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KOREANS BETWEEN KOREA AND NEW ZEALAND

International Migration to a Transnational Social Field

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology,
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experience of transnationalism within a migrant group from Korea to New Zealand. It focuses on the transnational practices of participants from the Korean middle class in the recently created social field spanning the home country and New Zealand.

The aim of this research is to document the migration processes of Korean international migrants and to explore the meanings of this movement for the participants and the sending and receiving countries, drawing on the theoretical framework of transnationalism. This research is a multi-sited ethnography conducted in several cities in Korea and New Zealand. The main research method is life history interviews along with participant observation.

The research found that a new social field between the two countries has been created since New Zealand allowed mass immigration from Korea, and some Korean middle class have used this transnational social field to amass symbolic capitals for their status escalation and reproduction in Korea. As Korea had undergone rapid neo-liberal reform, after the economic crisis in 1997, this social field has been used by Koreans to access membership of another nation state which has a well-equipped welfare system and to gain entry to the education system in an English speaking country. In terms of settlement, these immigrants concentrate on achieving a transnational livelihood, building their community as part of the transnational social field where they can be embedded simultaneously in Korea while living in New Zealand. They adopt transnational and cosmopolitan identities to maximise their opportunities in this social field.

Korean international migration to New Zealand is one example of global population movement where people use transnationalism as a passage created by globalisation to cope with crises caused by globalisation itself. Here transnationalism is a deterritorialisation strategy against nation states' monopolistic hegemony in defining their nationals' social mobility channels.

Key words: Middle class, Immigration, Transnationalism, Social field, Korea, New Zealand

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

My Immigration Life History

Fourteen years ago when I decided to go to New Zealand for fieldwork for my MA (Masters) thesis, the decision did not arise from a purely intellectual curiosity about New Zealand or immigration. While I did my MA coursework, a friend of mine emigrated by himself to New Zealand in 1994 under the point system which commenced in 1991. Having this friend in New Zealand provided a good opportunity to do overseas fieldwork within a low budget. As far as I knew, until then no one had done fieldwork abroad for their MA courses in Korea, mainly because of financial reasons. Besides my aspiration to be the first MA student doing overseas fieldwork, I wanted to take that opportunity for my first overseas trip. Until then I had never been abroad while many of my friends went backpacking around the world after the Korean government liberalised overseas travel in 1989.

Upon completing my MA degree, I started working as a reporter in a newspaper in 1996 when I also married. At that time, my wife and I were planning to apply for permanent residency (PR) for my PhD study in New Zealand. One year before we decided to apply for PR, the New Zealand government changed its immigration policy and it now required the principal applicant to show English test scores as a prerequisite. Because I had no work experience then and my wife had quite a long professional career, we planned to apply for PR with my wife as the principal applicant if she got the required IELTS scores. So in 1996, my wife studied English for the test while I was working. But just before she took her second English test with a high probability of getting the required scores, an unexpected and urgent incident happened to my family which made us totally forget about immigration.

After that I thought I had missed the opportunity for further study, and forgot about New Zealand until I reconsidered PhD study as an option in my career in 2000 when I quit my job as a vocational counselor. But I hesitated to carry out the plan for a while because I was not confident about starting PhD study in my late 30s. Finally I decided to go abroad

when people around me, including my wife who had tired of my indecisiveness, pushed me to finalise my career plan. When I considered the destination country, I did not hesitate in choosing New Zealand because I already “knew” the country. Another reason that led me to choose that country was the consideration of my daughter’s education. She would start school in the near future. So I finally came to New Zealand in 2004 as an international student, accompanied by my wife and daughter. This is the immigration life history which my wife and I have told more than 10 times to people in the Korean community who wondered why I came to New Zealand, in particular, as a fee paying international student at quite a mature age.

In terms of how socio-cultural changes affect individuals’ lives and how individuals respond to those changes, which is a major concern in life history research, there are some points to be discussed in my story. For Koreans, overseas travel was liberalised in 1989, and Korean mass immigration to New Zealand started in 1991. My friend joined that flow three years later, and I made my first overseas trip to visit him one year after that to do possibly the first overseas fieldwork among Korean anthropology MA students at that time. Liberalisation of overseas travel in Korea caused a boom of backpacking among university students, and also provoked my desire for overseas travel. My desire was realised through the network with my friend in New Zealand. That network directed the destination of my first overseas trip. My experience in New Zealand made me consider the option of educational immigration later, but my plan was discouraged by the New Zealand government through its changed immigration policy. But the knowledge about New Zealand which I obtained during my fieldwork, and on-going interest in it and in New Zealand as an education destination, were reactivated when I considered it as a destination for study as an alternative career path.

My MA thesis

In 1995, I did fieldwork for six weeks in Christchurch and Auckland for my Masters thesis where I examined the “new emigration boom” among the Korean middle class which appeared during the mid-90’s and led to the formation of a Korean immigrant community in New Zealand. It is not an exaggeration to call this emigration flow a “boom”: in just five years between 1992 and 1996, over thirteen thousand Koreans reported to the Korean government their emigration to New Zealand, and during that period obtaining New Zealand PR was a prevailing fad among the professionals and white collar workers who

met the requirements in Korea. Given that New Zealand had been an almost unknown country to Koreans, and almost all emigration flows had concentrated on the US before that, it was a “new” phenomenon.

Koreans’ world-wide emigration has been established over a long period, dating back to the mid 19th century: migrations to Manchuria (1860s-1940s), the Russian Far East (1860s-1930s), the Americas (1902-1924) including Hawaii, and to Japan (1910s-1940s). These emigration flows can largely be characterised as reluctant or forced/semi-forced agricultural and labour migration under the Joseon Dynasty and, after that, the Japanese colonial government, although some early flows, especially to Manchuria and the Russian Far East were voluntary. There were emigrants to South American countries for agricultural purposes and to West Germany as contract workers in 1960s. The country to which most Koreans moved since the 1960s up to the present day is the United States. Emigration to the United States since the 1960s can be characterised as the “quest for modernity”--affluent lives, political freedom, individualistic values, etc (Abelmann and Lie 1995). Korea’s participation in the Vietnam War and the construction boom in the Middle East in 1970s was another chance for those who sought economic opportunities.

It is in this context that emigrations to New Zealand are defined as a kind of “*sin-imin* (new emigration or immigration)” which is different from the “emigrations of the 1970s and 80s, to the US, South America, and Europe, which basically aimed for fortune, success, and prosperity” (Yi 1995: 44). “New emigration/immigration” refers to the “new wave” of Korean emigration, which began in the 1990s, heading towards countries like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to seek out a new value: “quality of life”. Immigrants in New Zealand can be said to have changed the concept of traditional immigration and have diversified the patterns of international migration in Korean society.

During my stay with Koreans in New Zealand, I observed many immigrants left their Korean houses and businesses as they were and frequently visited Korea or invited over family members and relatives. Some men in the immigrant families, in particular business owners or professionals like medical doctors, returned to their jobs in Korea leaving their wives and children in New Zealand, and many immigrants seemed to be undecided as to whether to settle in New Zealand or return to Korea or re-migrate to other countries. Some immigrants planned to return to Korea after their children’s university entrance. Thus most of the immigrants in the community still had a certain uneasiness over labeling themselves as immigrants.

In this context, my Masters work examined the socio-cultural factors that encouraged some Korean middle class people to decide on emigration. From the 1990s when Korea began to integrate into the neo-liberalised world economy under the name of “globalisation”, English skills and educational experiences in advanced foreign countries started to be highly evaluated as important human capital. Around this time, many professionals and white collar workers in their 30s and 40s heard of emigration to New Zealand from the immigration agents’ advertising that anyone with a university degree and several years relevant career was able to get permanent residency in New Zealand, an advanced English speaking country where they could instantly access free education. Moreover, if they stayed in New Zealand for a few years and they obtained indefinite returning residency, they could maintain PR without being in New Zealand. Many Korean middle class people saw a prospect in which they and their children could learn English for a few years and after they obtained their indefinite returning residency, they could have various options in terms of work, residence and family arrangements. For Korean immigrants in New Zealand as of 1995, I concluded that the main reasons for their immigration was not to settle in the host society but to obtain some symbolic capital such as English and education experience in an advanced foreign country for their status escalation and reproduction in their home country.

Revisiting New Zealand

Twelve years later during my PhD research I observed that connections between the New Zealand community and Korea are more developed as international transportation and communication became more affordable due to advanced technologies. Many immigrant families still visit Korea on a regular basis or frequently invite their relatives and friends to visit. The practice of astronaut families, that is families split between Korea and New Zealand, has spread so widely that it has become recognised as usual in the community and Korea. During my fieldwork in Korea I met many Korean 1.5 generation immigrants who returned to Korea for work upon graduating from university in New Zealand, and some of them joined their parents who had returned to Korea after the children went to university. But none of them, neither the parents nor the children, said they had permanently returned to Korea. Korean immigrants in New Zealand often re-migrated to third countries, particularly to Australia. Some scholars argue that Koreans in New Zealand are still in the process of settling into New Zealand society and are still in search of their ethnic identity (Kim and Yoon 2003). They regard Koreans’ living patterns as being a result of a lack of

integration into the mainstream society. But I propose that these practices of at least a 12-year duration should not be seen as reluctance to integrate but, rather, should be regarded as possible transnational strategies.

But prior to the beginning of the fieldwork, my personal experience in the first year I arrived in New Zealand directed my PhD project towards the framework of transnationalism. The first incident was my daughter's early experience at her New Zealand school with the "JJ" snack. In 2004 when my daughter first went to a New Zealand school, she could not speak a word in English. During the first two or three months, she had to struggle to learn English. Around that time, she happened to find a snack labeled JJ at the food stall at her school. It tastes similar to a Korean snack, and for my daughter who was stressed from a kind of culture shock, to have that snack during lunch time was a great pleasure. One day when I looked at the bag the snack came in out of curiosity, I was quite surprised to see that the snack is a result of globalisation and transnationalism: it was made by a Malaysian manufacturer using wheat from Australia and oil from a different country, sold at a New Zealand school, and consumed by a Korean international student who felt a kind of nostalgia through the taste of it. And now I can imagine the ways in which the snack is probably imported by some Malaysian transnational businessmen running ethnic businesses in New Zealand and distributed through the networks of Asian small food shops in the country. Through this incident, I was able to form a strong image how globalisation and transnationalism is experienced in everyday lives of ordinary people.

The second incident was about Korean immigrants' high mobility. It was the first summer after I arrived in New Zealand. At a certain point almost half the people – more than 50 - at my church did not turn out for the service. When later I was informed that most of them were visiting Korea, I was really shocked to realise that this was a transnational phenomenon of people's large scale regular moving "back and forth" between Korea and New Zealand.

As I carried on my fieldwork, I had many "as-a-matter-of-fact" kind of interviews with my participants in which they told me they did not come to New Zealand for reasons such as better education, early English education, or a relaxed life as people often said, but *as a matter of fact*, they came here because they were [about to be] laid-off, failed in their business, had problems in their spousal relations, or had children who had shown low school performance *in Korea*. These individual reasons were so diverse that I found

difficulty categorising them into common factors. But all of these experiences led me to form an idea of “transnational social space” (Pries 1999). In this space ordinary people can solve individual problems arising from their lives in their countries of origin or they can obtain resources that they need, but which are scarce in their home countries, without exchanging existing problems for new ones and without losing resources they already have for their new lives in host countries. These are made possible when (e)migrants maintain connections with their home countries thanks to routinised transnationalism.

Rethinking Korean International Migration: Towards a Social Field Approach

Since the early 1990s when mass Korean migration to New Zealand started, Korean media have paid special attention to this phenomenon (i.e., Choi 1995, Yi 1995).¹ Korean emigration to New Zealand has been represented as unique when compared to earlier Korean emigration trends. First, while economic reasons were the main motivation of all previous emigrants, for emigrants to New Zealand, economic reasons do not seem to be a primary concern; the majority of them are upper middle class in Korea and left Korea when the country was celebrating its success in economic development. The second unique aspect of Korean immigrants is that their living pattern stretches across both countries. There were some earlier cases where men worked in foreign countries to remit money to their family in Korea, such as construction labourers in the Middle East or contracted workers in Germany. But this is the first time in Korean international migration history that men work in Korea to send money to their family in a foreign country, which is called “geese family”² in Korea.

The majority of research on Koreans in New Zealand (e.g., Yoon 1998; Lidgard 1996)³ whether conducted in Korea or New Zealand, also emphasises these two

¹ A newspaper also issued a special report about Koreans in New Zealand on 1 January in 1996. Several days after the newspaper report, a TV programme about Korean immigrants in New Zealand was aired. The number of Korean immigrants to New Zealand reached well over 3, 000 in 1995.

² This term which corresponds to “astronaut family”, “transnational family” or “multi-local family” was coined by the Korean media in the mid 1990s where the fathers in these families were figured as geese, according to Ly (2005), the bird which is a traditional symbol at weddings as a mate for life in Korea and which travels great distances to bring back food for their young, just as the fathers support their wives and children while living separately between Korea and other countries.

³ The literature on Koreans in New Zealand in Korea is small, and this is not surprising, considering that migration studies in Korea largely concentrate on Koreans in the traditional receiving countries such as the US, Japan or China. For this review I searched Google Scholar with the keywords of ‘한국인’ (Korean) or ‘조기유학’ (early international education) with ‘뉴질랜드’ (New Zealand) to find only 11 pieces of work.

characteristics: scholars focus on how middle class characteristics influenced Koreans' settlement in New Zealand. In the same context, some scholars conceptualised the astronaut family arrangement as an undesirable strategy, adopted only when migrants found difficulties finding the same level of job as they had in Korea. In this section, I review how Korean immigrants in New Zealand have been represented by scholars in Korea and New Zealand, and show that research on Korean immigration was based on the assumption that all immigrants aimed at settlement in the host society. Then I discuss some theoretical issues raised from "traditional" approaches to international migration, and trace how a new approach in international migration research is being constructed. Finally, I review recent empirical research on Korean international migrants to build a theoretical and empirical basis to interpret my data according to the new approach.

Middle Class Migration and Their Settlement

Although the first paper on a Korean community in New Zealand (Kim 1994) was publicised in Korea in the mid 1990s, Koreans in New Zealand did not attract any academic interest in Korea until the late 1990s. But in New Zealand Korean immigrants as part of new migrants from North East Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and China were at the centre in research on migrants which focused on the issues arising from immigrants' initial settlement process, such as education, employment, health, and welfare. These academic efforts were centred on two interrelated aspects: middle class immigrants' failure, or difficulties, in settlement and the lack of government planning and preparation to meet the needs of these immigrants.

Most immigrants from South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan were highly educated white-collar workers or professionals who were filtered by the general points system⁴, and they came to New Zealand with "the dream of a relaxed life-style in a peaceful and friendly country with professional work or viable business opportunities and instant free access to education", but they soon found that it was "not being realised for many in the reality of under resourced, overcrowded schools and unrecognised overseas qualifications"(Lidgard 1996). New settlers' employment experience was generally unhappy (Ho and Lidgard 1997): over half had no paid employment in New Zealand, and

⁴ The system was introduced by the New Zealand government in the 1991 Amendment to the Immigration Act awarding points for four factors to select PR candidates: employability (qualifications and experience), age, financial independence and settlement. This system "favoured potential immigrants from East Asia, or at least did not discriminate against them" (Chang, Morris and Vokes 2006:6).

among those who were currently employed, less than half had been able to obtain jobs related to their previous work experience and skills. Those who wished to do business were dissatisfied with the lack of information about business investment opportunities and with the tax system because of high compliance costs and high taxes. As a result, even though the Korean community in New Zealand grew rapidly due to the influx of new immigrants from Korea, the scope of Korean businesses and occupations could not penetrate the mainstream society (Yoon and Yim 1997).

In terms of child education, New Zealand had never had such large numbers of new citizens from non-English speaking backgrounds and these immigrants, most of whom were middle class, had high expectations of child education in this English speaking country. But some Korean immigrants' children had entered New Zealand schools on their arrival without preparation such as prior English teaching, and found this encounter unpleasant, and sometimes traumatic (Syme 1995).

The New Zealand government's immigration policy change in the late 1980s and early 1990s was critically reviewed regarding immigrant settlement issues by some researchers (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000, Daley 1998). These researchers seem to agree that the government lacked adequate settlement policy for new settlers. The energy, skills and talents that migrants brought to New Zealand were not valued and were often wasted, and the language issues frequently disempowered migrants.

As a result, these immigrants had difficulties integrating into New Zealand society both economically and socially, and have suffered considerable disruption, mental and emotional stress (Lidgard 1998). For example, a study (Lee 1999) found that the main health problem of Koreans in New Zealand was psychological stress from economic insecurity, and the major physical illness they suffered was psychosomatic symptoms such as fatigue. Nevertheless, the study identifies that Korean immigrants experienced barriers when seeking medical help because of communication difficulties.

As the Korean community in New Zealand continues to grow despite these difficulties in settling in the host society, academics have studied the social and cultural resources mobilised by Koreans in New Zealand. Yoon (1998) found Korean identity in New Zealand has been formed around three characteristics of the Korean community along with the background of Korea's long history as a homogeneous nation and Koreans' nationalism. These three characteristics are: the importance of alumni, blood [kinship], and

regional connections in social relations, the middle class socio economic background of Korean immigrants and an ethnic business-centred occupational pattern. Yoon proposes that Korean identity in New Zealand in the future is subject to the New Zealand government's immigration laws and policy, Korean cultural heritage and prosperity, the attitudes of the host society to the Korean immigrants, and the length of residence in New Zealand.

Many scholars point to ethnic religious institutions, protestant churches in particular, as another important resource for Koreans in New Zealand. Chang, Morris and Vokes (2006) document the experiences of new migrant families from South Korea to Christchurch. This study focuses on the ways in which Korean migrant families have tried to forge a new sense of home in the host country, and outlines a range of strategies employed by the families in pursuit of the feeling of being at home in New Zealand. Morris, Vokes and Chang (2007), based on the same research, detail Korean migrant accounts of social exclusion and harassment. These studies found that at the centre of Koreans' experiences and strategies, is membership of Korean churches and the practice of Christian life. Churches and church-related groups advise and assist new migrant families at all stages of the settlement process, and constitute a primary mode of social activity for many Koreans. That is, church provides a place of homeliness and security for Koreans in Christchurch. The significance of the ethnic church for Korean immigrants is also well explored in a study by De Leeuw (2007). This study found that since the early 1990s many Korean and Chinese migrants in New Zealand have turned to ethnic churches for assistance and support due to an underdeveloped settlement programme in the public area, and that ethnic churches help migrants adjust to New Zealand society with settlement-related programmes, and preserve and maintain their ethnic identities, especially for younger generations, and most importantly, provide migrants with an opportunity for socialising.

Family cohesion was found to be important for young immigrants' psychological adjustment, in Kim's (2007) examination of Korean adolescents' experience in New Zealand. From a questionnaire administered to 147 Korean youths, the study found the family had the strongest association with their psychological adjustment: enjoying time with family members and the perceived provision of practical and emotional support from the family were significantly related to both fewer depressive symptoms and subjective happiness.

Other studies have researched how Korean adolescents adapted to the host society. These studies were done at different times by different researchers but pointed out that Korean adolescents had similar problems. Ho, Chen, Kim and Young (1996) examine the attitudes, experiences and future education or employment plans of migrant Korean and Chinese students. They found that despite the students' positive attitudes towards education in New Zealand, they faced difficulties learning English, adjusting to the curriculum and teaching methods used in New Zealand, and some also mentioned growing racial tension in their schools. In terms of the students' future, most Asian students had high occupational aspirations and sought educational and occupational careers outside New Zealand for better career opportunities, life experience and to avoid unemployment, the language barrier and racial discrimination.

In research in which young new settlers to New Zealand who were from non-English speaking backgrounds and the people assisting them with English participated, Watts, White and Trilin (2002) found that there was a general level of happiness to be in New Zealand and of appreciation of the educational and other resources available; although the same concerns as a decade earlier were expressed by some of the older group about gaining employment and about possible discrimination in the workplace, and many were unsure whether their futures lay in New Zealand. But people assisting them with English concentrated more on the barriers in social participation, education and employment that might limit the opportunities of the young people. The authors suggest encouragement of members of the host society to be aware of the needs of these young people and to be supportive of them as well as the provision of social and educational support to these young people.

Astronaut Family Arrangement

The second characteristic of Koreans in New Zealand which has caught both public and scholastic interest is their multi-local family arrangement. From the early stage of their presence in New Zealand, immigrants from several countries in Asia: Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China, attracted scholars' and policy makers' attention for their transnational practices as "astronaut families"⁵. This strategy often evokes criticism that it is evidence

⁵ The term astronaut family is a derivative of the Chinese word "taikongren (太空人)", which can mean a person who spends time in space (such as in an air plane)...the term "astronaut" refers to returnees or the absent parents, who frequently fly back and forth to visit their family in New Zealand...astronaut families are those in which one or both of the parents return to their country of

of a lack of commitment to New Zealand, and that it negatively affects the family (Lidgard 1996).

First, there was a debate in New Zealand around whether this family arrangement was a conscious desire to take advantage of the privileges of residence in a country, while avoiding the responsibilities of contributing to the tax base. But many scholars argued that this astronaut or “geese” family arrangement should be understood as immigrants’ reluctant choices at the cost of their family relations. Ho and Lidgard (1997) contended that immigrants chose to leave the family in New Zealand and return to work in their country of origin in an effort to remain self-reliant when it proved impossible to find appropriate employment or set up business in New Zealand. In a study based on Census data in 1991 and 1996, Ho, Bedford and Bedford (2000) confirmed that many migrants who adopted the astronaut strategy do not regard the “split” family arrangement as a preferred option, but consider this as a better alternative than not working and being forced to live on welfare benefits. They found that immigrants from China and Korea showed the lowest incidence of geese families among the four migrant groups from Korea, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and that the age of children was a crucial concern in adopting the strategy because the option seemed more viable if the children were older and could take care of themselves. The study articulated how some Korean families ended up adopting an “astronaut” structure after living in New Zealand for a few years. For Korean immigrants, most of whom were in their late 30s or early 40s, returning to school for further training is a popular option for a few years after immigration while educating their young children. But many of them were disappointed at failing to find appropriate employment, or were unable to set up a profitable business in the new country. This drove these Koreans to return to their country of origin to earn a living, while their families remained in New Zealand.

Second, the astronaut family arrangement has often been subject to academic scrutiny in terms of how family separation affects family members. Aye and Guerin (2001) reviewed the studies on astronaut families to identify the impact of that family arrangement on family members. It was reported that the men suffered from loneliness, missing their family, and were concerned about how much longer they could put up with the arrangement, although some men reported that it had no effect or increased their

origin to work, while the remainder of the family resides in New Zealand (Aye and Guerin 2001:10). This term exactly corresponds to the Korean term “*gireogi gajok*” or “geese family”.

productivity. The occurrence of extra marital affairs was reported for men from Hong Kong who were said to be lonely. For the women, migration was not only about adjusting to a new country but also adapting to new roles in the family. Some were dissatisfied and frustrated by the perceived lack of support while others became more assertive, independent and capable of decision making. These women used social networks such as friends or religious groups to cope with the difficulties. The children were disappointed at their incomplete family. They longed for their missing father and male role model in the family as well as feeling lonely, frustrated and bored. They shouldered responsibilities such as interpreting and driving for their mother and even the role of the father in looking after younger siblings, or contributing to the family decision making. The astronaut arrangement is positive in children's psychological development in that many children in astronaut families become more independent, assertive, self-confident, and mature compared with children in the country of origin, but these traits may not be easily accepted in Asian cultures. For the whole family, the parents also reported difficulty disciplining their children in the host society due to the lack of a father. Separation from family or kinship networks led astronaut families to lack family support. Lasting different cultural experiences between husband and wives were noted as having a potential to cause troubles in their relationships when they reunited in the host country.

For Permanent Settlement?

Research on Koreans in New Zealand reviewed above seems to be based on a common basic storyline. Highly educated middle class Koreans immigrated to New Zealand as the country opened its immigration gate to people from East Asian countries from the early 1990s. They came to New Zealand with their family to settle permanently in the hope of a relaxed life in a welfare state, but the New Zealand government was not well prepared for the influx of immigrants from non-English speaking East Asian countries. As a result, the immigrants had to struggle economically, socially, and psychologically to settle in mainstream society. While many Koreans settled in New Zealand using available resources such as various networks in their community and/or religious institutions, as time passed some immigrants returned to work in Korea, leaving their wives and children in New Zealand because they found it impossible to obtain appropriate jobs.

Considering the immigrants' educational and occupational background and the results from research on Korean adolescents, however, a few questions are raised from this storyline. On the one hand, given that most Korean immigrants were university graduates,

white collar workers or professionals who had been trained to be rational actors at school and in the workplace, it is very hard to understand that they did not know before immigration that it would be difficult to attain the same level of jobs in New Zealand as they had in Korea. It is more reasonable to assume that they decided to immigrate to New Zealand with certain plans in terms of their livelihood or future as I argued in my MA thesis. In relation to their plans, therefore, the astronaut family arrangement can be considered neither reluctant nor abusive.

On the other hand, research results on Korean adolescents are contradictory to the general understanding of immigrant settlement in which immigrants become more integrated into the host society as time passes. The Korean adolescents in the studies mentioned above do not seem to become more integrated in the host society, as these studies have persistently pointed to the same problems over ten years, and the young Korean people have responded in the same way to the problems: lack of support and discrimination from the host society, and limited employment opportunities in New Zealand, resulting in Korean adolescents seeking better opportunities outside New Zealand.

Based on these questions, two fundamental questions about research on Korean immigration in New Zealand are raised:

- Did Korean immigrants plan to settle permanently in New Zealand?
- Is it exceptional or abnormal for immigrants not to settle in one country?

Normalising International Migration

Tracing the development of concepts to explain the immigration process, Pedraza (2006: 34) notes that how best to describe that process is a recurrent question in studies of immigration. In the effort to address this question, the theoretical framework that social scientists first adopted was assimilation theory. This theory derived from a long interest in how to incorporate newcomers into new countries. “In Germany and France, scholars’ expectations that foreigners will assimilate is a central piece of public policy” (Levitt and Schiller 2004:1002). Sociology in the US was mainly concerned with how to make Americans out of newcomers during the early part of the 20th century. The fundamental characteristic of assimilation theory was that “assimilation was expected to be a one way process that would also be natural and evolutionary, which as time passed would yield the inevitable outcome of the adaptation of minority ethnic groups to the mainstream culture” (Pedraza 2006: 41). Assimilation approaches developed later in two directions as Levitt

and Jaworski (2007:130) summarise. “New assimilation theory” argues that, over time, most migrants achieve socio-economic parity with the native-born but that ethnicity and race matter, and that both the native-born as well as immigrants change along the way. “Segmented assimilationism” suggests several possible trajectories for migrants on their route to incorporation, including becoming part of the mainstream, remaining ethnic or becoming part of the underclass and experiencing downward mobility.

But according to Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 3), these “traditional approaches have tended to conceive international migrants as exceptions from the norm”. Beck (2000: 93) states it more strongly: “movement between nation-states...is extremely undesirable. At the borders of nation-states the virtue of flexibility mutates into the vice of potentially criminal immigration”. Assimilation studies of international migration are based on a basic and often hidden assumption that immigrants are always the nationals of one nation state who have moved to another, and until they become the nationals of the receiving countries they do not become normal again. As a result, in traditional immigration studies “attention has been divided broadly between the process of migration – emphasising the importance of geographical movement across international borders – and the product of migration – emphasising the impacts of migrants on societies in which they settle” (Al-Ali and Koser 2002: 3).

This assumption and research focus appears to be based on “methodological nationalism”, which refers to “the naturalization of the nation state by the social sciences” (Wimmer and Schiller 2003: 576) or “the tendency to accept the nation-state and its boundaries as a given in social analysis” (Levitt and Schiller 2004: 1007). Wimmer and Schiller (2003: 577-578) identified three variants of methodological nationalism: ignoring or disregarding the fundamental importance of nationalism for modern societies; this is often combined with naturalisation, i.e., taking for granted that the boundaries of the nation-state delimit and define the unit of analysis; territorial limitation which confines the study of social processes to the political and geographic boundaries of a particular nation-state. Levitt and Schiller (2004: 1007) write that methodological nationalism has affected research in social science: “because much of social science theory equates society with the boundaries of a particular nation-state, researchers often take rootedness and incorporation in the nation-state as the norm and social identities and practices enacted across state boundaries as out of the ordinary.” This tendency is also related to what Beck (2000) calls

“the container theory of society”, which refers to the view that society, the object of sociology, is contained within the borders of the nation state.

As the process of globalisation continued to develop, however, many scholars paid attention to the flows of money, popular cultures, and people across national borders, and sought ways to represent these phenomena, overcoming the container theory of society and methodological nationalism. “Social life is not confined by nation-state boundaries” (Levitt and Schiller 2004: 1007) as people shop, work, love, marry, research, grow up and are educated internationally (that is, multi-lingually), and live and think transnationally, that is, combine multiple loyalties and identities in their lives.

As more processes show less regard for state boundaries, the paradigm of societies organised within the framework of the nation-state inevitably loses contact with reality (Beck 2000: 80).

In responding to these changes, Beck (2000: 79) calls for a new paradigm of “reflexive cosmopolitanisation as an institutionalised learning process [which] changes not only the relations between and beyond national states and societies, but also the inner quality of the social and political itself.” In terms of memberships of “the people living internationally”, Soysal (1994) proposes the notion of “post national membership” suggesting that new forms of participation and representation are emerging that do not require citizenship and that newly emerging supranational institutions guarantee a set of basic rights which, she argues, supersede the nation state.

Although they acknowledge that these approaches move beyond the container theory of society, Levitt and Schiller (2004) criticise Beck for directly connecting the global and the individual without considering social relations and social context, and Soysal for neglecting the continuing power of the nation state. They “propose a view of society and social membership based on a concept of social field” drawing on Bourdieu and the Manchester school of anthropology. First, Bourdieu’s concept of social field is as follows:

A [social] field, in Bourdieu’s sense, is a social arena within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them... Each field, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance which is both the product and producer of the habitus which is specific and appropriate to the field... A field is a structured system of social positions... Positions stand in relationship of domination, subordination or equivalence to each other by virtue of the access they afford to the goods or resources (capital) which are at stake in the field... economic capital, social capital (various kind of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (legitimate knowledge) and symbolic capital (prestige and social

honour)... The boundaries of fields are imprecise and shifting, determinable only by empirical research (Jenkins 1992: 84-85).

Therefore, a field is an arena where agents struggle with strategies for the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field, and Bourdieu's model of society, the "social space", consisted of interrelated social fields (Jenkins 1992: 87).

Meanwhile, the scholars from the Manchester school, led by Gluckman, who studied rural to urban migration in "the British Central Africa" of the 1950s and 1960s viewed two sites of the tribal-rural localities and the colonial-industrial cities as constituting a single social field created by migrant networks stretching between these two sites when they found the migrants belonged to the two sites at the same time (Levitt and Schiller 2004: 1008). This notion of the single social field stretching between two or more sites implies that national boundaries are not necessarily contiguous with the boundaries of social fields: some social fields stay within national boundaries while others connect agents across borders (Levitt and Schiller 2004: 1009).

In relation to international migration, Levitt and Schiller (2004: 1009) define social field "as a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organised and transformed". They use this term to conceptualise the potential array of social relations linking those who move and those who stay behind: individuals who do not move themselves maintain social relations across borders through various forms of communication through their social fields between the countries, and the fact that they are part of the same social field keeps them informed and connected so that they can act if events motivate them to do so. Such people participate in a transnational imaginary. Moreover, through the lens of the social field we recognise that local and global cannot be clearly divided: while we are living in a locale, if we participate in social fields that connect us to those in other locales across national borders, interchanging ideas, information or resources, our activities become global. In the same context, as Levitt (Levitt 2001: 4) writes "local level transnational activities are reinforced by the growing numbers of global economic and governance structures that make decision-making and problem-solving across borders increasingly common. Consequently, in this era of heightened globalisation, transnational lifestyles may become not the exception but the rule". As a result, what is at stake in the social fields within the national boundaries – "cultural goods or life style, housing, education for

intellectual distinction, employment, land, power, social class, or prestige” (Jenkins 1992: 84) can be sought in transnational social fields or can create a new social field across the national boundaries.

And in this way, “transnational approaches...conceive of international migrants not as anomalies, but rather as representative of an increasingly globalised world” as Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 3) argue:

They refocus attention on the utilisation by international migrants of modes of telecommunication and transport, their pooling of resources and successful exploitation of global markets and their association with new social forms.

Conceiving of immigration as normal, “transnational perspectives remove the focus from motivation for migration” (Al-Ali and Koser 2002: 3). Now that whatever is at stake in the actors’ social fields can be the reasons for immigration, the efforts to identify fixed and universal “push” and “pull” factors which cause immigration may end up having no explanatory value. Rather, factors such as the class or gender of migrating subjects may be more important in that these factors can explain who pursues what stakes through which social fields.

From the early 1900s when Korean migration to Hawaii, as the first mass immigration with the legal involvement of the sending and receiving states started, until the 1970s when large numbers of Koreans moved to the US to live, immigration was perceived as “unusual” by most Koreans. Koreans thinking of immigration as abnormal is well revealed in their explanation of the reason for immigration: many Koreans used to believe that only the people who have a destiny of a vagabond which Koreans call *yeokmasal* tended to become immigrants, while normal people stay in their homelands for their life time.

Moreover, under the influence of the strong primordial nationalist ideology strengthened during the military regime after the 1960s, immigrants or ethnic Koreans were often conceptualised as “others” so they could easily become demonised by the regime and/or be considered to be “betrayers of the nation” by the nationals when circumstances demanded such condemnation. Or in certain historical contexts immigrants were described in collective terms as “victims” of the colonisation of Korea. For example, regardless of their motivations, ethnic Koreans in China, Japan or the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent Countries) have been often considered as displaced or expelled under the oppression of the Japanese colonialism. When Korean emigration to New Zealand started,

its abnormality from the viewpoint of most Koreans was much greater even than emigration to popular destination countries such as the US, Canada or Australia because New Zealand was such an unknown and distant country to Koreans.

Interpreting Korean International Migration to New Zealand

This research is an attempt to interpret Koreans' international migration to New Zealand through the concept of transnational social field. The main questions of this research are threefold:

- The formation of a transnational social field between New Zealand and Korea: who created it and how?
- The utilisation of this transnational social field: who uses it, how and for what purpose?
- The meanings of this transnational social field.

I review a recent theoretical discussion on transnationalism and empirical research on Korean transnational migration across the world according to each of the main research questions to identify the key theoretical and analytical implications for my study.

I preface this work with a discussion of how the transnational social field approach was developed from a broader discussion of transnationalism. When Lewellen (2002) divided international migration into three categories⁶, “transnational” was conceptualised as a new form of international population movement in the era of globalisation, as the title of his book, “The Anthropology of Globalisation” implies. In the globalised world, however, transnational is not restricted to migration circuits or communities, but can be attached to capital flows, trade, citizenship, corporation, inter-governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations, services, social movements, social networks, families, identities, public spaces and public cultures. Vertovec (1999) categorises theory and research on transnationalism into six distinct conceptual areas: social morphology, type of

⁶ “International migrant” refers to a person who leaves his country of citizenship, often multiple times and to different countries, and returns without making a significant long-term social investment in the countries of destination while “immigrant” refers to one who leaves his country of citizenship to live permanently, or for a long term, in another country. “A transnational (im)migrant” is one who maintains multiple contacts--social, cultural, political, and economic--with both the country of origin and the host country.

consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and reconstruction of place or locality⁷.

But transnationalism is distinguished from globalisation (Faist 2000, Kearney 1995) in that transnational processes are anchored in, but also transcend, one or more nation-states involving actors from the spheres of both state and civil society, whereas global processes are often decentred from specific national territories and take place in a global space above and below states. A distinction is also made between “transnationalism from above” and “transnationalism from below”: the former concerned mainly with macroeconomic processes and the latter with the activities of “everyday” people.

This latter term meant people’s networks across two or more countries when Basch and her colleagues (1994: 7) suggested the classic definition: the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. Transnationalism from below or “grass-root transnationalism” soon became a key concept in understanding international migration because it was thought to provide an alternative adaptation path for immigrants: “whereas, previously, economic success and social status of immigrants depended exclusively on rapid acculturation and entrance into mainstream circles of the host society, present-day they depend on cultivating strong social networks across national borders” (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999: 229).

Transnational approaches to migration, however, had several weaknesses, as Levitt and Jaworsky (2007: 131) describe. First, when the definition of transnationalism was

⁷ Each means: 1) social formations spanning borders which turns the dispersed ethnic diasporas of old into today’s “transnational communities” through networks; 2) a common “diaspora consciousness” marked by dual or multiple identifications which bind many people into the social forms and networks noted above; 3) a fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices which are often described as syncretism, creolisation, bricolage, cultural translation and hybridity in such areas as fashion, music, film and visual arts; 4) the activities of transnational corporations which create the paths along which much of the world’s transnational activities flow, a transnational capitalist class comprised of transnational corporation executives, globalising state bureaucrats, politicians and professionals and consumerist elites in merchandising and the media, and the migrants who transfer money to their places of origins; 5) political activities by international non-government organisations to give economic, political support to people in poorer and oppressed countries, Transnational Social Movement Organisations to change the status quo in the areas of environment or human rights; and 6) ethnic diasporas in a transnational framework – a global public space which has been actualised through technology and changing notion of “locality” by trans-local understandings, social fields that connect and position some actors in more than one country, the growing disjuncture between place and subjectivity and collective social movement and the steady erosion of the relationship between spatial and virtual neighbourhoods, respectively.

initially proposed, the variation in frequency and intensity of migrants' transnational practices was hardly considered⁸. According to Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003), only about 10% of the Columbians, Dominicans and Salvadorians they studied participated in [sustained] regular transnational political activities. Second, when the scholars considered transnationalism as an alternative adaptation strategy, this concept suggested that "by living transnationally, migrants could overcome the poverty and powerlessness to which capitalism relegated them" (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 131). But there are poorly educated migrants with poor language skills who are pushed into transnational life styles because they cannot gain a secure economic foothold in their home country or in the receiving country. Third, when the term "transnational" was used, its conceptual distinction from "global" and "international" was not clear. Fourth, transnationalism is too easily dichotomised as incompatible with assimilation. Fifth, migrants had always maintained ties to their countries of origin, therefore, there was little new. Sixth, transnationalism might rapidly decline among immigrants' children. Seventh, dismissing national borders was premature, and the nation-state system was unlikely to disappear in the near future.

According to Levitt and Jaworsky (2007: 131), it is to rectify these weaknesses that more recent scholarship focuses on "fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society". They review scholastic attempts to delineate the types of social spaces⁹ that produce and are produced by migration and the social structures embedded within them: transnational social formations (Guarnizo 1997, Landolt 2001); transnational livelihoods (Sørensen and Olwig 2002); transnational life (Smith 2006). Despite the variety of expressions, all of these phrases try to capture migrants' simultaneity and the fluidity of social space which create continuing dynamics between structure and agency.

Forms and intensity of activity within these cross-border spaces vary, so distinctions have been made to represent them:

Transnationalism

- from above by such agents as global capital, media, and political institutions and

⁸ Later, Guarnizo (1997:9) defined it as a "series of economic, socio-cultural, and political practical and discursive relations that transcend the territorially bound jurisdiction of the nation state."

⁹ In this thesis, I use both social space and social field according to the context to refer to this concept.

- from below by local, grassroots (Smith and Guarnizo 1998 cited in Levitt and Jaworsky 2007);
- narrow – highly institutionalised and continuous activities involving regular travel, and
- broad – occasional or loosely coupled with sporadic or no movement transnationalism (Itzigsohn et al. 1999 cited in Levitt and Jaworsky 2007);
- core transnational activities that form an integral part of the individuals' habitual life, are undertaken on a regular basis, and are patterned and therefore somewhat predictable, and
- expanded transnationalism where migrants engage in transnational activities occasionally (Guarnizo 1997 cited in Levitt and Jaworsky 2007);
- ways of being or the actual social relations and practices and
- ways of belonging - those practices that signal or enact an identity demonstrating a conscious connection to a particular group (Levitt and Schiller 2004: 1010).

While some scholars (i.e., Portes 2001, 2003) “argued for confining the analysis to those individuals who are formally and regularly engaged in strict transnational economic, political or socio-cultural activities”(Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 132), others argue for a broader approach that includes both informal, social, cultural and religious practices (i.e., Kim 2006).

In terms of an alternative adaptation strategy, although poor labour migrants might not overcome the poverty and powerlessness in the host societies through their transnational strategy, they could utilise the different values of capital between two nation states using their simultaneous embeddedness through the transnational social field between the two countries. In their study on Filipino migrants in Canada, Kelly and Louisis (2006) show how the different evaluation of capitals between Canada and the Philippines is utilised in transnational social connections: the incomes of highly educated professional Filipinos working in low-status jobs are not highly valued in the Canadian context, but in the transnational context, they are worth much more, and the diminished cultural capital of a degraded occupation in the Canadian setting is rationalised against cultural and economic

capital, such as being abroad or high consumption norms, when they are evaluated in a transnational context.

It is still true that economic strategies in transnational social fields may allow migrants to circumvent structural disadvantages, but only when the migrants have social capital across borders and bicultural or bilingual skills. Yeoh and Chang (2001) show four different groups of transnational labour in the “global city” of Singapore: “transnational business”, involving high waged, highly skilled professional, managerial and entrepreneurial elites usually associated with finance, banking and business services; “Third World populations”, comprising low-waged immigrants who occupy insecure niches in the unskilled or semiskilled sectors of the urban service economy; “expressive specialists”, who participate in the cultural scene in areas such as art, fashion, design, photography, film-making, writing, music and cuisine; and “tourists”, who are present in considerable numbers, attracted by the cosmopolitan intensity of the global city.

The distinction between globalisation and transnationalism makes clear that scholars of transnationalism do not deny the significance or durability of national or state borders. Instead, they see multiple links between citizen and the state which reconfigure themselves, dropping some functions and assuming new ones. In a similar context, incorporation in a new state and enduring transnational attachments are not contradicted, as Levitt and Schiller (2004) argue. They suggest that it is more useful to think of the migrant experience as a kind of gauge which, while anchored, pivots between a new land and a transnational incorporation. The challenge, they continue, is to explain the variation in the way that migrants manage that pivot and how host country incorporation and homeland or other transnational ties mutually influence each other.

In terms of the novelty value of transnationalism in migration studies, although immigrants in the past also led transnational lives staying tightly connected to the homeland, sending things to their families, and even engaging in transnational processes of nation state building and identity politics from the early 20th century, new circumstances of international migration which were caused by post-World War Two developments made transnationalism a brand-new phenomenon. The intensification of international economic and labour markets, the globalisation of the media, and time-space compression resulting from the transportation and telecommunication revolution have made transnational back-and-forth travel and communication so much quicker, easier and more readily available so that transnational social fields can more easily be sustained.

This new form of international migration has been established and facilitated under the influence of time-space compression (Harvey 1989) in capitalist political economy. Since the first major post-war recession in 1973 exacerbated by the oil shock, the global restructuring of capital has occurred in response to “sustained economic crisis” (cited in Basch et al. 1994: 25).

Technological change, automation, the search for new product lines and market niches, geographical dispersal to zones of easier labour control, mergers, and steps to accelerate the turnover time of their capital surged to the fore of cooperate strategies for survival under general conditions of deflation. (Harvey 1989:145)

As a result, capital intensive industry moved from the core to the periphery as Basch and her colleagues explain:

Cooperations owned and controlled by interests in core capitalist states found it more profitable to set up industrial production in areas previously peripheral to industrial capitalist development, where labour was cheap and politically repressive regimes ‘guranteed’ labour peace. (1994: 25)

Time compression occurred from the demand of capitalism under this situation to constantly shorten the average turnover time between investment and the taking of profit. Reduction of turnover time was facilitated by means of rapid transmission of information, goods, services and capital: “the time horizons of both private and public decision-making have shrunk, while satellite communication and declining transport costs have made it increasingly possible to spread those decisions immediately over an ever wider and variegated space” (Harvey 1989: 147).

Followed by the global restructuring of capital, the structure of employment both in the core and peripheral countries was transformed. On the one hand, the core countries, the US as a representative, by the 1980s had undergone the transformation which is often called “deindustrialisation or post-Fordism” (cited in Basch et al. 1994: 25). This phenomenon was described by Harvey (1989:147) as “a vast surge in so-called ‘service-sector’ employment”, which increased the overall employment insecurity and decreased wages. According to Basch and her colleagues (1994:25), white workers who had normally occupied regular positions often plunged into peripheral employment while the unemployment and underemployment of African-Americans and Hispanics grew, and undocumented workers, who had been a key factor in secondary sector jobs, found it more difficult to get even this employment. On the other hand, as Basch and her colleagues (1994:26) explain, the Third World economy was also affected by the global restructuring

of capital: global capital penetration to third world countries in the form of loans increased level of debt service to these countries and disrupted local economies, which resulted in an increased pool of available labour due to migration to urban areas. This surplus labour force has been available for international migration. And

the economic dislocations in both capital dependent and core capitalist countries have increased migration to the latter. However, as the urban sectors of core country economies have slipped into decline, it has become increasingly difficult for migrants to construct secure social and economic bases in their new setting. (Basch et al. 1994: 26)

If the intensification of international labour and economic markets shows a political economy of time-space compression, the globalisation of the media reveals the identity politics of it. The development of international communications has been viewed through three successive paradigms in terms of time-space compression. According to Kearney (1995: 555), an initial approach in the 1960s assumed an overall cultural homogenising impact of transnational media, but it was challenged by a cultural imperialism model influenced by dependency theory. Later this model was modified by a revisionist cultural pluralism model which explored how the distinction between centres and peripheries has been largely dissolved in media production and consumption. For example, Karim (1999:5) cites Sinclair (1997: 159) who identifies what he calls “geolinguistic regions” centred in developing countries around Mumbai (formerly Bombay) for the Hindi film industry, Hong Kong for Chinese genre movies, Cairo for Arabic film and television, and Mexico City for film and television production in Spanish. However, these are the foci not only for contiguous regions where these languages are spoken but the cultural hubs for worldwide diasporas.

With respect to transnationalism the globalised ethnic media plays an important role in reproducing culture and forming identity as Vertovec argues:

An increasingly significant channel for the flow of cultural phenomena and the transformation of identity is through global media and communications...Many...forms of globalised media are having considerable impact on cultural reproduction among transnational communities...The expansion of satellite and cable networks has seen the spread of channels targeting specific ethnic or religious diasporas, such as Med TV for Kurds, Zee TV for Indians and Space TV systems for Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese and Koreans. (1999:451-452)

Another form of compression, as Kearney argues, is effected by “global media” such as the CNN and MTV television networks which disseminate a non-local identity.

Finally, regarding the anticipation of the declining transnational ties among immigrants' children, many scholars point out that socialisation and social reproduction often occur within transnational social spaces. The children who have been "raised in households where people, values, goods and claims from somewhere else are present on a daily basis...have the skills and social connections to become transnational activists if and when they choose to do so during a particular life-cycle stage" (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 134).

The formation of transnational social field

Studies show that the formation of the transnational social field between two countries needs a certain momentum in historical, political or socio-economic conditions from both societies but once created, the transnational social field tends to be expanded and generalised so that people can undertake their everyday activities across the countries. Levitt (2001) traces how a transnational social field is formed around the US. Regarding the agents, she distinguishes three groups of transnational migrants in the US: former subjects who settled in the nations that colonised them, as in the case of the US and the Caribbean where political and economic relations established under formal or unofficial colonial rule stimulated labour migration; refugees and former Warsaw Pact residents who migrated in response to the political aftermath of the Cold War; and the exiles, ethnic outsiders, and other stigmatised communities who have been cast out by nationalistic and repressive states.

The globalisation of production and consumption, or the heightened mobility of people, goods, ideas, and capital also creates transnational communities and generates a demand for the skills and outlooks these communities offer...Once begun, migration spreads through social networks...the sets of cross-border interpersonal ties connecting migrants, return migrants, and non-migrants through kinship, friendship and attachment to a shared place of origin...[They make] more likely that additional migration will occur [because] the risks and costs of movement for subsequent migrants are lower [thanks to] a group of "experts" already in the receiving country to greet newcomers and serve as their guides (Levitt 2001: 7-8).

While these social networks do not develop further among some immigrant groups due to their transferring loyalties and a weakened feeling of responsibility for those who stay behind, or simply decreasing numbers of new arrivals, in many cases "continued contacts and social network development between migrants and non-migrants create a transnational social field or public sphere between the sending and receiving country" (Levitt 2001: 8).

Levitt proposes that the many social connections and organisations that tie these individuals to one another create a border-spanning arena that enables migrants, if they so choose, to remain active in both worlds. Moon (2003) shows how deeply transnational practices are embedded in the well established transnational social field between Korea and the US. The study identifies transnational mothering among some Korean mothers of well-off middle-class families. These mothers participate in transnational mothering for their daughters in the US, staying for long periods of time to take care of their grandchildren. This transnational arrangement became possible as a result of economic and political changes in Korea in the last three decades. By the mid-1980s, Korean society witnessed the rise of an affluent urban middle class, and the Korean government relaxed its regulation of foreign travel. The economic success of Korea, particularly since the mid-1980s, made it less difficult for Korean travellers to obtain US visas, which enabled transnational family networks to be utilised.

The exploitation of the transnational social field

Transnationalism is propelled by many factors, and migrants adopt it by default or as a deliberate strategy (Ip and Friesen 2001). Contrasted to the transnational activities which connected the US and the Caribbean or Latin America by labour migrants, the case of the elite Hong Kong business men or the women who migrate to California from Taiwan to accompany their children to study in the US (Chee 2003) shows non-working class people's migration. In these cases, these people adopted a transnational family strategy to maximise benefit from productive and reproductive labour. Transnational social fields between particular countries, therefore, should be empirically studied. Koreans have exploited transnational social fields in two interrelated ways.

First of all, Korean immigrants use transnationalism as an alternative economic adaptation path, which Portes and his colleagues (1999) proposed, and this economic practice in the transnational social field facilitates transnational movement. Businesses have been established to meet social, educational and commercial requirements of either a short term or a long term migrant population. Importing products from the countries of origin is a typical case, and recently the business of providing video, websites and media publications for Asian communities has expanded. But the relationship between these businesses and the migrant population is two-way in transnational space: as the migrant population creates business opportunities, business activities also attract migrants.

In a study exploring the complexities involved in the relationships between immigration, globalisation, education and government policy in New Zealand, Butcher (2004) challenges the notion of educational immigration where immigrants arrive in New Zealand in order to bypass full cost fees paid by international students, arguing that, while there are an increasing number of international students becoming permanent residents, immigrant communities can act as indirect recruiters of international students. The study cited research commissioned by North Shore City Council to illustrate that there was a higher percentage of foreign fee paying students from South Korea in secondary schools on the North Shore than nationally, and the city has the largest Korean population in New Zealand, which implies the relationship between migration and export education.

This relationship is revealed more clearly in Collins's (2006) study which interrogates the every day urban encounters of South Korean international tertiary students. The study finds that the movement of international students is thoroughly embedded in transnational economic and social practices and inextricable from other forms of movement ranging from tourism to long-term migration. According to Collins (2006), the increasing number of South Korean students in the late 1990s and early 2000s is closely related to the growth of the Korean New Zealand community since the early 1990s. The increased circulation of tourists from South Korea increases awareness of New Zealand and facilitates Korean students' decision to choose New Zealand which, in turn, develops ethnic business in the community.

The second way Koreans use transnational social fields is as an alternative social mobility track. Various Korean agents who want to capitalise on transnational opportunities such as international students or 1.5 generation immigrants as well as astronaut families, have participated in this transnational practice, which is often conceptualised as a class, and particularly a middle class, strategy. In this context, the astronaut family arrangement is proven not to be unique to East Asian immigrants, according to a report from the New Zealand Immigration Service (2000) which tracked a cohort of migrants entering New Zealand during 1997 on the General Skills and Business Categories to understand the phenomenon of astronaut families and cosmonaut couples¹⁰. The report found that that astronaut and cosmonaut migration is practised by migrants of all nationalities including Indian and Pacific people, and is not confined to Asian migrants

¹⁰ These are childless couples and individuals who have migration patterns similar to those of astronaut families (New Zealand Immigration Service 2000: 8).

alone. The finding is in accordance with the arguments that astronaut strategies may be a characteristic of class rather than of ethnicity (Ip 2000), and that “astronaut families are part of a much larger long-established phenomenon of transnationalism in the economic and social behaviour of many migrant groups” (Ho, Bedford, and Bedford 2000: 39).

For 1.5 generation Koreans, transnational social fields are good arenas for their aspirations for career development. Ho and her colleagues (1996) note that immigrant students want to return to their home countries or go to other advanced countries for better employment opportunities. For example, 26% of Korean students wish to return to Korea, while another 17% of them aspire to migrate to the US and 9 % to Canada. This study was affirmed by recent studies on 1.5 generation immigrants (Bartley 2004, Bartley and Spoonley 2008). In Bartley’s (2004) study, immigrants’ children from South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan who immigrated to New Zealand when aged between six and eighteen years indicated a clear preference for returning to their home countries or moving to another English speaking country. About 70% of the participants preferred to return to their country of origin or to move to another country while only 28% of them indicated a preference for remaining in New Zealand.

Korean international student families form astronaut family arrangements voluntarily for maximum use of their limited resources in the national social field for social mobility in the globalised era. They concentrate on class reproduction at the cost of family relations, even though some families use the transnational social field as a way to cope with relational problems in the family. Based on statistical data and interviews with a small sample of geese fathers, Lee and Koo (2006) examine the main motivations for the geese family arrangement. Dissatisfaction with the present Korean education system and English becoming a critical asset for occupational success, were identified as two main reasons, but these fathers are not simply reacting to the unsatisfactory education system: they are proactively seeking to acquire new educational and cultural assets. In terms of split family living arrangement, the participant fathers seem to be able to maintain stable and normal relationships with their wives and children despite long periods of physical separation. Many middle-class parents seem to believe that sending children for study abroad at an early age is the best investment they can make for their children’s more secure, and brighter, future. In this way, the study shows how globalisation functions to modify people’s sense of security and their mobility strategy, and to adapt the spatial and social

bases of family and household formation in order to confront the changing global environment.

Cho (2004) interviewed some Korean mothers who had lived with their primary or secondary children in a small town in the US for the children's education while the fathers remained in Korea. These well-off middle class Korean families were so eager to give a better opportunity to their children that they voluntarily sacrificed their conjugal relationship. The desire for upward social mobility is discussed as a major mechanism which works with Korean familism in these global split families. She concludes that the Korean transnational family represents the weak and insecure position of the Korean middle class in the world capitalist economy. Meanwhile Choi (2005) interviewed 20 geese fathers in Korea to examine their motivations and the context of decision making to engage in geese family arrangement and the fathers' experiences and concepts of family. While the most important cause of the phenomenon was the problems of education in Korea, the study also found that for some couples, family separation was used as a strategy to contain problems in their relationships.

Unlike the studies mentioned above which examine early international education in relation to astronaut family arrangement, Jo (2007) examines the adjustment process of Korean early international students in the US. The study found that the youths faced difficulties ranging from differences of language and culture to school structure which is different from Korean schools. To cope with this situation, the students used the strategy of dual frame reference (Ogbu 1991: 11) where some other differences eventually become positive factors in adjustment, reminding the young people of their difficult school experiences in Korea such as excessive study load. It implies that the values of transnational practices are evaluated not by an absolute criterion but by the logic of the particular transnational social field.

Some Korean students who participate in early international education living by themselves abroad – parachute children - are also important agents in the transnational social field. The development of parachute children is closely related to their deployment as a way of improving a family's future class position. In Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lam's study (2001), Korean early international students in California play an important role in the process of family migration and in the construction of transnational social fields. The researchers argue that the migration of parachute kids from Korea to attend school in the US is also part of a long term transnational strategy for economic advancement. These

families hope to use the knowledge and networks their children acquire abroad as entry into the country and as part of an entrepreneurial strategy for widening their economic fields of operation. For Koreans, this strategy also allows parents and children to avoid the intensified competition for slots in top Korean universities. By enrolling children and adolescents in US schools with the hope of eventually getting US college degrees, parents and children can channel aspirations into an alternative mobility track.

