

INTERCULTURAL-INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT
EXPERIENCED BY KOREAN-CANADIAN MOTHERS

by

Seonae Seo

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain cross-cultural insights into the family dynamics of Korean-Canadians during their transitions as immigrants, by asking six Korean-Canadian mothers about the family conflicts they had with their children, that were of an intercultural nature.

The methodology consisted of a qualitative research design, informed by a post-positivist epistemological viewpoint. In semi-structured interviews, six Korean-Canadian mothers spoke at length about what triggered their Intercultural-Intergenerational conflict with their adolescent children, about how they responded to such conflicts, and about how they saw these conflicts in terms of their children's cultural adaptation/identity.

Audiotapes of the interviews were transcribed, then coded and categorized according to principles of thematic analysis and grounded theory. To ensure authenticity, reflexivity was built into all stages of the research.

From the categories analyzed, there emerged six general triggers of conflict, (such as the adolescents' style of communicating with their mothers, or the mothers' attitudes to their children's "culture shedding"); five general ways in which the mothers tended to respond to conflict (from emotional outbursts to attempts at adjusting); and three measures of what, for the mothers, constituted satisfactory adaptation, by the children, to the host culture (success in school, retention of Korean identity, and the ability to cope with any racism that they might encounter).

The study concludes with some suggestions for a more sophisticated social work praxis, and for service provision that reaches beyond a purely economic understanding of immigrants' problems, as the findings speak to a high degree of complexity in a shifting immigrant demographic.

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DEDICATION

To my loving friend, Terry Loughrey

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The topic of this thesis, culture conflict between mothers and adolescent children in Korean-Canadian immigrant families, arose because of a lack, in the relevant literature, of research on Korean immigrants, particularly Korean-Canadians, and the need I perceived in my professional capacity as a social worker for research in this field.

Before examining culture conflict, we need an operating definition of culture. Definitions abound, but that of Hooker (2004) is of particular relevance to the analysis advanced in this study. He defined culture as “the way that human beings learn to live with one another and their environment” (p.59) and as “a set of behaviours, attitudes, and ideas which human beings ‘learn’ while living together” (p.60) which “gives meaning to their practices” (p.59). He emphasized that “human culture can be deliberately cultivated” (p.60). According to Hooker’s definition, then, culture, “deliberately cultivated” and “learned”, does not include ethnicity, race, and genetics, and indeed we will see that the conflicts in the Korean families I studied occur, not because they happen to be ethnic Koreans now located in a different ethos, but because of different learned values, including different learned senses of how to live together. In other words, the adult family members have learned certain “lessons” from the Korean culture where they have spent their lives plus the Canadian culture to which they have had limited exposure, while the adolescent family members have learned certain other lessons from the Canadian culture to which they have extensive and salient exposure, and from the Korean culture where they spent half a childhood.

In this way, Hooker's perception of culture as learning illuminates my concept of "Intercultural-Intergenerational conflict," as distinct from various other family conflicts that afflict immigrant families. The term denotes those conflicts that immigrant parents and children get into when they are dealing with contrary thoughts, values and patterns of behaviour all of which come from cultural differences between them. These are intergenerational conflicts, but my argument is that they differ from the intergenerational conflicts they would have had if they had stayed in their country of origin, or if, hypothetically, they were "equally" acculturated to the new culture.

As a professional working in the field of immigrant settlement and integration, I have come across many stories from immigrant women about their difficult relationships with their adolescent children. From these stories and other sources, one beholds a picture of immigrant families in which the adults and the children, whether born here or in the country of origin, inhabit separate worlds. Among other problems, cultural conflicts are a key dynamic in these fraught relationships. This of course comes as no surprise; what might surprise some, however, is how severe this problem can be, even in materially well-off families such as recent Korean immigrants to Canada. It is the heart-breaking severity of the mother-child conflicts that points to the compelling need for investigation.

