services, Marketing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 2</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Language school</td>
<td>Counsellor, International Relations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 3</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Private Training Establishment</td>
<td>Student Advisor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 4</td>
<td>Non-Korean speaking</td>
<td>Public Tertiary Institute</td>
<td>International Student Advisor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 6</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Language school</td>
<td>Counsellor, Marketing officer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 7</td>
<td>Non-Korean speaking</td>
<td>Private Training Establishment</td>
<td>International Student Services</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 8</td>
<td>Non-Korean speaking</td>
<td>Public Tertiary Institute</td>
<td>International Director</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 9</td>
<td>Non-Korean speaking</td>
<td>International Education Organisation</td>
<td>Supervisor, support centre</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 10</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Language school</td>
<td>Student advisor</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 11</td>
<td>Non-Korean speaking</td>
<td>Language school</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 12</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Language school</td>
<td>Student advisor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 13</td>
<td>Non-Korean speaking</td>
<td>International Education Organisation</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. Comm. 15</td>
<td>Korean speaking</td>
<td>Education Agency</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Participants in Auckland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Home-town/city</th>
<th>Educational Institution</th>
<th>Interview Recorded</th>
<th>Other Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min-Gyeong</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su-Mi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sang-Hee</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin-Yeong</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Busan</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Busan</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min-Hee</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Daegu</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min-Jeong</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu-Jin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji-Eun</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha-Na</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Jeolla-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu-Mi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Jeolla-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyeon-Ji</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin-Hye</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dong-Su</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sang-Taek</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jang-Ho</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Jeolla-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won-Sik</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Jeju-do</td>
<td>PTE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>PTE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Yeong</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Gyeongsang-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jae-Uk</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Busan</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seon-Jun</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Daegu</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-Seok</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Gyeongsang-do</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin-Ho</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Participants have been allocated fictional names in the same language as the name they primarily used during their time in Auckland – English or Korean.
- All names are fictional except ‘Pedro’, who’s real English name was used by mutual agreement because it was already publicly known.
Appendix F

Map of South Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyeongsang-do (North and South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeolla-do (North and South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chungcheong-do (North and South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangwon-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeju-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daegu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwangju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyeonggi-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyeongsang-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeolla-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chungcheong-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangwon-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeju-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Cities (Korea National Statistical Office 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incheon</td>
<td>994.12</td>
<td>2,466,338</td>
<td>2,629.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daejeon</td>
<td>539.78</td>
<td>1,365,961</td>
<td>2,688.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulsan</td>
<td>1,057.14</td>
<td>1,012,110</td>
<td>1,029.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Unselected Map Drawings

Map Drawing: Joanne (LS, Seoul, 25)
Map Drawing: Ha-Na (LS, Seoul, 26)

Map Drawing: Jin-Yeong (LS, Busan, 26)

Map Drawing: Dong-Su (LS, Seoul, 24)
Appendices

Map Drawing: Paul (LS, Jeolla-do, 26)

Map Drawing: Min-Gyeong (TS, Gwangju, 23) and Sang-Hee (TS, Seoul, 23)
Map Drawing: Jeremy (PTE, Seoul, 21)