The meaning of the transnational social field

The utilisation of the transnational social field has multiple meanings for the agents and the receiving and sending countries. For the agents, it means multiple belongings and identities which they have to negotiate. First, in the transnational social field across two or more nation states, people are embedded in both countries at the same time, which can hardly be explained through the assimilation approach. An (2006) analysed Korean immigrants' trends in the utilisation of Korean broadcasting media, videotaped Korean TV programmes and local Korean papers in New Zealand to examine the relationship between immigrants' acculturation level and their ethnic media use. The research questions of the study came from the previous studies which showed a positive relationship between the degree of immigrants' acculturation and their use of mainstream media, but the results of the new study did not follow its predecessors. The study found that the immigrants' acculturation level such as English ability is not significantly related to the use of mainstream media. For example, immigrants who had a good command of English still enjoyed Korean media especially for entertainment. Immigrants' and their children's utilisation of their home country media is not a temporary practice which disappears as they become more acculturated, but is one of the most frequent transnational practices in transnational social fields. Immigrants can enjoy both their home countries' and the host societies' TV programmes at the same time.

In a study on immigrants' political participation in the host society, Park (2006) found that Asian New Zealanders participated at a lesser rate than "Pakeha" in all forms of political activities and that Koreans' participation rate was especially low. The lowest turnout in the election in 2002 was recorded amongst Koreans even among the Asian groups. Park noted that higher socio-economic status did not necessarily lead to a higher level of political participation on the part of Asian New Zealanders, and that the effect that membership in ethnic religious organisations had on the political participation of Asian

New Zealanders was almost contrary to the effect it had on Asian Americans, as it in fact discouraged Asian New Zealanders from participating in politics. The level of political participation of Korean immigrants in New Zealand or the effect of the membership of ethnic religious organisations on political participation might be a function of transnational migrants' sense of multiple belonging or simultaneous embeddedness which might weaken their need to participate in the host society's politics. This explanation is based on a different assumption than the lineal one that migrants will pursue political participation in the host countries after they move.

This multiple belonging can be capitalised by those who are familiar with both sending and receiving societies. Bartley and Spoonley (2008) note that 1.5 generation migrants from East Asian countries have ambivalence or in-betweenness about settlement and attachment: of sending and receiving countries, childhood and adulthood, and dominant and other minority cultures. Easy movement through transnational social fields together with the heightened ethnic pluralism in receiving countries makes cultural hegemonies contestable, ethnic identities more fluid, and notions of belonging, settlement and home more contingent for them. In this context, the 1.5 generation Asian migrant adolescents in New Zealand – financially well resourced, motivated to pursue educational qualifications and high-skilled occupations, bilingual (at least), and with a degree of cultural flexibility and transnational experience – have options, and can pursue any number of trajectories.

This simultaneous embeddedness, however, can have negative effects. A study to explore the relationship between immigration and health, Anderson (2007) examined how Korean, Chinese and Indian immigrants' marginalised position within New Zealand society affects their health from the perspective of political ecology using tuberculosis as a lens. Political, economic and social inequalities faced by migrants create stressors which can potentially affect their well being. And immigrants from these three countries are often faced with a health system they have little knowledge or experience of, and structural barriers such as lack of Asian health care professionals, and limited interpreting services. Migrants try to adapt by using health practices from their home countries. Transnational and community networks such as parents residing overseas, churches, general practitioners from country of origin and public health nurses also facilitated many aspects of health care. This study suggests a negative aspect of transnational practice when it is related to a stigmatised illness such as tuberculosis. Living in a transnational space between New

Zealand and home countries renders people vulnerable to two forms of stigma: from their countries of origin and the host country, which implies that people in transnational space can be marginalised from both societies.

To maintain self-consistency in this transnational social field, transnational agents need to constantly negotiate and recapture their identities. Living across borders, transnational migrants break down the identification of nation and state. Transnational social fields or transnational communities may have very ambiguous and quite fluid boundaries. For example, a Hong Kong transnational community might extend to many cities in both Asia and in America (Lewellen 2002). Corresponding to this circumstance, “transnational subjects construct and utilize flexible personal and national identities” (Yeoh et al. 2003). On the one hand, transmigrants formulate transnational identities that both draw on and contest national identities. On the other hand, transnational identities may also be associated with a sense of placelessness as a result of the discrepancies between citizenship and locality (Yeoh et al. 2003).

Analysing transnational Chinese subject making, Ong (1999) argues that the personal identities of travelling men, and the new fixities of the Asian national elite’s emphasis on “Asian values”, are varied cultural logics produced by the encounter with globalising trends and challenges. The family regimes that valorise mobile masculinity and localised femininity, i.e. elite Hong Kong executives who jet all over the world and transfer their families to a “safe haven” in California, where the wives care for the families, shape strategies of flexible citizenship, gender division of labour, and relocation in different sites (Ong 1999). Identities and cultural logics in the transnational social field, on the other hand, are produced by women to challenge men’s hegemonic ideologies of patriarchy. Based on in-depth interviews with Korean immigrant women of the first generation in Los Angeles and supplementary interviews with women in Seoul, Kim (2006) addresses both the influence of, and the women’s transnational engagement with, hegemonic ideologies of white American masculinity. Drawing on both their experiences at home and their impressions of U.S. society, South Korean women often saw their pre-migration ideologies of hegemonic white masculinity as legitimating their new gender arrangements upon migrating to the United States. The women’s perception of South Korea as patriarchal, their struggles with Korean immigrant men’s backlash in the United States, and the power of hegemonic white masculinity in both contexts, typically reinforced the women’s belief in “gender egalitarian” white masculinity.

Ethnic identity can be replaced with class identity as ethnic enclaves are changing into the hub of re-territorialised capital with the influx of capital and labour flows in the transnational social field. Lee and Park (2008) investigate how the transnational flow of capital and labour transformed a Korean community, namely Koreatown in Los Angeles which is often perceived as an internally homogeneous ethnic enclave dominated by Korean-American small-business entrepreneurship. The research found that the influx of capital from Korea, and the guest workers from Latin America who were attracted by economic opportunity, fragmented the Korean community along class lines, and Koreatown can no longer be characterised as an ethnic enclave, but rather as a re-territorialised switching board. According to this transformation, migrant identities are changed into class identities.

The identity dynamics in transnational social space occurs not only in practical relations but also in the process of cross-border imagining of social exchange. Park (2007) documents the identity dynamics among less mobile immigrants, who, despite their immobility, negotiate their identities transnationally. Despite their low level of transnational engagement and obligation, the participants displayed a set of identity practices that allowed them to construct a sense of membership to multiple imagined communities including the South Korean society back home, the larger US society, Korean immigrant communities in the United States and the Korean Diasporas outside the US, using identity markers and reference groups, and flexible definitions of citizenship. For example, when asked how they felt about their status or social standing after migration, a participant who has two masters degrees in Korea said she was probably lower economically, but intellectually she was as good as any American. Thus, they transgressed geographical boundaries of settlement communities in the United States through identity practices that enabled them to construct multiple “community of the mind” (Chayko 2002: 40) organised in a socio-mental space (Zerubavel 1993: 397-398).

For the receiving and sending countries, the emerging transnational social field is an opportunity and challenge at the same time. In an attempt to understand transnational migration in the historical context of New Zealand, Spoonley and Macpherson (2004) discussed the transnationalism of British, Pacific and Asian immigrants in New Zealand. The researchers saw Pacific and Asian transnationalism replacing transnationalism associated with colonial links with the UK. Transnational migrants between New Zealand and small island states in the Pacific were in the centre of “MIRAB [Migration,

Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy]” economy in the national income of these countries as suggested by Bertram and Waters in the mid 1980s. Compared to the Pacific communities in New Zealand, for more recent Asian communities, transnationalism reflects the early phase of migration and the exigencies of first generation and the 1.5 generation migrants.

For the receiving and sending countries, on the one hand, transnationalism and the transnational social field have provided them with an opportunity to create and expand a new relationship with each other. On the other hand, as Spoonley and Macpherson (2004) argue, the presence and practice of these transnational networks is an important counter to narrow and exclusive forms of nationalism and the expectation in the host society that migrants will assimilate. In this context, Lidgard (1998) argues immigration policy needs to be flexible enough to accommodate these transnational citizens.

Finally, the process of formation and utilisation of the transnational social field by transnational migrants shows how structure and agents interact reinforcing and restricting each other, and how global and macro-level processes penetrate, or are experienced, at local and micro-level. A study (Seo 2007) on the emergence of a Korean middle class town in Beijing can provide good empirical evidence. Recently a hundred thousand lower middle class South Koreans migrated to a suburban town in Beijing, Wangjing. There, Koreans can enjoy an upper middle class lifestyle thanks to the favourable exchange rate, and for some geese families from the lower middle class, it can be a good place for an affordable education for their children with prospects of learning Chinese. The author links the Chinese socialist state’s urban reorganisation and the crisis of the South Korean middle class in the age of neo-liberalism to this migration. Wangjing represents ambivalence which is produced through multiple interactions between the Chinese socialist state engaged in commodifying its territory, the Korean nation state struggling with globalising forces, and the neo-liberal world order replacing nation states’ authority to regulate territory and population. It is ambivalence itself that eventually benefits all parties involved in this reorganisation of space and population. The Chinese state invites small Korean investors but does not allow Koreanness to dominate in Wangjing. Korean middle class migrants silently continue their middle class status and habitus while not reducing the possibility to engage with the local locals. Neo-liberal forces permeate the district without threatening either Chinese state authorities or Koreanness.

As a case study of transnational migration, this project will contribute to, in Vertovec’s (1999) terms, better understanding of the social formation spanning borders,

dual and multiple identities, and changing notions of locality through Korean transnational migrants' experiences. Transnational study by American sociologists and anthropologists is mainly concerned with transnationalism between America and Latin American countries or Caribbean countries. Much research on transnationalism is based on these case studies, which has the limitation of assuming immigration flows from periphery to centre with particular historical and geopolitical relations. But this study hopes to show that transnational social fields can be created without previous contact between the two countries.

Fieldwork, Participants and Data Analysis

This study is based on my fieldwork in New Zealand and Korea, which consisted of 15 months participant observation between March 2006 and May 2007 and 52 interview case studies including 62 people in New Zealand and Korea. Some interviewees were contacted through my community and university networks whereas many (39) interviewees were contacted through church networks. This mode of networking should not be seen as unduly biasing my participants as 12 of 39 participants who were contacted through church networks were not regular church goers in Korea. These people began to attend the church as a way of settlement in the community after arriving in New Zealand, which is common for many Koreans. Formal in-depth interviews with these participants were conducted once for each participant. With many of these participants, I established rapport by engaging in various community and church activities before the interviews and I could hear their "true" stories. After the formal interviews, I continued to interact with the interviewees and had follow-up conversations. I had 11 key person interviews with Christian ministers, counsellors, general practitioners,¹¹ newspaper publishers, health practitioners and a Korean weekend school principal in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton. I conducted 16 interviews with 20 returnees and two geese fathers in several cities in Korea in 2006. Most returnees had been acquainted with me in New Zealand, except seven participants. The interviews normally lasted for between one and two hours and the interviewees were asked

¹¹ One general practitioner was contacted when I participated in a research project conducted by a team from Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation, the University of Auckland as a research assistant between May and August in 2006. The centre kindly allowed me to use the interview with this Korean general practitioner in the research.

to tell their stories from the point at which they made their decision to come to New Zealand to their present situation. All interviews were conducted in Korean.¹²

Participant observation has been done at my church, at a weekend Korean school, at community events and at the homes of participants. But my participant observation was more concentrated on participation than observation. My wife, daughter and I have been considered as a prospective immigrant family in our church. As for my church members, this identity was stronger than my being a PhD student doing anthropological fieldwork. At church I took charge of a small group as its leader and participated in another subgroup as one of its leaders. These memberships provided me with certain status at church, and were helpful in building close relationships with the members of those groups, which allowed me to access various informal groups and to get information about interpersonal conflicts within the church. But spending time with church and community members having BBQ parties, going fishing, making excursions and so on was the best way to know of, and learn from, them. In the Korean community in Auckland, I participated in a Korean health professional group, and this membership connected me to many ethnic and mainstream institutions.

Data analysis in this research was not done through the presupposition of particular theoretical approaches, although my main research interest was in transnational practices of my participants. Instead, I conducted a thematic analysis (Aronson 1994, Miles and Huberman 1994:131) on the collected interview data exploring patterns of experience by clustering the quotes indicating similarity and then identifying “themes” (Taylor and Bogdan 1984: 131).¹³ Since the collected data in this research were life histories, participants’ experiences were clustered into several stages according to the chronological sequence in their migration processes. And then the themes were chosen to be discussed when they were confirmed by a few participants while some contradictory themes were interpreted as supplementary. I kept field notes during my participant observation describing conversations with other Koreans than the interviewees as well as notable events and happenings in the community. These informal conversations and observations

¹² I extracted quotes from the transcripts in Korean and translated them into English. A bilingual Korean corrected my initial translation and produced the final version which I checked for accuracy from the Korean.

¹³ Themes are defined as units derived from patterns such as “conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs”.

from field notes were also used throughout the data analysis process to back up the interview data and to extend their scope.

Through this analytical process I identified the main theme that for my participants, international migration was no longer regarded as special or extraordinary but as usual or common. By referring to the literature, I found this finding could be interpreted in the framework of transnational social fields. As a result, I incorporated several analytical themes linked by this common topic of “normalising international migration through a transnational social field” to produce a “thematic narrative” (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995: 170) of the transnational lives of a group of Koreans. In addition to a thematic analysis, critical incident analysis (Flanagan 1954, Kain 2004) was used as a supplementary tool especially to identify the conflicts that the participants experienced as the costs of their strategies, which is featured in Chapter Six.

Regarding the methodology of this research, two things should be noted. First, given that a transnational social field is across two or more nation states, the importance of plurality in the study of transnationalism should be noted. As Levitt and Jaworsky (2007: 8) write, we “need a methodology that allows us to move beyond the binaries such as homeland/new land, citizen/non-citizen, migrant/non-migrant, acculturation/cultural persistence” for the study of transnationalism. I identified during fieldwork that immigration, study abroad, return migration and remigration were mixed in the life stories of my participants who got involved in this transnational social field, and in practice, many participants engaged in dual locality – Korea and New Zealand. As Gupta and Ferguson (2002) argue, the existence of people “who live a life border crossings” questions the premise of distinct groups of people occupying discontinuous spaces in anthropological representation. In this context multi-sited ethnography is quintessential in transnationalism studies. Second, in doing transnational migration research, life history¹⁴ method is very

¹⁴ The terms, life story and life history, are normally used interchangeably in either academic or non-academic situations. But Bertaux (1981: 7-9) distinguished each of these two terms from other types of biographical data, arguing that the distinction between “life story” and “life history” might well involve a distinction between two different approaches. First, the life story, which anthropologists doing fieldwork in the nineteenth century started to collect, is distinguished from the autobiography in that the former is the result of an interaction between the narrator and the researcher while the latter has only one author. The life story, meanwhile, is supplemented with other formal or informal materials such as official records, letters and interviews with friends to check its truthfulness and to form a life history. If the object of social research should be a given set of social relations, Bertaux argues, it seems necessary to collect not one but several life stories, and this contributes to solving the problem of truthfulness as these life stories maybe checked against each other. He also notes that neither the life history nor the life story needs to cover the entire life-

suitable and effective because in and through them it is possible to identify the story tellers' social field, and what they pursue in that field through their life stories which are actively reconstructed by them around a few themes which the story tellers think important, i.e., their significant others, important values, and their justification for failure.

There are two major ethical concerns surrounding this research¹⁵: I am dealing with people's life history and I am studying the community of which I am a member. The first problem is how to protect my participants' privacy. The Korean community in Auckland is not large enough to guarantee interviewees' anonymity, therefore, even though I use pseudonyms to protect my interviewees if they request it, their life histories may reveal who the storytellers are. To address this problem it was fundamental to select participants who are willing to tell their life stories. In addition, I used some technical methods to protect anonymity such as occasional use of composites. Another related ethical concern with having one's life history is its psychological consequences (Ortiz 1985). Among various possible consequences, one negative thing is that telling a life story may cause narrators to re-experience negative feelings such as anger or sadness in their past lives. In fact, a few of my participants expressed their resentment when they recalled the unpleasant events in which they had been treated unfairly by the host people or institutions. Nonetheless, it was never traumatic: rather they said they felt that they released their anger after the interview.

The second concern stems from my multiple subjectivity in my field as I conducted fieldwork in the city where I lived with my family. As Caputo (2000: 27) points out, "fieldwork undertaken 'at home' involves adding another dimension to the network of one's established social relationships and commitments to the network of one's established social relationships and commitment once fieldwork begins". Although I came to Auckland for my doctoral study as an international student, my initial involvement in the Korean community and my church was not as a researcher but as a member. Two years later, I conducted fieldwork doing participant observation in the community and interviewing those most of whom I had been interacting with in daily life as a fellow member of the same church, client, or friend. As my fieldwork lasted for about two years, I

span and all its aspects. For this research, I conducted interviews with my participants to collect their life stories focusing on their immigration experiences and I reconstructed these people's life histories by checking their life stories against each other and by supplementing these stories with official records such as statistical records or newspaper articles.

¹⁵ This study was approved by the University of Auckland Human Participant Ethics Committee on 12 May 2005 to 11 May 2008 for three years.

continued to build personal relationship with some of my participants during my fieldwork. Moreover my wife and daughter also formed their own relationships with various people in the community at work, school and church, which could be easily integrated into my networks. This special relationship between my participants and myself led me to have a sense of “the discomfiture many anthropologists have with using terms such as informant, respondent or research subject as textual references for people they have known as friends, neighbours, advisors, etc. (Amit 2000:3)”. Within this special relationship with my participants, using results from participant observation in my thesis was restricted. Because Korean people in the community tend to gather with some close friends and relatives to form many subgroups and I have a closer relationship with a few of these subgroups, using data obtained from my personal networks would in many cases compromise confidentiality.

Apart from transnational features of Korean community in New Zealand which made traditional anthropological participant observation difficult¹⁶ and my emphasis on collecting life histories, this close, multiple and, to some extent, exclusive relationship with my participants discouraged me from using the results from my participant observation in this thesis. As a result, my participant observation was rather implicit than explicit in my thesis although it was an important part of my fieldwork. Through thorough immersion in the daily practices and face-to-face relationships of a particular set of people, however, my participant observation became the solid basis of contextualising and interpreting interview data.

The Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is a scholarly retelling of Korean international migrants’ life histories in a chronological sequence. The body of the thesis is therefore organised according to the separate phases of migration processes. In the introductory chapters, I create a context for this retelling. In Chapter One I first relate my personal experience to this anthropological project to show my positionality in research as an acknowledgment that this thesis is not independent of my subjective self which must influence data collection, interpretation and

¹⁶ Amit (2000: 15) raises several questions on participant observation “in seeking to expand [the] research scope to include the study of mobile individuals, dispersed and/or fragmented social networks” in transnational era: “How do we observe interactions that happen sometimes but not necessarily when we are around? How do we participate in social relations that are not continuous, that are experienced most viscerally in their absence? How do we participate in or observe practices that are enacted here and there, by one or a few?...Where do we ‘hang out’ when the processes which we are studying produce common social conditions or statuses but not necessarily coterminous collectivities?”

writing. Then a theoretical framework is suggested, derived from a critique of established research on Korean immigration to New Zealand. Lastly my main research questions in interpreting Korean immigrants' experience through the suggested theoretical framework are suggested. In Chapter Two four life stories of five immigrants and international student families are chosen and reconstructed to provide a full description of their immigration life history as the context and reference for the data analysis chapters.

Chapters Three to Six are the main body of this thesis in which various themes extracted from the 64 transnational life histories are discussed in detail. In Chapter Three together with the participants' socio-economic background, the participants' lives in Korea are examined in relation to their decision on international migration to New Zealand, based on their narratives about difficulties they faced amid the rapid socio-cultural change of neo-liberalisation in Korea and their connections to transnational networks. In Chapter Four the participants' lives in New Zealand are described in terms of initial settlement, labour market participation and the efforts to build an immigrant community. In Chapter Five after discussing the formation of a transnational social field between two countries, the transnational characteristics of Koreans in New Zealand are examined, describing their daily lives and activities in and exploitation of the transnational social field. In Chapter Six the difficulties Korean transnational migrants face in the transnational social space are examined in terms of the opportunity costs of their flexibility, mobility and dual belongings.

In Chapter Seven I revisit the major findings and themes raised in this thesis and conclude with a discussion on their theoretical implications for an anthropology of globalisation with which these findings and themes can be integrated.

CHAPTER TWO:

FOUR TRANSNATIONAL LIFE HISTORIES

The following four life histories are real although the family names are all fictitious. Each of the histories has been reconstructed based on the interviews and informal conversations with each family member from the five families both in New Zealand and in Korea. The aim of this chapter is to provide full descriptions of four types of Korean families in or from New Zealand. The stories of an immigrant family, a separated international student family, a return migrant family, and two return international student families are described from the time they decided on immigration to the time of the interviews. These four stories were chosen among all of my 52 interview cases because they provide more complete stories of the families and more family members' stories.

Through the full description of individual families' immigration histories, firstly I tried to reveal individual immigrant families' uniqueness. Immigrants are often represented in a depersonalised way according to ethnicity or race, gender, age, language and legal status etc. If I describe myself in these terms I am a South Korean male international student in my early 40s with Korean as my first language. This is likely to evoke certain stereotypes attached to each attribute. I think the categorisation of immigrants is necessary and helpful for academic and policy purposes and I also categorised my participants according to a few criteria in later chapters. But before doing that I would like to show individual cases in detail to stress that there was an immigrant [family] before an immigrant category.

Second, I attempted to show how macro level trends such as international immigration flows and/or socio-economic changes in a society were perceived and experienced by the individual [family]: how the global and local intersect and are mutually shaped. The history of the Cho and Yu couple tells us how the Korean foreign currency crisis in the late 90s was experienced by a middle class family. The Jin family's history is about a long-term international student family, which tells us how separated families were made and maintained over a long period. The history of the In family shows us how the immigration boom among Korean middle class people in the early 90s, when New Zealand

opened its immigration gate to middle class people from East Asian countries, was experienced in a middle class family. And finally the Han and Seon histories well exemplify how Korean upper middle class people coped with changes in Korea's educational environment as they sought to reproduce their class status.

Third, I emphasise how these people connected themselves to social networks stretching across two or more countries, and how participant family members lived separately in Korea, New Zealand and other countries, but at the same time were embedded simultaneously both in Korea and New Zealand. In these three respects, these stories are "Transnational Life Histories" which show ordinary people's efforts to live their lives spanning two [or more] nation states.

Immigrant: Mr Cho and Mrs Yu¹, Hamilton, 2007

Mr Cho, who was an employee of a bank in Korea, was advised to take early retirement as part of restructuring of the bank in the aftermath of the Korean currency crisis (so called "IMF"²). As an incentive for early retirement he received a good sum of money and succeeded in finding another job in a public cooperation. But his new job was much worse than the previous one in terms of salary and other labour conditions.³

He was very dissatisfied with his new position, and was seeking an opportunity to "jump again"⁴ in his mid life when he heard of life in Australia from the minister of his church who had permanent residency in Australia. He had never thought of immigration before but after that, he "took the first step on the stairway to immigration" when he "started considering immigration as a possible option in the life".

But it was his wife Mrs Yu who first suggested immigration. Mrs Yu began to consider immigration as she often heard her minister speak about missing Australia when he mentioned "how cheap rice and meat are" and how good the education system in Australia was. A friend of hers in the church who had studied in Australia for three years was also a source of information. But Mrs Yu was worried about how to make a living after immigration so she did not present her thoughts to her husband until, after taking time

¹ In Korea women keep their own family name after marriage.

² This economic crisis in 1997 is explained in detail in Chapter Three.

³ At the time of IMF, it was common for many office workers to accept early retirement with some monetary incentives and get new jobs in the public sector which were provided by the government as a relief measure for the unemployed. But these jobs were more like casual work and the wage was low.

⁴ All these quotes are the participants' own phrases.

to “pray”, she felt convinced about her plan of immigration. She sounded out her husband on immigration one day when she saw that her husband was dissatisfied in his second job; however Mr Cho opposed her plan because of the uncertainty of making a living. So she “prayed again” for the means of living after immigration. After some time, she was told from her friend who had studied in Australia that real estate property in Korea which could give them income from rent would be a great financial help in living abroad. So the couple obtained a real estate property at auction from which they obtained a monthly income. After that Mr Cho started preparing for IELTS because they believed this was proof of God’s approval for their plan.

Initially the couple prepared for immigration to Australia under the business visa category. In fact Australia was their only option at that time because the only available information they had was about that country. But “fortunately” their first try ended up in failure as Australia immigration policy became stricter for business visa applicants at that time. During the first application process, however, they came to know about immigration to New Zealand and successfully obtained permanent residency. Finally, this couple with their two sons arrived in Auckland in April 2002.

When Mr Cho prepared for moving to New Zealand he found it difficult to find available information about the country except on the internet most of which looked unproven. Interestingly, Mr Cho did not decide how to make a living in the new country until he arrived in New Zealand. He had a thought that, if nothing else materialised, he could be a taxi driver, based on information from the internet that a taxi driver in New Zealand earned more income than in Korea. Mr Cho also found and contacted a Korean church in Auckland through the internet and the minister of the church provided him with a lot of useful information. When the family arrived at Auckland Airport the minister came to meet them, and they rented a house near the church and began to attend the church as many Korean newcomers did.

When Mr Cho attended the church he came to know that one of the church members had just started driving a taxi. He had learned all the information that he needed about being a taxi driver from that person and consequently followed his path. So Mr Cho successfully got a taxi driver licence and began to work without any difficulty six months after he arrived in New Zealand.⁵ Some time after Mr Cho drove a taxi, Mrs Yu who was a nurse in Korea also started working “not only because of money but also because she

⁵ Later he too became a model for another two people at another church to start driving taxis.

wanted to work”. She thought people could do any work regardless of age or gender in New Zealand so she did not hesitate to work in a Korean owned sushi shop rolling sushi which was a job that many Korean women do because of easy accessibility. She worked for about 10 months in the shop but the job was simple and repetitive. So she quit the job and entered a six month course to be a qualified caregiver. Her plan was to have a “New Zealand qualification” which was easy to access and related to her previous career as a nurse as well as to learn English in preparation for a further career as a nurse in the host society.

Two years after settlement in Auckland Mr Cho’s family moved to Hamilton. Their move was so sudden that some of their friends felt this family ran away from them. Just before they moved, the family travelled to Hamilton, having received an invitation to visit a friend of theirs from their previous church.⁶ When they visited Hamilton, the family happened to attend a Korean church meeting in the city and Mrs Yu felt that this was the ideal church for her. In addition to the city’s atmosphere which was calm and peaceful, the church strongly attracted Mrs Yu, and they had a friend who was willing to help them with practical matters in their initial settlement.⁷ So the family decided to move to the city. For them, “it was not that difficult to move to another city because they had already experienced international movement”.

Since arriving in New Zealand, church has been central in this family’s life. Just as the family had settled, and Mr Cho got a job, with help from their first church in Auckland, so their lives in Hamilton were also organized around the church. Their new church helped them settle in Hamilton and every Friday they had a regular worship meeting with some of their church members living nearby at members’ homes in turn (*guyeokyebae*). This was one of their main social interactions apart from the regular Sunday service in church. Their personal relationships were mostly with church members.

⁶ This family had moved their residence and church in Auckland, from their first residence in the city centre, to west Auckland and had lived there for a year. But their shifting to a new church seemed to cause trouble in their relationships with the former church members. When Mrs Yu spoke about the human relationships within the Korean community she implied that: “if you move church from one to another, then the former church members tend to treat you as a betrayer.” She attributed this attitude to many Korean immigrants’ over-dependency on their small group of close neighbours or friends. In these over-dependent relationships, small conflicts with each other can easily break relationships and, in worst cases, they can even be turned into enemies. She diagnosed this phenomenon as an expression of immigrants’ “pathological loneliness”.

⁷ This friend also had them as a familiar neighbour.

Driving a taxi was not bad for Mr Cho in terms of income and social status. He could have a moderate income from the job and he supplemented this by hosting a Korean international student who was the child of his friend, with some financial assistance from the government such as family support. Even though he was an office worker with a university degree in Korea he did not feel ashamed that he drove a taxi “because of egalitarianism in New Zealand”, unlike Korea where taxi driving is mostly regarded as work for those with lower educational levels. He had worked in that job in Auckland for two years and continued to do the job in Hamilton.

During one year of driving a taxi in Hamilton, however, he felt isolated from his colleagues: he was the only one from “Asia” except for some Indian people, and his English was not good enough to allow him to mingle with other taxi drivers most of whom were white Europeans who were not friendly to their Asian colleague. Moreover, he had to work late on Friday and Saturday nights and even early on Sunday mornings when he could earn two thirds of his weekly income, but this hindered his church-centred life style.

Being unwilling to continue in this almost unbearable situation, Mr Cho decided to study English “before he gets older” in order to further develop his career. First he finished a free English language course over a period of a few months while working, and then as a full time student he completed a course for a certificate of health studies in a year. He got the confidence to pursue further study during these courses, and his wife advised him to study nursing because of career opportunities. So he started studying nursing from 2007. During his period of study, the student allowance and hosting two Korean students, who are the children of his friends, will be the family’s main source of income. The couple grows some vegetables in their kitchen garden, which helps reduce their living costs. Despite these efforts they still have to cut down living expenses to cover the cost of their two sons’ extra curricula music and English lessons. Nevertheless, Mr Cho feels satisfied with his study expecting that he will later have a professional job where “he can care for others”. He is planning to apply for a position in the local hospital when he finishes the course.

At the time of the interview Mr Cho’s family seldom contacted their family in Korea: they have visited Korea only once since they came to New Zealand and even feel estranged from their family in Korea because of “misunderstandings with each other happens due to their long separation and the different life style”. But in their future plans for themselves and their children, they are very transnational. Although the children are still too young to

decide on their careers, the couple will not insist that their two sons go to university in New Zealand because they feel New Zealand has few opportunities for Asian youths. Instead, they would prefer their children to experience countries bigger than New Zealand in order to become internationally competent people. If the children are academically competent and gain entry to, say, law or medical school, it would not matter that they attend university in New Zealand; otherwise, it would be better for their future careers to go to the US or Australia to study. After their children enter university, Mr Cho and Mrs Yu are hoping to live transnationally. When Mr Cho obtains his nursing qualification, the couple believes they can go anywhere there are job opportunities: they can stay in the country where their children study, or return to Korea. They believe an internationally recognised qualification and English skills will enable them to do this.

But in order to get there, Mr Cho has to overcome the barrier of English. Studying a totally new subject in English in his mid 40s is a great challenge for him. At times he still cannot fully understand what he is told and often makes mistakes in class, while younger students from non-English speaking countries in his class have adjusted easily. This gives him a sense of inferiority and he has to concentrate so hard in class to understand the lectures in English that even though he is exhausted at the end of the day he has no time to rest because of the assignments.

In this situation, the only way he has found to relieve his stress is by playing tennis. He was a very committed member of a Korean tennis club in Auckland. But after moving to Hamilton where there is no Korean tennis club, he had difficulty finding Koreans to play tennis with. So he reluctantly joined a Kiwi⁸ tennis club where he was the only Korean member. But he soon became “one of the core members of the club” because he never failed to turn out for the club’s regular matches which he finds so helpful in relieving stress. Participating in a Kiwi social group gave him the additional benefit of having personal relationships with some Kiwis.

For Mrs Yu, who is a housewife now, the main source of stress is in spending too much time doing housework compared to Korea. When she visited Korea in 2005 three years after immigration, she found that, for housewives, life in Korea was much more convenient than in New Zealand. For example, there was no need to “pick up the children”

⁸ This word is widely used to refer to a person from New Zealand in mainstream society, but among Koreans in New Zealand, “Kiwi” is conventionally used to refer to a white European New Zealander. For Koreans, it has the same meaning as “Pakeha” in mainstream society.

and, furthermore, home delivered take-away food was available round the clock in Korea. Mrs Yu observed during her stay in Korea that many Korean housewives, from middle class families in particular, saved time in this way and enjoyed living, exercising, shopping and especially managing their children's education. But in New Zealand she has to take the children to school and take them home every day and she has to cook every meal.⁹ This work, together with the limited availability of suitable take-away food in New Zealand, prevents her from living as a middle-class housewife.

Nevertheless Mrs Yu and Mr Cho think Koreans in New Zealand should try to contribute to the host society. From their viewpoint some Koreans who came to this country with a lot of money and did not work, spending money and just playing golf while receiving social benefits create a negative image of Korean immigrants. As these Koreans and some of the early Long Term Business Visa holders abused the New Zealand welfare system and did not make a considerable contribution, New Zealand government restricted immigration quotas for Koreans. They believe that if immigrants try hard to settle in the host society, New Zealand provides some opportunities for them because this is a relatively fair society although some core areas in the society are still kept from immigrants.

International Student Family: Mr Jin, Seoul, 2006; Ms Jin, Auckland, 2007; Mrs Im, Auckland, 2008

Ms Jin, a university student in Auckland, is the elder daughter of Mr Jin and Mrs Im. She and her younger sister were sent to New Zealand by her parents in 2001 at the age of 13 and 10 respectively. The sisters have been in New Zealand for the last seven years as international students.

Their father, who owns a mobile phone shop in Seoul, sent his elder daughter with her younger sister to New Zealand for a month when she finished primary school to give her a chance to learn English before she went to middle school. He decided to send them to New Zealand because there were people in Auckland whom he contacted through his church. But the daughters wanted to study longer in New Zealand and because he thought it would be good for them to "master" English through a few, perhaps three, years' study in an English speaking country, he allowed them to remain.

⁹ It seems that this is because, as an immigrant housewife, she is not familiar with the ways in which mainstream housewives arrange their household chores, and her family cannot afford to eat out or have domestic services. In her narrative, however, she attributes it to a less developed consumer market in New Zealand than Korea.

His wife, Mrs Im, who was working in a Korean church in Auckland as an assistant minister at the time of having an informal conversation with me, had a more detailed and even different version of the story about how they decided to send their children abroad to study. She had a mind to educate her child abroad from the time her elder daughter was at kindergarten. Mrs Im had had a desire to live in a foreign country and used to clip newspaper articles about foreign countries, such as Iceland, until she got married. She prayed for an opportunity to move abroad¹⁰ and used to encourage her daughter saying “you are such a smart girl that you should be a world class person”. Her husband, who did not have a job at that time, told her not to dare to dream when he heard her plan. Mrs Im thought that the proper age for her child to go abroad would be the sixth grade at primary school or the first at middle school. It was just when her daughter reached the sixth grade that a Korean education agent from New Zealand, who was a friend of the minister of her church, came to the church to advertise for students to study in New Zealand. So the couple decided to send their children to New Zealand for a three-week English learning programme. At first her husband opposed her plan because it was too expensive but Mrs Im insisted on it encouraging her elder daughter that she would make it happen at any cost. So her husband reluctantly agreed with her and he became even more active than her in sending their children abroad after he happened to meet a person who worked in a regional office of education, and heard of the problematic situation at secondary schools in Korea. Her husband contacted the minister of the church in New Zealand which the education agent attended, and a Korean international student who was already studying in New Zealand, to inquire about the local situation.

Going through these processes the two primary school age girls came to New Zealand without their parents. Mr Jin could send his two daughters alone abroad because he could trust their guardians, a couple in New Zealand, one of whom was a minister. But Mrs Im was already prepared to send her children abroad alone: when she was still at kindergarten she made her elder daughter visit her relative in a local city alone by plane, in order to train her. Mrs Im purposefully chose her daughter’s extra curricular institution far from their house to train her to take a bus alone. At first Mrs Im was going to send the

¹⁰ Mrs Im became a Christian when her eldest daughter was one year old. In her narratives she continuously stressed that it was God’s will that her children went abroad to study, telling me “how God sincerely answered her prayer.” As an example, she told me the story about how her husband who had no job until two years before their children went to New Zealand suddenly made a big success of his business even during the IMF period and earned money which became the fund for their children.

elder one only, but the younger daughter wanted to go with her sister so she decided to send them together. Because Mrs Im was a working mother, the elder daughter used to take care of her younger sister so the younger one depended a lot on her elder sister. Ms Jin remembered that she was excited when she first arrived in Auckland with her sister even though she would not have wanted to come if she had known what difficulties she would have. Since she started studying in New Zealand at the age of 13, she has had to take care of her 10 year old sister, as well as do every thing by herself for both her own and her sister's living and studying in Auckland, such as visa renewal or school transfer.¹¹ The guardian couple helped her only with first visa application.

Three years after his children went to New Zealand, Mr Jin intended for them to return home but the daughters wanted to study longer at a New Zealand school. He had to give in to his daughters' demand because he thought they would have had difficulty in readjusting to secondary school in Korea which was deteriorating in terms of the heavy burden of study and the increasing rate of violence among students. But he did not intend to keep them in New Zealand for the more than seven years that they had stayed: every year he just let them stay there for one more year. For Ms Jin three years of study was not enough for her English to be good enough for her to go to medical school in the US. During her study in New Zealand she had a dream of becoming a medical doctor who would work in underdeveloped countries, and for this purpose she wanted to study longer in New Zealand.

Ms Jin seemed to be quite ambitious in pursuing her career. After she had lived for three years with her sister in Auckland, she moved to Dunedin, leaving her sister in Auckland, to go to a private Christian boarding school for girls in preparation for entering the medical school at Otago University. She studied for two years in Dunedin until her mother came to Auckland to join her sister. Mrs Im had been asked to come to New Zealand two years after the girls left Korea, but she could not come at that time because of her work in Korea. Soon after her mother's arrival, Ms Jin returned to Auckland because she could no longer stand living alone now that her mother was in Auckland. Ms Jin went to a university in Auckland one year after that.

¹¹ Afterwards, when Mrs Im came to New Zealand she apologised to her daughter for giving her so great a burden, but Ms Jin replied to her even if her mother had been with them she could not have helped them much at that time [because of her limited English ability]

English had been a challenge to Ms Jin's study in New Zealand until she became a university student. Harassment from some Kiwi students and discriminatory treatment towards Asian students at the high school were another hardship, but the most powerful source of stress to a teenage girl seemed to be a sense of isolation. Among her friends, there were some Kiwis at the boarding school in Dunedin but they were friends in name only. Most of her friends at the high school were Koreans with whom she used to study and chat, but she could not reveal her innermost feelings even to them.¹² She no longer had any friends in Korea because of the lack of contact with them for a long time. The friends she has currently are those from her church and two from her high school. Ms Jin also had difficulties interacting with her schoolteachers. She felt that the teachers were different from her. Even though her Kiwi peers in the class talked to their teachers freely, she felt she could not freely ask them questions. But the worst thing that made her feel isolated was her parents' absence. She was always conscious that she was living in other people's houses, so could not relax and feel at home. Also, there was no one to be with her at school prize-givings. Owing to the lack of meaningful interpersonal relationships among other social groups, she had to focus her activities in New Zealand on her Korean church.

After his wife went to New Zealand, Mr Jin had lived alone in Korea for one and a half years until the time of the interview with me. He spends most of his time working in his shop 11 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week, while doing housework such as cooking and laundering for himself. Many people around him do not understand how he can live like that, but he said to me he was dealing with his situation by concentrating on work and he adjusted to it. He understood well the negative social perceptions of geese fathers in Korea. But those perceptions did not matter to him. He stresses that he sent his daughters abroad not for his pride but for the benefit and happiness of his children. He was willing to live alone as a goose father because his two daughters were satisfied with their studying and living in New Zealand. He was being rewarded by their satisfaction and by the fact that he provided them with high quality education, although he was having difficulty in his business because of a recent overall recession in Korea.

Recently Mr Jin and his family have not been able to meet each other very often. Until 2005 they used to visit each other once a year but since 2005, when Mr Jin visited his

¹² Ms Jin attributed it to her personality and did not mention another reason but it seemed that they did not have enough time to build a deep friendship because they first met each other at high school age and separated soon after finishing high school; this is experienced by many Korean international students.

family to Auckland for the first time, they have not seen each other. Ms Jin has not visited Korea in the last three years, and does not make any contact with Korea apart from a fortnightly phone call to her father, and an additional call on his birthday or traditional holidays.

Despite limited contact opportunities with his daughters over a long period, he did not feel a generation and/or acculturation gap between them, although he felt regret for not being with them during their puberty. Nevertheless, he reserved judgment on his decision to send his daughters abroad. He had assured himself that he made the right decision for their children for the first three or four years, but he concluded that it was not all beneficial when his daughters made him aware that they had grown up in a different environment, out of the boundaries of a normal Korean family.

Mr Jin did not expect his children to return to Korea after graduating from university. He, too, thought if they could get a professional job it would be better for them to settle in New Zealand than to return to Korea. But he acknowledges that it totally depends on the children's decision. At this stage his family's future is contingent on the situation that they will face in the future, as he did not anticipate his children staying in New Zealand as long as seven years. He thought his family should accept the change and adapt themselves to the situation. But he had a rough plan for their future: if his children settled and got permanent residency in New Zealand, then he could get permanent residency too, which would enable him to enjoy life after retirement. Until then he would work in Korea. But according to Mrs Im, each of their children has different plans: the elder daughter does not want to live in New Zealand while the younger one wants to remain here because she found that "the life style in New Zealand fit her". In fact Ms Jin wanted to move to a bigger country such as the US, because she has not found a job that suits her in New Zealand yet. In terms of her marital future, both Mr Jin and his elder daughter were against interethnic marriage. For Mr Jin, the idea of his daughter having a foreigner boy friend would be embarrassing; while Ms Jin felt she did not want to create an extra burden of cultural difference to her marriage because she had observed a married couple's relationship fail because of cultural difference.

Return Migrants: Mr In and Mrs Lee, Seoul, 2006; Mr In Jr, Auckland, 2006

When Mr In and his family applied for immigration to New Zealand in 1992, it was an unknown country to most Koreans and there were only about 200 Koreans living there. Mr

In had little information about the country except its geographical location. He even did not know that New Zealand had started to receive immigrants from East Asian countries, including Korea, until he inquired of a state owned immigration agent company as to where they could immigrate. But as soon as he became aware of the new immigration system of New Zealand he made an application for immigration to the New Zealand Embassy in Korea, and a few months later Mr In, Mrs Lee and his two sons found themselves in New Zealand.

Mr In said he had no particular reason, intention, or motive to immigrate to New Zealand when he decided to do so: his two sons who were 10 and 8 respectively, had no problem at school and were too young for Mr In to consider the quality of their education and he also had a solid job so had no intention of seeking an opportunity for a new business. But he said there might have a hidden motivation that he needed to change his life when he had become “stuck” in terms of income and occupation as early as in his late 30s.

After graduating university and completing his military obligation as an officer, he had worked in a project team for one of Korea’s largest electronics companies for two years until he quit the job because another company took over the project he was involved in, in accordance with the Korean government’s policy of industrial specialisation in the mid 80s. A short time after this, he saw a vacancy notice for the position of technical staff in the US army¹³ and applied for it because he had been attracted by the far more favourable labour conditions offered to the employees of foreign companies in Korea, such as observing legal working hours and not working on Saturdays. He got the position and had worked in it for 10 years. During this period Mr In achieved economic and occupational security in his life: he bought a large apartment in a newly developed residential area near Seoul and got the highest level of licence in his professional area. After 10 years working in the US army he moved to a venture company as an executive in his mid 30s and made it into a promising company even though he did not make big money from it.

When he was working in the venture company, however, he became stressed over his different role in the company from his previous career as an engineer: his important work in the company was to deal with bank managers or high ranking officials in government,

¹³ Since the Korean War in 1950, the US military forces have been stationed in Korea and hired many Koreans as support staff.

entertaining them with drinking, playing Korean style cards or touring, which were customs in the Korean business environment. Mr In, who had been trained as an engineer, found himself no longer fit to do that kind of work. His wife Mrs Lee, who was a senior nurse at a hospital, was also feeling tired of her job which was complicated and busy but repetitive, when her husband informed her of the possibility of immigration. Moreover, she became allergic to cold air when she was pregnant with her second child which made her difficult to endure the winter in Korea. So she pursued the idea of living abroad and encouraged her husband to immigrate.

When Mr In and his family arrived in New Zealand in November 1992 they were one of the first Korean families to come in on the point system, New Zealand's new immigration policy. At the time they came, New Zealand had been suffering a severe economic recession. The Koreans who came to New Zealand earlier than Mr In's family were also affected by depression: damaged by decreasing house prices and their businesses going bad.¹⁴ Mr In was advised by some of his predecessors not to invest in New Zealand: not to buy a house, not even to dream of starting a business. Despite this bad economic situation and the advice from his neighbours, Mr In bought a house as soon as they arrived and started running a motel four months after that. Despite concerns from those around him, his motel business was a great success because 2,000 or 3,000 new immigrants from Korea came to New Zealand every year after he started the motel.

Mr In and Mrs Lee, with their sons' help, had run the motel for about five years until they sold it. Their new life in New Zealand became settled: they worked together in the morning and Mr In played golf while Mrs Lee had a rest reading and watching videos in the afternoon. But soon after the couple started the motel Mrs Lee, who would like to pursue her career as a nurse in New Zealand, decided to prepare for working. She had studied English for one year and got a nurse's licence. But she did not work until she registered for the practicing licence to work at hospital. On the day she got the practicing licence she was contacted by a Korean GP who was looking for a Korean nurse and she got a job in the GP's clinic to become one of the first Korean nurses in New Zealand. Later, she joined a company run by some independent nurses for health education while working in the clinic and later in a private hospital. She worked at North Shore hospital for a year before she returned to Korea.

¹⁴ One of the Koreans at that time killed himself because of the failure in his business according to Mr In.

Mr In ran the motel for two more years by himself after his wife left to work at the hospital. But Mr In got tired of working alone without his wife's support so he sold it and made some trading profit. After that Mr In decided to spend a year or so doing nothing but playing golf—a new interest for him. But ten months later he found himself looking for work again. He did not want to do his own business again because of the high tax rate in New Zealand, so he looked for an employment opportunity and found that bus driving was suitable. He worked as a bus driver for three years before he returned to Korea.

For a full nine years after immigration Mr In and his family never visited Korea. Mr In visited Korea for the first time after immigration because his mother got sick. When he came to Korea he expected to see his mother one last time before she died, but his mother did not get worse during his month's stay in Korea, so he brought her back with him to New Zealand to care for her. Six months after coming to New Zealand his mother got better and wanted to return to Korea. Meanwhile Mr In was offered a job from a friend of his whom he had contacted during his stay in Korea. With the employment opportunity in his professional area, as well as his mother's request to return, he decided to return to Korea. He had lived in Korea for three years by the time of the interview with me. At first he went to Korea by himself leaving his family, and one year later his wife also returned after his second son entered university in New Zealand. She has taught nursing at a university since then.

Mr In said he was enjoying transnational living between the two countries. His younger son is remaining in New Zealand to study¹⁵ and Mr In and Mrs Lee have visited New Zealand once every year on holiday, or for “homecoming”, since they returned to Korea, where they work in their professional areas and earn good incomes. Mr In's Korean friends in New Zealand envy him. Nevertheless Mr In wants to come back to New Zealand as soon as possible. When they returned they left their house and all their possessions in Auckland and only brought some clothes with them.

But Mr In and his wife's return to New Zealand depends on their children's choices. If their two sons leave New Zealand to work in other countries they have no reason to return to New Zealand. In fact their younger son, who is studying law in a university in Auckland, is planning to go to Korea to work after graduation. He was impressed by the dynamic features of his profession in Korea and saw more promise there when he was studying at a university in Korea as an exchange student.

¹⁵ His older son was working in the US at the time of this interview.

In their narratives Mr In and Mrs Lee continued to stress that their lives in New Zealand and Korea were “smooth” and “favourable” even though they did not strive for success in life with a special target or deliberate strategy. For Mrs Lee living in New Zealand was like a “bonus” in her entire life. They said the only difficulty they had experienced in ten years living in New Zealand was that they could not find somewhere to eat on the first day they arrived. They bought the motel which was just a little more expensive than a good house at that time. It provided them with a dwelling, they did not aim to make large profits and they were satisfied with their job. And they were also satisfied with their good Korean neighbours who all had been highly educated with professional jobs in Korea. They were especially satisfied that they could spend more time with their children while they were growing up because of the slower pace of life in New Zealand. Mr In and Mrs Lee became closer in their spousal relationships in New Zealand while Mr In had faith in religion. In all, Mr In and Mrs Lee said they had not had any big hindrance in their lives so far.

But unlike his narratives about their “smooth” settlement without a special effort in New Zealand and Korea, Mr In implied, at times throughout the interview, the effort required to adjust himself to a new environment. He decided to immigrate to New Zealand without any special motive. He just had a thought that where there were people, there were always some jobs to do. In his answers to my question about comparing the two countries, he said if someone emigrated from Korea because he/she was not satisfied with Korea, then he/she would become dissatisfied with the new country, too. What was important for immigrants trying to settle in a new country, he said, was their positive and active attitudes to make the best of the opportunities the environment offered. And when I suggested that his younger son made a good decision to return to Korea after graduation because of the small market in New Zealand, he replied that there was no guarantee of success without competition in the world.

Mr In’s younger son, Mr In Jr, told me about his father’s strict discipline which perhaps hints at the efforts Mr In made to bring his son up “correctly” according to his values and also at some inter-generational tensions. Mr In never allowed his son to sleep-over at friends’ houses until he went to university. Nor did he allow his son to grow his hair long, dye his hair or have his ears pierced, until his son was in his second to last year at high school. Despite this, he never pushed his son to study.

Mr In evaluated his decision to immigrate to New Zealand as especially good for his two sons. He felt that they would have more opportunities to develop their abilities in order to succeed in a globalising world, such as by learning English, than they would have had in Korea. He felt fortunate that his two sons kept their Korean identity, as well as their fluency in Korean, even after more than 10 years of living in New Zealand, and that they had no intention of inter-ethnic marriages, in accordance with his wishes. But his younger son had a different opinion from Mr In in terms of Korean identity. For Mr In Jr, Korean immigrants in New Zealand tend not integrate into New Zealand culture even after more than a decade of living in New Zealand. In his opinion the problem is not of losing Korean identity, but of keeping too strong a Korean identity without mingling with Kiwi society.

Return International Students: Mrs Han and Mrs Seon, Seoul, 2006

Mrs Han and Mrs Seon, who are upper middle class housewives in their early 40s, took their children to New Zealand for their English education in late 2003 and returned to Korea in late 2005. When they arrived in New Zealand Mrs Han's two sons were in the fourth and second year of primary school in Korea respectively, and Mrs Seon's son was in the fourth year at primary school and her daughter was seven years old. Mrs Han's husband is a practising lawyer and Mrs Seon's husband is the owner of a commercial rental building in Seoul.

Mrs Han and her husband began to take an interest in their children's study abroad as they saw an increasing number of people around them participating in their children's early study abroad. They decided to educate their two sons in New Zealand when Mrs Han's uncle, who was an immigrant in New Zealand, visited Korea and urged her to come to New Zealand to improve her children's English, stimulating her by saying if she did not come she would be an old fashioned mom as lots of Korean mothers were coming. So Mrs Han came to New Zealand with her mother and nephew as well as her sons.¹⁶

Mrs Seon followed her son's decision: he wanted to study abroad because he saw many of his friends going. But New Zealand was her choice: she already had a very good image of New Zealand before her decision. She had seen a documentary programme on a Korean TV channel in which New Zealand was described like "a heaven on earth" where

¹⁶ It is common among many Korean international student families in New Zealand to accompany relatives. Adult [women] relatives are supposed to help the mothers with child care and household work and the mothers are expected to be the guardians and caregivers for their relatives' or friends' children for free or for a fee.

you could enjoy golf inexpensively, and women have more power than men. She thought she and her children would live in safety in New Zealand even without her husband. So she looked for someone who had networks in New Zealand and contacted her apartment neighbour whose aunt was living in New Zealand. It was this person who met Mrs Seon and her children at the airport and helped their initial settlement.

These two international families settled, and sent their children to schools, in west Auckland because the people whom they initially contacted had lived there. Mrs Han and Mrs Seon met each other at a Korean church in west Auckland. When they arrived in New Zealand, they found they could easily meet other Korean mothers who arrived in the same period. They found that far more mothers had come to New Zealand one or two years before they had when the exchange rate was favourable. They met some of these mothers at churches, children's schools or golf courses, became friends and kept in touch with them on their return to Korea.

When they prepared to move to New Zealand they thought it was just a matter of "packing and ticketing" to move to the foreign country: they did not know it was going to be much tougher than they expected until they had actually lived in New Zealand. When Mrs Seon arrived at Auckland airport, her first impression of the city was very good because of the clean air, clear sky, bright sunshine and even a feeling of embracement of the landscape. Mrs Han was disappointed to see that Auckland international airport was smaller and older than a local airport in Korea. At first the chill in the house, which she had never experienced in houses in Korea which had underfloor heating systems, made Mrs Han regret her decision to come to New Zealand.

Soon after their arrival, however, they faced a real challenge even before they were able to enjoy the natural environment and the new life in New Zealand: English. As soon as they started living in New Zealand they realised that they had a serious problem with communication in English and it made them worry constantly about possible incidents such as traffic accidents and getting sick, which they would have had to deal with by themselves. At first these two mothers tried to study and learn English but it did not work well. Mrs Seon watched New Zealand TV programmes only, and studied English vocabulary for several hours a day but she found that her efforts were no use if she did not speak English a lot in her everyday life. She gave up studying English which only made her more stressed. Mrs Han attended a community centre to learn English and she found it

was very good in terms of her English and making friends but she tended to focus on making friends mostly with Korean mothers.

Mainly because of their limited ability in English, their everyday lives in New Zealand were restricted to their home and, at best, the neighbourhood of the Korean community until they returned to Korea. These two mothers' everyday lives were almost the same. In the morning, after taking their children to school, they used to watch Korean TV programmes on video, play golf (Mrs Seon), or meet other mothers (Mrs Han) until their children came back home. After that they took them to the extra curricular activities or supervised their studies until they went to bed.¹⁷ They continued to live in this manner for two years. When I asked what her life in New Zealand was like, Mrs Seon said she had nothing to say when people asked about her experience in New Zealand, apart from playing golf, although it was a meaningful time for her.

But they had to endure their “nothing but boring” lives, because they did not want to make trouble which they would have to deal with alone as “the head of their family”, in the absence of their husbands. This new role was a source of constant tension during their stay in New Zealand. For example, Mrs Han could not even go shopping freely for fear of causing a car accident. And she only made a few one-day trips with her children and could not make a long trip partly because she had no confidence in her ability to arrange the journey in English. As a result they kept within their comfort zone.¹⁸ Despite their efforts, these two mothers could not avoid all incidents. Mrs Seon caused a few minor collisions, and Mrs Han had to deal with a conflict with a car insurance company. When they had problems, both tried to resolve these by themselves but in the process Mrs Han experienced severe stress which she could not relieve even after she managed to solve the problem; while Mrs Seon realised that there was no one to trust in foreign countries, where she thought people tended to be very calculating. In all, they seemed to live alienated lives for two years which Mrs Han expressed well when she said she never felt her house in New Zealand was like home.

¹⁷ Korean international student mothers generally have more free time in New Zealand than in Korea because they do not need to do household chores for their husbands. Moreover, their stay in New Zealand is not permanent but temporary, only for several years at most, so they do not care about household chores in New Zealand as much as they do in Korea. Instead, these mothers concentrate on their children's education, learning English, or the activities such as golf or church involvement.

¹⁸ But there are many Korean international student mothers who are very active in terms of problem solving and seeking new challenges.

But meanwhile their husbands visited them quite often. Mrs Seon's husband visited his family three times in two years and stayed for a week at the shortest and a month at the longest while Mrs Han's husband visited as many as eight times within one and a half years although he stayed only a few days and Mrs Han and her children went to Korea twice.¹⁹ And these two mothers became healthier in New Zealand than they were in Korea: Mrs Seon's recurring cough disappeared three months after she came to New Zealand. Most of all, their children were all fine in New Zealand. They never annoyed their mothers and had no problems with their friends at school. Mrs Han's elder son always told her that he really liked his school when he was at primary school, and at first Mrs Seon's son also liked the calm and peaceful atmosphere in New Zealand and said he would like to live there with all his family. But as they went to intermediate school and stayed longer, they realised they were discriminated against or, at least, treated differently by their schoolmates and their teachers because they were Asians although the extent of their experience was different: for Mrs Seon's son it was explicit while for Mrs Han's son it was more subtle. After returning to Korea when their mothers asked them if they would like to return to New Zealand to study they said they would never go back.