Despite this urgent need, however, and despite the surge in the Korean-Canadian population, research is sparse (Kwak, 2003; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Eom, 1996; Kim, 1996). It is almost negligible compared with research on Koreans in the U.S. (where immigration dates back to the late nineteenth century), or compared with research on other Asian-Canadian groups. Canada has no other sizeable visible minority about which so little is known. Perhaps the rapidity of the recent influx has outstripped the response-

time of the research community. According to 2001 Census (Statistics Canada, 2007), between 1996 and 2001, the number of people of Korean origin rose by 53%, while the overall population grew by only 4%. In 2001, 70% of Korean-Canadians were foreign-born, and the largest population of Korean immigrants living in Canada is relatively recent arrivals (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Whatever the reason, it cannot be socially healthy for there to be a group about whose issues we are so uninformed, yet whose presence among us is now so noticeable. If we want to learn about the lives of these Koreans, we mostly have to look in the research on Asian immigrant families. Unfortunately, with very few exceptions (Kim, 2004; Kim, 1996; Kwak, 2003; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Noh & Avison, 1996), this literature either excludes Koreans altogether, or includes them in catch-all conclusions about family conflict and cultural adaptation, not taking into account the discrete purposes of immigration, the social status, the income level, or the family arrangements, that are particular to Korean immigrants. About my own topic, family conflicts, not a single study has been conducted with Korean-Canadians. Yet, as Nah (1990) and Kim (1996) assert, each immigrant group has, in addition to the common challenges that all groups must face during transition, its own cultural characteristics, and its own set of adjustment problems. Without a sound cross-cultural understanding of the particular circumstances of an immigrant group, it cannot be feasible to design and/or deliver to them the social services they need. Not knowing that the motive for most Koreans to immigrate here is their children's education, or that education in Korea is extraordinarily competitive, how can the social worker appreciate the importance of family conflicts about school work? Not knowing about the class structure in Korea, or that most recent Korean immigrants come from the affluent middle class, how can the social worker get a sense of their aspirations

and sacrifices, and so of the weight of their despair when the aspirations are unmet, the sacrifices in vain? Not knowing their income level, how can the social worker predict the role of money in parent-child conflict? Not knowing that the majority of adult Korean immigrants are church-going Christians, how is the social worker to imagine the strictness of the moral code that they impose on their children, and the difficulties of that code for Korean teens, exposed as they are to today's sexual climate in Canadian schools; and not knowing that Confucianism has survived the centuries and is a force in Korean family structures, how can the social worker be prepared for Korean parents' insistence on children's total and unquestioning obedience? On the other hand, a concrete knowledge of such matters can forewarn the social work profession about the conflicts that are likely to escalate into problems requiring their response, and can equip the front line worker with an approach and a discourse that is appropriately responsive.

Research questions

Prompted by this hitherto unmet research need, the purpose of the present study is to provide a description of some Korean mothers' lived experience of intercultural conflicts with their adolescent children. My research questions were:

- 1) What are the incidents of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict experienced by Korean mothers?
- 2) In what ways do mothers respond to such conflicts?
- 3) What do mothers think about effects of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict on the cultural adaptation/identity of their children?

Korean immigrants in Canada

Unlike the history of other Asian immigrant populations, Korean immigration to Canada is a recent phenomenon, originating in the 1960s. However, no influx of any significance took place until the late 1990s. Since then, the number of Korean immigrants has been unprecedentedly high (Kwak 2004). Korea became the fifth largest source country between 1996 and 2001 (CIC 2002 cited in Kwak, 2004), and the Korean community is the 7th largest non-European ethnic group in Canada, after the Chinese, East Indian, Filipino, Jamaican, Vietnamese, and Lebanese (Statistics Canada, 2007). According to the 2006 Census, there were 146,550 Korean-Canadians, with concentrations in Ontario (39%, 57,235) and British Columbia (31%, 46,035) (Statistics Canada, 2008). In those provinces, we see “little Seouls” in large cities, and Korean-Canadian communities with their own churches, schools, newspapers and media outlets.

Kwak (2004) explained that, since the business immigration program was revised in 1986, many well-educated, affluent entrepreneur Koreans have sought a better quality of life in Canada, leaving behind an unstable economy and a stressful education system. She characterized Korean immigrants since 1991 as having high human capital, substantial financial assets, university education, and nuclear families, and pointed out that this middle class exodus is seen in the entry categories of Korean immigrants: from 1991 to 2000, over 90 percent of the total Korean-Canadian immigrant population was entrepreneurs, self-employed, or investors.