In addition to studying at school many Korean international students, like these two mothers' children who were going back to Korea within two or three years, receive extra curricular tuition to acquire English ability as much as they could in a short period, and not to fall behind other students when they return to Korea. These mothers were no exception: Mrs Han gave her children extra curricular tuition in Maths and English grammar and writing. But when they returned to Korea after two years' absence, these children needed to readjust themselves to schools in Korea: Mrs Han's elder son, who reached the sixth grade at primary school, had a difficulty studying Korean literature; and Mrs Seon's son who entered middle school experienced severe competition with his schoolmates.

Soon after returning to Korea these two families moved their residence to *Gangnam* district, which is regarded as the most affluent area of Seoul. Primary and secondary schools there are rated very highly in terms of their graduates' high ranking university entrance rate. These two families also moved to *Gangnam* to provide their children with a more competitive educational environment: lots of "high level" private teaching institutions and many high achieving students. According to Mrs Han, considering that the

¹⁹ This frequency of visiting is very high compared to other Korean international families, many of whom visit each other only once or twice a year.

final goal of secondary education is entrance to one of the top universities, her priority should be to increase their children's score on the college entrance exam through which all college students in the nation are compared. She said, given that students who show only average academic performances at schools in *Gangnam* area can go to the higher ranking universities while even high achieving students in other areas fail to do, implies that studying at school in the *Gangnam* area would increase the possibility for her son to go to the top ranking universities even though he might show just average academic performances there.

Mrs Seon also sought a competitive environment where she expected her son to study voluntarily, stimulated by the hard working students around him. After finishing middle school Mrs Seon's son wanted to go to a foreign language high school, or a private high school enabling the talented to enter university in the US more easily because these schools have special classes where all subjects are taught in English. But Mrs Han was planning to send her elder son to university in Korea: she did not think her elder son could live and study alone in a foreign country because she found he lacked self-control when he stayed alone in New Zealand for a few months after she came back. She also thought her child would study much better if he studied in his mother tongue, than if he studied in English as a speaker of English as a second language.

Now that there are many high achieving students in *Gangnam* who have been supported by their highly educated, eager and wealthy parents,²⁰ Mrs Han and Mrs Seon have not seen the effectiveness of education in New Zealand in their children's school achievement yet, although Mrs Han's elder son had few friends to compete with him in English in his previous school in Ilsan, one of the rich suburbs near Seoul. In *Gangnam* district, however, Mrs Han realised, most of the students in a similar age group could speak English as fluently as her elder son: many of them had been learning English from a special kindergarten which had tuition fees almost the same as university and had been abroad at least for six months if not a few years.

²⁰ There are some lower middle class parents who transferred their high achieving children to schools in *Gangnam* from other less affluent areas in Seoul or local cities. These parents, especially mothers support their children with "bare foot", which means they substitute their lack of economic capital for their devoted efforts such as carefully managing their children's study schedule or collecting up-to-date information about educational policy or university entrance to support their children.

To catch up with their friends these children were studying for more than 12 hours a day and for almost 20 hours a day during examination periods. To help their children catch up with their friends, these two mothers supported their children during these extended study periods by keeping the same long hours as they did. Mrs Seon's son took the first mid-term examination at middle school just before this interview. During his examination period Mrs Seon could not sleep while her son was studying, but she had nothing to occupy her and complained that this was very stressful and exhausting for her.²¹ Mrs Han said they were not exceptional, and that all the Korean mothers who were concerned about their children's school achievement were making the same effort: after dinner, sitting next to their children until late at night, and sending them to school in the morning. At the end of the interview Mrs Seon told a story about a student in her son's class who was in first place in his class: he kept studying all day only sleeping for an hour or so when he felt really tired during the examination period, and he got full marks in all subjects except one slipped question in a minor subject.

Conclusion

The virtue of the life history approach in social science is that it can reveal individual actors' uniqueness, and that at the same time, it can show us how those individuals adapt themselves to, use, or change the structure. In migration studies in particular, the benefit of the life history method is derived from its focus on individual actors' view points in describing migration processes: from the view point of migrants, pre- and post- migration experiences are on a continuum. This can be contrasted with structural approaches to international migration in which these processes are treated as two discrete stages from the view point of sending and receiving states. Moreover, this tendency becomes stronger and more practical in transnational migration: transnational migrants' life experiences are continuous and traceable not only in narratives but also in practice. In these four stories, international education, immigration, return migration and remigration were mixed up in practice in participants' lives.

In this context of continuity, an important theme emerged from these four transnational migration life histories: for the storytellers, international movement is conceptualised as a way to acquire resources that are meaningful in Korea, not in New

²¹ The reason why these mothers think that sitting beside their children while they are studying would help is a complex mixture of symbolic meaning and practical purpose: they participate in their children's hardship and monitor and urge them to study.

Zealand, that is, they wanted to change their positions in their own social field rather than move to a different social field through international movement. For Mr Cho, international migration occurred to him when he was seeking an opportunity to “jump again” in his mid life, rather than looking for a chance to move to a different social field, while Mr Jin and Mrs Im sent their children to New Zealand because they wanted their children to master English to help them study in Korea, not elsewhere. In the story of Mrs Han and Seon, coming to New Zealand for international education was understood in the same context as moving to the *Gangnam* area to seek high level schools and private coaching schools. For Mr In and Mrs Lee, international migration seemed to be an attempt to move to a different social field at first, but their narratives of “good income in Korea and holidays in New Zealand” revealed their perception of international migration as a way to up-lift their positions in Korea. As a result, a traditional sending and receiving country model of international migration is hardly applicable to these transnational life histories: the participants did not aim for New Zealand as a destination country; instead they were connected to New Zealand and chose it among a few eligible countries, and the notion of crossing the border was hardly noted in their stories.

Beginning in the next chapter, I discuss various themes in detail extracted from the 62 transnational life histories. My focus will be on how the participants tried to change their positions in their own social fields while living in a different nation state. I examine their successes and failures in pursuing the dream of globally talented people within the identity of the Korean middle class.

CHAPTER THREE:

LIFE IN KOREA

This chapter presents how the participants described their lives in Korea in relation to their decision to leave that country and to head to New Zealand. My main sources for this chapter are those parts of the interviews where I asked participants to tell me about their reasons for leaving Korea and then for choosing New Zealand, which acted as opening questions. My initial aim with these questions was to identify the factors or motives that precipitated international migration for my participants. But their reasons for leaving Korea are similar to the problems that most people, the middle class in particular, have in Korea, so these reasons cannot be the factors which are necessarily connected to international migration. Moreover, I found during the interviews that many participants decided to leave Korea or to come to New Zealand impulsively, which I hardly expected in relation to such a big decision as leaving their own country for an extended period. These findings led me to change the main question in this chapter from what the factors were which made the participants decide to leave Korea or to go to New Zealand, into why these people chose to leave the country as their response to the same challenges for which other Koreans are seeking solutions in Korea. In other words, I tried to seek the answer to the question who – not why – participates in international migration.

In my approach to this question I discuss how Korea has become neo-liberalised since the IMF as a way to cope with globalisation, examine what resources in the society were at stake and how middle class people respond to this rapid socio-cultural change. I followed participants' narratives as they linked their motives for leaving Korea to this socio-cultural change. Next, the decision-making process for international migration is analysed in the context of how the participants are connected to, and activate, transnational networks to show who chose international migration as a way to acquire resources and solve problems they faced. Finally, by examining who the decision makers for international migration were, and what the participants negotiated in international migration decision making, I try to reveal the class and gendered nature of this international population movement. But first I will discuss the middle class in Korea in

order to describe the socio economic background of Korean immigration to New Zealand since the early 1990s: who the middle class in Korea actually are, how the participants meet the middle class criteria and how the Korean middle class has been formed

Who is Middle Class?

Since the full-scale immigration of Koreans to New Zealand began in the early 1990s, this has been thought of as a very peculiar social phenomenon and stirred exceptional interest from Korean society, especially in that the majority of these New Zealand-bound emigrants consisted of highly educated middle-class professionals in their 30s to 40s. Some Koreans who got permanent residency through the point system consider themselves as “model students [citizens] who were acknowledged and chosen by the New Zealand government”. In fact, under the skilled migrant and business migration category, the New Zealand government set the criteria to filter the entrants from East Asian countries to select high quality human resources with some economic capital. Although the socio-economic features of the applicants from Korea have changed slightly as the country’s immigration policy itself has changed, most people who applied for residency under the skilled migrant and business migration categories belonged to the middle class, or higher, in terms of their occupational careers and assets in Korea. Applicants for permanent residency were evaluated according to their employability factors, such as educational qualification and age, and settlement factors, including immigration funds. Since 1992 the point system has changed several times in the direction of reinforcing an English ability test, but the system has always been favourable to professionals or office workers in large companies in their 30s to early 50s holding university degrees, several years of work experience and more than a hundred thousand dollars of immigration funds.

At this point, the term “middle class” should be defined. Middle class in Korea is a unique group which is hard to define: it is neither the class between the capitalist and working classes as in Marxian perspectives, nor the middle stratum as a status group in Weberian approaches in its exact meaning, according to Shin (2003). I translated the Korean term “*jungsancheung* (中産層)” into middle class according to its common use in Korean academia, but this term does not exactly refer to class. In the 1960s when the military regime prohibited use of the term class because it implied leftist political ideology, some Korean social scientists coined the term, which is closer to the middle stratum in its meaning. Many Korean scholars, especially in the 1980s, tried to define the middle class in

Korea, and as a result, several criteria for identifying middle class have been set. But despite scholars' efforts, the term middle class is commonly used in Korea referring to "the social group in the middle economic level" (Shin 2003:44). For example, in many policy reports by the government and private research institutions, middle class is regarded as "medium income stratum"(i.e., Ryu and Kang 1999), while in public discourse, middle class is mainly identified with the level of household incomes and consumption (i.e., Cho and Han 2003).²² Korean middle class, in this regard, is a fluid group which is changeable in size according to the country's income trends.

In this study I will use the term as a concept including both class and status according to Hong (2005). In his study on the middle class in Korea, Hong uses "status" as well as class to define the middle class based on Weber's concept (1978) which consists of life style, institutional education and status honours. He suggests four criteria to define the middle class in Korea: occupational status, household income, house ownership and educational level. Generally, occupation and educational level have become the most commonly agreed-upon factors that determine class status in Korea.

The upper middle class includes doctors, engineers, professionals, and managers who possess profound knowledge and professional skill. The new middle class refers to typical white-collar workers such as semi-professionals and clerical workers, [and] the old middle class refers to self-employed workers... The overwhelming majority of the upper-middle class and new middle class has had at least some college education and a substantial portion of them graduated from four year colleges. [But] the educational level of the old middle class is similar to that of the working class (Hong 2003: 46).

"Middle class" in this study refers to the upper-middle class, the new middle class and the old middle class together, but I will attend to the different life-course trajectories, enablers and constraints that may be evident within this broad category.

Based on data from empirical research Hong defined the middle class as the group of professionals, managers, and small business owners with qualifications above junior college level and over 2,500,000 won or an average monthly household income of about \$3125, living in their own houses wider than 66 m² or renting houses wider than 99 m². Applying Hong's criteria, the participants in my study are closer to upper middle class in

²² According to the survey in this report, the four biggest reasons for the respondents' class identification were the level of income, the level of consumption, cultural life, and occupation and status in that order.

Korea.²³ For principal applicants for immigration, the age span was from the early 30s to early 50s and all had bachelor degrees or above. All the main applicants had worked as managers, professionals or office workers in large companies or banks in Korea. The financial status of all participants was not available but two of the participants were willing to tell me their immigration fund: a participant who worked as a department manager in one of the largest companies in Korea brought around \$600,000 to New Zealand in 2001 and another participant who was a construction engineer brought about \$550,000 in 2002, most of which was from selling their apartments.

The participants from the international student families in the study are far more affluent than their immigrant counterparts although these two groups are similar in their age span and family size. All of the fathers of the international students are business owners and professionals, including lawyers, a vet and a professor. The financial status of the international student families is not available either, but based on their expenses for study and living in New Zealand, it can be estimated: a mother of two international students told me that they had made an estimate of \$80,000 per year when they sent their two sons to New Zealand, but she found it was insufficient. Considering that these temporary households depend totally upon remittances from Korea, and have little income in New Zealand, many Korean international student families have enough income or assets to spend around \$100,000 a year for their children's education only.²⁴

The Formation of the Middle Class

Middle class formation in Korea seemed a project which was initiated by the Korean government. Although the middle class in a Marxian context already emerged in Korea under Japanese colonial rule, it was during the 1970s and 1980s when Korea had visible success as a result of its rapid industrialisation policy, that a group of urban people formed and was identified as middle class. Middle class formation in Korea began with the rapid increase of college-educated people. To meet the increasing demand for human resources during rapid industrialisation in the 1970s, the then military government expanded higher education and, as a result, "student enrolment tripled in the 1970s and the increase

²³ Appendix A shows the participants' demographic and socio economic backgrounds at their departure.

²⁴ Because of the huge expenses, many international student families are trying to save money. Some mothers seek job opportunities to get work permits with which their children at primary or secondary school can get domestic student status, while others make an income by hosting other international students or teaching Korean students privately.

continued through the 1980s” (Lee 1994: 48). Many of these people were absorbed into industry as white collar workers and technicians and became residents of the big cities. Some who succeeded in getting jobs in large conglomerates, banks or government agencies had secure incomes, and formed a middle class where material wealth and urban life was joined for the first time in Korean history. Soon “the materially wealthy and urban life of middle class was perceived as the desirable life by all the employees” (Shin, 2003:52), and many success stories about upward social mobility through educational achievement spread during continued economic growth before the 1990s.²⁵

From the mid 1980s the middle class became the focus of government policy. Another military government, which formed the 5th Republic, initiated a “middle class support policy” in 1985 which aimed at upward mobility for the lower class by increasing incomes and preventing downward mobility for the middle class by enhancing the social security system. But the government-led middle class support seemed to be largely driven by political purposes. The second military government used the policy to cover their lack of legitimacy while strongly suppressing demands for democracy.²⁶ At the same time, the myth of middle class success that “whoever works hard can live the middle class life” and the image of successful urban middle class families, was widely spread through the mass media by the government as a way to separate the public from its political opponents. The Korean economy achieved rapid growth during the military regime: the country’s economy grew over 12% per year in three consecutive years from 1986. Under these circumstances, the Korean middle class grew rapidly as shown in Table 3.1.²⁷ Despite its economic fortune, the military regime which planned a long-term seizure of power, faced a huge anti-government protest in 1987 in which many white collar workers participated, and the protest ended the military government. Korean people, including the middle class, started to have political democracy as well as economic wealth.

²⁵ Young people’s massive rural to urban migration from the late 1960s till the mid 1990s was also to seek the same kind of success.

²⁶ The military-led governments in the 3rd (1962-1972), 4th (1972-1979) and 5th (1979-1987) republic severely restricted civil rights and freedom in the name of public security, especially from the threat of the communist regime of North Korea and to promote economic growth.

²⁷ A Korean TV documentary broadcast in December 2003 described this period as the ‘Korean dream in the 1980s’.

Table 3.1 Changes in class structure in Korea between 1960 and 2000 (Hong 2003: 45)

Class	1960	1970	1980	1990
Upper-middle	0.9	1.3	1.8	1.9
New middle	6.6	14.2	17.7	25.5
Old middle	13.0	14.8	20.8	18.2
Working	8.9	16.9	22.6	30.6
Urban Lower	6.6	8.0	5.9	6.2
Farmer	40.0	28.0	23.2	12.7
Rural lower	24.0	16.7	8.1	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

But middle class formation in Korea cannot only be attributed to the government's project.²⁸ Rather, many Koreans voluntarily²⁹ pursued "the myth of middle class success". With rapid expansion of opportunities for upward social mobility during early industrialisation, Korean people sweated blood in the hope that they could become heroes in the success drama and many of them succeeded in their attempts. In the 1970s and 1980s Koreans saw many successes in which, for example, poor farmers' children ended up as white collar workers in large companies or professionals after successfully finishing university with great effort, despite financial difficulties and other hardships. Parents were compensated for the sacrifices they made to educate their children, when they became the mothers or fathers of lawyers or doctors. Unlike the process of industrialisation and modernisation in western societies, where youths left their families to become an urban middle class, Korean people never left their families. Instead, it was family that motivated Koreans to participate in the competition for social mobility and provided the resources to achieve this goal. In the 1970s, as Korea succeeded in industrialisation and escaping poverty, the generation which had severely suffered from poverty and social disturbances eagerly wanted their next generation to lead a comfortable life. Their cherished desire was

²⁸ Koo (2007: 282-283) also discusses middle class formation in Korea as the result of the joint efforts of government initiative and the Korean people's voluntary participation in economic development.

²⁹ Koreans' internalised enthusiasm to contribute to the country's economic development at that time can be questioned because it might be manipulated by the government who wanted to mobilise people, but this enthusiasm could be voluntary for most of Koreans as far as it was related to the pursuit of higher status.

conveyed to their children to make them strongly pursue economic success (Cho 1985), and because of the earlier generation’s unconditional material support, the next generation did not need to start from scratch.

Passing through the early industrialisation in the 1970s many Koreans succeeded in social mobility and became urban middle class using resources from their families, and since the mid 1980s Korean urban middle class families have increased in number as capitalism in Korea has advanced. With increasing numbers of middle class families, the competition among them for social resources to raise their social status has become stronger, and their efforts for status reproduction have taken very active forms. For the middle class, “social mobility [was] most possible and most sought after” (Lett 1998: 207). Cho (1985) explains it in relation to the appearance of the full-time middle class housewives. As the male heads of middle class households could earn enough income to support their nuclear family due to the rapid economic growth, especially with the decline of the birth rate which started from the 1970s as shown in Table 3.2, their wives did not need to participate in the labour market. Instead, these women took on the responsibility of caring for home as a space separated from the work place, where they could give their husbands and children “love” and “rest”.

Table 3.2 The change in the total fertility rate in Korea (Kim 2003)

Year	1960	1974	1983	1987	1990	1996	2000
Rate	6.0	3.6	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.71	1.47

In most western societies the same change happened from the late 19th century until the 1960s, however, women could escape from this nuclear familism by virtue of the women’s liberation movement from the 1970s. But in Korean families, women were more deeply involved in the nuclear familism which was combined with the ideology of Korea’s traditional extended familism. Women had to give up their career pursuits despite their high qualifications in a modern educational system, because of their responsibility in the nuclear family. Excluded from social production, middle class housewives entered into activities in informal areas to escalate their families’ social status: speculative investment in real estate, various efforts to increase the opportunity to send their children to high ranking universities such as moving their houses to good school zones, influencing their children’s schools for their children to be treated more favourably than other students, or

marrying their children into “good” families. In this context, children’s achievements can be their mothers’ achievements at the same time.

But for these families, being middle class is not their final goal. It is considered to be the pathway in Korean people’s desire for social mobility: this category is often considered by Koreans to be a minimum desirable status that every one should reach, and once people succeeded in entering the middle class circle, they try to reach a higher social level. Lett (1998) observed that Korean society was very status-conscious and Korea’s new urban middle class showed strong status-seeking behaviour. According to Hong (1999), this tendency is because rapid industrialisation and structural changes in Korean society have facilitated a surge of upward social mobility over the past half-century, and, paradoxically, egalitarian ideology has intensified. That is, the status-seeking behaviour of the middle class is attributed to an endeavour to emulate the elite; the tendency is toward sharing the socioeconomic condition, disposition, and lifestyle of the upper class.

“IMF” and Neo-liberal Reforms

In late 1997, Korea faced a sudden socio-economic crisis, the Asian foreign exchange crisis, so-called the IMF by Koreans. It caused a huge, significant social change in Korea as exemplified in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Selected socio-economic indicators pre/post-IMF in Korea

	1997	1998	2007
Economic growth rate	4.7%	-6.9%	5%
GNP per Capita (US\$)	11,176	7,355	21,695
Unemployment rate	2.6%	7.9%	3.2%

The IMF crisis was experienced by ordinary people, and the middle class in particular, mainly as unemployment. All of a sudden Korean society had a huge number of unemployed due to mass layoff and failures in businesses at the time, and the country’s poor social security system really mattered: in the case of unemployment or failure in business, Koreans have little social or public support. As a result of the lack of a social support system, Korean society saw homeless people explosively increasing right after the IMF when many families were broken due to bread-earners’ losing their job, as a Korean researcher writes:

During the “IMF era”, stories abounded of laid-off managers leaving home early in their usual dark business suits, riding subways back and forth aimlessly, or going to nearby mountains to kill time because they could not face telling their families they had been laid off. This was the first period after the Korean War that saw a large number of homeless people camping out in Seoul’s Central Station or in subway stations (Koo 2007a: 3).

Since the IMF, the Korea labour market has gone through restructuring: it became more flexible and competitive, and job insecurity increased greatly. Those holding managerial positions in large companies in their 40s and 50s – the typical middle class in Korea – suffered the most from labour market restructuring, and the growing level of job insecurity among white-collar and managerial workers has led to a declining middle class. Shin (2003) analyses several economic indicators from 1996 to 2000 to show how the Korean middle class experienced unemployment. Between 1997 and 1999 about 60,000 people in managerial jobs, 70,000 in professional jobs and 120,000 in technical jobs lost their positions, but managerial jobs decreased at the highest rate: one in five people who held managerial positions in the labour market lost their jobs between 1996 and 2000. This group was the symbol of the myth of middle class success: if you are well educated and build careers, then you can live a secure middle class life. But the myth collapsed as retirement at an early age, perhaps earlier than the age of 40, became a custom.

As a result, both high and low income groups are becoming more tightly clustered at the expense of the middle income group as shown in Table 3.4. Korean society became more bi-polarised. On-going neo-liberal reform of the Korean economy, and since the IMF all of society, has led to increased social stratification about which many critics of neo-liberalism have expressed concern in various discourses such as “collapse of middle class”, “bi-polarisation of income distribution” or “downward social mobility” which hit the headlines (i.e., Kim and Choi 2007, Lee 2007). For younger people, becoming middle class became more difficult because of the skyrocketing house, and especially apartment, prices, which far exceeded the rate of income increase: “the price of an apartment in *Gangnam* area³⁰ frustrated most young salaried men [who] cannot afford even a small sized apartment even if they save a large portion of their salary for more than 30 years” (Shin 2003: 54). The spatial separation between different social classes based on residential areas in a city was not a new phenomenon in Korea, but it has been more and more fixed since

³⁰ The price of a 115 square metre apartment in the *Gangnam* area is about \$1,750,000 as of March 2009.

the IMF, as the Korean economy has been more influenced by neoliberal global capitalism and the resultant social inequality has become more apparent.

Table 3.4 The distribution of Korean households by income class (Ju 2009: 5)

Income groups (Median Income =100%)		2005 (KRW2,533,300 ≐ NZD3,167)	2008 (KRW2,561,340 ≐ NZD3,202)	Increase rate
High	Over 150%	24.4%	27.1%	2.7%
Middle	50-150%	57.5%	49.9%	-7.6%
Low	Under 50%	18.1%	23.0%	4.9%

The inequality is fuelled by a broadened gap in educational expenditure between the income clusters, especially extra curricular expenses as Figure 3.1 shows. Education has started functioning as a mechanism for class reproduction rather than social mobility. A study of educational inequality and transmission of poverty in Korea (Yeo et al. 2007) shows it well. The study found that the connection between parents’ socio economic status (SES) and that of their children had become stronger: for those in their 40s, the direct effect of the parent’s SES on their own was low, and the effect of education on their SES was high while, for those in their 20s, the effect of the parents’ SES was high, and the effect of education was low. This finding clearly demonstrates that class reproduction through education is becoming stronger in Korea.

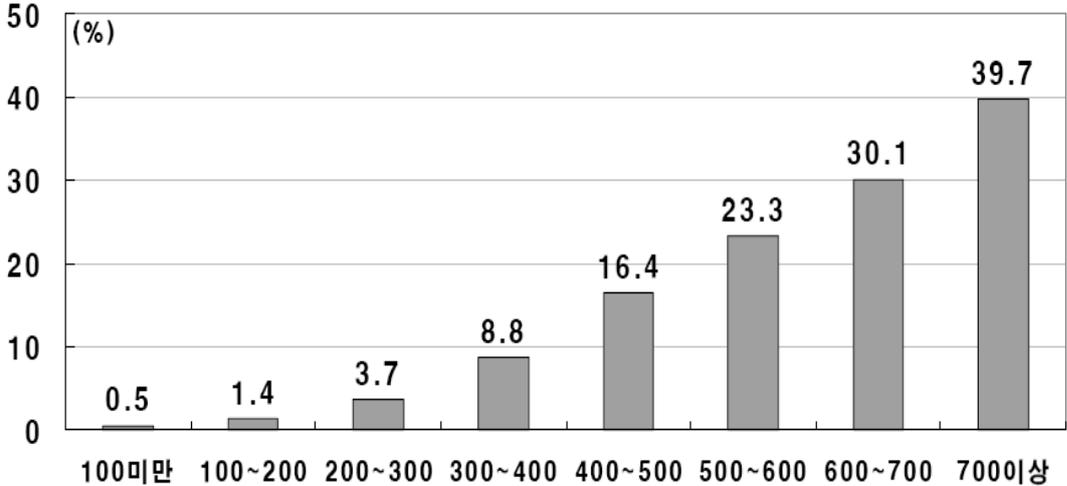


Figure 3.1 The percentage of households by income class in Korea spending more than KRW500,000 (NZD 625) per month for extra curricular tuition for their children (Ju 2009: 9)

Middle Class Status at Stake in Social Change

Social Status in Korea

Apart from social science scholars' efforts to define social stratification in Korean society, there is another notion of social hierarchy among the public which is based on a traditional sense of status. That is, although in modern day Korean society the feudal social rank system no longer exists, hierarchical relationships between those who have higher social status with high educational qualifications, privileged occupation and economic wealth and those who have not are still working. This hierarchical order which is deep rooted throughout the society first stems from a social rank or estate system (身分制度 *sinbunjedo*) of the Joseon Dynasty, the last kingdom in the Korean peninsula which lasted over 500 years until the Japanese annexation in 1910. The Joseon kingdom had a well developed social rank system which consisted of four hierarchical groups based on Confucian values: aristocrats (兩班, *yangban*), middle people (中人 *jungin*) commoners (常民 *sangmin*) and outcaste (賤民 *cheonmin*).

Social status in Korea was basically defined by the means of demonstrated membership in a lineage. In most cases belonging to a lineage, especially to a powerful lineage, proved one's status as an aristocrat. (Paik 2000: 85)

Upward mobility by becoming a public official through the Confucian civil service examination was a duty ordained by a Confucian value system which teaches people to "improve" their inner values. Social mobility between the groups was, however, restricted or limited and "generally involved either a rich commoner buying into a *yangban* genealogy or an intelligent sangmin son passing the civil service examinations (Robinson 1994:511)" although the latter cases were rare.

In traditional Korea...yangban status was maintained through Confucian ritual. Knowledge of these rituals and the Chinese characters necessary for reading about them were tested on these civil service examinations. A young man's ability to pass these examinations validated a family's social status. (Robinson 1994:512)

Since the social upheavals caused by the Japanese occupation and liberation and the Korean War (1950-1953) made social lines more difficult to delineate, the social rank system itself has disappeared in legal and practical terms, but the hierarchical relationship was transformed into a modern form, which was facilitated by successive authoritarian regimes and power elite in them. This elite group gained power by forming *hakbeol* (學閥 academic clique and/or credentialism), family background, wealth and centrality of power

and centralisation to the capital city, and monopolised decision making and policy in Korea. The group tried to maintain their established rights emulating traditional *yangban* practice in managing their families through, for example, upbringing and marriage, and reinforcing hierarchical order in the society through Confucian discourses such as emphasising obedience to authority.

As this group crosses class, status, and power lines in Korea it has been eagerly desired to enter it, but it has been very competitive. Passing bar examination and civil service examination, becoming medical doctors, or promotion to managerial positions in companies has been considered as a gateway to enter the privileged group often combined with marriage.

[W]hen seeking a marriage partner for one's children[,] [t]ypically, an attempt is made to match social, economic, and educational backgrounds-with the husband higher in the latter category. In some cases, young men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds but educated at a prestigious university find a welcomed match in a family of higher status. (Robinson 1994:512)

Under this circumstance social status in Korea can be interpreted as social standing or rank, which is well exemplified in the expression “*sinbunsangseung* (身分上昇)” which often refers to upward social mobility but literally means “upward movement to a different social rank” in Korean. This also explains why most Korean people, especially men, so fear downward social mobility of themselves and/or their children that they feel disgrace because it can mean downward movement to a different social rank.

Status Inconsistency

Despite its success in rapid industrialisation and consequent middle class formation, Korea's social systems and values were not changed along with economic modernisation. Although Korea adopted the principle of meritocracy based on rationalism as the major principle to operate society, constructing a modern capitalist economy, the society at large had been run in an authoritarian way, by military-led governments, until the early 1990s. The value system which was based on Confucianism dominates human relationships and public and private organisations many of which were being operated by family-oriented principles even until the late 1990s. The Korean middle class who held value systems based on rationalism, and the belief in competency through the modern institutional education system, experienced many difficulties living and working in such social or business organisations.

Especially within the family, modern life styles and traditional life standards collided heavily. The life style that the Korean middle class pursued was either thwarted or distorted by the traditional life standards, and because of this complications arose in the establishment of identity (Koo 1997). For example, when Mr In in Chapter Two said he chose foreign companies after he resigned his first job, pursuing labour conditions favourable to employees such as observing legal working hours and not working on Saturdays, he seemed to choose not only practical labour conditions, but also modern middle class white collar work and life style. But only a few people could have this privilege: most middle class people were caught in the dissonance between middle class ideas and their actual living and working conditions until the late 1990s, which led them to be in status inconsistency.

Status inconsistency refers to a situation where an individual has differently valued social statuses at the same time. It can be expressed in different types. For example, in terms of educational background and occupational position, one can claim his or her middle class status while the same person can have lower status in terms of income. For an individual or a family, overlapping value systems can be seen as practical problems in their everyday lives when they experience them in the form of status inconsistency, and for middle class people, this status inconsistency is as strong as their upward social mobility aspirations.

Gender was a major factor which caused status inconsistency in Korea, and it is still the case. The opportunity for Korean women's social mobility is seriously restricted despite their high educational qualifications. OECD Education at Glance 2003 (cited in Kim 2004) shows that the labour market participation rate of Korean women with higher educational qualifications was quite low, which means they are more likely to experience status inconsistency between educational background and occupational status: only 56% of Korean women between at 25 and 64 with university degrees participated in the labour market while 91% of Korean men and 83% of women in other OECD countries at the same ages with the same qualification participated. The report reveals an interesting point that Korean women with higher educational qualifications participated less in the labour market unlike the other OECD countries where the more the women were educated, the higher their labour market participation is. This means that the Korean labour market has low demand for women with higher educational qualifications and at the same time many women are working in low level jobs, which shows women's social status is likely to be

largely determined “by the mere reason of being a woman”. Korean women’s status in the family system is also lower than men’s regardless of their social achievement: although it has been said that women’s status in conjugal families has escalated, when it comes to extended families, women’s status is checked by their husbands’ kin, especially by their mothers-in-law, which is the main reason for their conflicts with in-laws.

According to Yang (1990), most research on status inconsistency shows the result that those who feel status inconsistency are likely to have more liberal attitudes in political terms, or more psychological tension than those who are in status consistency. So it was suggested by Lenski (1956) that “people suffering from status inconsistency will favor political actions and parties directed against higher status groups”.

Status Inconsistency can be used to further explain the phenomenon of why status groups made up of wealthy minorities will tend to be liberal instead of the presumed conservative. In the 1950s and 1960s, American Jews provided a strong anecdotal example: Politically liberal, better educated and more affluent than average, they were still subjected to discrimination in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. However, recent decades give us the counter-example of (a small number) prominent conservative African American intellectuals (Lenski 1956).

The Korean middle class also responded to status inconsistency in a similar way as Jews and later African Americans in the quote above. They were a social group whose social mobility was hindered by the authoritarian political system of the military regimes, as well as the main beneficiary of rapid industrialisation initiated by the same governments. Even though people reach the level by which they are considered to be middle class in terms of educational and occupational achievements and their income, they may not enjoy a middle class life style. When many office workers, who were called at that time in such collective terms as “necktie legion”, participated in demonstrations during the June Democratic movement in 1987, they were trying to redress their status inconsistency in a political and collective way. But after 1987 these middle class people changed their attitude into the conservative way -- individualistic, apolitical, and conformist:

As democracy progressed after the June Democratic Movement of 1987, Korean middle class could enjoy political freedom in addition to economic affluence. As a result enjoying overseas trip and all sorts of leisure activities freely became the established life style of middle class...[but] middle class people had shown very negative attitudes towards the rights of labourers because they were afraid that their economic affluence would be damaged in the process of democratisation. Whereas stumped for democratisation they opposed guaranteeing labour’s three major rights and activating labour movement which should have been part of democratisation.

They were always negative to labour movement because they perceived it as a threat to their vested economic right (Shin 2003: 54-55).

When New Zealand opened its immigration gate to East Asian people in 1991, many Koreans in their late 40s or early 50s came to New Zealand after an early retirement. A man in his early 50s applied for New Zealand permanent residency without a concrete plan for actual immigration because he had heard about the welfare system in New Zealand and had been very interested in it with his retirement shortly ahead. At that time many office workers even in their mid or late 30s in large companies in Korea quit their jobs to join the immigration flow to New Zealand, even though they were supposed to be at the most productive ages in society. This became a social phenomenon in Korea and most Korean media devoted attention to it blaming the bad educational environment, work regimes, and pre-modern practices in all the sectors of society, including companies, for pushing young and professional workers out of their home country. A 1.5 generation man whose parents immigrated in 1991 said that his father who was an investment banker retired in his late 30s in order to immigrate. This early retired man enjoyed a relaxed life which was like “holidays” according to his son. Of course, people who managed to make enough money to retire at this early age were few but it was a dream for most employees in Korea to make enough money to live on without working, to immigrate to countries like Switzerland or New Zealand.

One of the reasons why Korean white collar workers want to leave their job as soon as possible after obtaining some economic capital is related to work regimes in Korea: extremely long hours of work, authoritarian superiors and the pre-modern way of company operation, like familism. Mr In and Mrs Lee’s case in Chapter Two is a typical example of early retirement. In this case, of course, job dissatisfaction is also involved. Mrs Lee got bored with her complicated and busy, but repetitive, job as a nurse. Normally Korean working women, even professional women like nurses, are subjected to gender inequality and often treated as men’s assistants in the workplace. Mr In also got stressed due to his job in the company because it required him to entertain influential people, which seemed to contradict his educational background as an engineer who was taught that “one plus one is two”, and his previous career in the US army where employees were expected to work according to regulations.

Especially for those who experienced and/or participated in the student movement for democratisation in 1980s, this conflict can be more serious: A return migrant couple

who had been teachers in a special high school gave up their secure and well-paid jobs to immigrate in their mid 30s in 1995. The husband, who had been one of the leaders of the student movement at a university, felt frustration at the reality of the education field corrupted by pre-modern practices such as parents' gift money and book suppliers' commissions given to teachers. He tried to correct this situation but often ended up damaging his relationships with his colleagues.

Some participants, singles in particular, left Korea to escape from life courses structured by the society's hierarchical system and to seek alternative opportunities. A single immigrant who had a master's degree continually failed to get a job before immigration in the mid 90s because he graduated from a middle ranking university and had an individualistic personality which was difficult to accept in most Korean companies in the 1990s.

Increased Possibility of Downward Social Mobility

Many Korean middle class people experienced upward social mobility in their own generation, which was the result of educational achievement through institutional education during the rapid industrialisation in the 1970s and 1980s. Although the Korean middle class was not a homogeneous, but a segmented, group in terms of occupation, income and educational background from the beginning of its formation, the gap between subgroups was not perceived as unchallengeable because of the possibility of social mobility in the early stage of capitalist development in the country, and the Korean middle class had not considered downward mobility before the 1990s. People could live a secure middle class life if they managed to get white collar jobs with a university degree, and once they entered middle class circles, they were blessed with secure employment and resulting economic security due to the country's economic success.

But since the 1990s, when Korean society was more influenced by the global capitalist economy, the vulnerability of middle class status has been apparent. From the mid 1990s, globalisation discourse swept through Korean society when the then Korean government initiated a "globalisation policy" as the country's coping strategy for the formation of a neo-liberalised economy. In people's everyday lives, this current of globalisation was experienced as an increasing emphasis on distinctive human capital in the labour market. In the mid 1990s, the Korean government announced that English teaching would be extended to primary schools as an aspect of globalisation policy. It

immediately sparked the boom of “early English education” among Korean middle class parents who had increasing purchasing power thanks to the country’s economic success.

In the labour market, since the 1990s, more and more Korean companies have been using English as an important part of the screening process at job interviews for the sake of selecting employees competent in a globalised world. A report titled “The economics of English” (Jeon and Kim 2006) by an economic research institute, owned by the largest conglomerate in Korea, shows clearly how much money and time Koreans spend on English: It is estimated that each Korean spends on average 15,548 hours studying English for 10 years of formal education from middle school to university and more than 14 trillion won or NZ\$ 17,500,000,000 is spent for private English education alone each year within Korea. The reason for this phenomenon is not because English is a means for international communication: most Koreans have few opportunities to speak English in their everyday lives. It is because English is used as the most important measure to evaluate one’s competency in all sectors of Korean society. Applicants’ scores of internationally recognised English test systems, such as TOEFL or TOEIC, are given a great deal of weight in examinations for employment and evaluation for promotion. According to the same report, more than half of the respondents of a survey said they studied English for employment or promotion and nearly 90% of large companies use employees’ English ability as part of the criteria when deciding remuneration or promotion. Generally this kind of evaluation is applied to most office workers no matter how much their jobs require English.

When a female immigrant in her 50s told me that her family immigrated in 1993 before her husband might have been laid off due to the lack of “pull behind him” in the company, she referred to the vulnerability of one’s class status without distinctive human capital. But these cases were small in number compared to the cases after the IMF when the risk of layoff was a real possibility. After the IMF many middle class people experienced a fall to being low-wage workers.

Many participants who immigrated after the late 1990s pointed to insecure employment or hardship in doing business as the major reason for their leaving Korea. The case of Mr Cho in Chapter Two is a clear example of this and there are many other similar cases. An engineer who worked in a large construction company immigrated with his family in 2002 two years after his company commenced a full scale restructuring. There were some unsuccessful businessmen among the immigrants. A man in his mid 40s had

suffered from difficulties running his car dealership for a few years in the aftermath of the IMF before he immigrated with his family in 2003. During the IMF period large numbers of employees in most companies in Korea were laid off, and in this process the companies used various unfair and even dirty tricks. An immigrant in Christchurch who immigrated in the early 2000s was in charge of lay-offs in a large company. He felt guilty for his actions and thought he would also have the same fate as his laid-off colleagues, which was part of his reason for immigration.

A single immigrant refused his uncle's offer to give him a job in a bank, where his uncle was a branch manager, when he graduated from a local university because he thought it would be boring "to count money all his life". So he went to Australia to study photography. But in the middle of his foundation course the IMF crisis came to Korea and affected the Korean community in Australia as well, where he was earning money for living and study. When he decided to return to Korea to get a job in the field of media or advertisement he was advised from a producer of one of the top advertising agencies in Korea, who was also studying in Australia, that it would be extremely difficult to get such a job unless you had graduated from a top ranking university in Korea and had postgraduate degrees from one of the world's top universities. So he gave up returning to Korea and decided to seek an opportunity to live abroad.

As the Korean economy has been more influenced by neo-liberal global capitalism, the resultant social inequality has become more apparent, and this has led to class segmentation among the Korean middle class. Koo (2007b) argued that after the IMF the Korean middle class divided into three segments: upper middle class, core middle class and marginal middle class. Among these groups, marginal middle class people are those who had experienced downward social mobility after the IMF. This segmentation of the Korean middle class was created by different economic and cultural capital, and has become fixed through different life-styles among class factions.

In this respect, since the IMF consumption for the middle class has a stronger meaning than before as a class privilege marker. As a result of on-going trade liberalisation from the mid 1980s, and the IMF, when Korea lifted almost all protection against imported consumer products, consumption of imported foreign goods increased greatly: Korean society saw enthusiastic, and even competitive, consumption of imported luxury goods so called "*myungpum* (名品)" which have well known brand names such as Luis Vuitton or Prada, and expensive European cars like Mercedes or BMW. Recently, frequenting brunch

restaurants and the facilities in five-star hotels like fitness clubs are considered to be markers of middle class privilege. What we can see through this phenomenon of consumption is, according to Koo (2007a), that the proceeding fragmentation and re-composition process of the [middle] class is determined not only by the changes in economic structure but also by consumption behaviour among the emerging social class. In Bourdieu's terms, this is a symbolic struggle, by this emerging upper middle class, over the definition of cultural legitimacy and a class reproduction strategy to mark a social boundary.

Child Education

Traditionally education was almost the only route to upward social mobility for Korean people, and educating their children up to university level was an ultimate life purpose for many Korean parents because a university degree was identified as "a qualification" for middle class membership before the IMF. But university education in Korea was a big financial burden even for middle class families because the expense of tertiary education is totally the recipient's responsibility. In this context, for those who left Korea for purposes of child education during the early and mid 1990s, "education" means guaranteed and affordable university education. For these parents, an opportunity for nearly-free university education for their children was a very attractive option. A man in his 40s came to New Zealand in 1990 with his wife and four children because he did not think he could give his four children tertiary education in Korea with his income. For a similar reason, a couple immigrated to New Zealand in the early 90s after the wife gave birth to twins as their third and fourth children.

But university graduation no longer guaranteed [middle class] jobs after the IMF. In fact the inflation of qualifications had already started before the IMF. Most Korean middle class people who achieved a certain level of economic success had been eager to change their economic capital into cultural capital in the next generation for "transverse mobility" (Jenkins 1992: 140) since the 1980s, and competition over university education accelerated. In an expanding economy these university graduates had no difficulty finding jobs, but amid a socio-economic crisis, they had to watch their educational qualification devalued. According to a newspaper report (Baek 2001), 71.5% of the graduates from universities located in Seoul Metropolitan area found jobs in 1996, but the rate of employed among the graduates from the same universities decreased to 54.5% in 1998, and maintained 50% or more until 2000.

As a result, differentiation between universities greatly widened, and competition among parents to send their children to higher ranking universities became fiercer. Parents move house to send their children to well-known private institutions or cram schools and spend enormous amounts of money for private education for their children, which resulted in a huge private education market worth ten billion dollars a year. According to Koo (2007a:11), although educational zeal among Korean parents “is not a new phenomenon, recent years have witnessed significant changes in the field of educational competition...over the years, social mobility through education has become more restricted, and education is functioning as a mechanism for class reproduction rather than social mobility”. Seoul National University, the most prestigious university in Korea, revealed family income levels of the 2007 entrants where the students from the households of the top 20% in income level, counted 61.4% of all 1,463 students in the sample group while only 8% were from the households of the bottom 20%.

This increasing competition in the educational field caused anxiety about status reproduction among middle class families because “the possibilities of the social reproduction of the middle class family are no longer perceived as certain as they perhaps once were” (Vincent and Ball 2007: 1074). A man in his mid 30s, who was an office worker in the largest bank in Korea, quit his job in 2003 to immigrate with his wife and son who was one year old at that time. His first reason for immigration was that he became sceptical about whether he could continue to work in his job until his son finished university, as he had gone through the IMF crisis. Moreover, he worried whether they could give their children the same level of education opportunities as their middle class neighbours most of whom lived in affluent middle class families and had experienced various kind of private education, because he and his wife, who were from a rural area and the outskirts of Seoul respectively, had never had private education.

Middle class families who have faced the prospect of declining fortunes have adopted a cultural logic of child rearing which stresses the concerted cultivation of children (Tap 2007). Vincent and Ball (2007) examine middle class status reproduction strategies and anxiety, looking at some English middle class parents enrolling their under-five children in various “enrichment” activities such as music, sport or foreign language classes. The market offers versions of good and necessary parenting, and the buying-in of expertise is one of the more obvious ways in which cultural capital is linked to economic capital. The enrichment activities have two purposes: to ensure that children develop

physical, social and intellectual skills which will leave them in a state of learning readiness for future success at school; and to formulate the beginnings of a CV for the child to increase their attractiveness in a competitive school market. The researchers concluded that “it is an effort of endless responsibility, fuelled by the market, provoked by the state and driven by social competition in a context of social and technological risk” (Vincent and Ball 2007:1074).

It is under these circumstances that almost all Korean parents eagerly participate in their children’s private education, even beyond their economic capacity. In this situation, some middle class parents, whose children are not excellent in school performance, seek alternative educational opportunities for their children as they are not sure if private education will guarantee their children’s entrance to top ranking universities. An international student mother recognised that her son was not exceptionally intelligent but simply an average child. She decided to educate her son abroad which her husband could afford:

We do not have enough money to leave for our son and this [education in an English speaking country] is the only thing that we can give him for his future life. If we as parents support our son when we can afford it, and he can take this opportunity, I think that would guarantee his future success...I think parents can shape children’s future career. The world is changing. Professions such as medical doctors, lawyers or teachers are no longer considered to be promising. ...In Korea, there are many students who get good grades at school but I do not think my son is among them and do not really want my son to be good at studying that much... I rather want him to experience the things that I could not...I would like him to be a cool guy rather than a smart one.

Although her remarks about changing labour market demands in the future can be interpreted as the justification of her decision, they exactly reflect some Korean middle class people’s logic in wanting to escape the local education system which was considered to be failing in bringing children’s skills up to competitive “global” standards. Bourdieu pointed out that one gets the best return on invested cultural capital in the fluctuations of the market in academic qualifications “by knowing the right moment to pull out of devalued disciplines and careers and to switch into those with a future rather than clinging onto scholastic values which secured the highest profits in an earlier state of the market” (1984: 142). The immigrant who ran a car dealership was very shocked when he saw even some large and sound companies bankrupt and merged by multi-national companies during the IMF crisis, and at that point he felt his children needed global standard education in order to survive in a society of the future.

If education functions as a mechanism for class reproduction after the IMF, as I mentioned earlier, educational success in Korea can be largely guaranteed by a good command of the English language. For students in Korea, English competency can determine their future social status: English is given the highest credits, together with mathematics, for students' school records and in the university entrance exam, but it is one of the most time consuming and difficult subjects to obtain a good mark in exams with only a hasty preparation. So if children can "master" English they can save a lot of time for the study of other subjects, and it could also help them get high scores in the university entrance exam (CAT: College Aptitude Test) which allows them to enter top ranking universities. Graduating from high ranking universities is directly related to economic success and social status in Korea. A survey (cited in Im 2007) shows that over 40% of executives in Korea's top 30 companies, ranked in terms of the total sales, graduated from one of the top five universities which are generally ranked by entrants' average CAT scores, and about a third of them graduated from Seoul National University, the highest ranking university in Korea. A participant who came to New Zealand as an exchange professor told me of his experience of discrimination against the graduates from local universities which are generally ranked much lower:

In our country one's social status is already determined, 60% to 70% by the level of university he or she can go with their CAT scores or their internal high school grades. It's the social structure in Korea and I agree...those who graduated from local universities can become professors at lower tier universities at best. Do you think those who graduated from local universities can become professors at Seoul National University in this social structure? It is impossible...There is a joke among professors [who graduated from local universities] that a diploma from local universities or lower ranking ones is a slavery document...Parents must send their children to top ranking universities at any cost. That's the duty of parents. Why did I send my children to a foreign country even in their early age? I know its sorrow because I myself had graduated from a local university.

In this regard, when the participants say they sent their children abroad to make them "master English" for one or two, even three years, it does not mean that they wanted them to speak English as fluently as native speakers. Rather, it means that their children should get enough English skills to have a head start on other students at school. This is clear in the quote from Mrs Han in Chapter Two who moved to *Gangnam* district³¹ after returning

³¹ It is located in the southeast of Seoul. According to the government's south of Han River development policy, this area has been constructed as a planned city since the 1970s and became one of the most affluent areas of Seoul. The residents in the area, many of whom are upper or upper-middle class people, made this area a privileged school zone with 'good' schools and 'high

from New Zealand where her two sons had studied for two years. She implies an educational differentiation through devaluation of the local education system:

There was no child who could compete with my son in Ilsan in terms of English since he had studied English in an English speaking country.(all laugh) I mean there were only a few. Even though there were many children who had studied abroad in Ilsan, one of the more richer suburbs where many upper middle class people live, my son had only a few class mates who could speak English as well as him. But here [*Gangnam*] most children in his age are at a similar level regardless of whether they have studied abroad or not.

Combined with devaluation of the local education system, children's English acquisition through international education is treated as instrumental for the parents' [or children's own] strategy to make their children distinctive even before they enter university. In Korea for high achievers at middle school, there are several foreign language or science high schools and, for the talented, there is a special high school all of which have classes taught only in English. These schools are regarded as a gate-way to high ranking universities in the US as well as in Korea. In these circumstances some parents make the choice of sending their children for early study abroad in order, eventually, to be able to send their children to one of these special high schools. Those children able to master senior school level English while they are still at primary school, have a head start at middle school where they have to have a good school record in order to go to special high schools.

In the Korean education system where most high school students compete with each other for the sole purpose of entering higher ranking universities, severe competition is unavoidable. This highly competitive system has produced many "losers", and there are few alternatives for these losers who are generally considered as failures in life, both symbolically and practically. In this context, to send their children to study abroad so that they avoid the excessively competitive university entrance exam has been an established practice among some well-off families in Korea. A father, who was a CEO of an IT venture company, decided to send his son and daughter to study abroad with their mother in 2001 because he felt his son who was 10 at that time did not fit in such a competitive education environment as Seoul. He and his wife were not sure whether they could give their children as good a private education as their neighbours. An immigrant guessed that

level' private coaching institutions. So many Korean parents who live in other areas want to move to *Gangnam* for their children, which is similar to the movement to 'grammar zone' in New Zealand, but far stronger in intensity.

his daughter-in-law came to New Zealand to enter university probably because she failed university entrance in Korea. He supposed she had decided to get a university degree in an English speaking country, rather than going to any of the lower ranking universities in Korea or taking the university entrance exam again.

There are few alternatives for those who are ill-adapted to Korea's formal education system, either. An immigrant who came to New Zealand as an international student mother had decided to leave Korea for her two daughters when they experienced difficulties at school. The elder daughter suffered from school violence when she entered high school and the younger one had problems in her relationship with her teacher at middle school due to her "very strong and creative personality".

Unlike these two girls who were accompanied by their mother, many secondary school students go out alone. Two high school students went through similar experiences to come to New Zealand. One of these students experienced school violence when he was in the first grade at middle school in Korea, so his parents sent him to an alternative school in Korea and then to the Philippines. After nine months in the Philippines, he came to New Zealand. After he came to New Zealand, another student, a friend of his from the alternative school in Korea, followed him. This student's mother had been informed about New Zealand by the mother of the former student. When I heard about them, the latter student was awaiting the decision as to his punishment from his New Zealand school for smoking, fighting and other "naughty" behaviour. In Korea, he caused many problems while his elder brother was a model student. His mother sent him to the same alternative school as the former student, and then to China. But his mother found her son's situation became worse and so she sent him to New Zealand.

Finally, for the Korean parents whose children are disabled, their children's disability is a very serious reason to make them consider leaving Korea because the disabled and their family members are stigmatised, there are few institutions specialised in educating disabled children, and special education for the disabled was expensive until the early and mid 1990s in Korea. One of the participants came to New Zealand with her family in the late 1970s when there were only about 60 Koreans there. One of the reasons this family left Korea was the country's low standard of living. But this family had a bigger reason for leaving: the youngest daughter was hearing-impaired.

Even though Korea's social security system, including welfare for the disabled, was incomparably improved by the 1990s from the 1970s and 1980s, it is still far behind its hugely successful economic development. Moreover, public perception of the disabled is slow to change: discrimination against the disabled in educational or employment settings is still to be improved. For this reason, the parents of many disabled children in Korea were still among possible migrants even in the 2000s. A Christian minister who runs a counselling centre in Auckland gave me an example:

In the early 2000s I found that there were many Korean parents whose children were disabled physically or mentally....The first child whom I took care of [had severe learning disability]...His parents brought him to New Zealand because they could not educate him in the Korean education system. Since they came to New Zealand...the parents had patiently educated the child for a long time. In the end he succeeded in going to university although he could not get into to Auckland University and he was two or three years behind.

Decision Making on Transnational Migration³²

Decision Making on a Whim

All the "problems" discussed above are structural problems of Korean society that affect most Koreans. Therefore, it is hard to say that one of these problems pushed a particular person or family out of Korea, although many participants gave me examples of the problems that I discussed in the earlier section as the reasons for their leaving Korea. Rather, the proportion of emigrants in the total population is still small in Korea. Furthermore, these responses from participants were collected after they left Korea, which means reasons might be given to justify their decision.

As I got to know more and more immigrants and international student family members personally I found, during my fieldwork, that there were as many reasons for leaving Korea as the number of the immigrants. Moreover, some participants were unwilling to talk about their personal reasons for leaving Korea while others were unable to explain their reasons for migration even to themselves:

My decision to immigrate was completely a personal one. (A male immigrant in his late 40s).³³

³² I adopted Lewellen's terms (2002) as I cited in Chapter One to differentiate agents in international movement, but I redefined those terms reflecting agents' different status in New Zealand immigration law. First, "international migrant" refers to both immigrants and international students and their accompanying family members while "immigrant" refers to people who have permanent residency or other types of long term residency and intend to get permanent residency. "Transnational migrant" is used when emphasising international migrants' transnational practices.

To be honest, I had no motives. I came to New Zealand without any thought, which no one believed...I still don't know why I immigrated. (Mr In).

What was noticeable in participants' decision making was its serendipitous quality. For most of the participants, decision making for international migration was not made through complicated step by step procedures or with careful consideration of the pros and cons. Rather, practical decision making might be based on a whim at certain points in their lives.

This contingent character of decision making appeared even at the application stage of permanent residency. When a boom of application-for-New Zealand permanent residency swept Korean society, between the year 1992, when the immigration law was amended, and September of 1995, when immigration was substantially restricted, immigration to New Zealand had become a prevailing fad. "Emigration seminars" were held nearly every day. Fifty to three hundred emigration applicants would show up [at these seminars and] emigration grew to be a frequently discussed topic of conversation among job holders in their 30s to 40s. They simply applied for it while it was easy for the majority to "win" and when "everybody was getting one", figuring they could move abroad later on when the circumstances and opportunities allowed them to.³⁴ For example, a participant who got New Zealand permanent residency in 1994 in preparation for his retirement, decided to carry out his alternative plan of immigration right after he had to quit his job a year later.

Many participants, who immigrated after 1995 when the boom finished, also decided to leave Korea suddenly at a critical point, or through certain critical incidents in their lives and the decision to migrate was made very quickly. The former car dealership owner who came to New Zealand for his two children's global education had visited New Zealand for a week to attend his brother-in-law's wedding in 2003 before moving here with his family that same year. He had never considered immigration before but when he returned to Korea and engaged in his stressful business again after spending a relaxed week in New Zealand, he often found himself missing that relaxed feeling. A few months later he found himself preparing for immigration. His wife who had been a middle school teacher for 17 years had to quit her job in order to immigrate. Another example is that of an international

³³ Although even 'personal' decisions are socially patterned, his motivation remains unclassifiable unless he is willing to elaborate at a later time.

³⁴ In my understanding this was the easiest opportunity in the history for Koreans to get permanent residency in a foreign country.

student mother who came to New Zealand with her three children two weeks after she happened to have a chat, at a Japanese airport, with a New Zealand teacher who was taking a group of students on an overseas trip. She and her eldest son were touched by the students and teacher who were behaving like friends.

For my participants, their previous overseas experience was one of the most important factors which influenced this quick decision on international migration. As Korea’s international trade and exchange has been increasing since the 1970s and the Korean government lifted the restriction on overseas travel in 1989, the opportunity to go abroad was expanded to middle class people and they started participating in overseas travel in various forms. Many university students went abroad for backpacking or short-term language training, and from the mid 1990s overseas travel for holidays became common practice among Korean middle class families in addition to increased business travel by Korean office workers.

Table3.5 The number of Korean overseas travellers (Korea Tourism Organisation 2008)

	1988	1989	1997	1998	2005
Departures (Tourists)	725,176 (NA)	1,213,112 (NA)	4,858,135 (2,032,537)	3,026,715 (602,661)	9,500,982 (5,522,313)

Through these experiences many Koreans could reduce their fears of living in foreign countries where they had no one whom they knew. A female participant had worked for two years as a volunteer teacher in a school for the children of Korean missionaries in the Philippines before her marriage. She had never considered living abroad before but while working in Philippines she experienced a totally new life – “free and easy”. As a result, she easily agreed with her fiancé when he asked her if she would like to go to New Zealand with him after they married.