Despite their affluence upon arrival, however, many Korean-Canadians have experienced difficulty integrating into the Canadian labour market. Korean immigrants have a much lower employment rate and a much higher self-employment rate (44% of working Korean

men; almost 30% of working Korean women) than the overall visible minority population (Kwak, 2004). In fact, Korean-Canadian immigrants have the highest self-employment rate of all immigrant groups (Hiebert, 2003 cited in Kwak, 2004). Unlike some other immigrants, owning their own small business is not an aspiration of Korean-Canadians. On the contrary, self-employment is something they resort to, because of the evident impossibility of obtaining employment in Canada that is in any way commensurate with the employment they had in Korea. They do not come to Canada seeking a better standard of living for themselves. It follows that, for most Korean-Canadians, conventional practical services such as job search training are likely to be a less pressing need than for traditional types of immigrants. In fact, as the findings of this study will show, their needs are less material than psychological.

As well as self-employment in Canada, another common response to the impossibility of appropriate employment here is to keep working in Korea. Rather than facing the seemingly endless and perhaps ultimately fruitless struggle to overcome barriers to employment, many become “astronaut families ... maintaining a household in each country ... living between Korean and Canada” (Kwak, 2004, p. 29). Here again we see Korean-Canadians as dissimilar from the classic pattern. Many of them are transnational families, variously known as “goose families,” “satellite children,” and home-stay “pseudo families.” Kwak’s term for this recent wave of Korean-Canadians is “opportunistic” (p. 31), in the sense that they are less likely than earlier Korean immigrants to see assimilation as necessarily a virtue. Whether running a laundromat in Vancouver or shuttling between here and an architecture firm in Seoul, Korean immigrants would appear to be perilously situated at the edges of Canadian society. For people used to being members of a tightly-knit society to which they made a significant

contribution, this marginality must be painfully dislocative. Their arrival here may be “opportunistic,” but their manner of existence here calls for a particular kind of services.

Relevance to social work

This study is particularly significant for social work. The influx of new Asian immigrants has dramatically changed Canada’s demographics. Forty percent of Vancouver’s population was born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada 2001). This increasing racial and cultural diversity necessitates culturally competent social work practitioners (Este, 1997), and obliges social workers to re-examine their roles and their relationships with immigrants who use their services (Sakamoto, 2007). In Este’s words (1999), cultural competence embraces “the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs” (p.31). In this regard, the particular findings of the present study can inform social work professionals so that their work might be more consistent with the needs of Korean-Canadian immigrants. As Sakamoto noted (2007), the accumulation of this type of knowledge about members of distinct cultures is an essential safeguard against a one-size-fits-all practice of social work with immigrants.

Based on interviews with six Korean-Canadian mothers living in the Vancouver area, this study will convey, often in the mothers’ own words, their felt experience of culture-caused conflict, and will elucidate the meanings of that experience, including the occasions of conflict, the mothers’ responses to conflict incidents, and, where sufficiently formed, their own perceptions of the ways that such conflicts can affect cultural adaptation. As this study is, to the best of my knowledge, the first on this topic with this

immigrant group, the hope is that, in addition to providing the profession with a little information where now there is none, it will stimulate further studies along the same lines. On this foundation, we can then attempt to conceptualize cross-cultural family conflict.

Meanwhile, a conceptual framework for researching cross-cultural family conflict cannot be found in classical disciplines such as psychology. It is possible that parent-adolescent conflict is universal across cultures, and one prevalent explanation, based on developmental psychology, locates changes in parent-adolescent relationships within the critical development of adolescent autonomy (Fuligni, 1998). According to this view, children's increasing desire to lay claim to autonomy and independence causes them to resist their parents' authority, leading to disagreements as to the parents' right to regulate, and often to a higher intensity of conflict (Youniss & Smollar, 1985 cited in Fuligni, 1998). Even if this claim of universality is upheld, it would not exclude the existence of cultural variations. For example, even if adolescent autonomy is, as developmental psychologists claim, a universal cause of family friction, the actual degree of the developmental imperative may vary from culture to culture, in which case the degree and nature of the ensuing parent-adolescent conflict would also vary.

In fact, individual autonomy tends not to be seen as having any importance at all among the tasks of adolescent development in non-western cultures. Naturally, when people from non-western cultures, such as Korea, migrate to western cultures, such as Canada, they import their value systems, such as a low value for adolescent autonomy. The host culture may do nothing to actively discourage the maintenance of that low value in the parents; however, through schools, peer-groups, the media and other pervasive influences,

it will do a lot to encourage a high value for adolescent autonomy in the children. Clearly, this situation is ripe for conflict between parents and adolescents.

Given that adolescence is the time when all families are liable to encounter “generation gap” problems, it is predictable that non-western immigrant parents will run into special difficulties during the adolescence of their children (Maiter & George, 2003).

How the intergenerational problems and the intercultural problems interact with and multiply each other, and how they morph as they proceed through the transitions of the children and the different transitions of the parents, is obviously a question of tremendous complexity, beyond the scope of developmental psychology to explain.

For this reason, this study has had recourse to other branches of knowledge, as discussed in **Chapter II, Literature Review**. That chapter will examine four areas of research: acculturation theory, especially the notion of “acculturation disparity”; parenting styles and cross-cultural parenting; models of conflict response; studies of Korean immigrant matters. We will see that acculturation disparity has explanatory power, but is not a sufficient reason for intercultural-intergenerational conflict. We will also see that the classic models of parenting styles and conflict management styles do not have a good fit with the realities of Asian immigrant family conflicts. As for studies of immigrant families, the chapter points out that most such studies focus on psychological issues such as mental health, and in any case rarely report the subjective experience of individuals.

As explained in **Chapter III, Methodology**, the interviews were semi-structured, and my three research questions were not relied on for elicitation purposes. A variety of other questions came up as each interview progressed. This chapter details other aspects of the

research design and its implementation, together with their philosophical basis. The chapter thoroughly explains how the study met the demands of validity, with great weight being given to reflexivity.

The attempt in **Chapter IV, Findings** is to provide for the reader the richest, most nuanced possible description of the life experiences of the subjects, six Korean mothers who have gone through harrowing times with their adolescent children, including the changes these experiences have brought to the women's lives.

Chapter V, Conclusions, makes suggestions for future research and for the social work field, deriving these suggestions, to some extent, from a comparison between the **Findings** in **Chapter IV** and those in some of the key studies in **Chapter II**, the chapter which we now commence.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Acculturation theory

As the subjects of this study are people in transition between two quite different cultures, I review in this chapter the body of acculturation theory that informs my exploration. To that end, this section will outline some relevant concepts from acculturation theory; discuss how acculturation, especially a disparity in rates of acculturation, can cause conflict in families who are in transition from a familiar culture to an unfamiliar one; differentiate such intercultural parent-adolescent conflict from the normal parent-adolescent conflict that can affect any family, regardless of culture.

Definitions of acculturation

According to Berry (1990, 1997 cited in Rhee, Chang & Rhee, 2003), acculturation refers to the cognitive and behavioral changes that occur as a result of extensive exposure to an unfamiliar culture, specifically the adoption of the language and values of a dominant culture. Lee, Soral, and Frongillo (2003), extending Berry's concept, define acculturation as an "overall adaptation on both individual and group levels" (p.282), including not only cultural, psychological and social aspects, but also economic and even political aspects. Yeh (2003) complements this approach to acculturation and considers that it refers to "the manner or the process in which individuals negotiate two or more cultures" (p.35), such as culture of origin and host culture.

Models of acculturation

I will present two models of acculturation, both of which have had wide acceptance, but one of which has more applicability to my research.

(1) The unidimensional model

This is a traditional model that goes back to the early 1960's (Stonequist, 1964 cited in Tsai & Chentsova-Dutton, 2002). It positions orientation to one's native culture and to a host culture at opposite ends of a line, along which one moves inexorably from being unacculturated to being acculturated, adopting aspects of the new culture as one discards aspects of one's old culture. In other words, the process is unidirectional and privileges the assimilation of minorities into a majority culture.