Sometimes overseas experience can directly influence a person’s immigration decision by opening up the possibility of different ways of life, as a participant who had travelled Europe for two months before deciding his immigration pointed out:

It seems common that Korean immigrants decided to leave Korea after travelling somewhere abroad and realising that their way of living was not the only one.

Similarly, when a mother of three international students was recommended by her daughter’s private piano teacher to educate her “very talented” daughter in the US before

they came to New Zealand, she hesitated to do that because she “was afraid of living in a foreign country without any previous experience and any relatives”. But she changed her mind after she went to Europe on a trip with her daughter:

There were amazing and surprising ways of the new world! It was literally “wonderful” in English. (laugh) It made me realise that I had lived in such a small yard. I came to think that I should be more receptive to new cultures and that I should provide my children with more opportunities in a wider world.

But these kinds of short-term overseas experiences could be superficial and so mislead some potential immigrants, giving them a “rosy dream” about living abroad. A participant said that when he prepared for immigration, he thought immigration would not be that different from his one-year language training in Australia which was funded by his company. It was only after immigration that he found it was not such a pleasant experience as short term English training in a foreign country backed by a secure source of income. In the interview with me in 2006, the participant, who immigrated after a short visit to New Zealand for his brother-in-law’s wedding, admitted that his decision to immigrate was not the best one among the many options that he could have chosen to escape his hectic life style.

I could have enjoyed the same kind of relaxed life style through living a rural life in Korea, but I misjudged that I could find such relaxed life only in New Zealand.

But once immigration enters their mind as a solution to the problems they faced in their lives, some people tend to be seized by the idea that they want to immigrate. The participant for whom New Zealand was recommended for his study by an agency, expressed the moment of decision rather dramatically:

At the moment when I heard the word New Zealand I felt something like a light flashing in my heart. Because, when I was a middle school boy...I used to play a game to find places on the world map with my friends in class. One day while I was playing the game I came across New Zealand. When I saw an English speaking country located in the Southern Pacific far from the other continents on the map...I must’ve had a dream of living there once in my life as a boy at puberty. When I heard the word New Zealand again, I felt a fire in my heart which must’ve been lying dormant from the time I had dreamt of New Zealand suddenly burning and I could not think of anything else except that I needed go there.

This kind of compulsion for immigration is quite common and it is called “immigration sickness (*iminbyung*)” among Korean immigrants. Korean middle class people’s self-confidence that had they achieved a certain level of social status by themselves, coupled with their “rosy dream” about life in an advanced foreign country despite insufficient and

inaccurate information about it, seems to be involved in this phenomenon. But still, a question is raised regarding the participants' international migration decision: who chose New Zealand as their destination?

Being Connected to and Activating Transnational Networks

While some people conceived the idea to immigrate after a short visit to New Zealand to visit their relatives or friends, others made the decision for immigration after a temporary stay in New Zealand. A single woman left Korea in 2000 after three years working as a reporter in a small newspaper. She was going to take a rest from her busy and difficult job for a short time, while having an overseas experience. But soon after arriving in New Zealand she decided to apply for permanent residency because she “liked this country”.

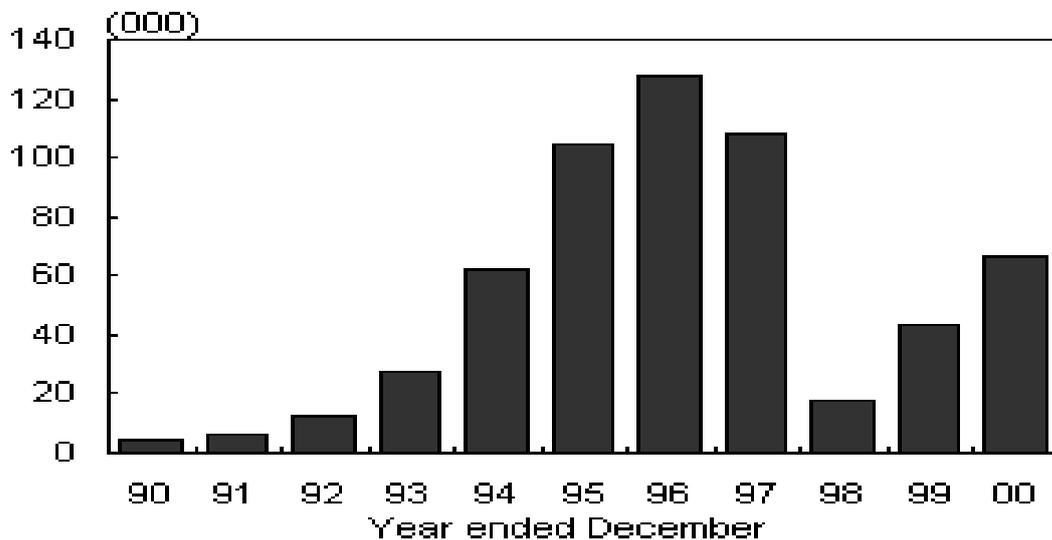


Figure 3.2 Visitors from Korea 1990-2000 (Statistics New Zealand 2001)

In 2000 there were 66,581 visitors like her from Korea and among them 47,048 were holiday visitors and 11,368 friends / relatives visitors. The number of Korean visitors to New Zealand is closely related to the rise and fall of the Korean community in New Zealand as well as the economic situation in Korea. From 1992, the next year the New Zealand government changed its immigration policy to receive immigrants from Korea, to 1995 when immigrants from Korea reached its peak, the numbers of Korean visitors doubled every year. From 1995 until 1997, just before the IMF crisis in Korea, the numbers reached over 100,000 each year, and most of them were holiday visitors and friends / relative visitors. Although the number of visitors dropped sharply to under 2000

in 1998 right after the IMF, it recovered to 100,000 in 2002, and since then remains at 100,000 every year as shown in Figure 3.2. Since mass immigration from Korea to New Zealand started in 1991, more than a million Koreans have visited New Zealand, apart from international students and permanent or long-term migrants.

The fact that the number of Korean visitors, holiday visitors in particular, has been partly influenced by the situation in the Korean community in New Zealand shows that visitors have been attracted by activities in the community. In fact travel agents were one of the main businesses in the Korean community in Auckland before the IMF. Visitors became the main customers of other related businesses in the community such as Korean restaurants, souvenir or health food shops. Many immigrants could also make informal income by working as unregistered tour guides for these visitors. Increasing visitors from Korea widened related business opportunities, and widened business opportunities led the business people to attract more tourists from Korea.

In the same way immigration and/or international education agencies both in Korea and in the Korean community in New Zealand actively recruited immigrants and international students, and it was these agencies that provided information about New Zealand as a destination for prospective Korean international migrants. An immigrant who was looking for a country to pursue his studies in 1995 was also informed by an agency that immigration to New Zealand would be a much better option for study in terms of cost. And an international student came to New Zealand to study at high school in 1992 with his mother who had learned about the country through a “seminar for international study” held in Korea. As the number of Koreans in New Zealand increased, the media’s representation of New Zealand also increased and it became a source of information and a rosy dream at the same time. From the mid 1990s New Zealand was often introduced by the Korean media as a “welfare state” with a clean, natural environment and some Korean immigrants sought such a “high quality of life”.

These continued contacts and social network development between migrants and non-migrants created transnational networks between the sending and receiving countries. Increasing cross-border interpersonal connections through kinship / friendship or transnational agents built a public social sphere where the circulation of resources between the home and host country occurs, while the circulation does not necessarily give rise to a transnational sphere of action. That is, in this social space, people do not necessarily need to actively participate in transnational practices to stay connected to both home and host

countries. The individual who never migrated also inhabits a transnational social space by living in a socio-cultural context influenced by the cross-border movement through the social space and being familiar with the transnational imagination.

As Korea has a quite long history of emigration, it has built transnational networks among many countries where Korean immigrants live, such as the US, Canada, Australia, Germany or Japan. Korean immigration to New Zealand created another transnational network between the two countries, and this connection makes New Zealand a possible country of immigration for other Koreans. Actually until the early 1990s New Zealand was “an unknown country” to most Koreans. A woman with a university degree, who immigrated with her husband and children in her late 30s in 1993, had so little idea about New Zealand that she confused it with The Netherlands until she prepared for immigration: her brother who was a university professor wondered if The Netherlands received immigrants [from Korea] when she told him they would emigrate there.

Some participants got to know about New Zealand as a destination for immigration or study while they were trying to go to other countries like Canada or Australia. An international student mother became aware that New Zealand was also an English speaking country while she was looking for alternatives after her plan to go to Canada failed. Other participants considered all English speaking countries³⁵ and compared them -- America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. These participants chose New Zealand for similar reasons: accessibility, favourable exchange rate, safety, the image of a non-discriminatory country, and/or weather. America was very hard to immigrate to legally, or as part of labour migration, and for international students it was thought to be unsafe and too expensive. Australia was excluded by most participants because of their images of its “White Australia policy” which most Koreans had learned at school in the 70s and 80s. Some participants also experienced it in person when they were in Australia. Canada did not fit because of cold weather in winter and a high exchange rate. Therefore, many participants chose New Zealand because it is an English speaking country, safe to live in and low cost. So it looked like a very rational decision but, as some participants said, it was likely to be based on an impression or image based on inaccurate information on the Internet and limited personal experience, as related by a participant, who had chosen New Zealand because he had an image of New Zealand as a non-discriminatory country:

³⁵ An immigrant said he considered Haiti as well because he said it is also an English speaking country.

It was said that New Zealand is an English speaking country and has good climate, and there was a common misconception that it is a very rational country, with gentle people, free from racial discrimination, and respectful to the indigenous Māori people because the country was founded by English middle class immigrants, which isn't all that true it turns out (laugh). I was deceived by the catch phrase – “New Zealand is the last paradise on Earth”, I think deceived is the right expression, and that is why I came here.

Although the image of a “safe country” has attracted many Korean primary school students to New Zealand, more important factors which influenced the decision-making for Korean immigrants seemed accessibility and, for international students, a low exchange rate, judging from the fact that the number of immigrants and international students fluctuates according to the changes in immigration policy of New Zealand and the exchange rate of the New Zealand dollar:

Apparently less international students went there when we went than in 2001 and 2002 when I heard huge numbers of Korean students flooded in because the New Zealand dollar was very cheap at that time (Mrs Han).³⁶

I think English is a habit. In New Zealand you can live and study up to three years with the amount of money needed to do the same in the US for one year.³⁷

The personal transnational networks between Koreans in both countries are the most important source of information and immigration decision making. Some participants have “activated” this kind of transnational network in the process of information gathering (Kelly and Lusia 2006: 841). These social connections did not have to be strong: they were not only between family members, relatives or friends but also “the one who go to the same church as my mother-in-law’s sister” or “the mother’s sister of my neighbour in my apartment building”. These would be sufficient to depend upon. As a Christian minister in the Korean community in Hamilton says, it is because “Koreans seem to have a kind of fear for living in a foreign country where there is no one they know, so they would rather go to the country where there is anyone they know”.³⁸

³⁶ NZ\$1 was KRW573 in 2001, KRW562 in 2002 and KRW800 in late 2003.

³⁷ As this mother pointed out, because many Korean international student families chose New Zealand because of a low exchange rate against the Korean won, New Zealand is perceived as a second tier destination compared to the US or Canada. Another international student mother meant the same thing when she said that most people coming to New Zealand are from local cities.

³⁸ Despite this tendency, some women seem to avoid the country where their in-laws live when they choose their destination. Two of the women participants -- one is an immigrant and the other is an international student mother -- did not go to Australia, the US or Canada because their sisters-in-law lived in those countries.

The structural pressures from Korean society, the socio-economic situation and their middle class background, plus their previous overseas experiences and transnational networks, afforded some Korean middle class people the possibility of considering international migration. The possibility would be activated at certain critical points, or by certain critical incidents, in these people's lives. At such times the decision on migration could be made very quickly. It is in this context that they decided on international migration as a whim.

Decision Makers: International Migration as Class and/or Gendered Projects

I often hear it said that in many middle class immigrant families it is the wives or mothers who are “behind the families’ immigration decision’ as the actual decision makers seeking an opportunity “to move away from a tradition of ‘women at home with mother-in-law’”. Instead, they become “modern mothers”, autonomous, and potentially in paid employment themselves. But for the immigrant families in this study, husbands and wives almost equally shared the responsibility for their immigration decision making, whether the men decided on immigration first or whether the women did, there seemed no serious conflict or disagreement between the spouses around this decision. For the participants in this study, immigration seemed to be a class project rather than a gender one. Even when women suggested an immigration plan first, it was for their class status or the middle class life style. A working mother of two daughters applied for PR as a principal applicant. She decided on immigration to become a fulltime housewife and mother in order to dedicate herself to child education despite her secure, high-paid job in a public company. Another woman participant suggested immigration to her husband after she had to endure more than two years of separation from him while he worked on an overseas construction site.

The class nature of immigration, where Korean middle class families concentrate their resources on their immediate family members to maintain and reproduce their class status, often causes a conflict with the participants’ family obligations or a sense of filial piety to their old parents. For the participants, who have other siblings to support their parents or have many brothers and sisters, immigration does not matter in this way. A participant who has a sister and brother was even encouraged by his father who thought there should be at least one of his children abroad “just in case”. But even though, nowadays, in Korea there are many elderly couples who live on their own for the participants who are the eldest or only son, their immigration might be seen as avoiding their responsibility to support their parents. A participant, who was the eldest son, had to

tell his old mother that he would come back in 10 years when he left Korea. This criticism would most often fall on the women. When a woman agreed with her husband's immigration decision she was concerned that her mother-in-law might think she "pressed for her husband to immigrate". So the couple told their mother that they would be away just for three years on overseas service for the company, giving her a sum of money when they left Korea.

But the most important consideration for immigrants might be to secure their livelihood in foreign countries. As it has become known that it is difficult to find employment opportunities in New Zealand, some Koreans arranged for certain complementary income sources such as rent, like Mr Cho and his wife in Chapter Two. Others continue to run their businesses in Korea after immigration or live in New Zealand on their pension from Korea.

For some participants, the consideration of livelihood after immigration was not the first priority, at least in the course of application. When he prepared to move, a participant thought he "should manage to find something to do in the paradise on earth" where he heard, "even cleaning was recognised as a decent job", so he was not concerned about what to do for a living. At the time of the application, his only interest was to have more time for his child, which he did not have in Korea because of his long hours of work in a bank. But in most cases, some strategies for living in a foreign country were devised before moving. Some participants learned such skills in Korea as hair cutting or welding which they believed would help them find a regular job in New Zealand, or run their own shop, and which did not have a high demand for English. This strategy is not based on specific knowledge about the New Zealand labour market but on indirect experiences from early Korean immigrants to the US, Canada or Australia, where many Korean middle class people adjusted themselves to the needs of the labour market. There were some participants who planned to do "the similar work" as they did in Korea, with extra training for more skills: an immigrant, who was a graphic designer, learned glass art and picture frame making in Korea with a plan to run his own shop in New Zealand. But in any case, these people seemed to have the same optimism as the participant who thought there must be some way to make a living in "the paradise on earth".

In terms of information gathering for their prospective jobs, most participants depended on the Internet, their personal transnational network or immigration agencies.

But as a Korean Christian minister in Auckland said, this information is inaccurate or, at best, biased:

It seems to me that they had inaccurate information whether they got it from their personal transnational networks or from immigration agencies in Korea. Most people believed it without any verification...they immigrated based on information they had heard from those around them. I am almost 99% sure about it. But the information was not accurate as the advice were given by immigrants who themselves were not fully adapted into the New Zealand society.

For this reason the first job that new comers get is likely to be the same as that of people who they have contacted during their application process, which will be explained in Chapter Five in detail. A pre-immigration tour provided by immigration agencies in Korea was also a chance for prospective immigrants to look at the job/business prospects in New Zealand. In fact it was quite helpful for a participant to decide on his job in New Zealand. According to his 10 page “immigration plan”, documented using Power Point, during four days and three nights he looked around more than 10 small businesses in Auckland city and he found a suitable dairy shop (small grocery store). But a trip of less than a week might not be long enough for many Koreans to find a job in a new country. The immigrants’ decisions to take on jobs based on inaccurate, or insufficient, information would be one reason for their frequent job changes during their time in New Zealand.

Unlike in the immigrant families, it was women who initially suggested the plan to go abroad in the cases of international student family participants.³⁹ In fact, some fathers might have had plans for their children to be sent abroad to be educated someday, but the decision-making for early study abroad was done mostly by mothers. It should be noted that commitment to child education is gender specific⁴⁰ as well as class specific: “intensive or total mothering...requires a heavy investment of the mother’s time, energy, money and emotional commitment” (Vincent and Ball 2007: 1069). For mothers in Korea, educating--teaching and disciplining--children has been their prime responsibility, because of which women may be excused from other roles at home such as that of wife or daughter-in-law. These mothers’ efforts for their children’s education show how the notion of “labour” is culturally constructed. For example, Mrs Seon in Chapter Two could not sleep and sat beside her son who was studying until late at night. By staying awake while her son was

³⁹ A participant who was an exchange professor was the exception. It is almost a custom among Korean professors to leave their wives and children for one or two years when they have an exchange scholarship.

⁴⁰ Although nowadays more and more Korean fathers participate in their children’s education, it is mainly mothers who educate and take care of children in practical ways.

studying, Mrs Seon, who did not need to have a paid job or to spend much time in household chores, was doing a major job as an upper middle class housewife. She was participating in her son's struggle not only in a practical way, by helping or overseeing her son, but also in a symbolic way. Moreover, these efforts are often praised as self-sacrifice and evoke emotional responses associated with maternal affection in society. Parents, mothers in particular, who succeed in child education, that is, succeed in sending their children to top ranking universities, are considered successful people. It is in this context that many middle class mothers are able to leave Korea in spite of family separation, to escape from various difficulties they face using the rationale of their children's education:

From a common-sense point of view it doesn't make sense that they came to a foreign country to educate a knee high child. If their children had been really excelling in studies and they had really wanted to give them good education opportunities, they would have gone to the US. Low exchange rate is probably just an excuse. The accompanying mothers do nothing special for their children's education except for dropping them off and picking them up at school. I think most international student mothers came here as a way out of their domestic spousal problems. These couples are practically in separation and they are using the child's education as an excuse. (A female immigrant who used to be an international student mother in her mid 40s).

One of the main criticisms of early study abroad in Korea focuses on family separation. Some scholars argue that it is the case of "the well-off upper middle class families who are eager to give a better opportunity to their children at the cost of their conjugal relationship" (Cho 2004). The families in Korea who have separated for the purposes of child education, known as the "geese family", are considered as "a by-product of the syndrome of early study abroad" (Cho 2006). It is, of course, true for some families but not for all. For the women, the converse may be true. The structural problems of Korean families were given as the reason for some women seeking education for their children in New Zealand. An international student mother, who left Korea with her seven year old son, had experienced conflict with in-laws and had spousal trouble before she left in 2003. She was very displeased with her in-laws on whom she and her husband had to spend a large part of their income. She "thought no one could take away money invested in child education" so she persuaded her husband and was able to come. Moreover, her husband "is a very job-oriented and outgoing person. He often returns home very late under the excuse of business and has little time for the kid". She "felt like she was just a housemaid when she saw him drunk for 360 days in a year when he came back home".

Although the divorce rate is rapidly increasing in Korea at present, divorce is still a stigmatising experience for family members, especially for women and children. So most Korean couples try to avoid the legal resolution even if they are in dissatisfying marriages. In this context children's study abroad can be a good excuse for *de facto* separation for some women. An international student mother left Korea with her six year old son in 2002. Her husband was having difficulties in his business and, before she left the country, the couple used to have frequent arguments because of finances. So, according to this mother, her husband suggested she go abroad with their son and stay there studying English until he solved the problems. Women's conflict with in-laws, spousal conflict, women's dual responsibility, and spousal disputes and separation because of financial problems are well known structural problems in Korean families. For the women involved, accompanying their children to study abroad is the best way to escape the problems whilst simultaneously avoiding cultural or ethical criticism.

Not only the women having spousal trouble, but also some happily married women in Korea, can become prospective geese mothers when they are expected to prioritise their roles as mothers and daughters-in-law at the expense of their roles as working people. In this respect escape from women's dual responsibility is an important reason in their decision on children's early study abroad. An international student mother took advantage of the early study abroad boom in Korea when she left the country with her 10 year old son in 2001 to "get some rest" for just one year:

Educating my child can be one reason why I came here but to be honest, the true reason is, in Korea I kept working after marriage. Therefore it was hard for me. So I wanted to get some rest. Just when I was thinking of that, and there was an early study abroad boom, my child reached the adequate age. I took advantage of this and so I came here with a plan to stay for about a year. As a matter of fact...[My husband] did not ask me to work...I found that I could not bear the life as a fulltime housewife...But it was still hard for me to take care of my baby and to do every job as a daughter-in-law while I was working.

At first, her husband was as reluctant as most geese fathers in this study, some of whom objected to their wives' suggestions. So she negotiated with her husband promising that she would return in one year and it would be the last time. Some women in the research persuaded their husbands to agree to a longer period:

I kept on persuading my husband for over a year that we needed to invest in our son's future while we could afford it.

As a result of lengthy persuasion and negotiation, reluctantly at first, the husbands decided to send their children and wives abroad. But some husbands quickly changed their attitude in the course of preparation after receiving positive information from the people around them about study abroad, and negative information about education in Korea.

The parents give careful consideration to when, and for how long, it is proper for early study abroad to be undertaken. It is not just for their children's foreign language acquisition and maintenance without the risk of loss of their mother tongue, but it is also for their children's advanced school entrance. In fact there is a consensus among Korean international student parents about the best time for early study abroad. In Korea, the years between the third grade in primary school (9 year-old level), at the earliest, and the first grade in junior high school (13 year-old level), at the latest, is considered to be the most suitable age-span in which to "master" English without interruption of a child's future studies.

Two years of overseas study is considered by parents to be the best option, because that period of time would be bearable for them to live without their spouses whilst their children are studying. Participants believe that education at secondary level in a foreign country means that the students will have to go to university in that country, as they will not qualify for entrance to a top Korean university. This also means that they will not be able to build social networks based on high school and university alumni in Korea and as a result, this may limit their chances of "success" in society:

I thought it would be better for my children to attend high schools in Korea because I know that the high school alumni are very important in men's social lives in Korea. And you are always considered a foreigner no matter how long you lived in a foreign country. I don't like that. My children need to get used to Korean sentiments because they are Koreans. Therefore I thought it didn't matter for my children to attend middle school abroad but they had to go to high school in Korea. For this reason, I suggested my children to go to a foreign language high school after graduating from middle school abroad.

Some children in the participant families asked their parents to send them abroad. Mrs Seon's case was the only one in the study in which the child wanted to go abroad to study because he saw that many of his friends did. But it is not difficult to find similar cases in the community. A college school girl who had been studying in New Zealand for four years had also asked her parents to send her abroad. She had wanted this because she had cousins in the US and New Zealand.

At first, some parents send their children alone, although an increasing number of mothers accompany their children. In the interviews, when they were asked how they could decide to send children abroad alone when they were only 12 years old, they gave reasons to justify their decision; having reliable guardians or the opportunity to experience hardship were the answers given.

They are also missionaries so I was not worried about that. They took good care of my children and I trusted them, so I sent my children. (Mr Jin)

When I first sent my elder son...I thought it was okay for him to live by himself because he was the eldest son...I said to him "Hey there are parentless head of family children out there, but you have parents and it was just for a short period so you should try it once." You need to be dogged. (An international student mother who sent her two primary school children by themselves and later accompanied them).

But after one or two years of living alone, the children asked their mothers to come to them because most of them suffered from homesickness and loneliness even though their parents visited them a few times each year. The timing of the mothers' accompanying their children is also related to children's age:

I had my two daughters stay at a Korean homestay home for the first three years when I used to visit them three or four times a year. But I had to come here in 2004 to take care of my children who grew to adolescence.

In either the case of coming together with the children or accompanying them later, the couples have to live without their spouses for at least one or two years. These couples need some justifiable reasons to deal with the separation even though, according to a minister in the community, "the wife-husband relationship in Korean society has not traditionally been very intimate, with the women's focus being on children".

I thought just one or two years would be okay.

Those kinds of people did that not because they were separated but because they had the potential to do wrong in them. They could commit those things even if they lived together.

I was willing to make sacrifices in order to educate my children in a safer environment.

The negotiation process of the international student families, however, is not a one-off situation but ongoing throughout their period of separation. Most of the participants have changed their initial plans in terms of duration of stay and children's educational career, and this will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

Conclusion

The majority of the participants in this study implied that an “insecure future” was the main cause of their leaving Korea. This future took many different forms. During my field work I often heard from the participants that they felt there was “no hope in their future” in Korea so they decided to leave Korea. I found later “the future” had a number of different meanings according to the context. It means little possibility of further achievement such as promotion or success in their jobs or business, stable living after retirement and their children’s opportunities to get good jobs.

As Korean society has been increasingly affected by a neo-liberal regime of global capitalism since the IMF, middle class anxiety about increasing difficulties in class reproduction in the country led them to leave Korea, and these international migration flows have been facilitated, or directed, by the participants’ previous overseas experience and/or transnational networks. When they decided on immigration, there was no gender difference as it had been widely known, but when it came to decisions regarding international education, the main decision-makers were women.

In the next two chapters I examine the ways in which these Korean international migrants use transnational strategies to get resources or capitals which are at stake in Korea, describing Korean international migrants’ lives in the Korean community in New Zealand and in the transnational social field between Korea and New Zealand. First in Chapter Four I examine how these Koreans built their community.

CHAPTER FOUR:

LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

This chapter examines Korean immigrants' lives in their community in New Zealand focusing on their economic activities and the community building process. It is often noted by many Koreans that New Zealand is a good place for studying and living peacefully, but not for working or earning money. This means that Korean immigrants know before their arrival that they will experience downward social mobility in terms of occupational status. When many Korean immigrants decided to immigrate to New Zealand, I heard many times that they were willing to do any job provided they could live peacefully and educate their children in an advanced English-speaking welfare state. As they anticipated before immigration, their occupational status in New Zealand became much lower than their previous one in Korea. But many immigrants manage their lives in New Zealand without great difficulties. This chapter explores how these immigrants cope with this situation within the analytical framework of the exchange of capital and the building of an immigrant community.

First I will describe these immigrants' initial settlement process to examine what factors influence their choice of residential areas. Then I will detail the Korean immigrants' labour market participation in New Zealand and their income situation to reveal the discrepancy between the immigrants' economic and social capital in Korea and their status in New Zealand. The following section will outline the immigrants' efforts to build their own community as a space for claiming and maintaining their highly educated middle class status and identity. Finally, in the section discussing immigrants' interaction with the host society, I will examine how some immigrants develop a sense of belonging to the host society. Through this chapter, I attempt to show how Korean immigrants in New Zealand use their own economic, social and cultural resources to maximise the possibility of living secure lives in a welfare state, while minimising the risk of losing their identity and status as highly educated middle class people.

Initial Settlement

The term “settlement” in the context of international migration is misleading if it is conceptualised solely as a separate stage which ends at a certain point. Rather, it should be more properly conceptualised as an ongoing process during which most immigrants become more and more “settled” both at an individual and a group level. But here I use the term to refer to the first phases in the participants’ narratives of migrant life histories in New Zealand. So these phases were set by the participants’ subjective criteria and have common features but with some variations: in most cases it meant the period from arrival to finishing moving to their houses, and/or their children’s school entrance in New Zealand. Here I reconstruct the Korean international migrants’ initial settlement process based on the participants’ narratives.

The participants’ first day in New Zealand began on arrival at Auckland airport and ended in temporary accommodation facilities – mostly motels in Auckland. Most of the participants were met at the airport by other Koreans in the community who they had arranged to meet before they left Korea. These people would be immigration agents, Christian ministers,⁴¹ a brother-in-law or a friend. It was on their way from the airport to their temporary accommodation when most of them saw “the city of sails” for the first time out of the car windows, which created a good impression for most of them, mainly because of the clean air. Usually the new comers stayed in motels for one or two weeks while looking for the place where they would live long term.

Although the majority of Korean migrants settle in Auckland, some of them choose other cities such as Christchurch or Hamilton. The reasons for the different choices may vary depending on the participants’ immigration motives. An immigrant who had to find a business opportunity in New Zealand chose Auckland because he thought he should start in the biggest city after his one month pre-immigration tour. But another immigrant who came to New Zealand in 1994, for early retirement in his 50s, decided to start his new life in Christchurch because he “felt an unexplainable feeling of comfort and peace” when he arrived in the city during the trip which he made soon after arriving in New Zealand, although he had never heard of the city of Christchurch before. Another immigrant who came to New Zealand to study in 1996 pointed to Hamilton on the map as his place of

⁴¹ In the early and mid 90s when huge numbers of Korean immigrants continued to flow to New Zealand, meeting new immigrants at the airport and helping their settlement were one of the main duties of Korean Christian ministers in the community.

settlement, because it was a medium size city near Auckland with fewer Koreans, which he thought would be good for his English learning whilst not inconvenient to live in. Some of the participants who had lived in Hamilton and Christchurch had the same justification for living in smaller cities than Auckland: they were not so crowded while equipped with the conveniences including Korean restaurants which allowed people to enjoy a Korean lifestyle. For some international student parents, these cities were seen as the best places for their children to make rapid improvement in English before they went to university, and the environment was safer than that of Auckland.

Table 4.1 Number of Korean residents by regions (Statistics New Zealand 2006a)

		Population	Percentage (out of Auckland population)
Auckland Region	North Shore	8,973	29 (42)
	Auckland	4,785	16 (22)
	Manukau	3,723	12 (17)
	Waitakere	2,670	8 (13)
	Others	1,200	4 (7)
	Total	21,351	69
Hamilton		1,089	4
Wellington		639	2
Christchurch		4,569	15
Dunedin		609	2
Others		2,535	8
Total		30,792	100

But the most important influence on the choice of settlement places came from the networks that the participants were connected to in Korea as these decided the destination country for international migration. Mr Cho in Chapter Two who contacted a Korean church in Auckland through the Internet and ended up settling down near the church is a typical case. This was also true for international student families like Mrs Han and Seon who settled in west Auckland where Mrs Han's uncle and the first person Mrs Seon contacted had lived. Although most international student families got to know about New Zealand as a destination for the children's study abroad through their personal networks, many of them depended on "the settlement service" of international study agencies at the

stage of the actual preparation for moving. This was because matters relating to school entrance or visa application needed support from “the experts”. As a result, agents could influence the choice of settlement place. For example, it was not until the early 2000s that west Auckland became well known for Korean international student families as a settlement place. An international student mother, who had also been guided to settle in west Auckland in 2001, guessed that it was probably because most of them had been guided by international study agencies. These agents had recommended the area to the mothers, informing them that it was a good place live in, that there were fewer Koreans there, the cost of living was lower than north Auckland and it was safer than south Auckland.

When the participants looked for houses, almost all of them went for help to other Koreans – Korean property agents, Korean neighbours, or Korean church members. Koreans tended to gather around certain preferential residential areas in town such as the North Shore in Auckland, Flagstaff in Hamilton and Avonhead in Christchurch because there are many secondary schools with good reputations among Koreans, or newly built houses in these areas. Some immigrants who do not have secondary school age children consider “newly built houses facing north” as their first choice. For immigrants and international student families alike, however, a good school zone is their first consideration in choosing a place to live. As the number of Korean immigrants increased, their residential areas have spread beyond Koreans’ preferred residence areas within the large cities. For example in Auckland,

In the mid-1990s, Koreans were mostly concentrated on the North Shore, and their presence there was still obvious in 2006. However, in recent years, many Korea-born migrants have also settled in other parts of the region, notably East Tamaki, the central business district (CBD) and parts of Waitakere City (Friesen 2008: 7).

As a result some new comers began to settle in other areas, but most of them ended up moving to good school zones when their children entered secondary schools. Koreans’ perception of a “good school / zone” is not necessarily based on objective criteria like school decile rating. Rather, this notion is based on the same grounds as in Korea. This is clear in a girl’s comment in an interview with a Korean community newspaper in 2007, when she graduated first from a high school in North Shore which was not considered as one of the prestige schools by Koreans.

Once I have said to my parents, that if they still insisted on a few big-named schools even here in New Zealand, then it was not different from them preferring *Gangnam*

school zone or special purpose high schools in Korea. That defeats the whole purpose of immigrating here. Although some parents in the North Shore area insist on schools such as Kristin, Rangitoto or Westlake, the students would often realise that it is not that important as time passes.

Once they have a place to live and a school for the children, Korean international migrants' initial settlement is completed. During this period Koreans show a tendency to gather in a few areas and around schools which match their own values. This tends to become a repeated theme in their lives in New Zealand.

Work and Income: Career Paths and Income Sources of Koreans in New Zealand

Since the 1990s, there has been an image of “rich Asian immigrants” in New Zealand (e.g. Reid 2000).⁴² Korean people are at the forefront of this image. It might seem strange to people in the host nation that some Koreans buy brand new houses, cars and electric appliances as soon as they arrive in their new country. Additionally, they visit Korea frequently despite expensive airfares even without having an obvious job. But unlike this stereotype, most Koreans are neither “too rich” nor “wasteful”.

Rather, their economic status in New Zealand in terms of occupation and income level is much lower than that of the host people. If high occupational achievement and income are used as indicators of immigrants' successful adaptation to the host society according to the assimilationist theories (e.g. Kim and Naughton 1993) then Korean immigrants in New Zealand cannot be categorised as a “model case”. Despite the low occupational achievement and income level, however, their standards of living in New Zealand, which can be another indicator of successful settlement, closely resemble those of the middle class in the host society. To explain this inconsistency a different approach from assimilationist theories is needed.

⁴² This article mentioned the widespread perception that wealthy Asians were settling in large numbers in New Zealand, when reporting the difficulties when Asian immigrants tried to set up and run businesses in New Zealand.

Table 4.2 Three Asian ethnic groups by occupation (Statistics New Zealand 2006b)

	Korean	Indian	Chinese
Total Occupation	9,573 (%)	54,294 (%)	61,893 (%)
Managers	2,742 (29)	7,695 (14)	9,198 (15)
Professionals	1,473 (15)	10,776 (20)	12,471 (20)
Technicians & Trades Workers	942 (10)	5,571 (10)	7,008 (11)
Community & Personal Service Workers	738 (8)	3,171 (6)	4,581 (7)
Clerical & Administrative Workers	522 (5)	6,939 (13)	6,594 (11)
Sales Workers	885 (9)	8,436 (16)	8,325 (13)
Machinery Operators & Drivers	300 (3)	3,282 (6)	2,520 (4)
Labourers	756 (8)	4,443 (8)	6,510 (11)
Not Elsewhere Included	1,221 (13)	3,981 (7)	4,683 (8)

Koreans' participation in the New Zealand labour market is characterised by a higher portion of managerial occupations and a low participation rate. The first characteristic, the higher portion of managers than the two other Asian groups as shown in Table 4.2, indicates Koreans' high concentration in self-employed small businesses. This is supported by a previous study on occupations of Korean immigrants in Auckland by Yoon and Yim (1997) and the data from the participants in this study.⁴³ Most Korean owned businesses in New Zealand are either ethnic or transnational, both of which have to depend on Koreans. Ethnic businesses such as Korean restaurants and Korean food groceries are mainly dependent on Koreans living in New Zealand, while the major customers of transnational businesses like international study, immigration or travel agencies are prospective immigrants, international students or tourists from Korea. These two business sectors are not clearly separated but interrelated: most ethnic businesses depend on Korean transnational migrants such as tourists or international students. Koreans' concentration in small businesses is an ongoing characteristic in their occupational history. Table 4.3 is built on the results from Yoon and Yim's research showing how Koreans' businesses change over 15 years. Yoon and Yim analysed the Korean telephone directory between 1992 and 1997 and I counted the listed businesses in the 2006 telephone directory

⁴³ Among all 20 participant families with permanent residency, 11 were running, or used to run, their own small businesses at the time of interviews.

published by the Korean society in New Zealand. The results show us that there has been little change in the types of business in 15 years although the number of businesses has been expanding.⁴⁴

Table 4.3 The 10 most common Korean businesses in Auckland (2006 Nyujilaendeu hanin gaideubuk chujin wiwonhoe [The committee for publication of 2006 Korean guide book of New Zealand] 2005, Yoon and Yim 1997)

Rank	1992	1996	2006
1	Tour / travel agency 6	Property agency 48	Restaurant 135
2	Restaurant 4	Restaurant 33	Real estate agent 107
3	House repairmen 3	Tour / travel agency 31 Dairy / food grocery 31	Dairy / food grocery 84
4	Auto repairmen 2		Cram school / study worksheet 78
5	Dairy / food grocery 2	House repairmen 21	Barbershop / beauty salon 70
6	Electric home appliance 2	Bank / stock / insurance 21	Health food 42
7	Bank / stock / insurance 2	Education agency / English education 19	Education / immigration agency 34
8	Souvenir 2	Health food 18	House repairmen 38
9	Real estate agent 2	Interpretation / translation 13	Tour / travel agency 38
10	Health food 1	Souvenir 12	Bank / stock / insurance 34

Occupations penetrating the host society are a recent development. As an immigrant said in 2007, “since younger generation people came in [New Zealand] many Koreans have been seen in lots of new jobs in the community, which immigrants had never expected to see before”. Koreans enter into the mainstream labour market in three ways. Some of the first generation immigrants are employed in the mainstream labour market as mostly semi-skilled workers such as drivers, and a small number of the first generation immigrants⁴⁵ and many 1.5 generation Koreans are employed in mainstream organizations as office workers. It is noticeable that Korean professionals occupy 15% of the occupations in the table. There are some young first generation immigrants who became professionals after re-training in New Zealand, but the majority of Korean professionals are 1.5

⁴⁴ The type of the business has been also expanding: in 1992 there were only 20 types of the business but in 2006 this increased up to 82.

⁴⁵ For example there are some Korean researchers in a few research institutions in Hamilton. These people tend to avoid contacting other Koreans so they are seldom seen in the community according to a Korean Christian minister in Hamilton.

generation people who have been educated in mainstream society for more than 10 years. But many Korean professionals or employees in mainstream companies are still likely to serve Koreans or act as a liaison between the community and the host society at the moment. The third way for Koreans to participate in the mainstream labour market is in running small businesses which provide the host people with such services as retailing, cleaning or small-scale manufacturing. At present, many Korean immigrants run small businesses such as dairies, small shops in shopping malls or franchised businesses for cleaning or lawn mowing. As such Koreans' high rate of occupations as "manager" represents their participation in small businesses targeting their community, their home country and the main stream society.

The present occupational situation of the Korean community is "quite settled now that long time have passed since the initial settlement", according to some participants who have lived in the community for more than 10 years. But the Korean community had to go through turmoil since 1991 when the present stability began to be formed. Before the bulk of Korean immigration started, a few Korean entrepreneurs in New Zealand succeeded in deer farms and deer horn processing factories in the South Island which were established from the mid 1970s. Apart from that, there were few networks for employment or business in New Zealand for Korean immigrants in the early 1990s. For Koreans, the New Zealand labour market and business environment were totally new and unfamiliar and what was worse, Koreans' English skills were not good enough to find jobs in an English speaking country. Nevertheless, more than 2,000 Koreans entered New Zealand with permanent residency each year from 1993 to 1995 because, according to a female immigrant who came to New Zealand in the early 1990s with her husband,

The advertisements by immigration agencies in Korea appealed to them greatly. The thought of engineering degrees leading to easy permanent residencies, enabling them to study at domestic students rates afterwards, the idea of receiving student allowances and unemployment benefits – all these added up to early immigrants coming to New Zealand with vague hopes.

Consequently, a large percentage of the early immigrants enrolled themselves in a school to learn English while receiving the student allowance for one year for the shortest and more than three years for the longest period, while some worked at informal jobs dealing with Korean trans-migrants, such as as tour guides or providing lodging. Some of them managed to get a dual income from these informal jobs and the student allowance.

A few people started their own businesses immediately after immigration like Mr In and Mrs Lee in Chapter Two. Two or three years after learning “English and New Zealand”, more and more people started establishing small businesses in the ethnic and transnational sectors as the Korean community in New Zealand expanded with increasing numbers of Korean immigrants and trans-migrants from 1993. Unfortunately many of these early efforts were likely to end up failures. Many immigrants pointed out that such failure was mainly caused by immigrants’ limited knowledge of New Zealand business practices, excessive competition in the community, business fraud, and the foreign exchange crisis in Korea in 1997. Many who started their own businesses at an early stage of immigration encountered trouble when they tried to operate their businesses in the same way they had done in Korea with little knowledge of business practices in New Zealand. When some Korean immigrants started a house construction business, for example, they did not expect, at first, that the time required to complete a project would be so long due to the different permits needed and procedures followed in New Zealand. This led to financial shortfalls.

Because of this limited knowledge, as well as language barriers, most immigrants in search of business opportunities followed the footsteps of other Koreans’ in the community or other Korean communities in the US or Australia. Many started their businesses based on wrong and/or insufficient information and consequently, some were likely to be deceived by other Koreans at worst or to suffer from rivalry in a small ethnic market at best. In the early stage of community formation Korean immigrants had no role models to follow when they started their businesses, so some immigrants “consulted the Korean telephone directories in the US and, especially Australia to learn from the experiences of the more established and bigger Korean communities and chose the businesses that had not appeared in the community in New Zealand until that time”. But the problem was that too many people in the community simultaneously gathered around certain types of business once they heard that someone had succeeded in a particular kind of business. Then the person who started the business would sell it to newcomers at a premium. Meanwhile, more and more people would participate in the same business leading to intensified competition and consequent business failure. The same cycle would be repeated if another kind of business became popular. An immigrant who had experienced various jobs in New Zealand for 20 years illustrated this situation:

For a while many Koreans rushed into glass house industries [horticulture] upon hearing that some people had made big money from tomato growing. But some of them ended up taking over ones in bad conditions while others ran it for a short time then sold them to other people...one or two years ago several new sushi shops opened in the community upon hearing that the business went well.

In the worst cases some new entrants in business became victims of fraud. There was a fraud case in the early 1990s in which some immigrants tried to set up a building cleaning business following the footsteps of Koreans in Australia, many of whom gained their livelihood from building cleaning. They ended up becoming victims of an agent who bilked them out of their payment for business contracts, according to the above participant. Such fraud is by no means confined to Koreans, as a similar case⁴⁶ in 2008 demonstrated.

Korean immigrants' responses to business failure were expressed in three different ways. Some people withdrew from formal economic activities in New Zealand after experiencing failure and started learning English at school to receive a student allowance, working at informal jobs or spending time fishing or playing golf. An immigrant who came to New Zealand in his late 30s failed in his first business in the late 1990s, and after that he worked as a part time private tutor for more than five years. He said he had lived a completely individual life for 10 years and thought his life in New Zealand was meaningless in a sense. When I asked him, in an interview, about what his life in New Zealand was like he implied that he had not worked in New Zealand as a university graduate, white collar middle class man, and that without a meaningful career and the social recognition attached to that career he felt like his whole life had become meaningless.

Some people returned to Korea or re-immigrated to other countries, especially to Australia and the US. Onward migration to Australia is a very common alternative for Koreans in New Zealand who seek further opportunities, because Australia has a very similar social system to New Zealand and a stronger economy. In fact, many of the early Korean immigrants in New Zealand who had come to New Zealand with "a rosy dream" grasp the reality of immigrant lives after a few years' experience of living in New Zealand. In an informal conversation in 2008, a female immigrant who has lived in New Zealand for more than 15 years said,

⁴⁶ A former franchise master has been arrested on fraud allegations totalling millions. It is alleged this person obtained more than \$3 million from about 172 people in exchange for sub-franchises. (New Zealand Press Association, Franchise master on fraud charge, 07/11/08 New Zealand Herald, A3)

These Koreans came here in the hope that they could find the jobs suitable for their qualifications. They lived on student allowances for the first few years while attending schools for job preparation. It was still very hard to transfer their Korean qualifications and careers to the New Zealand labour market even after some years of learning English, and when they sought business opportunities, they found the New Zealand market too small to accommodate them. As a result most of the Koreans who immigrated in the early 1990s re-migrated to the US or Australia. Only a few of them still live here.

Koreans' escape from New Zealand to Australia reached its first peak in 1998 right after the IMF and was followed by the second peak in the early 2000s just before the Australian government decided to reduce the benefits available to migrants from New Zealand.

As immigrants often experienced failures or fluctuations in ethnic or transnational businesses, either directly or indirectly, some turned their sights on the mainstream labour market to get more stable jobs. Taxi driving and dairy shop operation were two typical examples of this effort, and later many Koreans entered into various kinds of franchised small businesses such as cleaning, mowing or delivery services, for the same reason. These businesses and jobs⁴⁷ demand a minimum level of English skills, provide a steady income, do not necessarily depend on Koreans and, as a result of these characteristics, are unlikely to fail. And in the due course, the 1.5 generation Koreans grew and started to enter into the host society organisations such as banks and legal firms.

Nevertheless, the Asian financial crisis in late 1997 was a decisive blow to the community and it affected the host society as well, because the economy depended on Asian trans-migrants such as tourists and international students. Right after the IMF many Korean international student families, and even immigrants, returned to Korea and "holiday visitors from Korea were the most affected by the Asian crisis, falling 92% from 110,300 in 1996 to 9,300 in 1998" (Statistics New Zealand 2001). According to a Government report (New Zealand Immigration Service 2002), as a way to get out of the economic recession by "increasing the country's level of human capital by the acquisition of experienced business migrants", the New Zealand government introduced a new business immigration policy in 1999. This included a new temporary visa scheme: the

⁴⁷ These businesses and jobs are unlikely to appear in the Korean telephone directories because Koreans are not their main customers. According to an immigrant in Christchurch, there may be between 50 to 60 Korean families running dairies in the city. But in the 2006 Korean telephone directory, published by the Korean Society in Christchurch, there are only about 15 Korean grocery stores.

Long-term Business Visa (LTBV)⁴⁸ through which, as shown in the table below, many Asians, especially Koreans, came to New Zealand. As the report noted, “for each of the last six quarters two countries have dominated flows in this category – South Korea and China”.

Table 4.4 The number of Korean LTBV approved between 1999 and March 2002 (New Zealand Immigration Service 2002: 53-54)

		98/99	99/00	00/01	01 /Mar 02	Total
Application	Korean	0	27	278	497	802
	Total	10	125	889	1,153	2,177
People	Korean	3	74	835	1,574	2,486
	Total	113	357	2,637	3,314	6,421

These Koreans succeeded in stimulating the community economy by actively establishing various businesses although there was a tendency for new businesses to concentrate on a few sectors such as restaurants or dairies. But the LTBV scheme also had some negative effects in the community. Because they had to establish and keep businesses going in order to receive permanent residency, many LTBV holders ran businesses even when they made no profit or incurred losses. Some of them abused the system: they used it as a way to educate their children in New Zealand with domestic student status, without doing any business, and then returned to Korea after two years (Nyujillaendue haninsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe [The compilation committee for a history of Koreans in New Zealand] 2007). Some even went back with the extra money from property trading and foreign exchange profits. On top of this system failure, as the New Zealand economy revived, the government limited LTBV applications by imposing an English test from November 2002. Through this measure Koreans’ LTBV applications rapidly reduced, but many of those who came to New Zealand on that visa before that date succeeded in getting permanent residency. They comprise a large part of the community at present, together with those who have entered under the New Zealand government’s new work permit policies since 2002.

⁴⁸ “An LTBV gives applicants, and certain of their family members, temporary residence in New Zealand. The permit allows an applicant three years, with the opportunity to extend the period for another three years, to establish a business in New Zealand. Once a business has been successfully established and continued in business for two years, the Entrepreneur Category provides a path through to residence” (New Zealand Immigration Service 2002:51).

At present, many Koreans are slowly but continuously becoming integrated into the mainstream labour market and the occupational structure of the Korean community is becoming more stable. More than 20 years since the beginning of immigration, “it does not seem to be a big population change in the community any longer as before because those who are in the community have somewhat settled in their lives and businesses in New Zealand”, according to a Korean newspaper publisher in Christchurch. But for individual immigrant families, accomplishing their present stability was not an easy process – it was rather a struggle. Although most Korean immigrants do not have to start from scratch because they brought money with them when they immigrated, some people immigrated without money and had to do jobs involving hard labour. Still, some couples both have multiple jobs and work for more than 10 hours a day, six days a week. Among these people, some ended up making a fortune while others live marginally with social supplements or benefits. For Korean immigrants, there were three main pathways to reach occupational stability. We now see this process through a few successful cases.

[Story One] Mr Sung’s sweet shop: starting his own business immediately after arrival

Mr Sung, a former department manager in one of the largest companies in Korea and later in a venture company, first got to know about immigration to New Zealand through a close friend of his who had made a pre-immigration trip to New Zealand in 2000. But he ended up immigrating earlier than his friend after he too made a pre-immigration trip. He arrived in New Zealand in 2001 with his wife, daughter and son. During his pre-immigration trip he contacted his elder brother-in-law’s friend who was running a chocolate shop in a shopping mall in Auckland. After he saw the man living on a stable income from that business he decided to enter the same business. Soon after his arrival he started his business in a shopping mall in west Auckland with the help of his brother-in-law’s friend. His business arrangements were quickly settled without difficulty. Meanwhile, a shopping mall in Hamilton offered him the chance to open another chocolate shop. The offer coincided with his younger brother’s arrival in New Zealand so he handed on his initial business to his brother and moved to Hamilton. Soon after he established the same business in Hamilton, he had another offer to set up

a chocolate shop, this time from a shopping mall in Christchurch. He sold his shop in Hamilton to other Koreans for a profit, and moved to Christchurch with his family. In this manner he opened three chocolate shops in different shopping malls in Christchurch and sold two of them. Five years after immigration he has not become rich but has achieved economic stability through his chocolate shop. He and his wife are very satisfied with their job: apart from their stable income, flexible working time and less stress are other factors of their satisfaction. The husband and wife work together and sometimes their children help them, so they can work flexibly. According to the business custom in New Zealand, the shopkeeper and the customers are in an equal relationship, which is different from that in Korea where the former is often looked down on. Mr Sung's successful settlement in his business is the result of the following factors: a helpful personal contact, starting in the mainstream market with an accessible business, more business opportunities from established business networks in the host society, due to his long experience in a particular business area, and running the business with family labour with no extra costs for employment.

[Story Two] Mr Seo's furniture factory: training, employed & self-employed

Most of the early Korean immigrants in New Zealand enrolled in schools when they first arrived in New Zealand. Although some people attended school mainly for the student allowance, many immigrants studied to acquire qualifications in trades like carpentry or boat building in order to get jobs. Many succeeded in getting jobs in those areas upon graduation. Once they had a couple of years' work experience, they set up their own businesses as trades-people. These people settled successfully. Their education and career in the mainstream society lead them into the Kiwi market as well as their own ethnic enclave. Mr Seo is one of these immigrants. He and his wife immigrated in 1995 when they were in their mid 20s. After immigration, between 1996 and 1997 he attended a cabinet maker course. Upon completing the course he got a job in a Kiwi owned furniture factory where he worked for two years, until he was laid off because he refused to sign a pledge that he would not establish his own business when he quit the job. But this became a chance for him to establish his own factory although his former employer threatened to sue him a few times until he settled the dispute legally. Mr Seo has been running one of 20 Korean owned furniture factories in Auckland for six years, and his customers are both Koreans and the host people. A friend of his, who immigrated later, worked in his factory and followed in his footsteps to set up his own furniture factory.

[Story Three] Mr Ko's becoming a social worker: a semi skilled job in the community, advanced training & working in a mainstream organisation

Among the early immigrants there were a small number of people who entered university right after immigration. They studied accounting or law to become professionals, which normally took several years for Asian people. Other immigrants around them ridiculed these people at that time asking when they were going to finish the course. But they succeeded in becoming professionals and achieved economic success in the end. As the New Zealand government changed its student allowance policy so that only those who have been in the

country more than two years could receive it, it became difficult for immigrants to study immediately after immigration. But some started studying, like Mr Cho in Chapter Two, after two or three years' work. Mr Ko is another immigrant who has gone down the same track to enter university. He had worked in the biggest bank in Korea until he immigrated in 2003, in his mid 30s, with his wife and son. After immigration he also started his occupation in New Zealand as a taxi driver like Mr Cho. He had been satisfied in his job thinking he could live with a stable income, even in a foreign country, until he was told one day by a customer that he should have tried to find a job more suitable to his qualifications, career and age. This made him regret his two years post-immigration life as a taxi driver, and he began to think about getting a job which, when compared with other fathers, would not cause his son to feel ashamed. So he decided to pursue further study at university. He applied for a Masters Course in Social Work at a university in Auckland and was accepted. He chose that major because he wanted a job to help immigrants. During his coursework, he could be part of a Korean social workers' network and participate in a mainstream NGO through the network. Overcoming language problems with help from a colleague in his department, he finished his course work and at the time of the interview, had a part time job in a government agency for mental health which he had heard about through the Korean social workers' network.

So far I have discussed Koreans' concentration on self-employed small businesses as the primary feature of Korean occupations, and how the Korean community in New Zealand reached its current occupation situation. But the more noticeable characteristic of Koreans' economic activity in New Zealand is a low labour force participation rate⁴⁹ as shown in Table 4.5. Less than half of the Korean population in New Zealand of working age participate in economic activity, which is the lowest among the three Asian groups. Few opportunities for Asians in the New Zealand labour market could be one reason for

⁴⁹ The percentage of the working-age population (people aged 15 years and over) who were either employed or unemployed. The calculation for labour force participation rates excludes people with a work and labour force status of 'unidentifiable'. But among these three groups there is no 'unidentifiable' case. The labour force participation rate is Korean 46%, Indian 73% and Chinese 57%.

this phenomenon but it cannot explain Koreans' lower participation rate compared with the Indian or Chinese group. A longer education period than these two Asian groups can be suggested as a reason, but the largest portion (43%) of the Korean population in New Zealand is in the age group of 30 to 64, which is outside the main student age group.

Table 4.5 Work and labour force status of three Asian groups (Statistics New Zealand 2006c)

	Korean	Indian	Chinese
Total Population	30,792	104,583	147,570
Overseas born	28,731	79,836	114,147
NZ born	1,881	23,835	32,109
Others	180	885	1,311
Working Age	22,884	79,023	121,779
Total Labour Force ⁵⁰	10,614	57,921	69,117
Total Employed	9,573	54,294	61,890
Employed full-time	6,597	43,464	43,425
Employed part-time	2,970	10,833	18,462
Unemployed	1,041	3,627	7,224
Not in the Labour Force ⁵¹	12,267	21,099	52,665

As a result of this low participation, the income Korean people reported that they earned in New Zealand is the lowest among the three Asian groups, while the Asian group shows the lowest median annual income among all ethnic groups in New Zealand. Table 4.7 shows that the majority of the Korean working age population (39%) earned \$5,000 or less, while a smaller percentage (32%) of the Chinese population had this low an income. The majority of the Indian population (24%) earned between \$30,000 and \$50,000 and their income distribution was more even than in the Korean population. This income gap between the Korean population and the Chinese and Indian groups may be explained by the different proportions of New Zealand born population among the three ethnic groups.

⁵⁰ Members of the working-age population who were classified as 'employed' or 'unemployed'.

⁵¹ Not in the labour force: any person in the working-age population who is neither employed nor unemployed. For example, this category includes retired people / people with personal or family responsibilities, such as unpaid housework and childcare / people attending educational institutions / people permanently unable to work due to physical or mental disabilities / people who were temporarily unavailable for work in the survey reference week / people who are not actively seeking work.

Among Koreans only 6.1% were born in New Zealand, which means these people are recent immigrants who usually have disadvantages in economic activities in the new country.

Table 4.6 GDP per Capita of New Zealand in 2005 and median annual personal income by ethnic group 2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand 2006d, UNDP 2008)

GDP per Capita	US\$24,996
European	\$25,400
Māori	\$20,900
Pacific peoples	\$20,500
Asian	\$14,500
Middle Eastern, Latin American and African	\$16,100
Other Ethnicity ⁵²	\$31,200

Table 4.7 Personal income of working age population in three Asian ethnic groups (statistics New Zealand 2006e)

	\$5,000 or Less	\$5,001 - \$10,000	\$10,001 - \$20,000	\$20,001 - \$30,000	\$30,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 or More	Not Stated
Korean (%)	8,946 (39.1)	1,986 (8.7)	3,198 (14)	2,427 (10.6)	2,364 (10.3)	1,020 (4.5)	2,946 (12.9)
Indian	14,973 (18.9)	6,591 (8.3)	10,779 (13.6)	11,199 (14.2)	18,861 (23.9)	9,951 (12.6)	6,666 (8.4)
Chinese	39,561 (32.5)	15,360 (12.6)	18,597 (15.3)	12,819 (10.5)	16,017 (13.2)	9,900 (8.1)	9,525 (7.8)

Despite their low rate of labour market participation and consequent low income, however, many Koreans enjoy a decent middle class life in New Zealand as a Korean newspaper publisher in Christchurch pointed out in 2006:

[Koreans' socio economic status in Christchurch] is probably above middle class...Because, as far as the residents are concerned, most of them came with enough money to buy a house in New Zealand, and they all bought decent houses and the house prices rose quite a lot recently as well -- I think...they are rather affluent.

During my participant observation of participants and other Koreans, especially those who have permanent residency, I got the same impression from such indicators as home ownership, the size of houses, and the number of cars. According to a survey in 2006 with 479 Koreans who took part in the Korean Day event in Auckland, it was estimated that the

⁵² The 'Other Ethnicity' category includes responses from a number of small ethnic groups and for New Zealanders. In 2006, 'New Zealander' responses made up the largest proportion of the 'Other Ethnicity' category.

average monthly household expenses of the respondents was \$3,500.⁵³ In this context two questions are raised: how do many Koreans maintain their living standard as middle class in New Zealand with a low income, and do more than half of the working age Korean population really not work at all?

Some Koreans argue that many Korean immigrants live on various government benefits or support but, according to 2006 census data, incomes paid by employers and from businesses occupy the biggest part of Koreans' total income. Moreover, Koreans are rather reluctant to receive those benefits even when they meet the requirements as recipients, because many Koreans would consider it shameful to receive welfare benefits. Informal and/or non-taxable income might be an extra source of Koreans' income: income from private teaching, lodging Korean international students, or irregular part-time work. Some men and many women, especially housewives including international student mothers, are participating in these jobs. These incomes may be helpful to some Korean families but the market for these jobs is very small and limited to the Korean community. Some immigrants seek trading profits in property investment although it is not always successful.

Korean immigrants' major economic base for living in New Zealand was their immigration fund which they brought from Korea. The action of bringing money into New Zealand was of a very transnational nature in that such factors as exchange rates of the two currencies, residential prices between the two countries and business prices in New Zealand were involved. For example, in 1993 when more than 2,000 Koreans gained entry permits as immigrants for the first time in New Zealand history, the price of a 99 m² apartment in *Mokdong* area, a newly developed typical middleclass residential areas in Seoul was KRW175,000,000 which was NZ\$432,100 at that time, when average sale price of houses in New Zealand was NZ\$125,609. Until the early 2000s, NZ\$1 was worth around KRW500, which allowed average Korean middle class people who had a small or medium sized apartment in Seoul to easily build up \$300,000 to \$400,000 as their immigration fund. This amount of money was enough for immigrants to buy a house and business in New Zealand. But actually many Korean immigrants brought much more money than that. Mr Sung, who immigrated in 2001, brought over \$600,000 when NZ\$1

⁵³ According to Statistics of the New Zealand Household Economic Survey (as at 30 June 2007), average household expenditure per month of a four person household was about \$2,460, although the two data sets do not seem to be comparable as the above survey sample is too small, and both the procedure and those who conducted the survey are not known.

was worth about KRW550. With this money he bought a house in Auckland on arrival, and house prices in New Zealand have gone up continually since his arrival:

I do not have any financial difficulty. I didn't make big money [in New Zealand] but I didn't lose the money that I brought with me, neither. My family has been living on that money while earning money from my business to cover for living costs.

Having their house with little or no mortgage, many Koreans were able to have a head start in New Zealand in financial terms. In the case of a return migrant who had "similar income to lawyers or accountants" but with little immigration fund, this situation is well explained. This immigrant returned to Korea with his family in 2006 and one of the reasons for his return was to seek more income opportunity in Korea. He was a highly paid successful professional man in New Zealand but the balance of income and expenditure was always in deficit even after spending his income on tax, living expenses and mortgage payment so he could not save any money. He decided to work in Korea so that he could earn money for his mortgage payment.

To summarise Korean immigrants' economic situation in New Zealand, generally Korean immigrants have low incomes from their economic activity in New Zealand but many brought quite a large sum of money as their immigration fund which fills the income gap between them and the host people. In fact, I heard from many immigrants during my interviews that they had just enough income for their family to live on in New Zealand. These remarks made me keep questioning why highly educated middle class Koreans immigrated all the way to New Zealand to work as cleaners or retailers.

I suggest that the word "family" is the key to understanding Korean immigrants in New Zealand. Their immigration took place as a family project. Korean men as husbands or fathers have a big responsibility to secure and guarantee their family's lives. One of the worst insults for Korean men is to say that "you do not properly support even your own family". But as Korean society has been heavily influenced by a neo-liberalised economy since the late 1990s, insecurity in employment has increased while the cost for child education is becoming unbearably high. Under these circumstances, residency in an English speaking country, which guarantees a minimum living standard and provides children with free education, could be a promising option for Korean breadwinners. For Korean men, New Zealand is a society which shares their burden of supporting their family, especially educating their children to tertiary level.

Assimilationist theories around immigrants' economic adaptation tend to assume that immigrants strive to achieve the same goals as the host people. But the case of Korean immigrants in New Zealand shows that immigrants may put different values on their economic activities than those of the host people. Using Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus as a framework for understanding the value assigned to economic, social, and cultural forms of capital, Kelly and Lusic (2006) discuss the convertibility of this capital in transnational space: For example, in the case of a Filipino immigrant with an accounting degree working in a hotel kitchen in Canada, the diminished cultural capital of a degraded occupation in the host country's setting is rationalised against the enhanced economic capital associated with such work, but only when evaluated in a transnational habitus. For Korean immigrants in New Zealand, their diminished cultural capital seems to be rationalised against secure living in a welfare society as Mr Sung said:

But now my thought has changed a lot. I no longer feel that I need to make big money as I have felt in the past, because I don't have to worry about my retirement. I only realized that immigrating to this country was a good choice after finding out this year that no money was needed for my daughter to enter university. I felt that I was rewarded for having been in this country -- the student loan from the government was available interest free as soon as she applied for it. I have been giving my daughter pocket money until last year but now I don't do that as she became university student and she now receives student allowance...If this is the case it will benefit my son as well, won't it? I would have spent more than ten million won for her university fee if we had been in Korea...For ordinary families who live on breadwinners' salary in Korea, how can they have such big amount ready suddenly?...But here [in New Zealand] I don't have to worry about that at all which made me happy with my decision to live in New Zealand...And in your old age, it is said, you would have no difficulty in living in New Zealand if you have your own house. These things led me to think that I no longer needed to strive for money and I should live an easy life...I think that was the decisive point when my thought changed.

Many Korean immigrants in New Zealand seem to have a similar attitude to Mr Sung and they are quite different from previous Korean immigrants in terms of their attitudes towards "success". If the ambition for success of Korean immigrants to the US can be conceptualised as a "Blue Dream",⁵⁴ the dream of Koreans in New Zealand can be expressed as a "Dream of building a nest" which may be easily movable and perhaps not very comfortable, but secure enough to bring up the chicks. For the second question that was raised regarding the inconsistency between Koreans' income and living standard, we

⁵⁴ In Korea "dreams are considered blue" because blue is "the colour of the heaven above, the splendour and sunshine of the blue sky" (Abelmann and Lie 1995:190).

need to turn our sights to a different place – the transnational space between Korea and New Zealand, and Koreans’ economic practices in that space which is discussed in Chapter Six.

Community Building

Many Koreans, whether immigrants or international students, describe their lives in New Zealand as “BORING”. An immigrant in his late 30s complains his life is so boring that he has nothing to do but sleep after dinner and hours of TV watching at night. Some attributed their boredom to the monotony of New Zealand life while others to their life style which was tied to their businesses, like Mr Sung who found himself living a very simple and repetitive life going round and round.

But for Korean immigrants in some cases the sense of boredom might have a more serious meaning like a feeling of oppression, loss or frustration. The immigrant who complained about a boring life in New Zealand explained how he felt:

As life goes that way you always feel oppressed...it is one of the characteristics of an immigrant’s life...there is little entertainment. When you were in Korea you had lots of opportunities to burn off your energy. You have your job at work and have friends with whom you can drink and hang with after work. There are many ways for you to be relieved [in the society]. But when you come here, you no longer have those things.

These highly educated middle class people who had well-established careers in their home country experienced a loss of identity when they experienced downward social mobility in terms of occupational status and limited access to social and cultural resources in the host society because of language and cultural barriers. But “immigrants negotiate their social status in a new culture using a variety of personal, social and cultural resources” (Mahalingam 2006: xii) with which they build their own communities in the host countries.

It appears to be natural that the same language users from the same countries gather together in the country which has different language and culture, but forming an immigration community which is distinctive not only by exclusion from the mainstream society but also by its identification and inclusion of its own members needs a lot of resources. Moreover, when Anderson defined the nation as “an imagined political community” (Anderson 1991: 6), if he assimilated imagined to invented or created, then an immigration community is also a result of individual immigrants’ active imagination to

form a meaningful and distinctive social unit of their own in the host society because community formation needs deliberate efforts by some people or groups who take initiatives. For example, Liev (1995) showed how refugees in New Zealand from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam experienced difficulties building a community where their mother tongues were spoken and cultures were maintained partly because of the government policy to assimilate refugees into mainstream society, and partly because of their lack of resources when first generation refugees arrived in New Zealand. For the next generation of these refugees, their mother tongues had to be sacrificed to English for survival. They could not develop their ethnic identity within their weak community. As a result 1.5 or second generation refugees suffer from cultural and language erosion.

The formation of the Korean community in New Zealand also started with the building of ethnic organisations including Korean societies. When the first Korean Society was established in Wellington in 1974, with less than 100 Koreans in New Zealand, its common denominator which tied its members was their nationality – Korea, and the main purpose of the association was social gathering (Nyujiillaendue haninsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe [The compilation committee for a history of Koreans in New Zealand] 2007: 94). Since then, the Korean community in New Zealand has witnessed seven Korean societies spring up (Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Rotorua, and Whangarei), a Korean Sports Council New Zealand branch, and the establishment of the Korean Chamber of Commerce (2006 Nyujilaendeu hanin gaideubuk chujin wiwonhoe [The committee for publication of 2006 Korean guide book of New Zealand] 2005).

Although some community events hosted by these organisations such as Korean Day, Korean pop concerts, or collective TV watching of the 2002 and 2006 World Cup games have gathered lots of Koreans, the activities of these organisations are not visible in the community except in their role of formally representing the community. But in forming immigrant communities, immigration organisations such as immigration associations play a major role in that:

[Immigrant organisations] are...important because the extent to which immigrants cluster in organisations is a critical measure of collectively expressed and collectively ascribed identity...It is also through organisations that others can address immigrants as a collective, and as such organisations say something about demarcations within and between immigrant groups, and between immigrants and the host society (Schrover and Vermeulen 2005: 824).

The Korean community media clearly reveals Koreans' plentiful resources for building their immigrant community. For about 30,000 Koreans there are 14 newspapers and magazines, four radio stations and one TV channel according to the 2006 Korean guide book of New Zealand. These media, especially newspapers and magazines, interpret the local news for Koreans who have difficulty with access to the local English media because of language barriers. But the more important role these media play lies in binding Korean immigrants to their community. It is the community media that make Koreans perceive themselves as members of a community through raising various agenda concerning the host society, Korea, and the community, such as immigration policy. Through commercial advertisements and the listing of community businesses, these media build a community market. In addition, some media provide Koreans in the community with cyber space on their websites which many people use for finding jobs, seeking advice or debating community issues.

If the community media play a role in building the imagined Korean community, various levels and kinds of associations based on personal networks or common interests among Koreans comprise enacted communities. As Yoon (1998: 70) pointed out "Koreans in New Zealand were often influenced by [personal networks based on alumni, family and/or regional connections] in their coming to New Zealand, and are settling in areas through one of these connections and are socialising among Koreans often through these connections as well". In addition, some people find jobs or business partnership through these connections. I participated in the "get-togethers" of my university alumni group several times during my fieldwork. The group consists of a total of 49 members but 20 to 30 people attended the biannual meetings normally held in Korean restaurants in Auckland. Although it has a formal structure, such as chairperson and rules, its main aim is to provide occasions to socialise. But it also provided opportunities for business networking and job searching for its members. In fact when I engaged with the group, two members were employed by another member who ran a construction company. There are lots of other formal and informal organisations according to a person's military career (ROTC or Marine Corps), or kind of business or shared hobbies. Through multiple engagements with some of these groups Korean people, especially men, seek alternative economic and social lives in the community. It is mainly through these networks that many Korean service providers and consumers, such as property agents and prospective buyers, find each other. But these large networks hardly provide the opportunity for frequent,

intense or intimate social relations so people develop closer and more informal relationships with like-minded people within these wider groupings.

Some people do not want to get involved in social activities or are unable to access them, for example, some women, especially housewives including international student mothers. But these people also have relationships mostly with other Koreans whom they know through various means such as work, educational institutions or existing friends, both in Korea and New Zealand, because they found that “real” -- close and intimate -- relationships could be built only with Koreans. An immigrant who has lived and worked in New Zealand for 13 years told me that even though he had a few close Kiwi friends from his workplace and would chat on the phone with them after work, he felt his relation with them was not very deep. But relationships between Koreans in the community would often break up because, according to many immigrants, “many relations in the community are based on immigrants’ immediate need to avoid the feeling of isolation” and the friends lack common experiences or shared memories.

Among all the community organisations and institutions, Korean immigrants have made their most comprehensive networks around Korean churches which are the most important centres of community construction for Koreans in New Zealand. Korean churches in the community are not necessarily for Christians only. Statistically a quite large percentage of Koreans (20%) have no religion but even those with no religion would contact and join the Korean churches, looking for assistance in settlement or networking with Koreans, and this was especially true at the early stage of settlement and for Koreans in the small cities where there are few other Koreans. An elder at a Korean church recalled when he came to New Zealand more than 20 years ago:

At that time [in the early 90s] there were not many Koreans and most of them would gather at the Korean church to ease loneliness as well as to get information. If someone bought a house, all went to house warming party and when somebody moved house all gathered to give their hands....People attended the church whether they were Buddhists or Catholic.

And an immigrant who had lived alone in Palmerston North while studying used to attend the Korean church a few times “just to have a chance to talk to someone” because she found no other Koreans there and felt so lonely.

There are other religious groups besides Christians among Koreans in New Zealand, such as Buddhists (1,732) and other small religious groups (102) including new religious

groups⁵⁵ like Won Buddhists, but these groups are small in numbers compared to Christians (21,581). Over 68% (14,793) of all Christians are non-Catholic Christians. In the number of religious organisations in the community, the dominance of the Protestant group is clearer. According to 2006 Korean Guide Book of New Zealand, there are 116 Korean Protestant churches and missionaries⁵⁶ from Whangarei to Invercargill while one Catholic Church, two Buddhist temples and one Won Buddhist temple are listed in the directory.

The dominance of Korean Protestant churches of various denominations (Korean churches for short) in Korean immigrants' lives is a common feature of all Korean communities across the world, and in the entire history of modern immigration of Koreans. For example, Hurh and Kim (1990) examined religious participation patterns of Korean immigrants in the Chicago area to find that "church involvement is indeed a way of life for the majority of Koreans in the US".

Because, like the US, New Zealand is also a predominantly Christian society, Korean Christians with some of their religious leaders trained in New Zealand had no conflict with the state in practicing religious activities and, rather, were encouraged to do so. This encouragement led Korean churches in New Zealand to thrive, and they played a critical role in developing and expanding the Korean community from the early stage of its formation.⁵⁷ Host society churches supported and promoted these developments by providing the early Korean congregation with religious leaders when there was no Korean Christian minister. (Nyujiillaendue haninsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe [The compilation committee for a history of Koreans in New Zealand] 2007)

Religion plays a very important role in organising immigrant communities. As Humphrey (1987) argues in his study of a Lebanese mosque community in Sydney, the

⁵⁵ In the course of the fieldwork I came across another new Korean religious group, *Jeungsando*, which had just set themselves up in New Zealand facilitated by an international student father.

⁵⁶ 69 churches and 12 missionaries are in Auckland and 35 churches are spread throughout the rest of New Zealand.

⁵⁷ This place of religion in the process of community building is the opposite to other non-Christian dominant immigrant groups, such as Indians, in New Zealand. Leckie (2007) writes of the difficulties for Indian immigrants in New Zealand to sustain their religions in their initial period of settlement. These immigrants experienced a lack of resources for maintaining their religious practices including the absence of spiritual leaders, and "were reluctant to overtly display 'exotic' customs in a predominantly Christian society." But as these immigrants established organisations, Indian associations in particular, regardless of caste, religion and regional background, acquired property and their own community buildings to gain public visibility; various Indian religious networks were also fostered.

religious organisation and its leadership become a focal point for organisation of immigrants and the assertion of their cultural identity.

Religion has played a significant role in the process of incorporating immigrants marginal to, or isolated from, the wider [...] society. The ideology and organisational structure of immigrant religious institutions has provided a ready medium for the organisation of many immigrants (Humphrey 1987: 244).

The Lebanese Sunni community in Humphrey's study became marginalised and isolated from the wider Australian society because of their unstable employment status and racism, and responded to this situation with a reassertion of Islamic identity and the re-establishment of ritual observances and concern with the affairs of the mosque. In a similar manner Korean immigrants, in Morris, Vokes and Chang's research (2007), who were seeking to foster a feeling of being at home in a new country, but had experienced social exclusion, harassment and discrimination from the host people, turned to their ethnic churches where they felt most at home. But in this case, these were Christian churches:

Korean Churches provide a ready-made social network, providing practical, economic and emotional support for migrants... For many, the church provided a haven of Korean-ness in an unfamiliar society (Morris, Vokes, and Chang 2007: 22).

The researchers argued that the perceived "Korean community" is as much a product of exclusion by mainstream society as it is the outcome of a community building project by migrants themselves. Their findings very much coincided with those in this research regarding how Korean immigrants seek social networks, economic benefits, and the acquisition of status in their churches despite the difference in the main research site.

Once an immigrant contacts a church in an immigration community and becomes a member of the congregation, then he/she would be given all necessary support from settlement through job searching to all rituals. This practical and spiritual outreach has been the basis on which Korean immigrant churches were established and are still growing. Like Mr Cho in Chapter Two, immigrants have settlement assistance from being picked up at the airport to finding a place to live and schools for their children. As for finding jobs, sometimes the churches provide job opportunities to their members. Some international student mothers obtain job offers from their church so that they can get work permits and educate their children as domestic students. Christian businessmen provide their church members with employment opportunities whether formal or informal. A sushi shop owner who was a member of the church in Auckland, which I attended, gave part time jobs in his

shop to many housewives in the church. Many business men, for example car dealers or property agents, find business contacts through church networks. People look to their church members for these services in the first place because they are “closer” to them so “more trustworthy” than others. Some international student families hosting homestay students, found them through church networks.

As for the rituals, the role of the churches in the community is much bigger than in the churches in Korea, because the Korean churches in the immigration community replace all the other actors in the rituals, such as kinship or peer groups in the home country. When a wedding is held at a church, its minister officiates at the ceremony. The members of the church help the family prepare for the ceremony as kinship members normally do in Korea, as well as attending the ceremony and contributing money. As another example of the rituals initiated by the churches, a Korean counselor told me how the elderly female members of a church play the role of mothers, or grandmothers, to women after their delivery:

After giving birth to a baby, a woman is supposed to have recognition from family members and friends for her labour with supports and gifts and to remain in a hot room for the first 21 days, which is all Korean birth ritual...Now the ritual is done by the church members in the Korean community replacing the family: when a member of their church give birth to a baby the female members do the same things for her as her family would do such as cooking sea-weed soup for her, presenting her with baby clothes and slapping her on the back.⁵⁸

But the most important thing the Korean churches can give their members is the space for socialising. A Christian minister in a Korean church in Hamilton defined the role of the immigration churches in this manner:

I would like the church to become a good support centre for immigrants...I mean that it should become a place for immigrants living hard lives to come and rest, to be comforted and to be given advice so that they get some peace, relief and be encouraged.

Many Korean churches in the community organise their members into cohort groups and neighbourhood groups such as mission groups and small group worship meetings.⁵⁹

For the purpose of socialising, these groups are the basis of immigrants’ regular

⁵⁸ In the Korean cultural context, older people or seniors who have authority such as parents or teachers slap the younger people or juniors on the back when they want to encourage or complement the younger ones.

⁵⁹ The former consists of a group of people in a similar age group and of the same gender, and the latter is organised by residential proximity.

relationships as the members of these groups are supposed to meet bimonthly at least, apart from regular services. The members of the Korean churches usually consider these church-based human relationships to be trustworthy.⁶⁰ For example, a couple got to know a single man in a Bible study group at their church and the wife of the couple introduced him to her best friend in Korea because she found him trying to “be faithful”. Also, the churches give their members a variety of opportunities for entertainment such as football matches between churches, picnics or many events and games on Korean traditional holidays.

The churches provide their members with opportunities for participating in its operations in various ways. As I have mentioned above, many immigrants experience downward social mobility in the host society because of their occupation and language and cultural barriers. This threatens their middle class identity. But in the churches they can find some ways to maintain status through participating in various activities and roles such as a leader or influential figure in a formal organization, whether it is big or small, or as a teacher or a talented performer in music. These roles and activities fill the gap between their self-identity and social status, and help them retain a sense of self-efficacy as highly educated middle class people, at least in their own community.

These roles and activities also give the adult immigrants parental authority in relationships with their 1.5 generation children. This is especially true for international student mothers. Many mothers are actively involved in the churches’ activities as leaders because they have more free time than immigrant women who have to work with their husbands. And, when they are in stressful situations, they find solace in deep involvement in their roles in the Korean churches. Moreover, these roles in the churches provide them with parental authority when they are in conflict with their children without the support of their husbands. The Korean churches do this through socialising their members with their emphasis on family ethics. The churches function as “value protectors”.

Macpherson (1984) showed that for some Samoan immigrants in New Zealand, whose primary orientation is to Samoan values and institutions, churches seemed to replace their village of origin. Samoan parents’ authority is demonstrated in the presentation of children for religious instruction. And for children, the activity in the

⁶⁰ A fraud case took place at a Korean church during my fieldwork, where an “honest-looking” Christian persuaded some members to invest their money in his fake business and then fled to Korea. It is said there are many similar cases in the community, which abused people’s trust in church-based human relationships.

church is conducted in a language with which they are familiar, extends opportunities for its use, and involves contact with others from similar backgrounds which reinforce values and norms acquired in the home situation. Although there are also competing ways among Korean immigrants in New Zealand in terms of church attendance – Korean church, Kiwi church or non-attendance, as a strategy for “being at home in their new country”, as Morris and her colleagues (2007) pointed out, the majority of Koreans attend Korean churches and these churches are the source of cultural hegemony to assert Korean parents’ authority through the ways they socialise their children. The following excerpt is from Macpherson, but describes exactly the same features found in Korean churches as “Korean” replaced “Samoan”.

The children attend [Korean] language services and Sunday school regularly and are instructed by [Korean] trained pastors and by adult migrants respectively. The interpretation of Christian theology in these settings tends to coincide with that of their parents and to re-state and confirm similar themes...Children typically also become involved in other activities associated with the church including music, sports...all of which are considered appropriate ‘recreation’ (Macpherson 1984: 115).

In terms of sexual morality, as an instance of their socialisation activities Korean churches, most of which belong to rather conservative Christian traditions, ask their congregations, adolescents in particular, to strictly observe conservative Christian principles such as the prohibition of pre or extra marital sexual relationships and have a very critical attitude towards “more frequent and easier-looking” divorce, many cases of unmarried mothers and legalisation of prostitution in the host society. The Korean churches emphasise sexual morality because this is directly related to the reproduction of well disciplined Christian families. Through this emphasis these churches try to prevent Korean children from being “contaminated” by “sexual misconducts”, to give a firm reference for immigrant families who are exposed to dual worldviews, and to maintain, and reinforce, their unique identity among the mainstream churches. However, the churches’ attempts to socialise their members into Korean values and norms may be challenged by individuals’ experience of the wider society.

From the discussion on Korean churches in New Zealand so far, it can be seen that each church is a small, somewhat self-sufficient, society for its members. Korean people in New Zealand actualised their community in these churches. But to concentrate on, and confine themselves to, this small world can create a potential separation from the wider

society not only from the host society but also from the wider Korean community. When I visited a participant's house for dinner one evening, the participant and his wife talked about other people's responses at their church to their son's entrance to medical school. In their conversation, I noticed that this couple was proud of their son mainly because he was one of the two students at their church who was selected into medical school that year. For some immigrants their church community often becomes the only site where their achievements are compared and recognised as meaningful ones. But for this very reason, a lot of conflict occurs in a church community between people who compete with one another for recognition and status, and this competition is easily extended into church politics. When a person is elected and appointed as a church elder s/he receives respect from other members and has authority in decision making at a church. But some people consider the position as a means to exercise power within an organisation. When conflict between church members and someone's ambition for power at a church are combined, a church can be easily divided. One Korean church in Auckland has split three or four times since it was established, due to this kind of political process. This process is commonly reported on in immigrant churches.

Although Korean churches in immigration communities are called "pseudo extended family", many Koreans try to extend real family networks in the host society because this is the strongest human network for Koreans. For this reason, chain migration has often occurred. A 1.5 generation immigrant said that when her family immigrated, her mother's two brothers' families came together so she did not feel loneliness in a foreign country because she had many cousins. In the same context, it is quite common in the community that Korean young adults live with their parents even after they have married, and their parents support them financially. An immigrant couple who live with the husband's parents share living costs with their parents and sometimes give pocket money to them but would be financially supported by their parents when they needed a large amount of money. When their children have babies, Korean grandmothers take care of them to help their children continue working. This practice is accepted as natural by Korean young people. A young man who worked in a mainstream company once told me that he did not understand Kiwis who live by themselves despite economic difficulties.

Marriage is another way to create family networks. Although many Korean parents in New Zealand say they can accept children-in-law from other ethnic groups, usually they prefer Koreans as their children's spouses. Many young people themselves also seek

Korean spouses because they “do not want to add the burden of cultural difference to their marital relationship”. But the Korean community in New Zealand has a small pool. In this situation, Korean international students can be alternative candidates and in reality, many 1.5 generation Koreans married them.

In addition to these Koreans’ collective efforts to deal with the language and cultural barriers in the host society, Koreans make individual efforts to reconstruct their every day lives around leisure and sports activities represented by fishing and golf. Among these activities, golf is the Koreans’ favourite. Many Koreans consider golf an icon of New Zealand life: it is their privilege to enjoy golf inexpensively. Mrs Seon, an international student mother introduced in Chapter Two, chose New Zealand partly because she expected to play golf as much as she wanted. But for some people golf seems to be the only option. An immigrant, who was about to return to Korea for a business opportunity, told me that he could understand why Koreans, both men and women, have to play golf so intensely that they are usually found on golf courses on week days:

Only recently I came to understand why the Korean golf maniacs have been living the way they have. Probably they have no jobs but have brought money with them from Seoul. Even so, they couldn’t spend time drinking every day. At the end they seek activities but due to the language and social barriers they can’t find suitable activities in the mainstream society. Sports would be the only activity and they choose golf because it is the best sport to pass time quickly. I think that is why so many Koreans become golf maniacs.

Interaction with the Host Society

What I have discussed so far about Korean immigrants’ efforts to construct their own community in the host society might cause a misunderstanding that the Korean community in New Zealand is an isolated ethnic enclave. Rather, many Koreans in New Zealand frequently contact host people and try to find ways to participate in the host society. Most Koreans consider participation in the mainstream society to be right and desirable, and stimulate their children to do so. A 1.5 generation participant said her father regularly participated in the neighbourhood group in an urban area in Christchurch and she thought he did that partly because he wanted to give her an example. Also many Koreans join Kiwi churches or the English class that the churches provide for immigrants. Community centres across Auckland have many Koreans, especially women who want to make Kiwi friends, as well as to learn English. As parents they are keen on getting along with Kiwi parents at their children’s school. A man sought advice from other parents at his son’s school when

his son had difficulties making friends. Korean people want to know what is going on in New Zealand. Like some of the participants, many Korean immigrants have kind elderly neighbours to help them settle including teaching English which is envied by other Koreans. Some host people have relationships with the Korean community. Apart from the religious leaders in the Kiwi churches, New Zealanders who married Koreans or have the jobs connected to the community or Korea maintain their networks with Koreans. Some Korean churches are willing to accept these people as members and Korean ethnic schools in New Zealand run Korean language classes for New Zealanders who want to learn Korean and about Korea, for example, to communicate with a Korean daughter-in-law and grandson or to better understand the Korean international students at their schools.

But these individual efforts to interact with each other do not seem to overcome many Koreans' concentration in their own community in their everyday lives. For example, even though many Korean women voluntarily attend their local community centre to make friends from other ethnic groups including the host people, they often end up making more Korean friends there. A Christian minister said it is not just because of language as many Koreans excuse themselves:

The primary cause [why Koreans in New Zealand hardly contact the host society] is, um, language but ... as I see it, the national character of Koreans would also have something to do with it. For example, it seems that Somali people do that better than Koreans even when they can't speak English well soon after they arrive here....Koreans seem to have strength in uniting together with fellow Koreans but are weak in networking.

The tendency of "uniting together with fellow Koreans" is also found at schools where many Korean students hang around only with their Korean friends.⁶¹ As a reason for their passivity in networking with the host people, many Koreans including 1.5 generation often point out that they cannot develop deep relationships with Kiwis beyond "nice friends". A 1.5 generation Korean health professional said he had had the same difficulties when he tried to make friends at school:

After being friends, Koreans develop deep relationships with each other but for New Zealanders -- their relationships are not very deep.... What I am saying is that

⁶¹ This phenomenon also reflects the power relationship between the immigrants and the host people, which will be discussed in chapter seven. Koreans' interethnic marriages can be taken as a similar example. Quite a few Koreans marry other ethnic group members including the host people. Among the couples there are many Korean women who married men from other ethnic groups including Europeans, and some Korean men who married women from other Asian ethnic groups but very few Korean men married European women. This particular pattern of interethnic marriages between Koreans and the host people is also partly attributed to this power relationship.

they set certain boundaries [in relationships] and if anybody goes beyond it they get offended. Of course, there are personal differences, and I am a bit overgeneralising but the depth of relationship of New Zealanders seems to be shallower than those of Koreans.

But by his statement, this man also implies Koreans do not change their own ways in order to make friends in the different culture. In fact I have noticed similar attitudes many times during my fieldwork. For example, at schools, especially high schools, if a Korean student does not conform to the Korean peer group and gets along with their Kiwi friends, and if it is a high school which has many Korean students, this student might risk alienation from other Korean students. When they use the society's public services and institutions, such as schools and hospitals, Koreans in New Zealand try to fit themselves into the system, but in personal relationships they tend to stick to their own ways.

Many immigrants experienced a decisive turning point in their lives in New Zealand when they felt that their immigration to New Zealand was a good choice, as did Mr Sung who felt it for the first time in five years when he benefited from the government supported tertiary education system. An immigrant woman in her late 50s who had lived for more than 10 years in New Zealand had a sudden heart attack in 2005. She underwent a big surgical operation, and had been under treatment for two years when I visited her in Christchurch. She and her husband told me with one voice that they were deeply moved by the medical system in New Zealand which was really supportive and did its best for an immigrant woman, for free, and that they felt their taxes had not been wasted.

Many participants told me of similar experiences. When they became the recipients of the social welfare system of New Zealand, they said, they recognised that New Zealand is a much better country than Korea.⁶² From this point, immigrants' valuation of the two countries is often reversed. In their discourses Korea, once a much more developed country than New Zealand in many respects, began to be represented as the country where people dare not be sick without concern unless they are rich, or where even the middle class can barely maintain a decent standard of living because of the high cost of child education. It is a well-known saying in the Korean community that Korea is an exciting hell while New Zealand is a boring heaven. Those who have experienced the turning point emphasise hell and heaven whereas others still stress exciting and boring. For Korean immigrants, this is

⁶² Most participants mentioned the medical and financial support they had received from ACC when they were injured, as one of the most impressive examples of social support. Many of the participants and other Korean immigrants said the system was too good to be true.

the moment that their sense of belonging in the host society grows. On the other hand, the discourses starkly contrast with those when someone fails to settle in New Zealand and has to return to Korea. In a Korean monthly magazine (Kim 1994), a return migrant wrote an article about how New Zealand was underdeveloped and unsuitable for immigrants to settle in. He expressed his disappointment at the underdeveloped city rather than describing it as quiet and peaceful, he stressed tediousness and complained that it was not clean in contrast with what the tour guide book had said and, further, there was a high risk of ultraviolet rays, shabby houses, an insecure economic structure, and monopolies in business.

After many years of effort to construct their own community and especially after these decisive turning points, many immigrants develop their own ways of life. At this stage, people start to enjoy their lives in New Zealand: their boring and tedious lives turn into simple and peaceful ones. A Korean counsellor who used to run a counselling programme for Korean immigrants concluded the interview with me, saying how these people were transformed into happy immigrants and began a new life in their middle age once they had succeeded in dealing with the challenges in their immigration processes to find their own ways of life: “people start BBQ parties with their family and middle aged couples begin taking a walk in the parks holding each other’s hands.”

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described and discussed Korean immigrants’ lives in their community in New Zealand. From the time of their initial settlement in New Zealand Korean immigrants tended to gather together in a few residential areas in the major cities. In terms of economic activity, Korean immigrants are likely to be self-employed and show low economic participation and status in the host society. But they maintain a middle class standard of living in the mainstream society with the assistance of their immigration fund and/or their wealth in Korea. Nevertheless, they experienced diminished cultural capital with lower occupational status. Korean immigrants respond to this situation in two ways. Firstly, they exchange their diminished cultural capital for secure living in the welfare state. Secondly, they build their own community where they can maintain their status in Korean circles, mainly through participation in protestant ethnic churches. As their lives in New Zealand continue, some experience certain critical incidents where they receive social

support from the host society's welfare system, which leads them to adjust their perception of New Zealand society, while some find other ways to enjoy their lives in New Zealand.

The process of immigrant settlement in the host society has been studied mostly in the framework of immigrants' socio-cultural adaptation to the host society. For example, Yoon (2003) summarises the adaptation patterns of overseas Koreans in the four main receiving countries through four theoretical approaches: assimilation theory, pluralism, segmented assimilation theory and acculturation theory. But these theories share an assumption that immigrants compete with the host people or other ethnic groups in mainstream society to obtain resources. However in the globalising world, where resources or capitals can cross borders easily, immigrants do not necessarily compete with other ethnic groups to get resources. In particular the Korean community has a special group of Koreans, the international students and their families who usually stay more than one year and are replaced by new families continuously. In the next chapter I will discuss the transnational characteristic of Koreans in New Zealand examining their transnational practices.

CHAPTER FIVE:

LIFE IN TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

Korean *Gireogi Gajok* (기러기 가족), which literally means geese family where the male breadwinners pursue their careers in Korea while their wives and children relocate in foreign countries, has been considered a unique family arrangement dedicated to child education similar to the Chinese astronaut families (Waters 2002). This phenomenon is often perceived in the host countries as unusual in that a family separates itself voluntarily for a long time as shown in an article from a US newspaper:

They have lived this way -- children without a father, wife without a husband -- for a year. Their plan is to live this way for nine more years. The Koreans call them Kirogi, or wild geese. The birds, a traditional symbol at weddings, mate for life. And they travel great distances to bring back food for their young (Ly 2005).

Korean immigrants to New Zealand were one of the first Korean emigrant groups to begin this trend, and these Korean geese families, or families separated between Korea and other countries, are presented as a typical example of transnationalism by scholars (e. g., Cho 2004; Lee and Koo 2006). Used “to designate the experience of post-1945 new immigrants into the US” (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002: 2) the term transnationalism has been adopted by many scholars in immigration studies in a range of different ways since its widely used definition by Basch and her colleagues (1994: 7). When Vertovec (1999:1) categorises theory and research on transnationalism into six distinct conceptual areas, as I reviewed in Chapter One, he attempts to capture and understand a wide variety of phenomena in international migration, such as labour migrants shuttling between the metropolitan cities in the US and their home town in the Caribbean, or middle class housewives who migrate to California from Taiwan to accompany their children to study in the US (Chee 2003) thanks to recent developments in communication and transport technology.

But soon the assertion arose that these phenomena are not novel and “many transnational patterns actually have a long history” according to Pedraza (2006:46) who cited Foner (1997) to show examples: Italian and Russian immigrants kept ties of sentiment and family alive with those back home by living in what today are called

“transnational households” with members scattered across nations, by sending remittances back home and by making political contributions for particular causes at the turn of the last century. Many Koreans in Japan, and later in the US, also participated in the same processes from the 1960s when immigration was perceived as an irreversible process for Koreans. They did this by contacting their family members in Korea, by sending remittances back home and by participating in political processes between South and North Korean governments.

So what is new in transnationalism and what might appropriately be described as transnational in immigrants’ experience? This chapter tries to answer these questions through the experiences of Korean international migrants between Korea and New Zealand.⁶³ First I will examine how these two countries, with totally different historical and socio-economic backgrounds, have come into sudden intensive contact in a short period from the perspective of the process of the formation of a transnational social field between two countries. Next the daily lives and activities of Korean international migrants across the national borders will be discussed to show how these Koreans use the transnational social field routinely and intensively. Then I will explore how this transnational social field has been exploited by different agents with different purposes. Finally, I will analyse what transnationalism means to these Koreans.

The Formation of a Transnational Social Field between Korea and New Zealand

Korea and New Zealand are located at a distance of about 10,000km from each other separated by the Pacific Ocean, and these two countries had few contacts until the Korean War in 1950 when New Zealand troops supported South Korea (King 2003: 424).⁶⁴ Even

⁶³ As I continued with this research I found it very difficult to specify the localities of the participants. Many participant family members lived separately in Korea, New Zealand and other countries, and international education, immigration, return migration and remigration were mixed up in their lives. Although in the early stages of this project I thought that without any doubt this research was to be about Koreans ‘IN’ New Zealand, now I have to admit that this study is about Koreans ‘IN and FROM’ New Zealand, or more exactly Koreans ‘BETWEEN’ Korea and New Zealand.

⁶⁴ According to King “When, in 1950, the New Zealand [national-led conservative] Government was asked by the United States to support American-led United Nations intervention in the Korean civil war, it agreed to do so – the first of several actions the country was to take in the 1950s in the interests of ‘containing’ international communism...an artillery regiment with all the services [as ‘Kayforce’ which consisted of 1100 men, subsequently raised up 1550, and the] fleet of six frigates and 1350 of its men [of the Royal New Zealand Navy] served...By the time of the ceasefire in July 1953, Kayforce had lost 38 men killed and 79 wounded and had one soldier taken prisoner. The navy lost two men killed and one wounded.” Apart from these soldiers’ enormous contributions to

since the war, the relationship between two countries had not been very intensive. But 45 years after the first significant contact, and five years after it started to receive mass immigrants from East Asian countries, New Zealand became the second largest country of destination for Korean immigrants.

The New Zealand Census indicated that four men who were born in Korea lived in New Zealand in March 1945, and in 1961 the number of people who were born in Korea living in New Zealand was 52, among whom it was suggested that 42 were seafarers on deep-sea fishing boats, and ten (six male and four female) were residents in New Zealand (Kim 1994: 19). Among these residents as of 1961, one entered New Zealand before 1911 and this person might be the first Korean immigrant in New Zealand. Although it is not certain whether this person was a Korean or another ethnic group member who was born in Korea and entered New Zealand, according to Kim (1994: 20), the possible scenario, in the context of Korean immigration history, is that this person might be one among 7,393 Korean immigrants to Hawaii as labourers on sugarcane plantations between 1902 and 1910. Later this Korean might have entered New Zealand via one of the Polynesian islands as many Korean immigrants to Hawaii did not return to Korea, but remigrated stateside or to Mexico.

After the Korean War until the 1960s, interaction between the two countries became more frequent as New Zealand participated in the Colombo Plan⁶⁵ in 1950 and invited some Korean international students to study in New Zealand. The two countries established diplomatic relationships in 1962. But it was during the 1970s that important historical events occurred which had an impact on the formation of the social space between the two countries.

The first occurrence was Korea's expanding export driven economic development policy. Beginning in 1962, the Korean government's efforts towards economic development through exports gained momentum in the 1970s, and as a result Korea actively sought trading partners over the world for export markets and raw material suppliers. It was through this trend that Korea and New Zealand established their

the battle fields and their invaluable sacrifice, New Zealand troops left a Māori song in Korea – Po Karekare Ana which was adapted into Korean and became a very famous love song in Korea.

⁶⁵ The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific was conceived at the Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs held in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in January 1950 and was launched on 1 July 1951. The plan was a framework for bi-lateral arrangements involving foreign aid and technical assistance for the economic and social development of the region primarily focused on human resource development.

embassies in Seoul and Wellington in 1971, and that the Korea Trade Commission was opened in Auckland in 1973. The trade relationship between Korea and New Zealand has increased until the present time when Korea is the sixth largest trading partner for New Zealand exports, and the ninth largest one for New Zealand imports.

The second incident was Korea's participation in the Vietnam War. From 1965 to 1973 Korea sent 312,853 soldiers to Vietnam, and many civilians attached to the military and businessmen also went to the battlefield in search of economic opportunity. The Vietnam war was an important opportunity for foreign experience for Korean working class men as well as business men and some Koreans who had been involved in the war, whether as civilians or discharged soldiers, started to flow into New Zealand directly or via Australia where the majority of these Koreans went to seek further economic opportunities during and after the Vietnam War. Although there is no formal data available for this research, one of the participants who came to New Zealand in the 1980s testified that the Korean permanent residents in New Zealand when he arrived had obtained PR status after coming from Vietnam or Australia with work permits.

The Korean community which went through these historical experiences in the 1970s was composed of staff and families of the Korean Embassy and the Korea Trade Commission, Colombo Plan students, and several families who had immigrated in conjunction with international marriage, [employment and business] (Nyujillaendue haninsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe [The compilation committee for a history of Koreans in New Zealand] 2007).

Although it was not directly related to the formation of Korean community in New Zealand in the 1970s, the dramatic increase of Korean immigration to the US should be also noted in terms of its impact on the formation of the transnational social field. Since 1962 when the Korean government enacted the first law regulating its nationals' emigration, entitled the Korean Emigration Law, to promote emigration to solve overpopulation in the country, Korean emigration has been continuously increasing in terms of volume and destinations. From 1974 to 1977, the number of Korean emigrants per year was over 40,000, and in 1976 when Korean emigration reached its peak, 46,533 Koreans left their home country, most of whom headed for the US.

For Koreans at that time, emigration was conceptualised as a way of escaping "poverty" and obtaining "a modern and affluent life". International migration was

theorised as movement from the periphery to the centre, from a Third World country to a First World country, based on a similar worldview to the centre-periphery dichotomy in world systems theory. For example, since 1991 Korea's Diplomatic White Papers have continually pointed to Koreans' remarkably improved living standards, consequent on economic success, as the reason for decreased emigration from the late 1980s. Moreover, Koreans were exposed, during the 1970s and 1980s, to the images of the "great America" uncritically accepted by their mass media which portrayed America as the strongest country in the world, with material affluence and equal opportunities. From these images and a social evolutionistic worldview, "Western" was seen as equivalent to "modernity" in Korea. This creates Koreans' fantasy of immigration: movement to the centre of the world meant upward social mobility for them.

During the 1980s while the flow of Korean emigration was concentrating on the US, New Zealand had been through major socio-economic change resulting from neo-liberal reforms following the end of the era of the "Golden Weather" in the 1950s, 1960s and the early 1970s. From 1975 to 1984 the then National Government "involved itself in the New Zealand economy in a big-spending and heavily interventionist way" (King 2003: 488) despite the world economic downturn in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result "New Zealand continued to accumulate foreign debt" (Daley 1998: 36). In this situation the Labour Government, which won the 1984 election, began to restructure the New Zealand economy in the direction of privatisation of the public sector and weakening economic control. It was in this context that the government started a fundamental review of the country's immigration laws in 1984, which resulted in the Immigration White Paper of 1986 and the Immigration Act 1987. Until 1987 New Zealand had kept its preference for migrants from Britain and Ireland under the justification of "social cohesion". The new immigration law, however, dropped the preference for migrants from traditional source countries and "removed restrictions on the entry of people from countries and regions of present and future economic and political importance to New Zealand" (Daley 1998: 36). In this manner, "They hoped to encourage new economic migrants, with a view to strengthening New Zealand's international economic competitiveness [as a response to] the increasing favouritism Great Britain was then showing to its European trading partners over its former colonies" (Chang, Morris, and Vokes 2006: 5).

Although many Koreans, who came to New Zealand through the business stream under the new law, experienced difficulty doing business due to insecure economic

conditions in the host country, the Immigration Act 1987 was a watershed in building the social field between Korea and New Zealand. Thanks to this new immigration law, the Korean community in New Zealand saw increasing numbers of immigrants coming from Korea and these people, already resident, played roles as “experts already in the receiving country to greet newcomers [in the 1990s] and serve as their guides” as discussed in Chapter One.

Since the enactment of the Immigration Act 1987, the flows of Korean immigration to New Zealand can be divided into a few phases according to the changes in New Zealand’s immigration policy. The first phase of Koreans’ mass immigration started with Immigration Amendment Act 1991 and ended in 1995 when the New Zealand government imposed an English test on applicants, in order to restrict the number of non-English speaking immigrants. During this period the Korean community took on the contours that are still evident, and the transnational social field started to emerge. Non-stop flights which began in 1993 and continued until the IMF in 1997, and the visa exemption agreement which commenced in 1994, have rapidly promoted personal and material exchange between the two countries. Korean public and private institutions were also established: the Korean consular office opened in Auckland in 1996 and a Korean private bank established its branch in the same city in 1997 just before the IMF.

Mass immigration from Korea continued in 1996 because of those who obtained PR before the policy change came in, but from 1997 the number of Korean immigrants dropped to the level of the late 1980s as the English test imposition took effect, and this trend went on to 2000. From 1998 to 1999, especially, the Korean community suffered severely from the aftermath of the IMF. Many Korean owned businesses closed because of the sudden rise of the New Zealand dollar against the Korean won, and some Koreans who lived on money from Korea experienced their monetary value decrease by half. As a result many people returned to Korea or remigrated to other countries, mainly to Australia.

This economic crisis in Korea also shook the New Zealand economy which highly depended on the Asian market. To escape from economic depression the New Zealand government implemented a new immigration scheme. The third phase began in 1999 when the New Zealand government introduced the Long Term Business Visa (LTBV) scheme. During this period there was another influx of Korean immigrants to New Zealand and consequently the New Zealand and Korean community economy revived. This phase

continued until 2002 when the government imposed the English test on the LTBV applicants.

The fourth and the present phase (at 2009) started from 2002 when the government introduced a new policy to attract a skilled labour force: From Work To Residence was a new temporary work permit policy to provide a direct pathway from skilled temporary worker to permanent resident, which included the Talent Visa and the Long Term Skill Shortage List Occupation work permit. But this policy did not have a significant influence on the Korean community as only 70 Koreans gained work permits under this policy and 13 among them had PR between April 2002 and October 2005, whereas 1,947 people from the UK had work permits and 603 of these gained PR (Merwood 2006: 46). Nevertheless, many Koreans including immigrants and international student families have actively participated in the transnational social field between Korea and New Zealand on a regular basis once it was formed during the first half of the 1990s.

Transnational Practices of Korean International Migrants

BG = As a resident who have lived here more than thirty years, what do you think of those who have entered New Zealand since 1990?

WD = I think they are very different from us – different lifestyles, ways of thinking and socio-economic backgrounds etc from ones we had when we came in... First of all, among those who have arrived recently there are many wealthy people and international students. And rather than thinking that they must settle successfully here, they come to learn English first and to reap the benefits of the New Zealand system. Afterwards, they consider their options and opportunities elsewhere and easily leave for another country – their ways of thinking are totally different to mine. So far I have thought New Zealand was enough but the new comers do not seem to think that at all. They looked fully internationalized, for example, being educated in New Zealand, doing further study and working in the US and then returning to Korea – it's like just completely (laugh), yes, it's like that.

The remarks above, from a female immigrant who has lived in New Zealand since the mid 1970s, refer to the new Korean international migrants who came to New Zealand after the 1990s. From her observations during her long contact with Koreans in the community as a professional, and her own experience as a long term resident, she described clearly what she saw as the totally new characteristics of the new immigrants. Discussing the distinctiveness of current transnationalism, Pedraza (2006: 46) pointed out that “in today's global economy, changes in the technologies of transportation and

communication (jet air travel, faxes, electronic mail, the internet, videos)⁶⁶ have changed the qualitative experience of immigration, [which] have enabled immigrants to maintain more frequent and closer contact with their home country and to participate regularly – both actually and vicariously – in the life they once left behind”. This new experience of immigration precisely applies to Korean immigrants, as this immigrant pointed out. Until the 1980s international migration meant permanent relocation for most Koreans and it led to disconnection from their human networks in Korea, which was the root of their fear associated with emigration and prevented most Koreans from embarking upon it. But since the 1990s Koreans could easily contact their families, relatives and friends in Korea after immigration as ordinary Korean people started to benefit from the developed technologies of transportation and communication due to the country’s economic success.

Immigrants

Immigrants maintain contact with their parents, relatives and friends in Korea and often invite, or are visited by, them mainly in the summer holiday season in New Zealand. Tourism is not the only reason for that visit for parents. When a woman gives birth to a baby, her mother or mother-in-law would come and stay for a while to help the woman during her recovery (cf. Moon 2003 as discussed in Chapter One). The immigrants also visit Korea regularly. Some people visit Korea for their transnational businesses several times in a year, but most immigrants go to Korea once a year, or once every two or three years, mainly to see their parents while they contact their parents almost everyday on the phone.

A survey (Kang and Page 2000) conducted in 1998 with 154 Korean immigrant households in Auckland, found that Korean immigrants travelled overseas more frequently than the New Zealand population in general and their main motivation for travel was to visit relatives for “the enhancement of kinship relationships” in Korea. While 31% of New Zealanders travelled overseas, 37%⁶⁷ of respondents did and among them 61% travelled to Korea. Notably: one in five respondents who travelled overseas, visited Korea more than twice between January 1997 and July 1998. The survey confirmed that Korean’s overseas travel from Auckland fell into the category of “ethnic reunion” with the findings that over the half of respondents travelled as a family; the high proportion of travel was made during

⁶⁶ Along with advancement in technology, international communication and travel have become increasingly affordable as well.

⁶⁷ Given that the survey period included the IMF crisis, Koreans’ overseas travel before or after this period would have been much more frequent.

the months of September, October and December which coincided with Korean Thanks Giving Day (Chuseok) and Christmas; and 97% of visits to Korea relied on accommodation in the homes of family, relatives and their own.

One of the participants went to Korea every year, from three years after immigration, to see his elderly parents. His family paid their visit on every Chuseok, one of the two biggest holidays when tens of millions of Korean people in Korea go to their hometowns. Mr Cho and Mrs Yu in Chapter Two went to Korea for their parents' 70th and 60th birthday celebration three years after immigration. For Korean immigrants, transnational activities are used as a way to fulfil their family obligations.

In addition to maintaining their social networks, visiting Korea is conceptualised as an opportunity for the immigrants to “fill up” themselves. Even though Koreans in New Zealand can enjoy Korean ways of living in the community and in transnational space, they still experience a lack: they are neither free in the host society, nor can they do enough in the community. Whilst visiting Korea every two or three years, they have time to “refill or refresh” their Koreanness with Korean food, fashion and entertainment etc.

It is in this context that many immigrants never fail to go to hospital when they visit Korea. Medical service is one of the areas the Korean community in New Zealand cannot provide fully: there were only three Korean general practitioners and six Korean dental clinics as of 2006, while over 30 Korean traditional medical clinics are in operation. So Koreans have to largely depend on the mainstream medical system. But as a former Korean general practitioner, who used to be the only Korean general practitioner until recently, well describes, many Koreans have difficulties using the system.

They don't know about the medical system...in New Zealand. First of all, they don't know about it. So how can they trust something that they don't know? They can't trust it. When something happens, therefore, they become easily anxious as they can't speak English and there are no Korean doctors. As a result they can't solve the problems which I think can be easily resolved here and they go to Korea with them. At first I wondered why they had to go to Korea with the problems that can be resolved here but later I could understand them...And Korean patients' expectations of doctors should also be considered. When they were in Korea, they could easily get an injection as they wished...but here the things do not go as they expect and the medical system is very complicated. If you want to see specialists in public hospitals you have to be listed on the waiting list. You have to wait. But Koreans become anxious about waiting. They hate waiting...I have also learned that waiting is very hard for Koreans. If you want to see specialists in public hospitals for free then you have to wait for a long time...you can see them in

private hospitals without the wait but it is expensive...so Korean patients cannot be satisfied with the New Zealand medical system.

She pointed out the factors in the New Zealand medical system that makes Korean patients unsatisfied: the language barrier, a different system, the long waiting time or expensive costs. Research on Korean, Indian and Chinese migrants with Tuberculosis in New Zealand (Anderson 2008) also found that these migrants encountered problems of language barriers, long waiting times and negative relations with clinicians during their Tuberculosis treatment; while they felt fear, isolation and boredom when they were hospitalised.

These factors discourage Koreans from accessing the New Zealand medical system. In fact Korean immigrants are under-represented in ACC claims compared to their population size. But the under-representation and low access rate is often attributed to the fact that Korean immigrants, if not all Asian immigrants in New Zealand, are not well adapted to the New Zealand medical system, which is based on the assumption that, as time goes on and they assimilate into the system, they will go along with it. But immigrants in the transnational era do not passively adapt themselves to the host society's social system instead they actively seek alternatives in transnational space if the social system in a country fails to meet their needs. In these terms if Korean immigrants go to Korea with their medical problems it is because they find that the medical system in Korea has comparative advantages. Korea's overall level of medical technology is high.⁶⁸ There are lots of specialist clinics and private hospitals in the big cities and patients can easily access specialists without referral and waiting. The Korean medical market is competitive so hospitals and private clinics try to attract the patients with various kinds of high technology medical equipment. In the Korean medical system, patients can choose their specialists. Most of all, Korea has a public medical insurance system which covers about 70% of most medical costs with less than 3% of their income in the case of employees. Immigrants can benefit from this insurance scheme if they keep their Korean citizenship.

⁶⁸ According to Korean Academy of Medical Sciences, Korea has 80% of the medical technology of the US. Using the high quality and low cost of the medical service, the Korean government and big hospitals actively try to attract overseas Korean patients by developing medical tourism packages. As part of these efforts, Seoul municipal government concluded an agreement with the Korean Society Associations in 2008 to facilitate overseas Koreans' visits for medical purpose, and the Korean Society of New Zealand concluded a similar agreement with several big hospitals in Seoul in the same year.

Under these circumstances the immigrants postpone their treatments until they visit Korea unless the situation is urgent.

Immigrant Children

1.5 generation Koreans in New Zealand also temporarily visit Korea for various purposes. Some 1.5 generation participants visited Korea during long holidays after graduating from high school, for the first time since their immigration. During this trip, they experienced full-scale Korean popular culture for the first time as adults. Many reported that they were quickly fascinated with it, and that it was far more interesting, “advanced” and familiar than that of New Zealand. Another usual transnational experience of the 1.5 generation was teaching English in Korea, as teachers in private educational institutions, for a short term – normally during winter holidays in Korea. There is always a big demand for English teachers in Korea so working conditions are fairly good: a good salary with return airfare and accommodation. Many Korean 1.5 generation university students participated in this home-country experience because they can enjoy holidays in Korea whilst earning money.

Exchange studentships at universities in Korea are another opportunity for 1.5 generation Koreans to have a transnational experience. It is interesting that 1.5 generation Koreans come to Korea as exchange students about 10 years after their relocation. For Mr In Jr in Chapter Two, who had studied for a year at a national university in Korea, this experience was a good opportunity to live as a Korean university student, to learn about Korea and Korean people and make networks with Korean youths.

For most 1.5 generation immigrants, these trips give them an opportunity to contact and experience Korea for the first time as adults after spending most of their time at mainstream New Zealand schools during their adolescence, when their experience of Korean culture was confined to the community, Korean media or the internet. These direct experiences helped 1.5 generation Koreans have a personal understanding of Korea and in some cases reshaped their transnational identity. Mr In Jr who came to New Zealand when he was eight put it this way:

I felt all Korean people lived lives to the full and saw them working hard until late at night. I mean overall they try harder in their lives than people here [New Zealand]...I found Korean culture very amusing. For example, I have never seen *gosa* [告祀] before...I wondered what the people were doing [with that pig and money]. Another thing that I felt was that the Korean community in New Zealand was a kind of a high society and the people in it were certainly upper class people with polite manners. When I saw some middle aged people drunken and going wild

like teenagers in a restaurant in Korea, I realised that Korean adults in New Zealand were not like the ones in Korea.

Moreover, these young people are not the dominant group in either society in New Zealand: their fathers and mothers dominate the Korean community while their white European friends dominate schools. But in Korea they are the local people who have the advantage of English skills so they can enjoy some privileges in their exciting and dynamic home country. After this experience, many 1.5 generation Koreans have a mind to return to Korea in the future, like the daughter of Mr Sung in Chapter Four:

When she visited Korea last year after graduating from high school, she said she liked Korea so much that she would like to return and live there. (laugh)

In the community 1.5 generation immigrants have peers from Korea: Korean international students. These young international migrants play an important role as the transnational agents for 1.5 generation children's identity formation by interacting with them. A woman, who immigrated in the early 1990s with her husband and two sons, was concerned that her younger son who was 10 years old at that time would forget his Korean language. But her two sons never lost their Korean culture: rather they sought it. She thought it was probably because of their experience with Korean international students. Her two sons used to work with her husband for a Korean owned private English institution, as translators and facilitators for Korean international students. A return migrant described, in a rather evolutionistic way, the international students as agents who supplied updated Korean-ness in the community to strengthen his sons' and their friends' Korean identity, which reveals identity politics in an immigration society:

If our family had immigrated to the US my children might have tried to assimilate to the host society avoiding speaking Korean and abandoning the Korean culture...but among Korean children in New Zealand, based on my experience watching my children growing up, the more recent immigrants from Korea tend to be more popular among their peers because they bring the latest and more advanced things to New Zealand with them...and in a sense Korean children seemed to look down on their Kiwi counterparts a bit thinking that they were superior to them, which lead them to try to keep their Korean language and contacting Korea and Korean culture. I think that was very important for their future and identity.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ But these transnational agents may become double edged swords in the community. Some Korean parents worry that the international students 'contaminate' their children with bad adolescent culture in Korea.

International Student Families

In terms of transnational practice, Korean international student families are some of the most active participants in the world. These families regularly shuttle back and forth between Korea and New Zealand. The frequency of transnational shuttling varies: from once to six or seven times a year, depending on the families' financial situation. To describe the class difference among the families, Korean media have coined terms such as eagle fathers and penguin fathers in addition to geese fathers. Geese fathers can visit their families once or twice a year while Eagle fathers can go to their families or call them in whenever they wish, as eagles can fly fast and unhindered:

As my husband came in so often that he had seen almost all the immigration officers in the airport when he went through customs. Because there were extraordinarily many stamps on his passport, an immigration officer at the airport, one day asked him as to why he came so often...during my stay for one and a half year, I haven't counted how many times he came - my children and I went to Korea twice, maybe he came once every two months, so about seven or eight times?

Meanwhile penguin fathers can neither go to their families nor call them back because they cannot afford the airfares nor have time to visit, as penguins cannot fly but walk with faltering steps. These new terms show how transnational movement through early study abroad has extended across the social classes, spreading to the middle class from the upper / middle class.

Apart from transnational movement, Korean international migrants engage in regular and frequent communication thanks to rapid transformations in the media and the Internet which "have exponentially broadened the range and intensity of transnational ties" (Murphy 2006: 81). Although normal international phone calls, using the cheap services provided by ethnic suppliers, are most widely used in communicating between Korea and New Zealand, some international student families are very active in using high tech telecommunication devices such as international phone calls or video phone through the Internet because of their low cost. Many geese husbands and wives spend a lot of time on the phone: a participant said his wife and he talked on the phone twice a day for an hour each time but the phone bill was "cheaper than that of domestic long distant call" because they used international phone calls through the internet. An international student mother participant used video phone through the Internet when she talked to her husband in Korea "once everyday for one or two hours". A geese father used these regular, frequent and intensive contacts as an opportunity for "distant parenting" talking with his children

everyday. Among the international students, email, various Internet messengers or individual cyber space such as “Cyworld”, which is Korean style Myspace or Bebo, is most commonly used to communicate between Korea and New Zealand.

In their everyday lives in Korea and New Zealand, Korean international student families had to bear “unusual” or “extraordinary” lives in transnational space for a time, so the family members carefully arranged their everyday lives to get the most out of their expensive opportunity. Husbands and wives keep tight daily routines. In Korea, it is thought that men are likely to be uncontrolled and tempted into adultery at some point if their lives without their wives and children are prolonged. A participant told me that he overcame his loneliness and sexual need by playing tennis, working hard in his job and doing domestic chores such as laundry. In the interview he jokingly gave a proposition for this study that “geese fathers should exercise”. Some geese fathers, especially penguin fathers, gave themselves up to their work. A participant who had run a mobile phone shop for 10 years in Seoul opened his shop for about 13 hours a day: he said his shop was a resting place as well as the work place for him.

Many geese mothers had even tighter lives in New Zealand than their husbands. In addition to doing housework, parenting and schooling including teaching school subjects to their children, they also had jobs, dealt with regular or unexpected household matters, and volunteered at church, so they had no day off in a week. An international student mother, who managed to get a work permit via a missionary organisation, worked in the organisation on weekdays while doing housework and volunteering as a teacher at Korean weekend school and Sunday school at her church on weekends. Another international student mother spent hectic days studying English, taking care of her children, teaching them maths and giving private piano lessons as a part time job on weekdays, while volunteering as an organ player at church at weekends. Moreover, the international student mothers had to deal with difficulties of life in a foreign society without their husbands’ help from arranging accommodation to complaining about incorrect bills. But not all international student mothers lived this way. According to a mother, there are three “types” of Korean international student mothers: golf playing groups, chatting groups and studying groups. But it seems true that there are many Korean mothers who are eager to learn English as well as to educate their children, which seemed to be a manifestation of their unrealised desire for social achievement in their early lives. A mother who failed to go abroad to study in her early days told her elder son that she envied him when she realised

that he fully understood the English lyrics when he listened to English pop songs. Through their efforts, some mothers succeeded in getting English certificates. A participant started studying English from elementary level and returned to Korea with her TESOL certificate after almost two years of study.

Including these efforts, the lives of many Korean international student families are arranged around the theme of “learning”. It is especially true for those families who planned to stay for less than two or three years because they want to learn English as much as they can during their stay. Some of these families never contact the Korean community, or try to avoid it, in order to mingle with main stream society. Some of them chose schools where there are few Korean students as this would assist their children’s rapid improvement in English. An international student, who returned to Korea after two years, had the chance to act in a musical performance in Auckland which was devised as an educational programme for children because his mother wanted to give him a New Zealand experience. He was one of only five Koreans among over 100 children in the musical. Some of the mothers urged their children to try to make friends with Kiwi students in order to learn English, and to avoid mixing solely with the Korean student group.

Most Korean parents were satisfied with New Zealand education as they found their children were very happy at school. Comparing the New Zealand education system with the Korean one, the parents listed the advantages New Zealand education gave them such as high receptiveness to students’ needs, friendly and encouraging teachers, non- coercive teaching, and respect towards students’ individuality and creativity. Most of all, less competition, if not none, among students at school was the best virtue of New Zealand’s education for Korean parents. For example, a mother was deeply moved by a Kiwi mum who lent her child’s homework notebook without hesitation when she sought advice from the Kiwi mum as to how to help her son’s homework. From this experience and other similar ones, she said she felt they played “a win-win game” at New Zealand schools – all children in a class profit in one way or the other.

But for most parents of Korean international students who are going to return to Korea sooner or later, New Zealand education was not enough and for some of them, it was too relaxed for their children in terms of strength of learning. As the parents of a returned international student family pointed out:

As a matter of fact we don’t think there is much to learn [in New Zealand] except for English. Of all things, they didn’t push children [to study] at school...it was fine

when the children were at primary school but it didn't seem okay to me when they went to secondary school.

Many international students have extra curricular classes in English and “Korea math and Korea sciences”, while studying at school to improve their English rapidly, and to not fall behind their school peers when they return to Korea. This costs a lot of money.

Considering this cost for children's extra curricular activities and the living expenses, along with school fees which cost at least \$10,000 a year for one international student in primary or secondary schools, Korean international student parents make a tremendous investment in their children's education to make their children competent in both societies.

Exploiting a Transnational Social Field

Alternative Adaptation Paths for Immigrants

I suggested in the previous chapter that it was necessary to examine Koreans' economic activities in the transnational space between Korea and New Zealand, as well as the money they brought from Korea, to understand the inconsistency between Koreans' poor income and their middle class living standard in New Zealand. In fact transnational livelihoods of Koreans in New Zealand are quite common and the range is wide.

Some immigrants arranged several income sources in Korea before they immigrated, like Mr Cho in Chapter Two who acquired a real estate property in Korea from which he could get regular income. These incomes were quite diverse in kind and quantity: from small supplementary income, to one's bread buttered for life from rent, pension, or shares. The participant who immigrated after failure in his car dealership said he was receiving a small amount of money from “a kind of pension”, while an immigrant, who was a former fund manager in Korea, still operates “over a billion Korean Won in the Korean stock market”. Although some people live on these incomes without working in New Zealand, for other immigrants, these incomes would supplement their incomes in New Zealand and give them psychological comfort. A participant, who could not work during his studies, said that even though he had money in his bank account, he used to feel nervous when he kept spending money from it without replenishing it with even a small amount.

International trade between Korea and New Zealand is often assumed to be one of the promising business opportunities for Korean immigrants in New Zealand. For example, two of the participants said that they once thought of importing Korean IT products to New Zealand and exporting New Zealand health food to Korea respectively, although their

business plans were never realised. What was interesting to note, was that both of these immigrants conceived their plans as an opportunity to earn extra money apart from their regular income. As such, Korean immigrants often conceptualise transnational space as the place where they can find economic opportunities because of their belonging to both societies, although their trials often ended up in failure which will be discussed later in this chapter.

It is still true that “transnationalism has created numerous economic opportunities for immigrants” as Lewellen (2002) noted, but these opportunities are found in the ethnic sector:

The transnational communities tend to form in metropolitan cities and this creates an internal market for ethnic specific businesses. The need of culture specific imports creates a niche of opportunity for capitalists who understand the language and culture and possess appropriate international connections (Lewellen 2002: 153).

In the case of the Korean immigrant communities, there are two big grocery firms based in the US. Their business activities are so transnational that, for example, one of them imports goods from 26 countries and exports their products to more than 30 countries where there are Korean communities. They deal with over 20,000 food items such as Kimchi, Korean soybean sauce or rice. These firms have their local franchisees in New Zealand and each of these franchisees has three wholesale stores in Auckland. Apart from these stores, there are lots of Korean grocery stores in New Zealand, many of which were set up by Korean Long Term Business Visa holders.

Through these ethnic businesses a multiplicity of Korean commodities are supplied to the community in New Zealand. It is estimated that about 10 containers of Korean goods are imported weekly by only one local franchisee, according to a Korea shop owner in west Auckland. Among the imported items, there are various kinds of Korean industrial products including Kimchi refrigerators and electric floor heating panels⁷⁰ as well as a variety of Korean food. The products of Korean media, mainly Korean TV programmes, are imported and supplied to the community through the Korean grocery shops one day after the programmes were aired in Korea. For most Korean families in New Zealand, watching Korean TV programmes is almost the only leisure time activity in the evenings,

⁷⁰ These items symbolise how Koreans organise their ways of living into Korean styles in New Zealand. Many Korean families in New Zealand need a Kimchi refrigerator which is mainly to store Kimchi in fresh condition because they still make Kimchi at home as a staple. Electric floor heating panels are used to emulate the floor heating system of houses in Korea where people often sit or lie on the floor.

so Korean TV programme video rental used to be a big business in the community before Internet downloading of TV programmes became popular. By means of these transnational business activities, Koreans have built their community as the place where they can be embedded, simultaneously, in Korea whilst living in New Zealand. Koreans can live the Korean way of life in the community -- eating Korean food and watching Korean TV programmes without overtly competing with the host people for resources in the host society.

However, the development of these ethnic businesses in New Zealand goes beyond the capacity of the Korean community: for example, as shown in Table 4.2 some ethnic businesses such as 135 Korean restaurants or 78 cram schools are too many for the scale of the community. Apart from the immigrants these businesses seek another group of customers: Korean international student families.

Table 5.1 Student permits and visas issued to Koreans and Korean international students (Statistics New Zealand 2007, Ministry of Education 2009)

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Permits & visas	12,125	17,992	19,509	15,207	13,594	12,972	14,441	105,840
At schools	NA	NA	7,232	6,519	5,080	4,503	5,050	NA
In tertiary education	1,999	2,428	2,164	2,028	2,085	2,212	2,580	15,496

From 2001 to 2007, on average, over 15,000 student visas per year were approved for Koreans and more than half of them were fee paying students at schools and in tertiary education as in Table 5.1. In addition, 12,333 guardian visas were issued to Korean parents from 2003 to the first half of 2008. This group is measurable in numbers but their influence on the community as consumers goes far beyond their population size. When an international student family arrives in New Zealand, they need accommodation, household items and cars most of which they buy from Koreans in the community. If students come by themselves, by law they need legal guardians and a homestay family. So many immigrant families host these international students and become their guardians. Moreover, every year new Korean international students, and their parents, arrive in the community to repeat the same process of settlement and consumption. Many international students seek extracurricular classes as I have noted, and these students are the main customers of private education providers in the community.

The private education providers in the community, together with the international education agencies, have played an important role as transnational agents in strengthening the transnational ties and connections between New Zealand and Korea through their business activities. For example, an immigrant who runs a private coaching school in west Auckland visits Korea every year to promote his institution and recruit students. He takes tens of Korean students to New Zealand every year and normally they return to Korea after several weeks' English training. Many Korean international agents do the same work as this man: it was an international education agent from New Zealand, who made Mrs Im in Chapter Two decide to send her daughters abroad for their education. Through these business activities of immigrants, New Zealand has become known as a destination country for study to Koreans.

Last but not least, in terms of transnational economic activity is the novel phenomenon of geese fathers working in Korea. Although this practice now happens less frequently than before among the immigrants, according to a Korean newspaper publisher, some immigrants and the international student fathers still carry on this transnational strategy. An immigrant, who is a member at my church, has shuttled between Korea and New Zealand for more than 10 years running his private hospital in a small city in Korea. Another immigrant, who was an international student father, had been back and forth for two years to run his IT company in Seoul after he moved to New Zealand to be with his wife and two children. Like these two men many of these people are business men or professionals, such as medical doctors or lawyers in Korea. Among the fathers of the separated families of this study, there are seven business men, three medical professionals, two lawyers and one professor. Some international student families among the participants sought residency in New Zealand while they were shuttling back and forth. A father of two international students, who was a Korean traditional medical doctor, was applying for immigration through investment category to live with his family. Another father who was a veterinarian was planning to run a farm in New Zealand for the same reason. However, even though these people get permanent residency, they are not likely to "settle" in New Zealand because their careers in Korea are too good to be given up and they have difficulty transferring their qualifications to New Zealand. Under these circumstances these fathers chose to continue transnational shuttling.

So far I have discussed Korean international migrants' economic activities, which accords with Portes and his colleagues' argument about transnationalism. They claimed

that immigrants' sizeable back-and-forth movements, and regular exchange of tangible and intangible goods between places of origin and the destination, should be taken note of in immigration studies:

These movements and the bi-national field that they gradually create amount to an alternative adaptation path for immigrants in the advanced world. Whereas, previously economic success and social status depended exclusively on rapid acculturation and entrance into mainstream circles of the host society, present-day transnational migrants depend on (at least for some) cultivating strong social networks across national borders (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 228-229).

It is obvious that Korean international migrants in New Zealand build an alternative path for attaining desired economic and social status through their back-and-forth movements.

Simultaneously Chasing the Two Hares of Economic Opportunity and Quality-of-Life

As transnational practices have become popular among migrants, international population movement is better described as continuous rather than completed (Ley and Kobayashi 2005) because the participants find and/or build transnational routes between the two countries once they get into international migration flows. In this context migration and return migration should not be understood as discrete movements. In their study of Hong Kong middle class returnees from Canada, Ley and Kobayashi (2005) discuss transnational migration which, in that scenario, consists of a series of strategic migrations and return migrations between an economic pole in Hong Kong and a quality-of-life pole in Canada. In this sense, the return becomes an integral part of the migration experience in transnational migration, and transnational migrants live in transnational spaces or social fields which have multiple localities between the two countries.

This idea, in which international migrants strategically swing the transnational pendulum between their home country and host country, is also applied to Korean international migrants between Korea and New Zealand. The stories of return migration of the participants have common factors: getting qualifications or careers which could be helpful for them to seek economic opportunities in Korea, returning for job or business opportunities in Korea and plans for coming back to New Zealand for child education and retirement.

One of the participants who had worked as a cook for eight years in New Zealand returned to Korea in 2002 to set up his own business. In his cooking school a New Zealand cook taught in English and he translated in Korean to Korean housewives. Unfortunately, his "smart and novel" idea ended up failing within six months and he incurred a big debt

because of it. After that, he stayed with his wife and daughter and worked as a cook in a restaurant in Korea for two years to pay back his debts before they returned to New Zealand. His reason for returning to Korea was to make big money for his old age, while he was still young, using his career and taking advantage of the favourable exchange rate. But, he said, he never intended to live permanently in Korea: although he came to Korea to seek “a bigger market”, he thought it was New Zealand where he would live with his family, bring up his children and would be buried because he liked “the carefree life style” in New Zealand.

Mr In in Chapter Two, who returned to Korea to his earlier job, left his two sons, his house, and all his belongings (apart from some clothes) in New Zealand when he went to Korea because he intended to return to New Zealand some day in the future.⁷¹ Another participant, who also returned to Korea for a job opportunity, planned to return to New Zealand because he thought he could not afford his children’s university fees in Korea. A single male immigrant who had lived in Christchurch returned to Korea after graduating from university because he saw few job opportunities in New Zealand. He put the situation in this way, “[As an immigrant] I found that I could only work as either a cleaner or a shepherd in New Zealand. Even though I worked as a shepherd, I could choose to do shepherd among many options in Korea but in New Zealand you have no choice but a shepherd”. Through this claim this immigrant tries to express that career options are very limited for Asian immigrant youths in New Zealand: restricted to low status labour jobs like cleaners or farm labourers. Despite his criticism, however, he visited New Zealand once after his return to maintain his permanent residency.

It is also true for 1.5 generation immigrants that there are limited job opportunities in New Zealand because of its small economic scale. Based on more than 10 years observation of the Korean community in Christchurch one immigrant, whose two sons graduated from university in New Zealand and succeeded in finding jobs in New Zealand and the US respectively, knew well the difficulty of finding full time regular jobs for Korean youths. Although they still do not seem to have well established career paths, according to his observation, many 1.5 generation immigrants returned to Korea as a way of coping with this difficulty. Many of their counterparts in mainstream society moved to Australia and the UK to seek overseas experience and job opportunities. These 1.5

⁷¹ One year after the fieldwork was over, Mr In’s wife, Mrs Lee, returned to New Zealand leaving her husband in Korea, to be with her two sons when her elder son married.

generation immigrants' return to Korea is based on a different perception of home from the first generation immigrants. That is, many of the 1.5 generation participants who came to Korea told me that they did so because they thought of Korea as a country where they could find more opportunities and they would have advantages in terms of language, networks and accessibility. A female participant turned her eye to Korea when she and her brother wanted to expand their business overseas:

For that purpose, Korea is an ideal foreign country for us because it is our motherland: we can speak Korean and have many networks there. So for us Korea is the more favourable foreign country to run our business than Australia or the US.

A male 1.5 generation Korean's provided a similar answer when I asked if the Korean 1.5 generation immigrants in New Zealand wanted to go to the US in search of jobs:

Many think of going to the US but it's probably more difficult than to Australia and Korea. After all, they can easily get the visas to work in either Australia or Korea but that's not the case in the US. And there is a thought that Australia would be similar to New Zealand but America is unfamiliar.

Note the interesting distinction between "motherland" and "country" in the former quote. Korea is her motherland but is seen as a foreign country, which implies that her country is New Zealand. And in the latter quote Korea and Australia are categorised as one in terms of easy accessibility and familiarity for the young Korean immigrants. This clear perception of the nation state shows that the scope of transnationalism is not global but multinational, if not bi-national. This exactly accords with the argument of Kearney (1995) and Faist (2000) in which transnationalism is distinguished from globalization in that transnational processes are anchored in, and transcend, one or more nation-states, whereas global processes are often decentralised from specific national territories.

What, then, are the opportunities that these young people think Korea can give them? For most Korean 1.5 generation immigrants, it came from their motherland's advanced industrialisation. One of the participants, who graduated from university in New Zealand and went to Korea to work in a telecommunication company as a researcher developing high tech mobile phones, said that if he had worked in New Zealand he would have worked in a company manufacturing "electric barbed-wire for sheep farm". If, by this metaphor, this man meant that Korea gave him more chances to work in a stimulating work environment and to develop his professional career, another young Korean immigrant

pointed to ethnic politics in New Zealand as a reason for his returning to Korea right after graduation at university. Furthermore, there were more opportunities in Korea. That is, as a Korean he was free from discrimination in, for example, promotion in the workplace in Korea; whereas he thought he would have been treated less favorably than white Europeans, or even Chinese, in New Zealand judging from the experience of his friends or other Korean people around him.

In turn, fluent English was the benefit that Korea expects to get from these 1.5 generation immigrants. Generally it is assumed that 1.5 generation immigrants who have education experience and qualifications in an advanced and/or English speaking country are welcomed by their motherland because of their “transferable skills and/or internationally recognized credentials” (Ip and Friesen 2001:229). But nowadays in Korea, where many 1.5 generation Koreans from different part of the world compete with each other in its labour market, those from New Zealand have little comparative advantage over those from the US in terms of educational qualifications and careers. As one of the participants said: “in the industry where I work, those who have work experience from US based multinational companies can be recognised but it is not the case for those who came from New Zealand”. Under these circumstances, many of the 1.5 generation participants said they found little advantage from their New Zealand background although they had more chance of finding “better jobs in foreign companies or major big companies in Korea with favourable working conditions” because of their English skills. Nevertheless, fluent English is still a rare cultural capital in Korea because these 1.5 generation Koreans had not just “more and better opportunities”, but “far more and better ones” in finding employment than Korean university graduates. For example, the organizations that one of the participants had applied for were all considered as the best employers by Koreans in terms of salary level, social importance of the work and employees’ career development opportunities.

Although the first generation participants who went to Korea wanted to return to New Zealand some day in the future, they agreed with the fact that they *returned* to Korea, but many 1.5 generation participants often represented their going to Korea as *re-migration* rather than return migration, like this female 1.5 generation participant who went to Korea to work as a Korean language teacher for foreigners and to study in a PhD course. When I asked her the reason for returning, she clearly denied that she had returned:

I did not return and I don't think it was a big decision for me to shuttle back and forth because I am from Korea...[In New Zealand] many people [around me] think that I returned to Korea but I don't think I "returned" to Korea in the exact sense of that word. I came here [Korea] for a short time for my studies and I have never thought I had permanently left New Zealand to come here.

For 1.5 generation Koreans in New Zealand whether they returned or re-migrated to Korea seemed to depend on how long they had lived in Korea before immigration and where their parents lived. That is, it depended on their notion of home.

Another important motive of 1.5 generation immigrants' going to Korea was to seek Korean spouses. According to a male 1.5 generation participant, women in particular go to Korea for marriage as well as for employment opportunities, but he did not give a clear answer as to why more women than men, go to Korea for marriage. From the examples below, however, we can see that some female 1.5 generation Koreans who went to Korea to seek spouses have a more traditional gender role perception or family oriented value system, which was expressed as "a Korean way of thinking". A participant who had lived in New Zealand for about 15 years married a Korean man and returned to Korea in 2006. She explained that her decision was the result of her Korean way of thinking: "I think I have both the Korean ways of thinking and the western ways of thinking but when it came to marriage I found I inclined to the Korean way in which I thought it should be very important for me as a woman to live as a wife in a family as well as a career woman." Another participant answered in this way when I asked if she would marry a man from an other ethnic group: "as far as I am concerned it doesn't matter...but I should care about it because marriage is a family versus family matter...I have seen that the two families could not get along with or children suffered from identity crisis in a few interethnic marriage couples." The former is the participant who described Korea as the "motherland" and "an ideal foreign country" and the latter is the one who denied that she had returned to Korea. Their senses of identity are very diverse, and this versatile identity is critical for them to be able to live in two or more nation states and exploit both of them at the same time.

Some 1.5 generation Koreans' return to Korea is consequent on a previous arrangement made by their parents. A male participant, after a few years work in the UK, returned to Korea when his parents returned. According to another participant, his parents returned to Korea when he got into university in New Zealand because they no longer needed to be in New Zealand given that he had succeeded in entering university. This strategy appeals to men in particular, as a 1.5 generation immigrant who worked in the

Korean Society in a local city said, “they do not need to stay in New Zealand anymore now that they got New Zealand citizenship by which they were exempted from compulsory military service and they have learned English which would make sure for them to have a good job in Korea”.

In my Masters thesis I argued that the main purpose of Korean immigration to New Zealand is not to settle in New Zealand but to obtain some symbolic advantages such as English or educational qualifications from the time spent in New Zealand, for escalation and reproduction of status in Korea. In that period of my fieldwork, I observed that many New Zealand immigrants looked into the possibility of moving back to Korea. The appropriate time for their return migration seemed deeply related to the opportune time for the children’s school entrance. When I met some 1.5 generation participants for interviews in Korea in 2006 and 2007, I found that they were those immigrants’ children who had “looked into the possibility of return migration” in 1995. Those who were primary or intermediate school students at that time graduated from university in New Zealand and returned to Korea.

These young people who returned to Korea with their parents wanted to work and settle in Korea where they could develop their professional careers and earn a good income using their comparative advantage. In their future plans, however, these people together with other 1.5 generation participants wanted to return to New Zealand after they attain a certain level of occupational and economic achievement in Korea. In New Zealand their children would be educated just as they had been and eventually they would retire there. As this participant noted:

I am not going to return to New Zealand for a while, say, while I am still young...as I have been telling you. I think I need to stay in Korea when I am young because it is a dynamic society where I can seek my career development and there is good income. Meanwhile when I get older, because the living environment [in New Zealand] is much better than here...I don’t think the process that I have gone through is bad. I moved there [New Zealand] after graduating from middle school in Korea and came back after graduating from university...if the children are too young...they might suffer from identity problems, and the parents should be with them. But I have to earn money so I could not go together with them. Therefore, according to my experience I think they should go after completing middle school to build Korean identities.

Trans-generational transmigration involving the same linked countries may be a future trend. The main thread of the discourses about international movement of these 1.5 generation Koreans was “quest for opportunities”. They did not think they belonged to, or

should live, only in one country. For them the important thing was opportunity and their comparative strength: which country could give them the best opportunity and do they have the strength needed to make themselves competitive in using these opportunities? In this respect, many 1.5 generation immigrants found their best opportunities in Korea as Koreans who could speak English fluently.

Crossing the Different Educational Systems

Often Korean international students in New Zealand are represented as a homogeneous group of English seekers, but they are diverse in their purposes. Some scholars in Korea consider the boom in early study abroad to be the result of the aspirations of Korean parents to prepare their children as competent human resources in the globalised labour market. In this regard, English is seen as important cultural capital to guarantee success in this market. But it is doubtful that someone would become fluent in a foreign language in two or three years as these two Korean women, one of whom was an international student mother and the other, an international student, implied:

Mothers have said to me that my son might speak English like a native speaker, which is naively ignorant. Their own children have lived and learnt Korean for ten years to complete the second grade in primary school in Korea, but even after that they still have difficulties in speaking and writing in Korean. I do not understand how these mothers could think that a child could speak English as fluently as an adult native speaker after only two years of schooling in an English speaking country.

BG = How many years did it take you until you could use English without much difficulty?

Ms Jin = More than five years. Actually, it was not until I entered the university.

It seems difficult to connect the two or three years early study abroad directly to human resources in the international labour market. Furthermore, my participant observation among international student families has taught me that their experiences in both schools and broader New Zealand society were sometimes superficial. Many of the mothers avoided contacting the host people, even their children's teachers, and many children have difficulties interacting with their teachers. A Christian minister told me that the parents rarely see the teachers because they cannot speak English well, which would cause misunderstandings between teachers and the parents and lower the quality of education of their children. An international student also recalled her experience with her Kiwi teachers in secondary schools negatively:

New Zealand students seemed to be very close with their teachers...but I couldn't do that not only because of the English barrier but also because I felt that they were different from me...Because of this, I couldn't even freely ask questions to the teachers, which was very stressful.

Although the international student parents' ultimate goal would be to prepare their children to become members of the future global elite, the individual paths they select to take them there may differ.

Then, what is the implication, for Korean parents, of two or three years of education in an English speaking country? According to the human resource discourse, it would be to develop children's foreign language ability when those children are in a critical period in terms of language acquisition. Thus it could be easily re-activated in the future when it would be needed. In fact, through all the interviews, I heard ideas as to the best time for a child to learn English without losing their mother tongue.

But the more direct aim of less than three years early study abroad is to find an easy way to enable students to go to top universities in Korea or the US, because acquisition of English language skills gives students a headstart in schools in Korea:

Mrs Seon = My kid wants to go to university in the US.

Mrs Han = Then, he must go to Daewon Woego (a foreign language high school).

Mrs Seon = Yeah, he wants to go Daewon Woego or Minsago (a private high school for the gifted).

In this respect, the reason why parents give careful consideration to when, and for how long, it is proper for early study abroad to be undertaken is not just for their children's foreign language acquisition and maintenance, without the risk of loss of their mother tongue, but it is also for their children's advanced school entrance. In fact there is a consensus among Korean international student parents about the best time to undertake early study abroad.

Some parents use the strategy more accurately to maximise the opportunity to take advantage of the two educational systems. A returned international student mother found that at schools in Korea there are more students who go abroad to study for less than six months, or for two months during school holidays, than those who went for more than a year. These students want to master English without disrupting their study in Korea.

When these parents decided to educate their children in an English speaking country, they seemed to consider it as two or three years intensive English tutoring, not as a formal/public education course. In this sense, it can be said that these parents are making,

or inventing, a transnational curriculum connecting both countries' public education systems. They strategically inserted part of a foreign country's public education curriculum into their children's school career, not so much for the curriculum content but for the language of instruction and school sociability.

This strategy is more evident when parents living in the regional cities in Korea use it:

Most people coming here [New Zealand] are from local cities such as Daegu, Kwangju etc. There are only a few people from *Gangnam* in Seoul.

There is no way for me to verify this statement, but the discourse of New Zealand's peripherality as the second tier destination among Koreans can be identified in a private foreign language institution's advertising flyer in Korea, on which it is written that "we do not have any teachers from Australia and New Zealand".⁷² Regardless of whether it is true or not, the discourse tells us about the strategic use of transnational space to bridge the gap in educational resources or the opportunities between local cities and Seoul, intersecting the local/global and centre/periphery.

The parents' interest is not in their children getting qualifications in New Zealand schools. Less than three years of a child's study abroad at primary school age comes not "from the transnational ideas of obtaining education credits from internationally recognized countries" (Cho, 2006). Instead, it comes from parents wanting their children to get sufficient English skills to distinguish them from other children in Korea. These Korean parents believe that children's high performance in schools, and ultimately in entering top universities in Korea, will guarantee successful class reproduction.

Is this about producing young adults who can capitalise in the global economy, or is it about young people who have an assured place in Korea's class structure? In fact there are few opportunities to use English in work or everyday life in Korea, except in examinations for the evaluation of people at work and in schools or in particular narrow fields:

[In Korea] There are very few occupations which need as good command of English as UN secretary General Bankimun has. For most Koreans, just elementary

⁷² The cultural logic underlying this advertisement is a hierarchy of prestige among different versions of English in Korea. North American English is considered to be the most authentic and prestigious, while Antipodean English is considered as strange in terms of pronunciation. Because of this perception, many Antipodean English tutors in Korea are asked to "correct" their pronunciation.

level of English is enough...Nevertheless, so many people cling to English education not because they need it but because they are evaluated by it at work or schools (Kwon 2007).

And their children's living or working in foreign countries appears to be a second option for these people:

It is best for Koreans to live in Korea (laugh)...If you live in a foreign country, it would be better for you to be acting as a mediator between Korea and that foreign country because you are still Korean no matter where you are living.

For some Korean upper middle class people, early study abroad is conceptualised as one of several ways of investment in child education for class reproduction. Their efforts to educate their children in English speaking countries do not seem to be a direct response to globalised world capitalism, but to be an attempt to get more resources in their own country through educational differentiation in transnational space.

Study abroad at secondary school level is sometimes considered as a response to a child's maladjustment in the local education system. In Korea, there are few alternatives for underachieving students or for those who are ill-adapted to Korea's formal education system. In fact, international education is seen as a second chance after a child's failure in the local education system and is a quite an established practice among wealthy Korean people:

This is an attempt to develop the student's ability by moving to a different educational system from Korea where students' academic achievement is closely related to the degree of conformity to the education system, and to overcome the structural barrier of university ranking system in Korea where all universities are hierarchically arranged according to the social reputation by going to university in a foreign country (Cho 2006:20).

But as transnational migration is generalised, this strategy is widely accepted by many middle class parents in a different context. One of the participants planned to return to Korea, once his two sons have a good command of English, and to send them to university in Korea. In his opinion, Asians -- Koreans in particular -- have no prospects with English skills alone even though they have New Zealand citizenship. To have secure jobs, they need to have a good command of both languages and complete understanding of the two cultures, and university degrees.

In a similar context, a father of a high school student wanted to send his son to university in Korea. This father had a very sophisticated rationale for his plan: even though Asians graduate from university in New Zealand and go to Australia or the US to seek

more opportunities, they are still immigrants in a new environment and they cannot be treated as New Zealanders. Moreover, if his son does not finish compulsory military service, he has to live as a foreigner when he returns to Korea. But if he returns to Korea he might get into university through the special admission for overseas Koreans. So if he gets into university in Korea and finishes his military service, he would have more opportunities in his home country with his English skills and experiences in New Zealand.

In their future plans for their children these people were trying to maximise the benefits of their transnational position: they crossed the borders between the Korean and New Zealand education systems in order to get to Korean tertiary education through various detours.

Early international education was very different from Koreans' previous form of study abroad. Until the mid 1990s, when the trend of early study abroad was adopted by many middle class parents, Koreans' study abroad had been undertaken mainly for university students' English training or post graduate education. At that time primary and secondary education were done entirely within the state's borders, except in the small number of cases of diplomats or those who had overseas job assignments: primary and secondary education were completely regulated by the government and by regulating and controlling the entrance examination to university, tertiary education was also controlled by the state. But since the late 1990s, the state's control of education has been challenged by the spreading trend of early study abroad. The existence of students who went abroad for primary and secondary education, and later returned to schools in Korea, shook the government's authority in establishing the school curriculum. Especially, those who completed secondary education in foreign countries and successfully entered universities in Korea have the potential to disturb the state's authority to regulate the qualification for university entrance, although the number of the cases is still small.

Quest for Opportunities through Multiple Localities

As I have discussed so far, popularisation of advanced technologies in communication and transportation allowed Korean immigrants to frequently contact their home country after their relocation. One of the results of this new phenomenon is that Koreans' perception of emigration has changed: they no longer need to be afraid of separation from their [family] networks in their home country because of emigration, or to perceive immigration as an irreversible movement. In fact after New Zealand opened its immigration gate to Koreans

in the early 1990s, this changing perception of immigration brought many Koreans to New Zealand. During my fieldwork in Christchurch for my MA research in 1995, four years after mass immigration from Korea started, when I asked the reasons for immigration, I heard from many immigrants that they came to New Zealand “just to live once in a place with fresh air and clear water”. This seemed to imply that they could always move back when circumstances called for it.

Another aspect of Koreans’ changed perception of immigration is that immigration in the transnational era is no longer perceived as a negative action. In Korean public discourse emigration used to be considered, often including by immigrants themselves, as an “extreme” choice for those who had few options in their home land. Those leaving their home country for economic, political or other reasons were often considered to be “turning their backs to their mother lands”. But, as discussed in Chapter One, now the transnational flow is no longer regarded as being special or negative as argued by Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 3). As a result of these changing perceptions, decision-making about international movement became much easier for most Koreans and the boundaries between sojourning, and immigration and international students and immigrants blur.

One of the participants in this research had come to New Zealand as a visitor, but she applied for permanent residency and obtained it one year after she arrived in New Zealand. And during the interviews I often heard from some international student mothers that their husbands would like to immigrate to New Zealand. In fact three of the immigrant participants were international student parents when they first arrived in New Zealand. During their time as international student parents in New Zealand, they managed to find a way to get permanent residency. What is interesting is that their motivation in seeking permanent residency is not to seek the right to reside in the country, which was the traditional aim of immigrants, but to seek the right for free access to various social systems of the country: all of the international student families mentioned above applied for permanent residency to get local student status for their children. They “had no special intention to live in New Zealand” when they applied for permanent residency.

International migration now includes a strong strand of a transnational movement in an increasingly globalising world. Transnational practices have a long history, as many

scholars point out, but they were limited to a small group of usually privileged people⁷³ or to large enterprises' multinational processes. What makes today's transnationalism distinctive is that it becomes so accessible that ordinary people can participate in the flows. According to Portes and his colleagues (1999), this popularised transnationalism which they called grass roots transnationalism "offers an option to ordinary people not present in the past" not only in the countries to which they migrate but also in their own countries, and "has the potential of subverting one of the fundamental premises of capitalist globalisation, namely that labour stays local, whereas capital ranges global".

As a result, ordinary people began to seek better opportunities across the national borders. A female immigrant, whom I cited in an earlier section, pointed out that this was the main difference between the newcomers and herself who tried to settle successfully in New Zealand. When I asked about future plans, a female immigrant who was studying clinical psychology expected that she would be able to work anywhere in the world with her degree. Mr Cho in Chapter Two decided to pursue a degree in nursing because "nurses are always demanded all over the world so I can work any where I wish". And for their family's future, Mr Cho and his wife, Mrs Yu, also had a global scale plan. Once their children finished secondary school in New Zealand they wanted them to have tertiary education in a more advanced country like Australia or the US. After the children are trained as global elites, Mr Cho and his wife hoped they would develop their career in their home country. In the meantime, Mrs Yu wanted to live moving freely between countries such as the country where her husband would work, be it Korea or New Zealand. But for their retirement they wanted to return to New Zealand. The reason for this couple's global scale plan was New Zealand's limited opportunities for Asian people in particular.

Many participants of this research said that for them to move to New Zealand was similar to moving to another district in Seoul, what they meant was that "New Zealand" was part of their transnational social field where they could easily access the host society's social systems for their benefit, while maintaining their linkage with their home country. It is also in this context that many white collar workers in their late 30s or early 40s, who were laid-off or felt insecurity in their employment status, or whose businesses had failed

⁷³ For example, I remember a famous Korean pop singer who was criticised because of her transnational shuttling between Korea and the US in the 1970s, when the general public's overseas trips were severely restricted by the then military dictatorship government. She lived in the US and periodically visited Korea for performances. When she came to Korea, many Koreans ridiculed her implying that she might need money again while being jealous of her privilege.

after the IMF, came to New Zealand. When they searched for alternative opportunities in Korea they found, or activated, their connection to the transnational social field through kinship/friendship networks or commercial immigration agencies spanning the two countries.

After moving to New Zealand, most of these people engaged in small businesses such as lunch bars or dairies or in the service sector like building cleaning. At the cost of their occupational status as university graduated white collar workers or substantial business owners in Korea, they gained membership of a welfare state. But this exchange is evaluated not in the context of the host society but in that of the transnational social field, as Mr Sung noted in Chapter Four. Meanwhile under the LTBV scheme, those from the old middle class with lower educational qualifications could also obtain residency on the basis of their business careers. For these people, the transnational social field could be the arena where they resolved the status inconsistency between their economic and social status.

Conclusion

To answer the questions “what is new in transnationalism and what might appropriately be described as transnational in immigrants’ experience” I examined how New Zealand and Korea came into sudden intensive contact in the framework of the formation of the transnational social field. Although the two countries have been in contact for more than 50 years, the formation of the transnational social field between New Zealand and Korea is a more recent development. Between 1991 and 1995 when an influx of Korean immigrants arrived in New Zealand, the transnational social field was largely formed and since then it has been used by many different Korean agents.

Korean immigrants and their children and international student families were the main agents in the transnational social field between Korea and New Zealand, and their transnational practices and activities are carried out on a large scale on a routine basis due to advanced technology in communication and transportation, and Korea’s economic success. These agents exploit the transnational social field in three different ways. Firstly immigrants use the transnational social field for alternative economic opportunities in the host country. Through this transnational practice Koreans in New Zealand can be simultaneously embedded in Korea while living in New Zealand. Secondly, immigrants and their children use this social field for seeking economic opportunity and an enhanced quality of life. In this practice, the boundary between immigration and return migration

blur. Thirdly, the transnational social field is used as a way to bridge different educational systems between the two countries to create a shortcut to a headstart, or to get entrance to university in the educational system in Korea.

Through these practices Korean transnational migrants seek better opportunities for their pursuit of status. For Koreans transnationalism means the strategy for maximising opportunities through simultaneous embeddedness in the transnational social field.

But many Korean transnational migrants incur costs as they seek these benefits. For example international student parents have to sacrifice their conjugal relationships. In the next chapter I will explore the costs and benefits of this strategy.

CHAPTER SIX:

THE COSTS OF TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGIES

I discussed, in the previous chapters, the reasons for Koreans' international migration to New Zealand in relation to the interests of the middle class in Korea. Many Korean middle class people chose international migration as a way of dealing with an insecure future, seeking secure economic and social status which they found hard to obtain in the social field of their home country.

Immigration and class status are quite familiar themes in Korean immigration history. According to Abelman and Lie (1995), in 1965 the US changed its immigration law to admit immigrants from Korea. The reasons for Korean immigration to the US thereafter, include the search for an affluent life in the most advanced country, the opportunity of upwardly intergenerational mobility, the desire for political freedom and the prospect of breaking loose from conflicts arising out of traditional family relationships. Thus, they are saying that such immigrations represent the realisation of the yearning for modernity. Abelman and Lie understood the social mobility-motivated immigration of Koreans as a phenomenon generated by an aspiration for status reproduction, something that can be realised through the guarantee of a college education for the second generation and through the freedom from social connections and discrimination based on individuals' attributed status in Korea.

But this immigration is different from international movements through the transnational social field. Immigration in the past was basically considered to be movement from one nation state to another. The borders between nations were fixed and clear in physical and psychological senses. Immigrants had to adjust themselves to "a new culture" which was bound up in a particular nation state. They had to learn new languages, often change their life-styles, and even abandon the internalised values to which they had adhered over a lifetime, in order to adjust to the new society.

Through these processes, most immigrants found themselves to become disadvantaged in the host society, which made immigration "a unique and profound

stressor” (Murphy 2006: 79). To cope with the situation, immigrants used various strategies that they thought enabled them to “make it” in the host society: from the complete abandonment of their own culture to the total rebuttal of the new culture. But most immigrants put themselves somewhere in between these two extremes. If immigrants succeeded in their efforts, they settled in the new society and if not, they often returned to their home country, all of these processes occurred once and irrevocably within the boundary of the nation states (e.g., Berry 2001).

Transnational migrants experience different dynamics in their contact with, or relation to, the host society because of their flexibility and mobility. In economic terms, as I discussed in Chapter Five, they have alternative adaptation paths so that they do not necessarily compete with the host people over resources in the mainstream society. Therefore, transnational migrants do not depend exclusively on rapid acculturation and entrance into mainstream circles of the host society for economic success and social status. In other words, they do not need to give up their ways of life of their home country. They have created their own community in which they can be embedded in Korea even while they are living in New Zealand. Moreover, through constant and strong transnational connections with their homeland, these migrants can choose social institutions such as medical or educational systems from either of the two countries, which are exemplified in the case of transnational migrants’ use of Korean medical institutions, as discussed in the same chapter.

But transnational migrants cannot always celebrate their flexibility and mobility. For example, as Ong (1999:19) argues, “travelling subjects are never free of regulation set by state power, market operation and kinship norms”. In this chapter I first examine the difficulties Korean transnational migrants face in the transnational social space in terms of the opportunity cost of their flexibility, mobility and consequent dual belongings as part of their transnational strategy. Then I discuss how these difficulties affect Koreans in New Zealand and how they experience and express these challenges. Finally the strategies which these people use to cope with these hardships are discussed.

The Opportunity Cost of Koreans’ Transnational Strategy

Degraded Social Status in a New Social Field

In Korea..., [It was hard for me] to spare time for the family, and actually I was not even with them on weekends. I don’t know whether you [the researcher] have worked as a company employee or not in Korea...but I used to go to work even on

Saturdays and Sundays when it was busy. So to say, once a month, in my memory once a month on average, just one Sunday, the Lord's day, was the only time to be with them, but even on that day I used to spend most of time sleeping because I was tired.

This man in his mid 40s, who had worked for about 20 years as a company employee in Korea before he immigrated to New Zealand, was not an unusual workaholic. In fact most company employees in Korea, if not all, are still in the same situation that this man was. The best thing he got from immigration was to have much more time with his family having lots of conversations with them. He also said he liked his work in New Zealand which he found to be less stressful than his job in Korea where he suffered severe stress from interpersonal relations in the workplace.

As he admitted, however, the positive gains he obtained from immigration cost something he had in Korea: he alluded to his dissatisfaction with his loss of status in the family as the main breadwinner, and in society as a career man. He implied that he had been a division manager in a large company in Korea, but now he had to work in a small shop alongside his wife who now contributed equally to their business, but who had never worked in Korea. Nevertheless "there are more good things" in New Zealand, according to him.

Although many Korean immigrants like this man could maintain, or achieve, economic security through small self-employed businesses after relocation, thanks to the fund they brought from Korea, they could not avoid downward mobility in social status in New Zealand. Many of them who used to work as professionals and belonged to the [upper] middle class in Korea remain un/underemployed, work in labouring jobs or run small businesses which have no link to their previous careers. In particular, men, who had enjoyed special privileges in a Confucian cultural context, lose the authority they could have built as professional workers, and are deprived of the satisfaction of making a valuable contribution to society (Koo 1997):

TA = While operating one or two businesses here, what I have felt that for a foreigner, a man in particular, it is difficult to live and run business in New Zealand. For me, it was nice to spend time without doing anything for about one year at first because prices were not bad at that time so in a sense I enjoyed spending spree with money that I brought from Seoul as well as enjoying the natural environment here. But as time went... linguistic, economic or political restrictions which limit a man's social activities were the factors that made me, how can I say, small. I felt like my brain got worse and my social sphere was getting smaller. Some people said that's why they drank a lot and started smoking again. I felt the feeling quite

strongly from the third year [of immigration] that, so to speak, I was becoming very small.

BG = [But] you are running a quite big business here unlike other Koreans.

TA = I don't think it has anything to do with business....I mean, if I came here in my early 30s and kept busy for living, it did not matter. But in neither the 30s nor the 50s, [in the 40s] when men are supposed to be most active [in terms of social and economic activities] to settle in a foreign country as a comfort zone seemed a bit problematic to me.

BG = You mean, if you came here in your 50s, then you were fine to live an easy life?

TA = What I am saying is not about easy or hard life. It is different. It's something hard to express, like a sense of letdown or emptiness.

BG = But you wouldn't have decided to return to Korea and continued to live with your family if that thing had gone differently, would you?

TA = I think so, and another thing that encouraged and accelerated me to decide to return to Korea was that there is still someone who needed me in professional terms.

This man, who had been a CEO of a venture company in Korea, decided to return to Korea again for work at the time of interview, three years after relocation in New Zealand to unite his family. The quote above clearly shows what middle class Korean people give up to get an “easy” or “undisturbed” life in New Zealand: their middle class social status in social and political realms as well as in the economic arena. This man addressed it only in indirect or implied terms such as “a feeling of contraction” or “a sense of letdown or emptiness”, probably to avoid giving the impression that he thought he deserved to have that status. But it is strongly suggested that what he was missing in New Zealand, and what he was looking forward to having in Korea, was his professional middle class social status which he could not pursue in New Zealand, a different social field, which is implied in his comments that if he were in his 30s it would not matter. In addition, the fact that there was someone who still needed him accelerated his decision to return. For this upper middle class man, who used to be a goose father, the exchange of social status and an easy and undisturbed life in a transnational social field was not considered to be a fair trade, as the values of Korea seemed to haunt him in New Zealand. As a result he returned again to a previous transnational strategy – family separation. In this context, the transnational social field is always a project under construction, and it is not an easy project.

Through the interviews I identified with three main barriers which, participants indicated, prevent Korean middle class people from transferring their social status into New Zealand society: lack of English, lack of local knowledge and discriminatory practices in employment and business in the host society.

Lack of ability in English was the most serious problems hindering Korean immigrants from having professional jobs or running businesses. Koreans' limited English ability restricts the jobs that they are able to choose in the host society: it constrains many of them to do labouring jobs regardless of their careers in Korea. This is the main reason for immigrants' dissatisfaction, and has consequences for addictive or dependent actions, as an immigrant observed:

Language is the biggest decisive factor [for settlement] for Koreans here...As they are unable to communicate properly in English, the pool of jobs where they can choose from are very limited. And as more and more people engage in similar areas, the whole community goes [that way]. That's why the saying, "an immigrant's life is like a woman's life [in the traditional Korean society where women's happiness in their lives was depend on their husbands]" is true. Many immigrants have no other choice but ending up in the same jobs as those who met them at the airport on arrival...that's why some people [who are not satisfied at their lives in New Zealand] are addicted to gambling while other people ruin themselves with alcohol.

The finding of this research is in line with most scholarly literature about immigrant adjustment where language is the most frequently identified barrier and source of stress (e.g., Ho et al. 2003, Kim 1991). Berry and his colleagues (1987) reported that Koreans in Canada who had experienced a language barrier tended to avoid contact with host Canadians, to show a high level of stress, and to feel alienated from the mainstream host society.

Koreans in New Zealand, who were the least likely to speak English among the Asian groups in New Zealand according to 2001 census, appear to be in a similar situation to their counterparts in Canada. In everyday life they have difficulties contacting the host society: when ordering food in restaurants, paying bills, doing banking, or buying things, or if anything out of the ordinary happens, Koreans often have difficulties understanding what is going on. More seriously, English inability affects Koreans' access to child education and health care. Many Korean parents do not know about their children's school lives, and have difficulties communicating with their children's teachers and getting information from schools. And immigrants often cannot describe their symptoms to doctors in English. A Korean general practitioner in Auckland said he had many Korean patients seeing him again after "failed consultation" with non-Korean doctors. He found that these patients' symptoms and the doctors' prescriptions did not match.

English ability restricts immigrants' spheres of activity in the host society. In this regard, an immigrant likened immigrants' lack of English fluency to a serious speech

disorder. According to a female return migrant, lack of information about the host society prevented immigrants from living a full-scale life as the host people do, which was regrettable for her. She said she realised this when she projected her experience in New Zealand onto the guest workers' lives in Korea: she doubted that they could enjoy the pleasures of Korea as Koreans do.

English is used as a means to maintain the host people's dominance over immigrants. Many participants agreed that in New Zealand discrimination against immigrants was seldom structural and/or explicit in everyday life. But they said they often face informal, personal and subtle types of discrimination by the host people on the pretext of immigrants' lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge, especially when the situations are against the host people. This covert discrimination makes immigrants more angry and frustrated than structural and explicit discrimination. But few immigrants can resist this discrimination. Rather, immigrants often try to avoid contacting the host society, like Mrs Han and Seon in Chapter Two, who had restricted themselves to their homes and, at best, to the neighbourhood of the Korean community, until they returned to Korea in order to minimise the risk of unpleasant situations such as a car crash which, due to their poor English, they would not be able to handle.

In order to cope with English in their everyday lives, many Korean parents depend on their children. But if their children are under age, according to some participants, even though this strategy works well in the case of simple interpretation, they cannot deal with complex businesses requiring particular knowledge such as translation of documents from IRD.

In these ways lack of proficiency in English has been one of the prime causes of stress for Korean immigrants. In terms of mental health, a serious problem of low self-esteem, strongly related to depression (Shin 1995), can stem from this. Many participants said that they felt even their other abilities, including educational and professional careers in Korea, were "totally ignored" by the host people just because of their lack of fluency in English. As pointed out by this return migrant:

Because, after all, I could not speak English, I felt like a fool there...I had lived in Korea without inhibition [before I went to New Zealand] but there I kept feeling small as if I had done something wrong... it was something like a sense of inferiority, you know (laugh)...I felt it very strongly.

It is not that Koreans do not make an effort to learn English. Rather, almost all Koreans in New Zealand wish they could become fluent in English, and many of them make eager efforts in various ways to improve their English skills. Many Korean housewives, including international student mothers, attend English class in community centres, or join the Bible study groups at mainstream churches. People repeatedly make a resolution to “study” English whenever they are “treated unfairly or feel themselves inferior because of [their] lack of English skills”.

Their aspiration for learning English, however, seems to be as much for “becoming a cosmopolitan citizen or a fluent speaker of a second language” rather than for “surviving”, which is different from immigrants in the past, such as Koreans in Canada as Berry and his colleagues reported above, or the refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos as discussed in Chapter Four, in that all these people needed English to settle in the host society. As transnational migrants, many – but not all – Koreans in New Zealand can bear the inconvenience from lack of English skills by relying on within their community and their connections with Korea.

But even for those who can speak English fluently and have experience of work in foreign companies, seeking employment opportunities in a different social and cultural environment is a challenge because of lack of local knowledge. “If a New Zealander family immigrated to the US, they face similar difficulties as a Korean family do in terms of local knowledge.”⁷⁴ In the same context, for a Korean businessman who had run his business in Auckland, the most difficult thing in running a business in New Zealand was that he had to go through numerous stages inquiring over and over to find something he needed which he could have found with just a phone call in Seoul. After his two years experience he decided to return to Korea because he realised that he would have achieved “ten, even hundred times” more if he had made the same efforts in Korea as he did in New Zealand. A female return migrant made a similar comment when I asked her if she would like to live abroad again: “if we try in Korea as half as hard we did in foreign countries, we will surely succeed.”

Considering the fact that many 1.5 generation Koreans who graduated from university in New Zealand also have difficulties finding job opportunities, we can deduce that the language barrier and lack of local knowledge are not the only reasons for a lack of

⁷⁴ This comment was made by a New Zealander at a conference responding to my presentation about Korean immigrants’ mental health.

job opportunities for immigrants. New Zealand's small and primary industry-centred economy is another factor that makes Korean immigrants' efforts to find jobs difficult. In terms of Gross Domestic Product, New Zealand is less than a tenth of Korea.⁷⁵ In addition, the New Zealand economy is strongly focused on tourism and primary industries like agriculture, in which people need cultural and historical connections to the society in order to engage, and has only a small manufacturing and high tech component. In this scale and structure of economy immigrants, who have limited language skills and local knowledge, can only access labouring jobs or need to create their own businesses. Moreover, according to a Korean businessman, since manufacturing components are small and largely depend on imports immigrants, who have no established import connections with other countries have disadvantages when setting up a new business.

Discriminatory practices in employment and the "gate-keeping" phenomenon in business areas against Asian immigrants, make Korean immigrants' economic activities more difficult. A female immigrant who had three Masters Degrees and more than 10 years work experience in New Zealand told me how she was discriminated against when she sought employment opportunities: while she had job offers from many Asian-related companies that she applied for, she was never even given a job interview when she applied for positions in the mainstream companies. Later when she found that the positions for which she had applied were filled by those who had lower qualification or shorter experience than her, she felt she had been discriminated against. She was even more frustrated after she was informed why she had been rejected: in some cases she was an "unqualified" candidate but in other cases she was an "overqualified" one. In the business area, some host people's gate-keeping practices hinder immigrants from entering their fields of business, as indicated in the case of Mr Seo in Chapter Four who was threatened by his former employer after he established his own factory.

As I discussed in Chapter Four, for one or two years after immigration to New Zealand, most Koreans' economic situations allowed them to maintain a living standard comparable to that of the New Zealand middle class. But after that they began to feel economic pressure unless they started to make money in New Zealand. If they had experienced a failure in their businesses in Korea, perhaps, during the IMF, this pressure

⁷⁵ As of January 2008, New Zealand's GDP was 112.6 billion US dollars while Korea's GDP was 1,206 billion US dollars

became stronger. To cope with the financial shortage, many Korean international migrants reduced their spending, which lowered their quality of life. A female return migrant said her family was not able to enjoy life in New Zealand as they had in Korea. They could not provide their children with extra education opportunities, participate in leisure activities, eat out often, or go to the opera in New Zealand because they did not make enough money. For her, this was not the way ordinary middle class people are supposed to live. Even though they lived a life undisturbed by their extended family, she said, she felt loneliness and deprived of culture. It is often said that New Zealand is a boring heaven. It means that people cannot enjoy earthly life in New Zealand because they do not have enough [economic] resources even though they can have calm and peaceful heavenly life there.

Sacrificing Family Relations

The transnational space between Korea and New Zealand allowed some Korean immigrant families to live transnational lives in which the husband works in Korea and the wife and children reside in New Zealand. Later through this space, many Korean international students and their caregivers entered New Zealand. These international student families exhibit the same pattern of transnational lives. Transnational lives can certainly be a useful strategy for immigrant families as a way to maintain their middle class socio-economic status without struggling for success in the host society, and for the international student families as a way to escape from difficult social problems in Korea. But these people also have to pay a price for this strategy -- family separation. The members of separated families have to endure lives without wives, husbands, and fathers, which brings various psychological and social problems. According to Murphy (2006), transnational practices have negative effects on immigrants' mental health because these activities place a burden on those in the provision role, when they are obliged to operate transnationally because of their immigration patterns.

Because this family arrangement is different from the western norms of family and parenthood, separated Korean families have difficulty being acknowledged as a family by the host society, which has the potential to cause problems for the family members in legal and psychological terms. I know of two Korean families who were asked to prove that they were a family by the immigration office because, according to New Zealand family categories, the family members had been separated too long to be recognised as a family when they applied for permanent residency. Even though they submitted a variety of proof like wedding photos, one family's application was rejected because of this different

perception of a family. For Korean international students from transnational families, it was stressful that their Kiwi friends could not understand their situation of family separation with neither divorce nor bereavement.

When it comes to Koreans' early study abroad, a lot of attention is paid to the separated family and husband – wife relationships within this. There are far more Korean students living abroad without parents than those who are accompanied by the parents. They experience many difficulties living alone in a foreign country: living with homestay families, enduring possible bad relationships with teachers or even racial discrimination. But the hardest thing for these students is that they cannot have parents' care when they need it.

Probably about 80% [of my stress came from] the homestay home... The saddest thing was, you know, I couldn't feel at ease at home because it was someone else's home any way...and [I also felt stressed] when my parents couldn't make it on the special occasions, like my prize giving day etc.

Moreover most of these international students just had to endure when they felt stressed because they did not have anyone on whom they could rely. For these students, the difficulties they experienced in their initial settlement might have been traumatic. One international student later told his mother that he had cried a lot for his first year.

These children had to bear a heavy burden when they lived and studied abroad by themselves, separated from their parents, as in the case of Ms Jin in Chapter Two. As a result the children in astronaut families become more independent, assertive, self-confident, and mature compared with children in the country of origin as in the review of Aye and Guerin (2001) which is discussed in Chapter One. But parachute children's independence may not be easily accepted in Korean culture. For example, Ms Jin's father had assured himself that he had made the right decision to educate their children abroad for the first three or four years, but after that, he concluded that it was not all good for them when his daughters made him realise that they had grown up in a different environment, out of the boundaries of a normal Korean family.

Another group, which usually miss attention in the practice of Koreans' early study abroad are children accompanying their elder siblings. When Korean parents consider their children's early study abroad, their primary concern is for their eldest children. So many younger children in international student families participate in early study abroad too early because of their older siblings, and this causes problems in their language

development and school adjustment when they return to Korea. An international student mother said her second daughter, who wanted to go back to Korea, complained that she was sacrificed because of her sister.

Korean international student parents in transnational families have to accept much inconvenience from family separation, but for them child rearing and discipline is the most difficult task. For Korean international student mothers, disciplining their teenage children without their husbands is a very challenging task. Mothers, who take care of their sons, feel keenly the necessity of their husbands being with them when their sons reach the age when they need a male role model. Mothers who have only daughters, without the mediation of their husbands, often conflict with their daughters as they grow up. For Korean international student fathers, who have not been with their children for several years, the acculturation gap with their children was part of the cost of their strategy.

But the most serious problem that the transnational family strategy may cause is family disruption. In June 2005 a community newspaper (Lee 2005) reported about a Korean man who came to New Zealand to search for his wife and children. His wife and children came to New Zealand in 2003 for their children's education, but his wife had not contacted him for some time past. Although the man claimed his wife had no reason to hide, the newspaper reported, through a third party, that his wife wanted to leave her marriage because of her husband's violence. The report suspected that she had committed adultery, and introduced the claim that there was a correlation between the disruption of transnational families and increasing cases of divorce among immigrant couples. Although the report seemed to show that a transnational family strategy was used as a way of avoiding divorce among some Korean married couples, it is true that the transnational family strategy may put spousal relationship at risk in some cases.

Husbands and wives in transnational families do not often see each other so they experience loneliness. Many international student mothers said that they felt loneliness and even a wife who had an "eagle" husband said she felt like she reached the limit as more than three years had passed since she started taking care of her children by herself. For a goose father, loneliness was the most difficult obstacle in maintaining transnational family life. Lack of sexual contact between the couples can be a threatening factor for transnational couples. According to research on Korean married couples' sexual relationships (Ham 2004), most Korean couples say they have sexual intercourse with their spouses between once a week and two or three times a month. Considering that Korean

international student parents can be together only about a month a year on average, their possible frequency of sexual intercourse would be much lower than this.

In fact many Korean couples are in their 40s and 50s when they decide to live transnational life. Ennui in married life is experienced by some Korean married couples at this point in their lives, and some of them experience a crisis. In this case, separation for child education is a better strategy than divorce. Nevertheless, a long term lack of sexual relationship causes stress for both men and women. It is said that some husbands of transnational families in Korea, where the sexual ethic is more generous to men commit extramarital affairs as a way of dealing with their loneliness and fewer women do that in New Zealand. But these extramarital affairs of men and women bring different results: for men, those relationships are temporary and they do not want them to damage their family, while for women, many adultery cases end up in divorce as in the newspaper report described above. Alcoholism among international student mothers is another cost of the transnational family strategy. A Christian minister said he was surprised to realise that in the community there are far more international student mothers who habitually drink and depend on alcohol than he expected.

Colliding Values

Korean immigrants are often surprised to realise how much their ways of living are different from the host societies' social norms and value systems. One example of difference in value systems between Koreans and New Zealanders is individualism. For Koreans who "consider the opinions of other people around them important and feel satisfaction when they are recognised by them", according to a participant who worked as a mental health worker, adjusting themselves to the more individualistic society is a very difficult task. I have been told several times by the 1.5 generation participants that they had difficulties in making Kiwi friends as they grew up. When they were at primary school they got along with their Kiwi classmates but from intermediate school or college, Korean students tend to mix only with other Korean students, partly because they find it hard to make a deeper relationship⁷⁶ with Kiwis Koreans "did not know how close is not too close" according to a 1.5 generation participant.

⁷⁶ Given that these 1.5 generation participants have lived and been educated at least more than 10 years in New Zealand, it is not a language barrier that hinders "deep and close" relationships between them and their Kiwi counterparts. Instead there seems to be basic differences in expectations in interpersonal relationships between Koreans and New Zealanders. Yum (1988)

In terms of relationships with teachers, for example, Korean students who have a different cultural scenario often have difficulties interacting with their teachers at New Zealand schools. A 1.5 generation immigrant experienced a cultural shock in his class in his early days in New Zealand, when he saw a classmate throwing an eraser for his teacher to catch and all his classmates calling the teacher by his first name, which is unimaginable in Korea where students should use their both hands to show their respect to their teachers when they need to hand in something, in addition to being required to use respectful expressions when talking to their teachers. They cannot behave in the same manner towards the teachers as their classmates do, who appear to have so intimate a relationship with their teachers that they speak to them as if they were friends. Korean students feel excluded from such relationships.

The different values can be stressful for immigrants. The study of the experiences of Tongan immigrants who live in New Zealand (Foliaski 1997) illustrates a possible protective effect of traditional Tongan culture on mental health: failure to maintain the

compares interpersonal relationship patterns between the East Asian and the Western European. Although her argument that East Asians have similar interpersonal relationship patterns because of the impact of Confucianism is debatable, Yum describes well the five characteristics of Korean interpersonal relationship patterns: 1) particularistic--instead of applying the same rule to everybody with whom they interact, Koreans differentially grade and regulate relationships according to the level of intimacy, the status of the persons involved, and the particular context; 2) long term and asymmetrical reciprocity--the individual does not calculate what he or she gives or receives. To calculate would be to think about immediate personal profits; 3) strong distinction between in-group and out-group members--mutual dependence requires that one be affiliated and identify with relatively small and tightly knit groups of people over long periods of time. These long-term relationships work because each group member expects the others to reciprocate and also because group members believe that sooner or later they will have to depend on the others; 4) informal intermediaries--because the distinctions between in-group and out-group members are so strict, it is imperative to have an intermediary to help one initiate a new relationship. The intermediary has an in-group relationship with both parties and so can connect them; 5) overlap of personal and public relationships--there is a tendency to mix personal with public relationships. Even though the obvious purpose of a meeting is for business, both parties feel more comfortable if the transaction occurs on a more personal, human level. Under this context when Korean immigrants try to establish "close or deep" relationships with New Zealanders who are accustomed to symmetrical or contractual reciprocity and may distinguish clearly personal and public relationships without any information on their personal backgrounds and/or intermediary, they often end up getting frustrated. But here a question is raised: why do these 1.5 generation Koreans who have acculturated in New Zealand society through formal education seek Korean style of human relationship? I think various explanations are possible. Upbringing, parents' networks and similar living experience might be important. Through these mechanisms together with formal education in the host society 1.5 generation Koreans might develop a transnational habitus [or] "a particular set of dualistic dispositions that inclines migrants to act and react to specific situations in a manner that can be, but is not always, calculated, and that is not simply a question of conscious acceptance of specific behavioural or socio cultural rules (Guarnizo 1997:311)." Related to this is identity politics. They might be claiming that their ways in making human relationships are better than those of Kiwis. This topic needs to be investigated further.

extended family structure, to follow social obligation and to keep religious affiliation were related to higher rates of drug involvement, suicide, and criminal offenses in their host society.

Some people rejected what they saw as New Zealand value systems. A mother, whose daughter returned to Korea for work after graduating from university in New Zealand, told me why her daughter came back to Korea:

My elder daughter is planing to go to Korea after graduation. She used to say to me that she would find a job in Korea and would not live here. She did not want to live here...New Zealand did not seem right for her because she is a typical Korean in her way of thinking. [If I have to define it] can I call it '*jeong*(情)' ⁷⁷? (Laugh) But for her, kids in New Zealand are so individualistic that she could not cope with it.

As in the case above, many international migrants experience difficulties negotiating between different values and modes of actions, and in the course of negotiation, some people have more acute experiences. In New Zealand there are also many cases where conflicts occurred between "Korean" ways and "New Zealand" social norms, for example, over parenting or health-care practices. During my fieldwork I gathered many examples of conflict cases from interviews, participation observations, and local newspapers in Korean and in English, and found that most of these cases were described in the form of incidents, which led me to use the "Critical Incident Technique (CIT)" to analyse the conflict cases.

The technique was originally developed by Flanagan (1954: 327) as a research tool. A critical incident is "any observable human activity which is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To qualify as critical, the incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intention of the act seems clear to the observer and the consequences sufficiently definitive as to leave little doubt concerning its effects". Working as an aviation psychologist in the United States Air force, Flanagan asked combat veterans to report their own, and others', behaviour in the form of incidents which they considered to be helpful or harmful in accomplishing their bombing missions. Following analysis of the data, Flanagan produced a list of critical behaviours which enabled him to identify important job elements, types of stressors and conditions that impair performance, and the critical requirements of leadership, based on an analysis of actions involving decision making and choice.

⁷⁷ This is a unique Korean sentiment which has the following three characteristics as Choi and Lee (1999) identify: interactions among involved parties with concern and consideration, intention to help, mutual understanding and caring for the counterpart; we-connoting oneness and sameness; familiarity and unceremoniousness in relations.

My aims were to find what kinds of conflicts occur and what strategies Koreans use to respond to the incidents. First I categorised the cases according to who was involved in the incidents. I found that the most frequent types of conflicts were about different legal consciousness between Korea and New Zealand, followed by conflicts between parents and their children over child discipline and conflicts between different practices in postpartum care. And then I divided each incident into four phases of background, incident, result and response to find the strategies used by the people involved.

I heard lots of cases, from the Korean communities in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton, in which Koreans were accused of doing illegal things without knowing that what they were doing was wrong: leaving underage children alone in the house or car while their caregivers were away, touching children's bodies, fighting with their mates at school, and so on -- all of which caused serious breaches of New Zealand law, but which were conventionally accepted in Korea. In these cases, the Koreans involved all accepted their responsibility after realising that New Zealand law prohibited those behaviours. In terms of the strategy, this was an area where they had to assimilate into New Zealand society.

But in some of the cases, Koreans felt it was hard to understand the law and they were psychologically resistant to it. For example, a Korean who had worked as a kindergarten teacher in Korea for 10 years, started working in an early childhood education institute as a volunteer about a year after she immigrated to New Zealand. One day, volunteering at the institute, she washed two children's arms and legs. After that, she was told by a teacher that volunteers could wash only children's hands and later she was summoned, by the head of the institute to the teacher meeting and was told that her behaviour could be considered sexual harassment. She defended herself saying that they were children under four years old, she was a mother and a qualified kindergarten teacher in Korea, and assistant teachers or volunteers were allowed to wash children in kindergartens in Korea. But her defence was not accepted. She was warned that it was illegal and she should never wash children again. Before finishing the meeting she told the head teacher that it was a pity for New Zealand to have this teacher-pupil relationship. Later, she became a qualified teacher, but she said she still could not understand the law although she was very careful when she washed and hugged children.

Korean parents often conflicted with their children over their Korean style of discipline. Typical examples of this conflict were over children's sleepover and party-

going with their Kiwi friends. Sleepovers, especially, were strictly prohibited by some Korean parents regardless of children's gender. The parents' -- the fathers' in particular -- reason for prohibition was unclear, or too clear: a female participant said her father did not let her sleepover because "it is not allowed", and a male participant said his father never allowed him to sleepover under the ultimate proposition that "people should sleep at home". These participants were also not allowed to buy popular sunglasses or to go to party, respectively, without "particular reasons". In these incidents, the two participants responded differently: the male participant accepted his father's decision without complaint, while the female participant strongly confronted her father.

These two participants, however, said they had never seriously felt pressure from their parents regarding their studies. This is unusual when compared to Korean immigrant parents in other countries who force their children to study hard, causing severe conflicts with their children. The participants' parents were focused on keeping their children from vices like smoking, drinking, or having sex, that youths often indulge in before they become university students, and which are considered typical examples of teenager misconduct in Korea. This is implied in the female participant's comment: "I know what my father wanted me. 'After you go to university you do whatever you want but before that you should obey me'." In the parents' thoughts, New Zealand is more permissive than Korea and moreover, they do not know much about what New Zealand families are like. So the best way to protect their children is to prevent them from going into possibly risky environments.

Conflicts surrounding health care practices are an area where different cultural logics about the human body compete in immigration countries. Postpartum care practice is a typical example of competition of cultural hegemonies. The first challenge that Korean women face after delivery in New Zealand hospitals is that of taking a shower. In Korea, keeping a women's body warm after childbirth is considered crucial for their recovery. If a woman comes into contact with water right after delivery, she is likely to suffer from the after-effects of child birth, sometimes until she gives birth to another baby. So it is Korean traditional custom to keep women, after delivery, in a hot room without contacting cold air or having a bath for a few days or even weeks at the longest. But in New Zealand hospitals Korean women feel pressured to take a shower because they worry about their smell. Another challenge to Korean women after childbirth is what they eat. Traditionally, and even nowadays, Korean women have to have an extraordinary amount of rice with

seaweed soup after delivery to supply nutrition and produce enough breast milk to feed their baby. But again in a New Zealand hospital, they are provided with toast, sandwiches, or cereal. Some people were even discouraged from eating rice because it is low in nutrition. The women, however, could not help but obey instructions from the hospital staff because they are cared for by them. A female participant who failed to produce breast milk put her situation during her postpartum period in a New Zealand hospital in this way: “[I could not eat Korean style meal in hospital] because other people in ward made grimaces at the smell of Kimchi. You can express yourself properly when you are healthy physically and mentally but when you have to lie down in bed after having an operation cutting my abdomen open, you cannot help but relying on the carers.” But she did better when she gave birth to her second baby: she had seaweed soup in hospital as many times as she wanted and was able to feed her baby with her breast milk.

Immigrants’ conflict with different values in the host society is not a new phenomenon. But in transnational migration this conflict exhibits different dynamics. Immigrants with prior experience of this conflict assume an inferior position in relation to the host society. Unlike past immigrants, transnational migrants have constant contact with their home country and this contact provides them with a strong reference when they compete with the host society over ways of living and thinking. It should be noted that Koreans, in many cases above, are trying to confront the difference using their own logics and to not simply conform to pressure from the host society. In transnationalism the conflict between immigrants and the host people becomes more like a politics of ethnicity and culture.

Interethnic Conflicts

The similar kind of competition or politics surrounding ethnicity and cultures also happens on the collective level between immigrants and the host people. Koreans’ collective response to the *New Zealand Herald’s* negative report⁷⁸ about Korean people in 2002 was a typical example. On 24 June when the 2002 soccer World Cup, which was co-hosted by Korea and Japan, was drawing to a close, the *New Zealand Herald* reported an article entitled “Korea at a glance” describing Koreans favourite foods as “dogs, snakes, octopus and seahorse” which many Koreans believed was a malicious attempt to devalue Korea’s

⁷⁸ Media’s protective silence should also be noted, such as a case where no media, except one newspaper, identified the ethnicity of a boy when boys at a school in Palmerston North were infected by tuberculosis from a Korean student.

achievement in the World Cup (Nyujiillaendue haninsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe [The compilation committee for a history of Koreans in New Zealand] 2007). As a result of this report, the Korean Embassy immediately lodged a complaint and the newspaper responded to the complaint with a clarification the following day. But the clarification⁷⁹ was not accepted as sincere by many Koreans, which led some Korean professionals including media representatives in the community to initiate a collective action a few days later. They organised a meeting and asked the newspaper to issue an apology and dismiss the reporter who wrote the article together with the chief editor. The signature-seeking campaign and fund-raising that this group initiated attracted widespread support from the community. These actions elicited a formal letter from the chief editor of the *New Zealand Herald*, four months after the incident occurred, expressing regret and a promise of better coverage on Korea in the future.

Koreans consider some conflicts with the host people to be example of racial discrimination.⁸⁰ Every participant experienced what they perceived as racial discrimination ranging from subtle ignorance or unfair treatment, to physical violence. I extracted incidents from the interviews which my participants perceived as discriminatory and analysed them to establish the type of perceived discrimination and observe how participants responded to these. While, for some participants, incidents occurred in the workplace and neighbourhood, most of the incidents took place in children's schools. This is because schools are one of the few spaces where Koreans frequently come into contact with the host people.

In the incidents in the workplace and neighbourhood, the participants perceived subtle discrimination: a Kiwi receptionist in a work place treated a female participant differently from other workers, and another female participant in her 40s noticed that when she was with her colleague, who was an old man, Kiwis looked at her as if she were a young Asian lady dating an old Kiwi man. But there was a very serious incident where

⁷⁹ It said that “the Embassy of the Republic of Korea says the nation's favourite foods are Kimchi, a traditional cabbage-based dish and bulgogi or barbecue beef. Few people eat dog or octopus, the embassy says. No one eats snakes or seahorses.”

⁸⁰ When racial discrimination refers to ways of treating people differently through a process of social division into categories, it means collective and persistent behaviour against a group of people rather than temporary incidents against individuals. But it is often difficult to distinguish between racial discrimination and personal harassment when people are experiencing the incidents personally. Nevertheless, the participants used the term “racial discrimination (*injongchabyeol* 人種差別)” when they told me of the incidents. To maintain the context of the incidents without misusing the term, the term ‘perceived racial discrimination’ is adopted.

physical violence was involved. Two Korean boys were playing with their Kiwi friends near their house, but these Kiwi friends turned into their enemies when they were offered money by their two Kiwi relatives in their 20s to beat their Korean friends. These relatives offered the boys a few dollars for each smack they inflicted with a stick. When the Korean mother came to the spot, these Korean boys were being beaten with a stick. The Korean mother, who could not speak English well, stopped the Kiwi children and rebuked their relatives but she only received verbal abuse to “go-back-to-Korea” and many f-words from them. Right after that she reported the incident to the police but she heard from the police that they could not punish the beaters because they were underage nor the relatives, because there was no evidence to prove they had made the children beat the Koreans. The police just phoned the Kiwi children’s parents to warn them that if it happened again, they would be summoned to the police station to be investigated.

In the incidents happening in schools, Korean students experienced various forms of harassment and some of their parents experienced unfair treatment by their children’s teachers. Most of these incidents took place in intermediate or secondary schools. Regarding this, Mrs Han and Seon in Chapter Two pointed out that their children appeared to feel more clearly that they were treated unfairly as they became seniors: in primary school they used to say they wished all of their family lived in New Zealand but in intermediate school, they never said that again. For Korean students, their Kiwi mates did things like spraying them with water, taking their washing out of the drier and putting it on the floor in the dormitory, calling them “SAS” or Asian, making fun of their small eyes or kicking them for no reason. And when a Kiwi student was selected as a class representative in running rather than a Korean student even though the latter ran the fastest in the class, Korean students felt like that they were treated differently and were under-valued. Korean mothers also perceived discrimination in schools. When an international student mother was volunteering at her child’s school, she was offended because she could not find her, or the other Korean mother’s, name tag while all other mothers’ tags were prepared and the teacher did not thank them but thanked the other mothers.

The participants’ attitudes to this perceived discrimination are very rational. No participants generalised their experiences to include all New Zealanders. They attributed these incidents to the personal misbehaviour of one or two or a small number of “bad guys”. According to a college school girl, even other Kiwi students at her school disliked those kinds of guys. But the participants agreed that the incidents could be classified as

racial discrimination. For the participants, some individuals who internalised racial attitudes for personal reasons commit discriminatory behaviours. In terms of coping, the participants' strategies were closer to forbearance than confrontation, largely because they could not express themselves properly in English, which gave them additional stress. But, despite their English inability, the mothers boldly confronted the school, or offenders, when their children were concerned. There were some students who also confronted their tormentors, like the Korean student who got on the bus and slapped a Kiwi student in his face after he sprinkled water on him from the bus. But there are some cases where victims become wrongdoers. When Kiwi students bully Korean students, they normally use verbal abuse because Korean students are not very good at English, and they are well aware that violence is not tolerated at school. Normally Korean students put up with it, but if the teasing continues for an extended period, they cannot stand it anymore. But with their limited English ability, they are only able to say "I will kill you", and might then be accused of making a death threat. Or in the worst case, the students committed violence and became attackers.

Interethnic couples also experience serious conflict. There are quite a number of Korean women married to Pakeha New Zealand men. According to Callister and his colleagues (2005: 49) who provide the results of research on ethnic intermarriage in New Zealand using the 2001 census, 4.7% of the partners of 3,483 Korean married women were European while 0.7% of the partners of 3,246 Korean married men were European. When I asked the reason for this phenomenon to Korean men during my fieldwork the most frequent response was that if a Korean man married a European woman he could not dominate the relationship, which reflects gender-race politics: superiority of man and white and inferiority of woman and non-white as Constable (2003:170) explains

Relationships between US men and Asian women are part of a more common cultural logic, a well recognised imaginary, in which it is considered more acceptable for women to marry patrilocally and more acceptable for men to marry "down" than for women.

Pakeha men who married Korean women usually had some experience with Korea before they married. Some had worked in Korea or with Koreans in New Zealand while others had travelled the country: the majority of those who had worked in Korea were English instructors. It was usually through this experience that Pakeha men and Korean women contacted and connected. A woman who divorced her Pakeha husband one year

after marriage had met him at an educational institution in Auckland and became close to each other as they often talked about the man's experience as an English tutor in Korea.

Many – almost all—of these couples, according to a female Korean counsellor, come to experience conflicts in their relationship mainly because of language and cultural differences. Even at the initial stage of their relationship before their marriage, however, the seed of conflicts stemmed from preexisting gender and racial stereotypes between Pakeha men and Korean women. The Korean counsellor said Pakeha men and Korean women are likely to have different expectations towards each other based on racial stereotypes: Pakeha men expect Korean women to be obedient to them while Korean women expect the men to be gentle and take good care of them. Soon after marriage, however, as they realise different realities, and language and cultural difference, spousal conflict often follows.

In terms of cultural difference the Korean woman who divorced pointed out that the biggest difference in perception of spousal relationship between her ex-husband and herself was the level of individualism. She described her husband as “too much” individualistic in spousal relationship as she exemplified:

They [New Zealanders] distinguish yours and mine even between spouses in many situations. For example, if he needed five dollars...he asked me to lend money with the promise of paying back (laugh)...For us [Koreans] mine is yours and yours is mine but for these people yours is yours and mind is mine.

While this particular cultural “difference” is expressed in negative terms by this Korean woman, cultural difference in general is often perceived as “inferiority” by Pakeha men. In many cases of Pakeha men-Korean women marriages, Pakeha men tend to look down on their Korean wives because of their lack of cultural knowledge of New Zealand, and Korean women feel shame at their inability and ignorance. A woman was embarrassed when her Pakeha mother-in-law and husband asked her to cook toasted sandwiches because she did not know what these were. So she asked them what they were and they laughed at her asking how it was that she did not know what toasted sandwiches were. She responded by laughing at first but she became upset as they repeatedly laughed at her. She said to them in anger, “how could you say to me that toasted sandwich is commonsense. I've never ever made it ever before. Can you make Kimchi or Korean style soup?” But this is a rare case. Few Korean women in interethnic marriages can express themselves properly in such a situation because of their English inability. The divorced Korean woman also experienced language problems:

Even when we had an argument at that time...I was not able to speak English well at that time...I felt frustrated because I could not express myself in English. That was my biggest difficulty. He also felt great loneliness as well as me because we had problems to have everyday conversation with each other. Even if we had some conversations, those were superficial...without much depth...I felt he ignored me much.

Language difference or English inability causes more serious conflicts between these interethnic couples if the woman is going through an immigration process. At the initial stage of immigration when immigrants are vulnerable socially and mentally Korean women who married Kiwi men have to deal with dual tasks: adjusting themselves to a new culture and family setting at the same time. Under these circumstances if the women cannot express themselves properly and only accumulate their frustration in their minds, according to the Korean counsellor, their anger might eventually erupt into violence.

[When a quarrel happens], they [Korean wives] try to express it in English at first, but it doesn't work. They can just say, "I hate you. You bad." And then they give up trying to communicate, and instead she throws the dish at him.

Many Korean-Kiwi interethnic marriage couples had successfully gone through crises at the initial stage of their marriage and settled down to the married life. But, as the Korean counselor experienced, some Pakeha men who did not understand Korean culture and the migration process regarded their wives as violent, so would call the police, or as mentally disordered, so forced their wives to see counselors. According to this counselor, when the women saw New Zealand counselors in many cases they were reported as violent and diagnosed as depressive and prescribed medicine because some counselors in the host society also had difficulty understanding the stress of the immigration process.

There is also a structural problem surrounding ethnic intermarriage between Pakeha New Zealanders and other ethnic group women, especially Asian women in New Zealand which leads many couples to failed marriage. When marriage is sometimes used as a way to obtain residence permit, various factors such as racial hierarchy, age and gender are traded as resources. In this trade non-European women are placed in the lowest level. Under this situation some Pakeha men use their migrant wives' vulnerable legal status and lack of legal knowledge in New Zealand to treat unfairly and exploit them, for example, threatening their wives with the annulment of the marriage and hence threatening their residency status.

Conflicts between Dual Memberships

Living across borders, transmigrants may experience difficulties in negotiating different expectations, values and modes of action between home and the host society.

Transnationalism frequently seems to conflict with the pressure from host societies for tokens of commitment from immigrants. For example, political debates about immigration in New Zealand have often been about the degree of commitment that new migrants have to their adopted country (Ip and Friesen 2001), like this expectation of many Americans towards immigrants:

Many Americans expect migrants...to sever their ties to their homeland as they become assimilated into the United States. They assume that migrants will eventually transform their loyalty and community membership from the countries they leave behind to the ones that receive them (Levitt 2001: 3).

This conflict can escalate when transnationalism becomes involved in identity politics between the indigenous people and the host people. In New Zealand this identity politics is manifested as a discourse of national identity: A range of non-indigenous people argue that New Zealand is a multicultural society, while indigenous Māori people claim it is a bi-cultural country. A Māori advocate and scholar, Ranginui Walker (1995) argued that the 1986 review of immigration policy asserted that New Zealand is a country of immigrants including the Māori, thus denying Māori's prior right of discovery and millennial occupation of the land. Furthermore, he said, the review disguised the mono-cultural and Euro-centric control over the governing institutions of the country by claiming that immigration has moulded the national character as a multicultural Pacific country. As a result, he added, multiculturalism advocated by the New Zealand government dilutes Māori assertion of the primacy of bi-nationalism. Walker's criticism of the government's immigration policy included Asian immigrants' transnational practices:

Under the Business Immigration Policy, on which hope is pinned for an economic miracle, the price of citizenship is measured in dollars. With the previous government the price of entry was \$100,000. In all the time that scheme was in operation, unemployment continued to rise. Anecdotal evidence suggests that business immigrants used their money to relocate families while continuing to operate businesses in their home countries (Walker 1995:295).

In the same context, some people within the Korean community criticise transnationalism saying that because transnational migrants seldom settle in the community, the immigrant community cannot become settled or developed, and Koreans are not treated as real members of New Zealand society. The commonality between

Walker's criticism of transnational practices of immigrant businessmen and Mr Cho's argument presented in Chapter Two that if immigrants try hard to settle in the host society New Zealand will provide opportunities for them because it is a relatively fair society, shows that transnationalism can be negatively described as opportunistic.

From the home country, transnational migrants are challenged by the Korean notion of "Koreanness". A 1.5 generation Korean, who worked as a professional in Korea, was embarrassed at his boss's negative response when he planned an overseas trip with his female colleague who was also a 1.5 generation Korean from Canada. This notion of Koreanness also caused serious conflicts between Koreans and overseas Koreans. As many overseas Koreans come to Korea for medical services, some Koreans voice criticism that these overseas Koreans benefit from the public medical insurance without paying the fee. In this circumstance a newspaper article caused fierce criticism against overseas Koreans in 2008: a Korean-American who came to Korea for medical treatment received about 7,000,000 won worth of medical service from insurance at the cost of 60,000 won as her one month fee. After the article was published, the Korean government restricted the benefits of medical insurance recipients to those who had had stayed for more than three months in Korea.

The people most vulnerable to these pressures from both societies are 1.5 generation immigrants. A 1.5 generation participant, who was in Korea for work at the time of the interview for this research, revealed his feelings of alienation from both societies:

I kept feeling like I am a foreigner. To be honest, Korea does not feel like my home because my nationality is New Zealander even though I was born in Korea and now I am living here. When I live in Korea, I feel like New Zealand is my home because my parents live there, but when I am in New Zealand, I don't feel like it is my real home because I realise I am a 1.5 generation immigrant in its negative meaning.

This participant has no real home and cannot be a 100% citizen in New Zealand. Another 1.5 generation participant who also returned to Korea for work had a future plan that if he becomes a father, he is going to stay in one country until his children finish university because he did not want his children to experience the same feeling of unfamiliarity as he felt when he visited New Zealand again after resettling in Korea, even though he thought New Zealand was his home when he moved back and forth between two countries before returning to Korea. He said he developed this plan when he learned that one of his relatives, who was a 1.5 generation immigrant in the US, could have a deep relationship with his friends as he had lived in one place for more than 30 years; while the speaker regretted that

he could not make a deep relationships with his old friends in Korea because of his 10 year absence.

Some transnational migrants face a moment in their lives when they decide to choose between the two countries. For example, a female immigrant had to decide where to bury her husband when he died two years after they immigrated. She buried her husband in New Zealand because of the negative perception of widows and absence of social support in Korea, even though there was no relative on her husband's side in New Zealand. Through this decision she created stronger ties with New Zealand than other Korean transnational migrants, which might limit her mobility and flexibility.

The single language common-format public school system in the host societies [and in the home country] can also conflict with the maintenance and reproduction of transnationalism (Lewellen 2002). For example, many international students experienced problems in reintegrating to schools in Korea because of Korean language difficulties and stronger competition from other students. As a result these international students had lower marks in their early period of return because they could not properly understand the questions. As a lack of English skills blocks being transnational for the first generation immigrants, so a lack of Korean also hindered 1.5 generation immigrants who could not fully understand certain difficult Korean words.

The strongest barrier to transnational movement is financial. In fact transnational shuttling is a very expensive activity. So those who cannot afford the airfare do not easily move: a Christian minister in a local city in New Zealand said the people in his church visited Korea once in five or 10 years. With a lack of physical contact, as time goes on, immigrants' ties with Korea weaken although these people keep contact with Korea through communication tools.

Crisis and Somatisation

The immigrant who decided on immigration to New Zealand, largely inspired by his childhood longing for the country described in Chapter Three, had to face the reality of immigration on the first night in New Zealand when he suddenly felt anxiety about "the unpredictable future" in his new life:

And when I lay down to sleep that night being tired and tense -- you know the oceanic climate of New Zealand...that night we had the storm. What made it worse was, usually the roofs of motels are made of tin. The noise from the raindrops striking the tin roof, the fierce winds and noises of sign boards being blown in the

wind -- I could not sleep even though I was really tired, which made me go crazy. I could not sleep because of the worries I had about how to make our living...given that all our secure incomes were cut off and from that time completely [I had to start from scratch]...My! Honestly I was afraid of taking responsibility for my family. I don't know if it would be a proper comparison but it was the similar feeling of sadness, fear and anxiety about the unpredictable future I felt when I spent the first night in the army – it made me really scared. And I regretted [my decision] a lot as well. Occasionally I still talk about that night. I wept in secret in bed because of the fear. I was really scared then.

He said this experience was so traumatic that he had had the same dream repeatedly in which he was restored to his former position in Korea until, two years after that night he found a job in New Zealand.

One possible way to explain this shocking experience is that the immigrant “awoke from his fantasy of immigration”. I argued in Chapter Three that for many participants, the immigration decision was made “on a whim”. Often these on-a-whim decisions were based on the decision makers’ groundless optimism about immigration which largely resulted from inaccurate information. Whether they obtained information about immigration from their own personal networks of relatives, or friends, or from commercial immigration agencies, the information always tended to be biased positively because these providers wanted to attract them as members of their community or simply as their customers, and people are likely to gather information to support their decision. But as soon as they arrived, they found themselves unable to understand what they were told and to say what they wanted to say in a totally unfamiliar situation, which made them panic. After experiencing it, most people realised that they were in a foreign country with few resources. Although the above case is rather dramatic and happened on the very first day of arrival and it might take longer to become aware of the reality when there was someone to help the immigrants’ initial settlement, a similar awakening moment seemed to come to most participants sooner or later.

Although some of them believed that the experience accumulated in their bodies as trauma, most of the participants said they managed to go through the initial settlement period without major difficulties, but this kind of experience was cited as a possible cause of fatal diseases for some people, as in the case below.

A man in his late 40s who had been cured from his brain tumor immigrated to New Zealand with his wife and son in 2003. He had planned to immigrate to New Zealand before he married since he visited a friend of his who was living in Christchurch. But he had to give up his plan after he found his brain tumour, according to his wife whom I interviewed. Luckily he got well enough to live a normal life after a few years treatment, and he tried immigration again and succeeded in getting permanent residency. According to his wife, his business was not very successful, which made him stressed at that time when he tried immigration again. He arrived in New Zealand five months after he got PR. His plan for living was to run a small shop for art and craft products to make use of his career in Korea as a graphic designer. But his wife found a job first in a Korean-owned family restaurant about four months after their arrival. So he had to take care of his son while his wife was working. Around that time, his wife found him depressed and she thought it was because “none of his initial plan went on well”. About three months later he suddenly wanted to see his parents in Korea. So his wife agreed that he should go to Korea to check his tumour as well as to visit his parents now that one year had passed since his last regular check. But in Korea he fainted and was carried to the hospital to find a new tumour in his brain. And he returned to New Zealand in a serious condition and died two months after that.

It is, of course, not at all sure whether his relapse into brain cancer was related to his frustration in New Zealand, but it is notable that his wife’s narrative implied that the gap between his expectations of a new life and the reality of life as an immigrant in New Zealand made him depressed and might be a cause of his relapse. And here, a longing for immigration, a groundless optimistic plan (for a living based on subjective judgment) and realising the harsh reality of immigration life (through gender role reversal) are repeated.

For immigrant children, this kind of experience comes to them when they first attend school in New Zealand. English was the main challenge in their initial settlement. A university student, who first came to New Zealand upon graduating from primary school in Korea, said to her mother she understood nothing at all in class at first when she could not spell even the word “elephant”. She had to spend time in class just smiling and nodding for a few months. Another student was embarrassed when all the children in the class went out

to a yard and started to run all of sudden. She joined in cross-country without knowing what she was doing.

What is notable is that few 1.5 generation participants who immigrated after the 90s said that they felt stressed in their initial settlement: for most of them, it was difficult but “not that stressful”, “not bad” or “nothing especially difficult” regardless of gender. This is in contrast to the experience of a 1.5 generation immigrant who immigrated in the 70s:

When I came here for the second time I was 12. Because I became sensitive to that kind of matter as I reached puberty, in my memory, it was really traumatic to leave all my friends and relatives in Korea. I thought I never see them again (laugh).

This difference in generational experience clearly shows how immigrants’ possible transnational connections with the home country could affect immigrants’ mental health status. Unlike the 1.5 generation immigrant, who thought she would never see her friends and relatives again, those who immigrated after the 90s assumed that they would see their friends and relatives in Korea.

Whereas the drastic changes in lifestyle cause distress for recent immigrants, several years after resettlement the emergence, or exacerbation, of family difficulties often emerges (Ritsner, Ponizovsky, and Ginath 1997). Spousal conflict, arising from men’s loss of socio-economic status after resettlement, is one of these emerging family difficulties. A Korean Christian minister analysed that mechanism:

Because there are less jobs available for Korean men in the New Zealand society, Korean women work. [In spousal conflicts] some issues around women’s status, which is a structural problem in Korea, are involved. [many Korean women who immigrated to New Zealand] already had family problems such as conflict with their in-laws, especially their mothers-in-law. Therefore most women do not want to return to Korea....They want to live here, but they do not like their husbands...They actually take the responsibility for supporting the family financially, and as they work mostly in labour jobs such as shop assistants or kitchen assistants [which require long working hours], they have little time to have conversations with their husbands. But the women are overall satisfied with living in New Zealand because they have experienced that [women’s status is high and their rights are well protected] as well as the fact that they can escape from their existing family problems in Korea. Korean women tend to concentrate on childrearing [in the family] -- the conjugal relationship is not necessarily close within the patriarchal system...And here they do not have any pressure from the extended family to which they had to adapt themselves in Korea. In this context men are also likely to be victims in this society.

In the same context the following two quotes clearly illustrate the contrasting stances of women and men in immigrant families. In the first quote, the interviewee was an

international student mother who had lived in New Zealand for more than five years. But her opinion can be applied to other immigrant women in that her reason for living abroad was also to avoid the structural constraints against women in Korea:

[The best thing for me to live in New Zealand] is that I don't need to care about the little and big events in relation to the in-laws such as weddings. That's best...And here I am the queen who takes responsibility for all the things and...can do whatever I wish.

[What is the most stressful thing for you here in New Zealand?] There is one thing. I guess most [male] immigrant feel it. Now that usually men work to make money and women take care of home in Korea, the husband and wife can hardly have time [to interact] during week days as men work from Monday to Saturday and on Sundays they spend time sleeping. But after immigrating here, many men have to be with their wives almost 24 hours a day, which causes more troubles between couples. And as husbands get involved in taking care of the household, the living pattern of the family becomes different to the Seoul living pattern [in a negative way]...I am trying to understand my wife...but I sometimes cannot understand her as I still have a Korean way of thinking.

Role reversal between wives and husbands in the Korean family is a major cause of spousal conflict among Korean immigrants (Yu 1987). It leads to loss of men's authority in the family as the head of the family, but there are no resources in New Zealand to support men's status in the family as there is in Korea. Male-centred ideology is not supported in the wider society and men's kinship networks, which also support men's high status, are greatly reduced. Despite this, men tended to adhere to the traditional high status of men in Korea without the resources to sustain this. Consequently men suffer more severe stress from this situation.

Spousal conflicts seem to end up in divorce more easily in the immigration community than in Korea probably because of loosening of cultural norms and lack of kinship, or other intimate social, networks which can buffer the conflicts. A Korean staff member in a help-line said that one of the issues that he dealt with most frequently was relationship breakdown cases, most of which were thought to be divorce. After divorce, both Korean men and women seemed to feel guilty or regretted their decision, he said, accusing themselves of not forbearing, or not taking care of their children. Meanwhile, Korean immigrant children in divorced families in New Zealand have to deal with a double handicap, which must have negative effects in their future development, according to a Korean school principal.

An acculturation gap between parents and children in Korean immigration families also causes conflicts. First, English fluency influences children-parents relationships in immigrant families. Parents lose their authority, as their children become more fluent English speakers and the parents became less capable in terms of parenting and schooling as their children advance to higher grade schools. Moreover, as children get more accustomed to the New Zealand way of doing things, conflict between parents and children happens more often. An international student mother complained in the interview about her thirteen-year-old son who stopped her when she pointed at other people with her finger, saying to her “these guys dislike it and get offended by it”. She was offended by this. In similar conflict scenes, if parents concentrate more on what they experience as their children’s rudeness according to traditional Confucian values, rather than their own lack of local/cultural knowledge, children feel confused at the colliding values and some even feel that they are treated unfairly and oppressed by their “stubborn” parents. When they conflict with their parents, according to a Korean counsellor, many Korean children cope with it with silence, by rebellion or by lying:

I think these Korean children’s habit of lying, which is detested both at school and home, can be a very safe way of self protection for the children because they have not learnt how to solve conflicts when they face them, their parents cannot help them and at school their culture is not understood. Under these circumstances, [when they are told to do something that they do not want], they answer, “Yes, I will do it” just to get off the hook at that time.

Another way for Korean children to cope with conflict with their parents is to run away. It is not difficult to find adolescents in the Korean community leaving home. Among the cases, underage interethnic couples’ elopement -- usually a Korean girl and a boy from another ethnic group -- are shocking incidents for the girls’ parents because it concerns with sexual ethics. In this context, rumours about Korean girls’ running away and their parents’ extreme reaction spread in the community: one example is that a Korean girl who ran away with her Chinese boy friend had her hair shaved by her parents.

But some parents find themselves having no resources to help their children as the children grow up, say, to senior students in college, and report little interaction with their children. In a different context, lack of interaction between parents and children may cause a serious problem for children. According to a Korean Christian minister, who ran a counselling centre in Auckland, during the early and mid 90s when the Korean community was forming, the most frequent counselling cases were about Korean children’s highly

excessive use of the Internet. At that time, as both parents had to work to run small family businesses like dairies, children who were left home alone became addicted to the Internet despite their parents' efforts to take the keyboards away from them. Children's Internet addiction implies that under stressful circumstances, without support or even control, people tend to easily fall into addictive habits or to be affected by mental disorders as a Korean Christian minister in Hamilton points out:

Among those [who are in psychological distress] some people are absorbed in something else, for example, golf or other things which make them forget complex and unsolved problems or in worse case, they fall into gambling. There are these people in Hamilton, too... which is the extreme case. And another thing is, when having trouble in interpersonal relationship, some people easily burst into anger and become aggressive to others because they are in bad situations and some others become...depressive.

Gambling addiction has been a long and hard-to-solve problem in the Korean community since Korean mass immigration to New Zealand started. In the community you often hear about Koreans who lost their fortune worth millions in the casinos around New Zealand. But unlike the public stereotype, adult males are not the only customers of the casinos. Many Korean university students and housewives hang around in the casinos. According to a Korean Christian minister there are even private Korean money lenders around the casinos lending money to Koreans and Chinese, holding their passports as security. Once people are addicted to gambling, they go to extremes to get money for gambling. Gambling addiction easily develops into family violence, and even caused a murder case in Auckland (Eames 2007).⁸¹

Tse, Wang and Kim (2004) suggest that kind of Asian problem gambling should be treated in an acculturation framework: while Asians who immigrated to English-speaking countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States show high levels of participation in gambling, Asian problem gambling is seen as being a social, rather than an individual, problem compounded by difficulties with post-migration adjustment. According to these researchers, gambling often provides individuals with a certain amount of relief or escape from problems.

⁸¹ A Korean man set fire to his brother-in-law's dental clinic in west Auckland and in the process his de facto wife, who worked in the clinic, died. The man was driven by his rage after his partner's brother-in-law, her sister and his partner "went on an all-night gambling binge at the Sky City casino the day before she died where she lost huge amounts of money".

It is often said that many immigrants, mainly in their 50s, have few social networks and few things to do except work. Many of these people who are the main customers of the casinos run a small business and achieved a certain level of economic security, but as I discussed earlier, experienced downward social mobility in terms of social status. For these Koreans the casinos, where customers are allowed to enter only if they are dressed properly and there are splendid and luxurious facilities and hospitable employees, are the places to compensate for their loss of status. For this reason, quite a few people visit there as frequently as possible.

In terms of health, Korean international migrants benefited from New Zealand's clean environment: many participants experienced their respiratory diseases being healed and I have heard that some Korean families came to New Zealand to seek unpolluted air for their children who suffer from atopic symptoms. But as international migrants, Koreans in New Zealand face many risk factors for their health. Lack of English ability, cultural knowledge and employment opportunities all affected Korean immigrants' health. Korean immigrants have limited access to medical service in the host society because of language and cultural barriers. In particular, limited employment opportunities, along with these barriers, force many of them into labouring jobs, but most of them had never done physical work before and experienced physical health problems.

Apart from physical diseases and injuries, during the interviews I heard many times of immigration stress from which the participants suffered and were suffering. But interestingly, few of them mentioned that stress might affect their "mental" health. Instead they often linked their stress from their life as immigrants with their physical health. An international student mother, who had been infected by herpes zoster said her situation, was really stressful when she got infected by the disease. When someone gets cancer, many people in the community speculate that it must be because of excessive stress. Healthy people also attributed their health to their life style and mind set. A returned international student mother said she could be healthy in New Zealand because she had to gird herself for living abroad without her husband.

For some immigrants, the obstacles that they have to face in the host society impose excessive burdens and this may lead to mental disorders. In fact, international research indicates that generally immigrants show higher rates of mental illness than either the population of the native-born, or those of their countries of origin (Helman 1994: 292). Three hypotheses seek to explain the high rate of mental illness associated with migration:

the selection hypothesis, the non-essential association hypothesis and the stress hypothesis. The selection hypothesis suggests that people in the early incipient stage of illness (e.g. schizophrenia) migrated due to failing interpersonal relationships in their countries of origin (Selective negative migration effect). However, significantly lower rates of depressive illness/symptoms in both native and migrant young urban women were hypothetically explained by the adverse rural social environment with more chronic adversities, and a positive selective migration to the cities. The non-essential association hypothesis assumes that diagnostic and admission rates in psychiatry may reflect moral, political or racial prejudices, or misinterpret the immigrants' cultural beliefs and reaction to their plight in psychiatric terms. The stress hypothesis, on which this research is mainly based, supposes that there are many stress factors from immigration, and migration is regarded as a stressful experience involving major disruptions in the individual's life.

According to a participant, who worked as a mental health worker for the Korean community, Korean immigrants' mental health status is closely related to their immigration process. Going through the process, most Koreans are confused and stressed by the different values in the host society, as I have discussed earlier. In the process, however, some people lose their way in between the Korean style and the New Zealand style: "if I live this way, it does not suit Korean way but if I live that way, it does not suit New Zealand way". As a result, the former mental health worker said, these people choose one of two extremes. Some people become so insecure that they feel rejected from both societies, while others withdraw themselves from both societies. Although these people's symptoms are different such as schizophrenia, depression or anxiety, she said, she felt most of them experienced these common processes. She also found, from her experience, that Koreans who immigrated in their late teens were especially vulnerable to mental disorders. They were given a double task of achieving independence from their parents and adjusting themselves to a new culture without their familiar networks, which was severely stressful for them. But their parents could not help them because they were also going through the same immigration process. In this situation, some highly anxious children are taken ill if they were criticised by their parents who do not know how to deal with their problems such as why they did not study hard, or why they mixed only with Korean students. This observation is strongly supported by a study which pointed to Asian immigrant students in New Zealand as one of high-risk groups in terms of mental disorders: "the various stressors faced by Asian students, such as language barriers, acculturative stress and the lack of

social support networks, place them at risk for emotional and behavioural problems (Ho et al. 2003: 44).”

But Korean families who have family members with mental disorders tend to hide it and try to handle them within the family, until their symptoms get so bad that they can no longer deal with them. According to the former mental health worker, they take them to hospital when the patients have no other option except to take medicine. Koreans’ tendency to hide their family’s shameful aspects was repeated when a child committed suicide. A Korean counselor told me how Korean parents in a family hid their child’s suicide: they told people around them that the child died from a disease, and instructed the children’s significant others, including siblings and friends, that they should not mention the death, which makes it unfinished business in the family. The counselor said personalisation is the root of these problems. Many Koreans tend to attribute all the problems in the immigration process to personal weakness. For example, when their children confront them, the parents think their children hate them or their children are becoming naughty or rude, rather than thinking that the children are going through difficult immigration processes. Personalisation is not helpful in trying to solve or prevent problems; instead the individual is blamed, said the counselor.

Mental health is a term of convenience derived from cosmopolitan medicine and used extensively in western societies, but it does not necessarily correspond well to some Korean concepts of health and well-being, where distress may be experienced and expressed mainly through physical symptoms. This is termed somatisation, which is the cultural patterning of psychological disorders into a “language of distress” of mainly physical symptoms and signs. When one particular organ is selected as the main focus of all symptoms and anxiety, then cultural somatisation occurs. The organ chosen often has a symbolic or metaphoric significance for the group concerned. Individuals not only suffer from a particular syndrome, but also become the “embodiment” of core cultural themes of the society in which they live (Lock 2002).

In China, for example, the open expression of emotion is not encouraged. Instead, according to Ots (1990), the main medical care seeking behaviour of people suffering from severe unhappiness or psychosocial stress is the presentation of physical complaining. Treatment in traditional Chinese medicine would aim “to harmonize the emotions by harmonizing bodily functions” (Ots 1990:29). Western models of psychosomatic disorders may not be easily applied to China, since the culture there gives both patients and

practitioners a different body awareness and “Chinese are the culturally trained to ‘listen’ within their body” (Ots 1990:26).

A common Korean culture-specific disorder is termed *Hwabyung*(火病), suppressed anger syndrome. It has both somatic and psychological symptoms: sensations of constriction in the chest, palpitations, sensation of heat, flushing, headaches, dysphoria, anxiety, irritability and problems with concentration (Lin et al. 1992): 12% of Korean American research participants in Los Angeles (N=109), the majority of whom were recent immigrants, suffered from this disorder, which was higher than that found in Korea (4%).

A traditional Korean medicine doctor in New Zealand explained in detail, and systematically, how stress from immigration life is changed into physical symptoms in the body. First, the doctor diagnosed the crucial reason for Korean immigrants’ stress as the state of low spirit which comes from fear from the unfamiliar environment, communication problems, few opportunities to relieve stress, and the sense of ineffectualness. Then he moved on to the resultant symptoms which were concentrated on a few organs. He first mentioned an oppressed feeling in the heart, from which he thinks almost all immigrants suffer sooner or later after immigration. If immigrants experience more stress, it contracts the liver which is supposed to fully radiate its energy (*Gi* 氣) to function properly. Contracted liver can be imagined as a swamp without moving water. If this state continues for a while, inflammation develops in the liver. In the meantime, stressed people often seek alcohol or cigarettes to ease their stress, which makes the inflammation worse.

When I interviewed a former Korean GP, I found that the Korean traditional medical doctor’s explanation was somewhat in line with the GP’s experience with her Korean patients. She said she wondered, when she first started to see Korean patients, why many Koreans worried about their liver when they felt sick in their stomach, and soon she learned that it was because many Korean men drank lots of alcohol as a way to relieve stress, which led them to worry about their perceived-stress-related organ, the liver.

Working with a phenomenological method of bodily perceptions, Ots (1990) found that most liver-related symptoms of the patients, who had been diagnosed and treated in a hospital of traditional medicine in China referred to different degrees and forms of anger:

Patients had experienced different forms of psychosocial stress, but social and cultural norms and circumstances did not permit them to react aggressively or to vent their anger. The repression of anger expressed...[mainly] in terms of “liver attacking the spleen” and “liver yang flaring up”...[which can be interpreted as a]

liver disorder might eventually become spleen disorder; or in other words, anger turned inward might cause depression. (Ots 1990: 50)

Another typical symptom from stress and constant tension is bowel contraction and weakened bowel movement which lead to constipation. According to the doctor, women are more affected than men because generally women are more sensitive and easily hurt emotionally, which makes them more anxious.

As many Koreans have a common perception of somatisation, Koreans' strategies for coping with stress also concentrate on physical activities. A typical example of stress relieving activities is to heat their body in a sauna or hot pool to "soften their contracted organs". Although many Koreans use saunas in public swimming pools, other people in the Auckland area often use the Korean style sauna (*Jjimjilbang* 찜질방) on the North Shore, which is the only Korean style sauna in New Zealand, where the floor is heated as well as the air, so people lie down on the floor to heat their body until they sweat.

Coping Strategies

When Korean immigrants are affected by these stressors, they cope with them in various ways. These can be categorised into three groups according to the level of coping units: individual, family, and community. On the individual level, the participants adopted the strategies of withdrawing, developing dual attitudes, using their cultural capital and seeking help from Korean professionals. Some participants withdrew themselves from the host society after they experienced stressful incidents. Many international student mothers, who had experienced bad incidents where they were frustrated because of their lack of English skills, avoided contacting the host people.

Other immigrants develop a dual attitude. A university student said her father may look very flexible and open minded to his children when he talks with other people, but in her view, in reality, he has conservative Korean attitudes towards his children. She said it does not necessarily mean he pretends to be nice on a social level. Rather, she said, her father does not recognise his dual attitude. The term "adhesive" (Hurh and Kim 1984) strategy helps interpret this Korean fathers' dual attitude which is similar to some Korean immigrants' attitude in America: these people show an ambivalent tendency in that they maintain a traditional Korean value system but at the same time seek an American life style. This strategy can be a good way to maintain a sense of self, negotiating between two different value systems without hurting the relationship with the host society.

Some participants use their competency or cultural capital to overcome stress. 1.5 generation participants, who came to New Zealand in their teens, experienced stress from their lack of English skills and cultural barriers, but when they showed their competency in study or artistic activities such as playing musical instruments, they implied, they could go through the immigration process without much difficulty. In a similar vein during my fieldwork, I saw many Korean students maintaining their self-esteem at school with their high scores in maths despite their weak English. Ability to play musical instruments can also be important cultural capital as a marker of their middle class identity, which also helps children and their parents maintain their self esteem regardless of their English ability. That is probably a primary reason why many Korean immigrant parents are keen to give their children an opportunity to learn musical instruments. When two participants, who majored in painting and musical instruments at university respectively, said they painted or played the organ at church when they felt stressed, the artistic skills worked for these adult immigrants, too, as a middle class identity marker and a reminder of their competitiveness in Korea as well as being pleasurable and absorbing activities.

Most Korean immigrants are not very active in seeking professional help for mental health problems, but for some who were referred to Korean mental health professionals, it worked very effectively. According to the former Korean mental health worker, these people recovered when they could tell health professionals, in their own language, their story as to how they went through the immigration process. This is the same benefit as immigrants gain from the support of their family members in terms of coping strategies. For Korean international migrants in New Zealand, family – immediate or extended – members are important, and often the only supporters. An international student mother said she and her daughter always had conversations as though they were friends: her daughter would talk to her even about tiny things. She said probably that was the way her daughter relieved her stress. A 1.5 generation participant said she and her cousins supported each other when they went through the immigration process, doing homework together and talking to each other about their difficulties.

On a community level, Korean international migrants' strategies are not different from other immigrants in that they get support from their community not only instrumentally but also emotionally as Murphy pointed out:

For many immigrants...the presence of a vibrant cultural arena in the host country may ward off feelings of alienation and facilitate adjustment. Most immigrants tend

to reside in niches or enclaves for that reason...Cultural ties not only maintain emotional affirmation, but also may lead to instrumental support through contact with other immigrants. (2006:83)

The Koreans' way of attaching themselves to community is mainly through Christian churches. The churches in Korean communities all over the world play a pivotal role to help their members overcome difficulties from life as immigrants. Many participants said that their faith grew more after immigration. It is not only because they depended more on religion to endure their harsh immigration lives, but also because they were more committed to their churches, which are almost their only social space. When they feel isolated, they seek meaningful relationships and make their own network at church. As an important measure to counter their marginalisation and blocked mobility in the host society, however, Korean ethnic churches can be a hiding place from the stressful reality at the same time.

The Korean community also often isolates itself from the larger society, which can be termed a "separation or segregation" (Berry 1997) strategy. This isolated community creates many negative effects. Excessive competition among Korean immigrants over limited economic, social and symbolic capital happens frequently in the community. For example, when I did fieldwork in Christchurch in 2006, I saw intense competition among about 50 Korean restaurants most of which had operation difficulties. Another negative result of competition over limited resources is that it is always possible for the weak in the community to be exploited. Newcomers, particularly international student mothers who have little local information, frequently become victims as exemplified by a case in which an international student mother paid more than \$2000 as a penalty to a Korean immigrant who helped her family's initial settlement. He insisted that she enter a contract for rent despite her bewilderment on the first day she arrived in New Zealand, and then charged her \$2000 to break the contract.

Another negative effect that isolation brings to the community is gossiping. In the Korean community in New Zealand, gossiping seems to be done for two purposes: devaluing other immigrant families' success or achievement, and spreading bad rumours about other immigrants who the tellers think wronged them. For example, a 1.5 generation girl was upset at the rumour about her university entrance when she succeeded in entering university one year earlier than other students. According to her mother, her church people started gossiping about it enviously. In another case, an immigrant told me that a Korean

accountant had a bad reputation in the community because some of his clients did not get satisfactory results from him, so they spread negative gossip about him portraying him as a “bastard”. A Korean Christian minister analysed the reasons for this phenomenon as follows:

I am not sure but one possible reason is for many immigrants, there is no way to vent [their energy] here. If you are in Korea, for example, there are many things that you can put your heart into but here you can hardly find any of those things. So your interests are naturally directed to other people...another reason can be a psychological one. You can find that the life after immigration is quite tough. I think Korean immigrants here are experiencing identity crisis and suffering from low self-esteem because they have few opportunities to do something worthwhile. Under these circumstances, people may become more sensitive and react aggressively when they face various difficulties.

The problem of this kind of gossiping is that it can harm human relationships in the community, which can lead to severe conflict between members. In fact, quite a few Korean immigrants experienced serious conflicts with other immigrants which originated from gossiping.

Last but not least regarding to the problem of Koreans’ community-centred coping strategies, is that certain troublesome behaviour is reproduced by the children. In fact vertical human relationships based on age are being reproduced among Korean students at some New Zealand schools where there are many Korean students. Mr In Jr in Chapter Two told me how he and his friends were disciplined by their seniors when he entered college. He and his peers were ordered to gather in the toilet by their Korean seniors because “they did not respect their seniors”. In the toilet they were punched in the face, which was like a rite of passage. When the juniors became seniors, they did the same thing to their juniors. There were few Korean students who refused to accept the Korean style senior-junior relationship, because they were afraid of being excluded from the Korean student group at school. And behind the fact that quite a few Korean students fail in New Zealand universities, according to Mr In Jr., is the Korean conception that once they entered university they did not need to study as hard as they did in high school.

Korean immigrants in New Zealand found that the transnational ties with Korea they had formed since their relocation were very helpful to mitigate these problems which arising from their community-based settlement strategies. That is, their transnational ties enabled them to extend their living spheres beyond the community, which might have decreased their dissatisfaction with the isolated community. For example, with up-to-date

Korean popular culture continuously supplied by Korean media through satellite TV or Internet, Korean youths in New Zealand – whether they are 1.5 or the second generations or international students – enrich their lives and even disseminate them into the host society.

In fact immigrants' transnational ties with their home country generally play a positive role in immigrants' psychological adjustment. Promoting and maintaining valuable social networks directly or indirectly “may produce tangible resources, social capital and emotional support that may offset some of the alienating and stressful effects of immigration” although there may be limitations in transnational contacts for less affluent individuals (Murphy 2006). Murphy also suggests that when an ethnic identity is defined as a person's subjective sense of belonging to a certain group or culture, transnational ties may help immigrants to consolidate their ethnic identity at a time when they may find a number of different identities suddenly thrust on them.

Ethnic identity has important implications for the way in which people see themselves, and their perception of how society responds to them both of which impact psychological well-being... Immigrants with strong transnational ties tend to have a strong ethnic identity, which serves as a potential buffer against racial prejudice. This “identity” offers them psychological protection: maintaining the idea that they came from a culture where they are valued and accepted, and that they have the option to go back there if things do not work out in the host country can be very comforting to immigrants who feel a sense of alienation (Murphy 2006:85).

Conclusion

Some Koreans attempted to resolve their problems in their lives in Korea by widening their social field into the transnational space between Korea and New Zealand with mobility and flexibility. But their mobility and flexibility required them to pay certain price. Korean transnational migrants usually have to face downward social mobility and experience conflicts by moving into a new social field where different language, knowledge, social norms and values are dominant. Some people have to sacrifice family relationships to maintain their social status. Koreans in the transnational social field between Korea and New Zealand have to deal with pressures from both the societies because of their dual belonging.

As a result they experience various psychological and social difficulties such as loneliness, conflicts in human relations, and identity loss, all of which cause stress. For Korean immigrants, stress is mainly expressed in the form of somatisation. Korean

immigrants cope with these hardships using individual, familial and community resources, but some coping strategies in the isolated immigrant community produced negative effects. In these circumstances transnational ties with their home country can be a source of tangible resources, social capital and emotional support which may offset stressful effects of immigration.

In the next chapter I summarise the major findings and draw together the divergent themes of this thesis to reveal the main theme of these transnational life histories between Korea and New Zealand in this globalising world.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In my thesis I have advanced the argument that the Korean-New Zealand migration of the 1990s was a new sort of migration, although admittedly it shared some features with past migration experiences. I have presented evidence that this migration created a new transnational space which could be exploited by Korean middle class people to maintain or advance their capitals, especially for the eventual return to Korea. Further, I have suggested that “failure to settle” in New Zealand was not always, or even often, to be understood as failed dreams, but rather, a life which encompassed Korea, New Zealand, and perhaps other nations, and which was part of a long-term, creative, transnational strategy. This innovative use of the resources of two nations was not without its costs, incurred by individuals, families and communities, and perhaps also by the nations.

Reprising Main Findings and Themes

This study is an extension of my earlier research on Korean immigrants in New Zealand. In 1995, I did fieldwork in Christchurch and Auckland for my Masters thesis to examine the “new immigration boom” among the Korean middle class during the mid-90s. It was defined as “new” because it was different from the emigrations of the 1970s and 80s, to the US, South America, and Europe, which basically aimed for fortune, success, and prosperity: the new immigrants were believed to be seeking a new value, namely, quality of life. This flow also deserved to be called a “boom”: in just five years between 1992 and 1996, over thirteen thousand Koreans reported their emigration to New Zealand to the Korean government. During my stay with Koreans in New Zealand, however, I observed many Koreans lived lives that were still involved in Korea, such as retaining their Korean properties, keeping their jobs, remaining connected to kinship and friendship networks in Korea and not deciding, finally, whether they would continue to live in New Zealand or return to Korea. Based on my observations, I related this immigration flow to a trend in Korea from the 1990s in which English skills and educational experiences in advanced foreign countries were highly evaluated as important human capital as Korea began to integrate into the neo-liberalised world economy under the name of globalisation. I

concluded that the main reasons for this immigration were not to settle in the host society but to obtain the symbolic capital of English and education experience in an advanced foreign country for status enhancement and reproduction in Korea.

Twelve years later, during my PhD research, I observed that connections between the New Zealand community and Korea were further developed as international transportation and communication became more affordable. Many immigrant families still visited Korea on a regular basis or frequently invited their relatives and friends to visit. The practice of astronaut families, that is families split between Korea and New Zealand, has spread so widely that it has become recognised as usual in the community and Korea. During my fieldwork in Korea I met many Korean 1.5 generation immigrants who returned to Korea for work upon graduating from university in New Zealand, and some of them joined their parents who had returned to Korea after the children went to university. But none of them, neither the parents nor the children, said they had permanently returned to Korea. Korean immigrants in New Zealand often re-migrated to third countries, particularly to Australia. Some scholars regard Koreans' living patterns as being a result of a lack of integration into mainstream society, arguing that Koreans in New Zealand are still in the process of settling into New Zealand society and are still in search of their ethnic identity. But I propose that these practices, of at least a 12-year duration, should not be seen as reluctance to integrate but, rather, should be regarded as intentional strategies.

Research on Koreans in New Zealand, however, seems to be based on a common basic storyline, which is similar to the view above, regarding Koreans in New Zealand as immigrants to be settled in the host society. Highly educated middle class Koreans immigrated to New Zealand as the country opened its immigration gate to people from East Asian countries from the early 1990s. They came to New Zealand with their families to settle permanently in the hope of a relaxed life in a welfare state, but the New Zealand government was not well prepared for the influx of immigrants from non-English speaking East Asian countries. As a result, the immigrants had to struggle to settle in mainstream society. While many Koreans settled in New Zealand using available resources, such as various networks in their community and/or religious institutions, some immigrants returned to work in Korea, leaving their wives and children in New Zealand because they found it impossible to obtain appropriate jobs.

But given that most Korean immigrants were university graduates, white collar workers or professionals who had been trained to be rational actors at school, and in the

workplace, it appears unlikely that they did not know before immigration that it would be difficult to attain the same level of jobs in New Zealand as they had in Korea. In addition, many 1.5 generation Korean immigrants, more integrated into the host society than their parents, also sought better opportunities outside New Zealand. Therefore the permanent settlement perspective on Koreans in New Zealand faces two fundamental questions: did Korean immigrants plan to settle permanently in New Zealand? And, is it exceptional or abnormal for immigrants not to settle in one country? In this context, this thesis has examined Korean international migration to New Zealand since the 1990s through the concept of the transnational social field.

Normalising International Migration through the Model of the Transnational Social Field

To describe and explain immigration processes, the theoretical framework that social scientists first adopted was assimilation theory, which derived from a long interest in how to incorporate newcomers into new countries. The fundamental characteristic of assimilation theory was that assimilation was expected to be a one way process that would also be natural and evolutionary, which as time passed would yield the inevitable outcome of the adaptation of minority ethnic groups into the mainstream culture.

But this approach tended to conceive transnational migrants as exceptions from the norm. Assimilation studies of international migration are based on a basic, and often hidden, assumption that immigrants are always the nationals of one nation state who have moved to another, and until they become the nationals of the receiving countries they do not become normal again. This assumption and research focus appears to be based on “methodological nationalism” or “the container theory of society”, which as discussed in Chapter One, respectively refers to the naturalisation of the nation state by the social sciences and the view that society, the object of sociology, is contained within the borders of the nation state. Methodological nationalism has affected research in social science because much social science theory equates society with the boundaries of a particular nation-state: researchers often take rootedness and incorporation in the nation-state as the norm and social identities and practices enacted across state boundaries as out of the ordinary. As the process of globalisation continued to develop, however, many scholars paid attention to the flows of money, popular cultures, and people across national borders, and sought ways to represent these phenomena, overcoming the container theory of society and methodological nationalism. Social life is not confined by nation-state boundaries

(Levitt and Schiller 2004), as people shop, work, love, marry, research, grow up and are educated internationally (that is, multi-lingually), and live and think transnationally, that is, combine multiple loyalties and identities in their lives. As more processes show less regard for state boundaries, Beck (2000) argues, the paradigm of societies organised within the framework of the nation-state inevitably loses contact with reality.

In responding to these changes, Levitt and Schiller (2004) propose a view of society and social membership based on a concept of a social field. This combines Bourdieu's notion of a social field where agents struggle with strategies for the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field, and the Manchester school's view of a single social field created by migrant networks stretching between two sites. This notion of the multi-sited social field implies that national boundaries are not necessarily contiguous with the boundaries of social fields. Some social fields stay within national boundaries while others connect agents across borders. In relation to international migration, Levitt and Schiller (2004) use the term social field to conceptualise the potential array of social relations linking those who move and those who stay behind. Individuals who do not move themselves maintain social relations across borders through various forms of communication through their social fields between the countries. The fact that they are part of the same social field keeps them informed and connected so that they can act if events motivate them to do so.

Consequently, in this era of heightened globalisation, transnational lifestyles may become not the exception but the rule. Local level transnational activities are reinforced by the growing numbers of global economic and governance structures that make decision-making and problem-solving across borders increasingly common. As a result, what is at stake in the social fields within the national boundaries – cultural goods or life style, housing, education for intellectual distinction, employment, land, power, social class, or prestige can be sought in transnational social fields or can give rise to a new social field across national boundaries. And in this way, transnational approaches conceive of international migrants not as anomalies, but rather as representative of an increasingly globalised world.

Life Histories in a Transnational Social Field

In traditional immigration studies attention has been divided broadly between the process of migration – emphasising the importance of geographical movement across international borders – and the product of migration – emphasising the impact of migrants on societies

in which they settle. For the study of transnationalism, however, a methodology that goes beyond the binaries such as homeland/new land, citizen/non-citizen, migrant/non-migrant, acculturation/cultural persistence, is needed.

The virtue of the life history approach in social science is that it can reveal individual actors' uniqueness, and that at the same time, it can show us how those individuals adapt themselves to, use or change the structure. In migration studies in particular, the benefit of the life history method is derived from its focus on individual actors' view points in describing migration processes. From the view point of migrants, pre- and post- migration experiences are on a continuum. This can be contrasted with structural approaches to international migration in which these processes are treated as two discrete stages from the view point of sending and receiving states.

This advantage of the life history method in tracing continuity of migrants' experience becomes more important in transnational migration: transnational migrants' life experiences can be properly understood as continuous within a social field, as in the life of my participants where study abroad, immigration, return migration and remigration were intermingled. Life history method is also suitable and effective to identify the story tellers' social field, and what they pursue in that field, because life stories are actively reconstructed by the story tellers around a few themes which they think are important i.e., their significant others, important values, and their justification for failure.

To provide full descriptions of Korean families in, or from, New Zealand, the stories of an immigrant family, a separated international student family, a return migrant family, and two return international student families were described from the time they decided on immigration to the time of the interviews. These stories are "Transnational Life Histories" which show ordinary people's efforts to live their lives spanning two [or more] nation states.

In these life histories, international movement is conceptualised as a way to attain resources meaningful in Korea, but not in New Zealand, that is, they wanted to change their positions in their own social field rather than to move to a different social field through international movement. For Mr Cho, international migration occurred to him when he was seeking an opportunity to "jump again" in his mid life, rather than looking for a chance to move to a different social field, while Mr Jin and Mrs Im sent their children to New Zealand because they wanted them to master English to help their studies in Korea,

not elsewhere. In the story of Mrs Han and Seon, coming to New Zealand for international education was understood in the same context as moving to the *Gangnam* area to seek high status schools and private coaching schools. For Mr In and Mrs Lee, international migration seemed to be an attempt to move to a different social field at first, but their narratives of “good income in Korea and holidays in New Zealand” revealed their perception of international migration as a way to lift their positions in Korea. As a result, a traditional sending and receiving country model of international migration is hardly applicable to these transnational life histories: the participants did not aim for New Zealand as a destination country but they were connected to New Zealand, and the notion of crossing the border was hardly noted in their stories.

Transnational Migration as a Response to Threatened Middle Class Status

The mass immigration of Koreans to New Zealand, which began in the early 1990s, has stirred exceptional interest from Korean society in that the majority of these New Zealand-bound emigrants consisted of highly educated middle-class people in their 30s to 40s who were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the country’s economic success, as well as its contributors. This study sought to identify structural problems of Korean society as the background to this middle class immigration.

Korean immigration flows to New Zealand can be divided into two phases, and a watershed in these two stages was the IMF in 1997. Before the IMF the main reason for Korean immigration to New Zealand was to seek an improved quality of life. I argued that by this they meant that, through immigration to New Zealand, they tried to resolve their inconsistent status between their economic, educational and occupational achievement, and the frustration in pursuing a middle class life style which was either thwarted or distorted in the formal and informal organisations and the larger society which operated on authoritarianism and familism. After the IMF, however, the reason for immigration to New Zealand was more directly manifested as a response to insecurity in occupational status – risk of unemployment or failure in business, as Korean society has been increasingly becoming neo-liberalised. Since the late 1990s Korean immigration to New Zealand was done as a strategy to avoid downward social mobility in Korea, by many middle class Koreans who sought a secure middle class life in a welfare state with some economic capital they had accumulated in Korea. Meanwhile another main reason in both cases was child education in an advanced English speaking country as a way to achieve ability in the English language which was seen as important cultural capital for social status in Korea.

I noted the way in which their immigration decision was made often based on a whim at certain points in their lives. Two factors were pointed out which influenced an instant decision on international migration. First their previous overseas experience made them reduce their fears of living in foreign countries and realise the possibility of different ways of life. Increasing cross-border interpersonal connections through kinship, friendship or transnational agents, built a public social sphere where the circulation of resources between the home and host country occurred. Being connected to these transnational networks was another important reason why the participants chose international migration as an immediate response to their challenges in Korea.

Transnational Exchange of Capital for Secure Living in an Advanced Welfare State

Despite the low occupational achievement and income level in New Zealand, Koreans' standard of living appears close to that of the middle class in the host society. Koreans' immigration fund which they brought from Korea was the major economic base for living in New Zealand and filled the income gap between themselves and the host people. But after relocation, many Koreans have just enough income to live with their family in New Zealand, which raises a question as to why highly educated middle class Koreans immigrated all the way down to New Zealand to work as cleaners or retailers.

I suggested that Korean immigration took place as a family project. Korean men as husbands or fathers have a heavy responsibility to secure and guarantee their family's lives. But as Korean society has been influenced by a neo-liberalised economy since the late 1990s, insecurity in employment has increased while the cost of child education is becoming unbearably high. Under these circumstances, residency in an English speaking country, which guarantees a minimum living standard and provides children with free education, could be a promising option for Korean breadwinners. For Korean men, New Zealand is a society which shares their burden of supporting their family, especially educating their children to the tertiary level. It shows that, as I discussed citing Kelly and Lusia (2006) in Chapter Four, economic, social, and cultural capital in transnational space can convert into each other. For Korean immigrants in New Zealand, their diminished social and cultural capital seems to be rationalised against secure living in a welfare society.

Nevertheless these highly educated middle class people, who had well-established careers in their home country, experienced a loss of identity when they experienced downward social mobility in the host society because of language and cultural barriers. But

immigrants negotiate their social status in a new culture using a variety of resources with which they build their own communities in the host countries. Among various formal or semi-formal organisations or institutions in their community, ethnic churches are the most important centres of community construction for Koreans in New Zealand. Morris, Vokes and Chang (2007) observed that the Korean immigrants who sought to build the feeling of being at home in a new country, but had experienced social exclusion, harassment and discrimination from the host people, turned to their ethnic churches which provide a ready-made social network, providing practical, economic and emotional support and a haven of Korean-ness in an unfamiliar society.

Quest for Opportunities through Simultaneous Embeddedness

Since Koreans' mass immigration to New Zealand started in the early 1990s, the two countries have seen the formation of a transnational social field between them. Personal and material exchanges between the two countries have been rapidly promoted as technical (non-stop flights), legal (the visa exemption agreement), and institutional (various public and private institutions such as consular office or bank) resources were available.

This transnational social field has been exploited by different agents with different purposes. Firstly, it has been used as an alternative adaptation path for immigrants. Together with the money they brought from Korea, Koreans' economic activities in the transnational space, including ethnic businesses and transnational businesses such as international education agencies, contribute to Korean immigrants' maintenance of a middle class living standard in the host society. Secondly, many Koreans strategically swing the transnational pendulum between their home country and host country, chasing the two hares of economic opportunity and quality of life at once in this transnational social field. Finally, the transnational social field is used as an alternative path to detour the Korean education system by Korean international students. For those parents who want to give their children an opportunity for intensive English tutoring, the transnational social field is used for inventing a transnational curriculum where they strategically inserted part of a foreign country's public education curriculum into their children's school career, while other parents cross the borders between the Korean and New Zealand education systems to get to Korean tertiary education through various detours.

International migration now includes a strong strand of transnational movement in an increasingly globalising world. What makes today's transnationalism distinctive is that it becomes so accessible that ordinary people can participate in the flows. As a result,

ordinary people began to seek better opportunities across the national borders. When many participants in this research said it was similar to moving to another district in Seoul for them to move to New Zealand -- they could come back to Korea anytime -- and when they planned and ran businesses in Korea while they were in New Zealand, what they meant was that New Zealand was part of their transnational social field where they could easily access the host society's social systems for their benefit, while they could maintain their linkage with their home country.

Costs of Living in the Transnational Social Field

Many Korean middle class people chose international migration as a way of dealing with an insecure future, seeking economic and social security which they found hard to obtain in the social field of their home country. Transnational migrants' flexibility, mobility and consequent dual belongings enabled them to reach economic and social security without rapid acculturation and giving up their way of life. But Korean transnational migrants face difficulties in transnational social space in terms of the opportunity cost of their strategy.

Although many Korean immigrants could achieve economic security with small self-employed businesses after relocation, thanks to the fund they brought from Korea, they could not avoid downward mobility in terms of occupational and social status within the host society. As a response to this situation, some Korean immigrant families choose to live transnational lives in which the husband works in Korea and the wife and children reside in New Zealand. But the members of these separated families have to endure disrupted family relations, and may not be recognised as being real families in New Zealand. Living across borders, transnational migrants may experience difficulties in negotiating different expectations: values and modes of action between home and the host society, and perceived racial discrimination can be stressors for immigrants.

From these difficulties Korean transnational migrants experienced various problems in their mental health including addictive behaviour and strained family relations. When Korean immigrants are affected by these stressors, they cope with them in various ways on an individual, family, and community level. While many of these strategies are concentrated on the Korean community isolated from the host society, their transnational ties with Korea were very helpful in mitigating these problems which arose from their local community-based settlement strategies. That is, their transnational ties enabled them to extend their living spheres beyond the local community, which may decrease their

dissatisfaction with the isolated community while promoting and maintaining valuable social networks and consolidating their ethnic identity.

Discussion: Status Seeking in Deterritorialised Space

Transnational migration is a general phenomenon in global population movements in the 21st century, but each movement has occurred within a unique historical context. Korean transnational migration between Korea and New Zealand is similar to and different from transnationalism around the world. Korean transnational experience in common with other new transnational realities reflects “an increased and more pervasive global penetration of capital” (Basch et al 1994: 24) and occurs in relation to class in the context of this global capitalism. From a global perspective on migration,

Transnational migration is actuated by the relationship between classes that is at the core of capitalism as a mode of production....While the capitalist class is increasingly global in the manner in which it incorporates all areas of the world into a single system of production, political processes that maintain the inequalities between classes remain structured within the separate states (Basch et al 1994: 23).

Korean transnational migration can be considered a local response of a social class in the Korean nation state to global capitalism.

In this respect Korean transnational migration between Korea and New Zealand is on similar lines as recent Chinese, Taiwanese and Hong Kong people’s transnational migration as a class strategy. The home country is characterised by rapid industrialisation and the subsequent growth of the middle class, increasing neo-liberalisation, a traditional family-based welfare system amid lack of social support. Transnational migration give access rights to social systems in advanced western countries, and to English and internationally recognised academic qualifications as highly valued symbolic capital. The ingredients of transnationalism of the people from the East Asian countries are the same.

This trend of transnationalism, however, differs from the trends which have been studied so far by many scholars in migration studies in two respects: the level of transnational practices and the longevity of the connections. First, regarding the level of activities, when some scholars in migration studies in the US initially noted the phenomenon of transnational migration, it was the movements between the US and Latin American countries and the Caribbean: between the core states and post colonial states. Within this flow transnationalism is adopted as an immigrants’ adaptation strategy in the host society and/or their class strategy in their home land through remittances, which is

categorised as “transnationalism from below”. On the other hand, when Ong (2002) noted diasporic Chinese border crossing activities and mobility and their cultural values and class strategy in transnational space, she dealt with transnationalism of mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals who “have the material and symbolic resources to manipulate global schemes of cultural difference, racial hierarchy and citizenship to their own advantage” (Ong 2002: 173). It is “transnationalism from above” which is “controlled by powerful elites who seek...political, economic and social dominance in the world” (Mahler 1998:67).

Transnational activities have often been categorised into these two contrasting groups. The uniqueness of Korean transnationalism compared to other transnational migrations is what Smith (2005) called “transnationalism from the middle”, “middling transnationalism” or “transnationalism in-between” which refer to transnational practices of social actors occupying more or less middle class or middle status positions in the national class structure in their places of origin. Korean transnationalism which is focused on everyday transnational activities is neither “the power of transnational technical and managerial elites nor to the village-based social networks forged by economically marginal social strata to generate transnational social capital (Smith 2005:15)” and thus differs in this respect from Chinese transnationalism.

This specific characteristic of Korean transnationalism is evident in geese families and contrasts with transnational families in general. Working class people from Latin America, the Caribbean or the Philippines are left behind by migrant husbands, wives or parents who migrate to the US as low level labourers or nurses and domestic workers. Migration in this case “is part of a strategy which includes economic survival or betterment for migrants and for those who stay behind” and “remittances of household or family members from country of immigration to country of emigration” are reciprocally exchanged with the labour of “those who run domestic affairs in the country of origin” (Faist 2002: 195). The migrants recurrently return to their home but the transnational family arrangement continues until family reunification in the country of immigration or that of emigration. Unification of increasing numbers of family members in the country of immigration contributes to the creation of a transnational community. On the contrary in upper class/elite transnational families, women leave their home countries for safe havens for the reproductive purpose of caring and educating children while their husbands who are professionals or managers in multinational corporations join them almost as often as if they

were in the same country. Korean transnational families are in the middle of these two extremes. Women leave Korea for reproductive labour but they find it a very hard struggle and their husbands cannot visit them very often because of the lack of financial resources except for small numbers of upper class families. Most of these families are neither working class nor upper class, and their transnationalism is neither from below nor from above.

Korean-New Zealand transnational migration is also unique in terms of the longevity of the connections between the two countries. While most transnational migrations which have been studied so far happen in transnational social fields constructed between the two areas linked through particular historical experiences such as post/colonialism, as the one between the United States and Latin American or the Caribbean countries transnational migration and practices in this study occur between two countries which had few particular links with each other until mass migration to one country started. Moreover it is not the movement between core states and peripheral ones but one between two semi-peripheral countries which can take place with fewer entrance barriers. In this context, it should be noted that New Zealanders are also actively involved in transnationalism with the UK, the US and especially with Australia which has created multi-stranded transnational connections with broader western society. Although the transnational social field between Korea and New Zealand is a quite recent development, within New Zealand, which has well-established transnational social fields with broader western society, Korean immigrants can also get connected to the same transnational connections.

While having common characteristic as a class strategy in global capitalism, Korean transnational migration between New Zealand and Korea has uniqueness in terms of its level of practice and the duration of connections: Korean transnational migration investigated in this study is transnationalism from the middle toward a semi periphery nation state.

Dealing with this unique Korean transnationalism this study makes some contributions to the anthropology of transnationalism. Firstly, as some scholars argue, if “the frequency and intensity of migrant transnational practices ebb and flow in response to the intensification or slackening of globalisation” (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007:146) this study provides a typical case. The frequency and intensity of Korean migrants’ transnational practices became noticeable after the economic crisis in 1997. Amid increasing economic and social inequalities in Korea, which had strengthened competition

throughout the society for resources such as educational qualifications and privileged occupations, transnational migration among Korean middle class people emerged as a coping strategy in the neo-liberalised world order. In relation to this, this study presents what class means in a nation state when it is constructed transnationally. Academic discussion on class in Korea has rarely been done in a transnational context, but my study shows a person's class and/or social status can be defined and constructed differently in the transnational social field. Korean immigrants, many of whom were upper/middle class in their home country, experienced downward mobility in terms of social status in New Zealand due to an implicit racialised hierarchy in the society and their lack of social and cultural capital. But in terms of economic capital they still remain as middle class in New Zealand, and because of access rights to the social systems in an advanced English-speaking country, they might be considered as high as upper middle class in Korea, despite their relatively low economic capital in the Korean context.

Secondly, by examining a case in a newly established transnational social field, this study presents the possibility of how a transnational social field can be rapidly built without long historical contacts, supporting the scholars who “understand transnational migration as taking place within fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society” (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007:131).

Transnational movements of immigrants and transnational immigration communities are not a novel phenomenon of the present. The difference between transnationalism today and the past is revealed more clearly when it is dealt with in relation to nation-states. The reason why transnationalism has gained great attention, whether passionate support or strong criticisms, is twofold. A new social space has been created, and everyday transnational contacts have weakened the hegemony of nation states by blurring border lines and creating new transnational subjects.

Taking advantage of post World War Two developments of the intensification of international labour markets, the globalisation of media, and time-space compression, some migrant communities emerged spanning two nations – transnational communities expanded their existence across national borders like multinational companies. Through these means the distinct centre-periphery relationship has been removed, which made possible Korean immigration to New Zealand which was previously unknown to most

Koreans and located in the “semi-periphery” (McDougall 1999: 31) in terms of world system theory.

Korean immigration to New Zealand is one example of the global population movement phenomenon in which people use transnationalism as a passage created by globalisation to cope with crises such as increasing social and economic disparity caused by globalisation itself. For them, transnationalism is a deterritorialisation strategy. The term deterritorialisation, which refers to the phenomenon that “production, consumption, communities, politics, and identities become detached from local places” (Kearney, 1995: 552) has several usages: deterritorialisation has to do with the construction of hyperspaces such as airports or franchised restaurants, hyper-real places such as amusement parks, global spaces and virtual spaces created by the Internet; but for transnational migrants, it means the formation of transnational spaces where people may escape from the totalising hegemony that a strong state has within its national borders.

However, as Wong (2002: 171) notes, “deterritorialisation must be contextualised in relationship to specific processes and to different levels of analysis”. In a nation state, the “who, why and how” of access to deterritorialised transnational space should be clarified to reveal the concrete meanings of that space. For Korean middle class people in New Zealand, how transnational space is turned into a field for their status maintenance, escalation and reproduction is closely related to its character as an area liberated from the monopolistic hegemony of nation states.⁸²

In this study Korean middle class people’s deterritorialisation strategy has two contrasting aspects. On the one hand, some Korean middle class who experienced their economic, social and cultural capital diminished through socio-cultural changes have opted for transnational strategies to free themselves from the nation state’s power to control nationals’ social mobility. In this context, for those who experienced threatened social status due to a lack of resources or status inconsistency in Korea, or others whose social status was threatened amid neo-liberal economic restructuring, “being sound middle class people” has been possible in the deterritorialised transnational space. When a female participant said that “most Korean immigrants to New Zealand came here to avoid competition in Korea”, she may imply that these people have certain disadvantages in competition in Korea.

⁸² This space is still being shaped by the two nations. For example, Korea has a much tighter grip on its citizens than New Zealand does.

For those who are in the upper middle class in Korea, on the other hand, this strategy of deterritorialisation is used to increase their negotiating power against the state's control over the education and qualification system. In this respect, Korean international students challenge the nation state's monopolistic educational hegemony. Since modern education started, the Korean Government has strongly controlled education, because education, school curricula in particular, was the key ideological mechanism to make its people Korean nationals and control them. Especially during military regimes from the 1960s to 1980s, the custom of uniform and standardised school curricula imposed by the government was established. People obeyed because of the state's monopolistic evaluation of educational achievement and qualifications, which was directly related to social status. It was also globalisation that broke the solid hegemony of the state in education:

Increasingly, global standards on educational skills and qualifications define educational pursuits in Korea. The most obvious way globalisation affects the Korean educational process is through the increasing emphasis on the English language... Since the 1997 financial crisis... the growing awareness of the vital importance of English in today's world has produced a frenzy for English [language] education, especially among children... But... middle class parents were not satisfied with English education provided at public schools (Koo 2007a: 13).

The universal character of globalisation overwhelms "the political and ideological dimension" (Kearney 1995: 549) of nationalism in transnational space where people can be freed from the dominant cultural logics of their home country.

This transnational strategy in education is directly related to cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan identity which can lead to upward social mobility through the acquisition of symbolic capital including English and familiarity with English speaking culture. Park and Abelmann (2004) argued that English functions as an index of South Korea's and South Koreans' cosmopolitan striving in the global order, examining the narratives of three mothers of different socio economic status respectively, on their management of their children's English afterschool education. As the way to conceptualise these mothers' cosmopolitan striving in relation to English education, they adopt the concept of "discrepant cosmopolitanism" -- diverse and specifically non-elite modes of cosmopolitan striving, which refers to people's desires to be at home in the world, unlike the classical concept of cosmopolitanism -- the humanist idea of universalistic identifications, which is "cultivated detachment from restrictive forms of identity". Many Korean transnational migrants in New Zealand also dreamed that their children would be cosmopolitans so that they could live anywhere and be open to more opportunities: they did not agree with

universal, unbounded cosmopolitan identities but they also rejected an either-or identity. For them, cosmopolitan identity means a versatile identity or flexible citizenship, in Ong's (1999) term, with which they can be at home in the world.

Two questions over transnational social fields and deterritorialisation are raised. First, does it mean weakening the nation state? As an immigrant literary scholar says "there is a sense of navigating a kind of unseen, unfixed [transnational] space which gives you an enormous amount of freedom" (Espinet 2007). But this freedom does not come from the weakening political and cultural salience of the nation state. Rather, the sense of freedom in the transnational social field relies on the nation state's independent regime in relation to other nation states, as Ong (2002) discusses in the study of mobile Chinese managers, technocrats, and professionals who seek both to circumvent and to benefit from, different nation-state regimes by selecting multiple sites for investments, work, and family relocation. But transnational migrants and their practices disturb the centrality of the nation state for individuals as the ultimate source of belonging, by their multiple belongings.

Another question is related to multiple belonging or memberships. Could not their multiple memberships conflict with each other? As Levitt and Schiller question, if a person has dual belongings which state is ultimately responsible for which aspects of transnational migrants' lives? Or in turn, which country is a transnational migrant ultimately responsible to? They answer that people in transnational social fields are exposed to different ideas of citizen rights and responsibilities, and as a result they enter the political domain with a broader repertoire of rights and responsibilities than citizens who live only within one state.

Host people's expectation of immigrants' loyalty and community membership of the receiving countries is the result of the perception that immigrants live in the host society as a geographical place. But transnational migrants in the globalising world live in transnational space between two or more countries. Considering Koreans' mass remigration to Australia just before the Australian government was about to stop providing those who held New Zealand permanent residency with the same welfare benefits as Australian citizens, transnational migration is not about ultimate belonging. Rather, in this transnational era, the state is conceptualised as an organisation which can be selected by the agents, as in the quotes below.

Many [Korean] people say that [life in] New Zealand is dull and boring, but I found that I fitted in well in New Zealand with my personality... You know, the unique

atmosphere of New Zealand, it suited me well...even if someone offered me all the living expenses to live in any other country in the world, I would refuse the offer and choose New Zealand. (A female 1.5 generation participant who came to Korea to work after living in New Zealand for about 15 years)

I had realised [and accepted] the fact that I had placid and even calm aspects in my personality during the first year in New Zealand. But I can't stand to be here anymore now that I have been pent-up for three years. (A once goose father who decided to come back to Korea after living in New Zealand for three years)

People always have multiple memberships in specific ethnic, class, or religious groups, and for transnational migrants, citizenship is only one of several bases upon which individuals form their identities or exercise their rights. For instance, some states, including Korea, have two different categories of membership -- nationality and citizenship. Citizenship defines a member's rights and duties within the national polity while nationality legally delineates a category of belonging without granting full citizenship rights (Levitt and Schiller 2004: 1019).

These are reterritorialisations -- efforts of a deterritorialised nation state to extend its hegemony over its citizens who, as migrants or refugees, reside outside of its national boundaries. The Korean government is also trying to reach its overseas nationals. Traditionally Korea did not acknowledge its citizens' dual nationality. So overseas Koreans who obtained the citizenships of their residential countries were treated as foreigners by the Korean government unless they gave up their other citizenship. Public sentiment towards dual citizenship holders was also very negative. But from 1999, after the IMF crisis, Korea promulgated a law which acknowledges dual nationality with the granting of some legal privileges to emigrants and their descendents, but not full dual citizenship. This alternative residency certificate for overseas Koreans, which practically grants them the same status as Korean citizens, was intended to attract mainly Korean-Americans' economic capital. Furthermore, Korea has recently also promulgated a law which extended the right to vote to their citizens overseas. Largely due to this policy, the meaning of citizenship became less serious for both the state and the nationals. The cases below, of renunciation of Korean citizenship, illustrate clearly how the Korean government's effort to win overseas Koreans made citizenship flexible, as well as demonstrating Korean government officers' bureaucratism.

The woman who returned to New Zealand after the failure of her husband's cooking school in Korea found just before departure that her Korean passport was expired. So she tried to use her New Zealand passport but was told that she had to give up her Korean citizenship to use the alternative passport. When she went to the immigration for renunciation of her Korean citizenship, what she was worried about most was how much she would be fined, but fortunately she could give up her Korean citizenship without a fine due to an officer who was in a hurry to leave his office.

The 1.5 generation immigrant who went to Korea for his exchange studentship was advised by an officer that the certificate of residence for overseas Koreans would be better when he applied for the student visa in an immigration office in Korea. As soon as he accepted the advice, the officer had him sign the form for renunciation of Korean citizenship without any advice about what it meant to him, which made him upset later when he realised what happened.

Re-nationalising overseas nationals' children is another effort by the Korean government to extend its hegemony over its nationals outside Korea. For example, a government agency, National Institute for International Education [NIIE] (www.interedu.go.kr), provides an eight day invitation programme for young overseas Koreans to help them "to establish a Korean ethnic identity and promote an understanding about their motherland" through such curricula as "Korean language, Korean culture, Korean history, Guest lectures, Cultural excursions, School visiting." All programme fees, including airfare, are paid by the Korean government. Another longer programme for young overseas Koreans is also provided by the same institution to offer "systematic instruction of the Korean language, help them to improve their self-confidence through cultural excursions and studying Korean history and culture" at participants' expense. In both programmes, participants should be approved by the Korean Embassy or Consulate. In fact, these programmes were originally designed based on the concept of a Korean diaspora, but in this transnational era, they aim to attract human resources among overseas Koreans and to extend the nation state into the entire globe.

In a similar way, transnational engagement is not incompatible with integration into the host society, as many studies support. As an example, Levitt (2001) discusses a

transnational community between the US and a Caribbean country in which members are integrated to varying degrees into the receiving country, and at the same time they remain connected to the country they leave behind. It is also true for Koreans in the transnational social field. Although some, especially 1.5 generation, Koreans experience a sense of dislocation, others see this transnational life as being beneficial to this sense of belonging, as a primary school girl, whose father is Chinese and mother is Korean, wrote on her library membership card. Her ethnicity was 50% Chinese, 50% Korean and 50% New Zealander: a 150% person.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Demographic and socio-economic backgrounds of the participants at the time of departure and their current status in New Zealand (NA=Not Available; FPR=Family with PR; SPR=Single with PR; SNPR=Single without PR; FWP=Family with Work Permit; ISF=International Student Family)

	Entry year (age) / gender	Accompanying Family	Occupation (Husband's)	Educational qualification	Place of residence	Status in NZ
FPR	WDG 1979 (14)/F	Parents, brother, sister	Middle school student	None	NA	Citizen
	DRD 1992 (38)/M	Couple, sons (10, 8)	Executive in a venture company	Bachelor	Bundang (Gyeonggi-do)	Return (2001)
	AGD 1992 (37)/F		Nurse			Return (2002)
	RDR 1993 (38)/F	Husband (41), sons	Private music instructor	Bachelor	Seoul	Citizen
	TGG 1994 (51)/M	Wife, 2 sons	Manager	Bachelor	Seoul	NA
	WCT 1995 (26)/M	Couple	Office worker	Bachelor	Seoul	Citizen
	GDT 1995 (25)/F		Housewife			
	WVW 1996 (37)/M	Wife, son, daughter (4)	Researcher in a company	Master	Bucheon (Gyeonggi-do)	PR
	TDD 1995 (33)/M	Wife, child	Secondary school teacher	Bachelor	Pohang (Gyeongsangbuk-do)	Citizen Return (2005)

	Entry year (age) / gender	Accompanying Family	Occupation (Husband's)	Educational qualification	Place of residence	Status in NZ
FPR (ctd)	TRR 2001 (41)/M	Wife, daughter, son	Office worker	Master	NA	PR
	DTW 2002 (38)/M	Couple, 2 sons	Bank clerk	Bachelor	NA	PR
	DAD 2002 (33)/F		Housewife			
	WAD 2002 (32)/F	Husband (33) daughters (5, 2)	Office worker	Bachelor	NA	PR Return (2005)
	GRR 2003 (34)/M	Wife, son (2)	Bank clerk	Bachelor	Bundang	PR
	GW 2003 (34)/F	Husband, son (5)	Housewife	Associate Degree	Seoul	PR
	DSF 1991(8)/M	Parents	Primary student	None	Seoul	Citizen
	GWR 1993 (16)/F	Parents, 2 sisters, brother	Middle school student	None	Seoul	PR Return (2005)
	TDQ 1997 (20)/M	Parents, brother	University student	None	NA	PR
	WDD 1984 (8)/M	Parents (38, 37), brother (10)	Primary Student	None	Bundang	Citizen
	GRT 1996 (14)/F	Parents (43, 37), sister	Middle school Student	None	Seoul	Citizen
	TXR 1991 (16)/M	Parents, sister	High school student	None	Seoul	Citizen Return (2003)
	GTQ 1990 (15)/M	NA	Middle school	None	Seoul	Citizen Return (2001)
	QEW 1991 (16)/M	Parents, brother, sister	High school student	None	Seoul	Citizen Return (2000)

	Entry year (age) / gender	Accompanying Family	Occupation (Husband's)	Educational qualification	Place of residence	Status in NZ
FPR (ctd)	TRG 1993 (19)/M	Parents	High school graduate	None	Seoul	Citizen Return (2002)
	WGR 1990 (17)/F	Parents, brother	High school Student	None	Daejeon	Citizen Return
	DWD 1995 (24)/M	Parents	Never employed	None	Seoul	PR
SPR	DAR 1995 (29)/M	Single	Never employed	Master	Seoul	PR Return (2000)
	DRR 2002 (32)/M		Never employed	Bachelor	Busan	PR
SNPR	GTD 1995 (24)/F		University student	None	Seoul	Citizen
	DTR 2000 (32)/F	Missionary	Bachelor	Seoul	PR Return (2006)	
	GDW 2001 (NA)/F	Newspaper reporter	Bachelor	Seoul	PR	
FWP	CTG 1990 (NA)/M	Wife, daughters, son	Farmer	Bachelor	Seongnam (Gyeonggi-do)	Citizen
	XTC 2002 (41)/M	Wife, 2 sons	Engineer in a construction company	Bachelor	Ulsan	PR
	EQD 2003 (12)/F	Parents	Primary student	None	Seoul	Return (2007)
	EDD 2003 (10)/F					
	DQT 2003 (40)/M	Wife, son, daughter	Businessman	Bachelor	Ansan (Gyeonggi-do)	Work permit

	Entry year (age) / gender	Accompanying Family	Occupation (Husband's)	Educational qualification	Place of residence	Status in NZ
ISF	TGT 1992 (16)/M	Mother, brother (14) (father in Korea)	High school student	None	NA	Citizen Re-migrate to Australia (2007)
	TAR 2001 (36)/M	Wife, son, daughter in New Zealand	Businessman	Bachelor	Seoul	PR
	GTW 2001 (37)/F	Two daughters (husband in Korea)	Housewife (International trade businessman)	Bachelor (Bachelor)	Incheon	PR
	WFD 2001 (41)/F	Sons (14, 9), daughter (11) (husband in Korea)	Housewife	Bachelor	NA	PR
	GDD 2004 (40)/M	Wife, 3 sons	Professor	Doctor	Jeonju (Jeollabuk-do)	Return by himself (2005)
	DRW 2001 (NA)/M	Wife, 2 daughters in New Zealand	Businessman	Bachelor	Seoul	In Korea
	TWW 2001 (13)/F	Sister (10)	Primary student	None	Seoul	Student
	TTQ 2001 (37)/F	Son(10) (husband in Korea)	Private coaching institution owner	Bachelor	Seoul	Work permit
	DDT 2003 (36)/F	Son(7) (husband in Korea)	Housewife	Bachelor	Seoul	Guardian
	AD 2001, 2004/F	2 daughters (husband in Korea)	Housewife (Traditional Korean Medical doctor)	Master	Changwon (Gyeongsangnam-do)	Guardian
ADC 2004 (38)/F	2 sons (husband in Korea)	Housewife (Veterinarian)	Bachelor	Icheon (Gyeonggi-do)	Guardian	

	Entry year (age) / gender	Accompanying Family	Occupation (Husband's)	Educational qualification	Place of residence	Status in NZ
ISF	GTW 2002 (40)/F	2 sons (husband in Korea)	Secondary school teacher	Bachelor	Seoul	Guardian
	DAG 2003 (35)/F	Sons (9, 7) (husband in Korea)	Housewife (Lawyer)	Bachelor	Ilsan (Gyeonggi-do)	Return
	DAT 2003 (38)/F	Son, daughter (husband in Korea)	Housewife	Bachelor	Seoul	Return
	WCC 2003 (40)/M	Couple 2 sons, daughter	Private coaching institution teacher	Bachelor	Cheonan (Chungcheongbuk-do)	Return (2005)
	RTG 2003 (38)/F		Private piano instructor			
	GWR 2003 (32)/F	Son (7), daughter (4) husband in Korea	Kindergarten teacher	Bachelor	Bundang	Return (2004)
	GT 2002 (32)/F	Son (6) husband in Korea	Housewife	Bachelor	Bundang	Return (2004)

APPENDIX B:

The profiles of participant professionals

Entry year/ Gender	Professions	Qualifications in Korea	Qualifications in NZ	Place of Practice
DRG 1993/M	Christian minister	Bachelor	Master	Auckland
RTD 2000/M		Master	None	Hamilton
WQC 2000/M		Master	None	Auckland
WDG 1979/F	Former General Practitioner	None	Medical doctor	Auckland
QTR 1996/M	General Practitioner	Medical doctor	None	Auckland
TGT 1992/M	Chiropractor	None	Bachelor	Auckland
RDD 2005/M	Traditional Korean medical doctor	Doctor	None	Hamilton
GDR 1994/F	Counsellor	Master	Master	Auckland
DGW 1991/M		Bachelor	Bachelor	Auckland
TGG 1994/M	Korean School Principal	Bachelor	None	Christchurch
GCD NA/M	Newspaper publisher	NA	Bachelor	Christchurch

APPENDIX C:

CONSENT FORM

(For Adult Participants)

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project title: Adaptation Process and Mental Health of Korean Immigrants In New Zealand

Researcher name: Bon Giu Koo

The participant has read the Participant-Information Sheet, has understood it, and is prepared to take part in the research. The participant has had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. The participant understands that they are free to withdraw themselves at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to them up to 31 January 2007.

The principal of Korean school of Korean Presbyterian Church of Auckland has given a guarantee that participation or non-participation will not affect students' grades.

- The University of Auckland, Korean Presbyterian Church of Auckland (KPCA), Korean Society of New Zealand, the leader of Korean mental health group, the Korean school of KPCA, and any interested community members will receive a copy of the final PhD report.
- I understand that audio-recording of this interview is optional. I **agree/ do not agree** that this interview will be audio-recorded and I may choose to have the recorder turned off at any time.
- I understand that the tape will be transcribed by someone other than the researcher, but this person has signed a confidentiality agreement.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at anytime without giving a reason. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my information up to 31 January 2007.
- The researcher is responsible for this consent form. The form will be stored for six years after my fieldwork period in a secure place in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Auckland. The consent form will be shredded and disposed after 1 March, 2012.

I agree to take part in this research.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12 May 2005 TO 11 May 2008 FOR 3 YEARS
REFERENCE NUMBER 2005/ 048**

연구동의서

(성인 연구참여자를)

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연구자: 구본규

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- 나는 이유를 설명할 필요없이 언제라도 자유롭게 연구를 그만둘 수 있다는 것을 알고 있습니다. 나는 내가 제공한 정보를 2007년 1월 31일까지는 취소할 권리가 있음을 알고 있습니다.
- 이 동의서에 대한 책임은 연구자가 지게 됩니다. 이 동의서는 현장연구가 끝난 뒤 6년동안 오uckland 대학 인류학과 내의 안전한 장소에 보관될 것입니다. 이 동의서는 2012년 3월 1일 이후에 파기되어서 폐기처분될 것입니다.

나는 이 연구에 참여할 것을 동의합니다.

연구참여자 서명 _____ 날짜 _____

이 연구(식별번호 2005 / 048)는 2005년 5월 12일부터 2008년 5월 11일까지 3년의 기간동안 오uckland대학교 연구참여자유리위원회의 승인을 받았습니다.

APPENDIX D:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: Adaptation Process and Mental Health of Korean Immigrants in New Zealand

Researcher name: Bon Giu Koo

To: Koreans with permanent resident visa or NZ citizens

My name is Bon Giu Koo. I am a student of the Anthropology department at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, conducting my research for a PhD degree. My research is about adaptation process of Korean immigrants and impact of their adaptation patterns on their mental health status.

As a Korean immigrant in New Zealand, your experiences in and opinions about Korean community and New Zealand are most helpful and appreciated. I would like to invite you to be interviewed about this topic and for your life history. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving reasons, and you may withdraw your data up to 31 January 2007.

The objective of this project is to gain an understanding of how immigrants who have been acculturated in an ethnically homogeneous society adapt to a multi-ethnic society through their life history, and of immigrants' mental health status and problems raised from the process of adaptation. I am interested in gathering as much information as possible through interviews with the community and any outside parties involved in the Korean community in New Zealand. Copies of the final PhD thesis will be provided to the University of Auckland, Korean Presbyterian Church of Auckland (KPCA), Korean Society of New Zealand, the members of Korean mental health group, Korean school of KPCA and any interested community members.

This interview will take no longer than one hour. However, I may ask you to consent to another interview at a later date. We will conduct the interview at a location and time that is convenient for you.

I will use your name in the final report, only if you request it. Because the Korean community in Auckland is not large enough to guarantee participants' anonymity, even though I use pseudonyms to protect you, it is difficult to guarantee anonymity with respect to the participant's identity and your life history may reveal who the storyteller is. And you may feel sad or angry in telling your life story. If your emotional response appears to require it, I will help you contact a counsellor.

If the information you provide is reported or published, and you wish not to be identified, I will make my best efforts to preserve your anonymity. Outside of the completed report, all data you provide is confidential. All data will be retained by the researcher, and locked indefinitely in a safe place so that it may be used in future reports or publications of this researcher and in the future longitudinal studies of this researcher to trace Korean immigrants' adaptation patterns and mental health status.

Audio-recording our interview is optional. Even if you agree to a recorded interview, you may choose to have the recorder turned off at any time. Interviews will be recorded only with your consent. The tapes will be transcribed by someone other than the

researcher. The transcriber may be able to identify you from the recordings. This person, however, has signed a confidentiality agreement.

All data collected and audio-recorded is confidential and will be preserved in a secure (locked) place in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Auckland. This agreement will be determined by you, the participant, and I, the researcher, in a separate consent form.

Researcher name and contacts	Supervisor name and contacts	HOD name and contacts
Bon Giu Koo Department of Anthropology University of Auckland P) 64-9-373-7999, Ext.86647 Contact Number in Korea P) 82-53-764-6597	AP Julie Park Department of Anthropology University of Auckland P) 64-9-373-7999, Ext.88589 Dr Changzoo Song School of Asian Studies University of Auckland P) 64-9-373-7599, Ext.84604	AP Peter Sheppard Department of Anthropology University of Auckland P) 64-9-373-7999, Ext.88572

For ethical concerns contact: The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Room 005 Alfred Nathan House 24 Princes Street, Auckland. Tel: 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12 May 2005 TO 11 May 2008 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2005/ 048

연구참여자를 위한 설명서

연구제목: 뉴질랜드 한국 이민자들의 적응과정과 정신건강

연구자: 구본규

뉴질랜드 영주권자 및 시민권자들을 위한 설명서

저는 오클랜드 대학 인류학과 박사과정에서 공부하고 있는 구본규라고 합니다. 저는 뉴질랜드 한국 이민자들의 적응과정과 이 적응유형이 이민자들의 정신건강에 미치는 영향에 대한 연구를 하고 있습니다.

선생님이 이민자로서 뉴질랜드에 살면서 한국 이민자 사회나 뉴질랜드 사회에서 겪은 경험과 두 사회에 대한 의견은 제 연구에 꼭 필요한 유용하고 가치 있는 정보입니다. 저는 이 주제에 대한 선생님의 의견과 생애사를 듣기 위해 면담을 하고 싶습니다. 이 연구에 참여할 것인지의 여부는 전적으로 선생님의 자유로운 의사에 달려있습니다. 선생님은 언제라도 이유를 설명할 필요없이 연구참여를 중단할 수 있으며 2007년 1월 31일까지는 제공해주신 정보를 철회할 수 있습니다.

이 연구는 한국과 같은 단일민족사회에서 문화화 된 이민자들이 뉴질랜드와 같은 다민족사회에 어떻게 적응해 나왔는지를 이민자들의 생애사를 통해 알아보고 이민자들의 정신건강상태와 적응과정에서 나타나는 문제에 대한 이해를 얻는데 목적을 두고 있습니다. 저는 한국 이민자 사회와 또 이에 관련된 뉴질랜드 내의 여러 사람들과의 면담을 통해 가능한 한 많은 정보를 얻고 싶습니다. 완성된 박사학위논문은 오클랜드대학교, 오클랜드한인교회, 뉴질랜드한인회, 한국인정신건강전문가모임의 회원들, 오클랜드한인교회부설 한국학교, 및 관심있는 한인사회의 구성원들에게 보내질 것입니다.

면담시간은 한 번에 한 시간이 넘지 않을 것입니다. 그러나 저는 선생님께 동의를 구하고 나중에 또 다른 면담을 요청할 수도 있습니다. 면담은 선생님이 편한 장소와 시간에 행해질 것입니다.

저는 선생님이 요청할 경우에만 논문에 선생님의 실명을 밝히겠습니다. 오클랜드의 한인사회는 연구참여자의 익명성을 충분히 보장할 수 있을 만큼 크지 않기 때문에 제가 선생님을 보호하기 위해 가명을 쓴다 하더라도 익명성을 보장하기 어렵고 또 생애사는 이야기를 하는 사람이 누구인지를 쉽게 드러 낼 수 있습니다. 또한 생애사를 이야기하면서 슬픔이나 분노와 같은 감정을 느낄 수도 있습니다. 도움이 필요하다고 생각되면 심리상담 전문가를 만날 수 있도록 하겠습니다.

선생님이 원하신다면 제공해 주신 정보를 가지고 보고서를 작성하거나 출판을 할 때, 저는 선생님의 익명성을 보장하기 위해 최선을 다하겠습니다. 완성된 보고서이외에 선생님이 제공하는 모든 자료는 비밀로 다루어질 것입니다. 모든

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수집되고 녹음된 모든 자료들은 비밀로 다루어지며 오클랜드 대학 인류학과 내의 잠금장치가 있는 안전한 장소에 보관될 것입니다. 이에 대한 동의는 별도의 동의서상에서 연구참여자인 선생님과 연구자인 저에 의해 결정될 것입니다

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연구윤리문제 문의처: The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Room 005 Alfred Nathan House 24 Princes Street, Auckland. Tel: 373-7599 extn. 83711. 이 연구 (식별번호 2005 / 048)는 2005년 5월 12일부터 2008년 5월 11일까지 3년의 기간동안 오클랜드대학교 연구참여자윤리위원회의 승인을 받았습니다.

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