This acculturation model posits three stages, unacculturated, bicultural, and acculturated, bicultural individuals being, not people who are at home in two cultures, but people who are between two cultures, at home in neither. In a zero-sum transaction, they have given up some of their original cultural attributes in the process of acquiring some attributes from the new culture, a process which denies the possibility of having a high degree of familiarity with both societies (Lee, Soral, & Frongillo, 2003). Still, Alba and Nee were able to argue as recently as 1997 (cited in Lee, Soral, & Frongillo, 2003) that much contemporary immigrant experience is explicable in terms of this model.

(2) The bidimensional model

This more recent model has been proposed by numerous acculturation theorists (Berry, 1995; Lafromboise et al., 1993; Oetting & Beauvais, 1991; Sayegh & Lasry, 1992; Zak, 1973 cited in Tsai & Chentsova-Dutton, 2002, p. 98; Roysircar & Maestas, 2002, p.77). As distinct from the linear model, the bidimensional model views people's orientation to their culture of origin and their orientation to their host culture as separate processes that develop independently within the individual. Roysircar and Maestas (2002) stated that acculturating individuals have two drives that are in opposition and so may engender

inner conflict: “(1) the maintenance and development of one’s ethnic distinctiveness by retaining one’s cultural identity, and (2) the desire to seek interethnic contact by valuing and maintaining positive relations with the dominant society” (p.78). According to Berry (1980, 1995 cited in Tsai & Chentsova-Dutton, 2002), Ward and Kennedy (1994) and Roysicar and Maestas (2002), individual responses to these two general needs account for four possible modes of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization (See Table 2.1). Each mode corresponds to the degree to which an acculturating individual is willing to go between old and new cultures.

Table 2.1 Four modes of acculturation

Integration	- Emphasis both on cultural maintenance and on intergroup relations - Allegiance to cultural identity and involvement in the host culture
Assimilation	- Emphasis on intergroup relations; no emphasis on cultural maintenance - Relinquishment of cultural identity; exclusive identification with dominant society
Separation	- Emphasis on cultural maintenance; no emphasis on intergroup relations - Exclusive retention of original cultural values; avoidance of contact with the host society
Marginalization	- Emphasis on neither cultural maintenance nor intergroup relations - Loss of cultural and psychological contact with both their traditional culture and the host society

As in the linear model, awareness of new cultural norms may develop in stages; however, the bidimensional model recognizes that acculturation often follows a non-linear, even cyclical, path (Pawliuk, Grizenko, Chan-Yip, Gantous, & Mathew, 1996). In other words, entry into a new society does not necessarily mean that one’s original culture must be relinquished: acculturation does not have to be a zero-sum transaction (Lee, Soral, & Frongillo, 2003).

Indeed, as Padilla and Perez (2003) pointed out, the importance of this four-mode model lies in the capacity of minority individuals to reverse their process of acculturation into a

dominant group and to revert to their former cultural heritage. It is a model in which every individual is free to negotiate their buy-in to the new culture in a different way and at a different rate.

Theoretically, this subtler model appears positive for the individual; for the family, though, all these multiple directions and outcomes of acculturation can add up to an unmanageable amount of complexity.

Effects of acculturation

The most frequently reported effects are anxiety and depression, often presenting with psychosomatic disorders (Sam, 2000). Matsushima and Tashima (1982 cited in Kim, 2003) surveyed Asian-American therapists, who described to them some serious consequences of acculturation, including higher than normal incidences of depression, low self-concept, and relationship conflict, and reported that 40% - 50% of their clients had experienced parent-child relationship problems attributable to acculturation difficulties.

These studies are of the whole range of immigrants, including children, single people and childless couples. For immigrant parents, there is the stress of immigration, the stress of parenting, and -- the topic of my own research -- those powerful hybrid stressors that inhabit the junction of immigration and parenting.

Acculturation disparity

Numerous studies have identified acculturation disparity as an important factor in immigrant family conflict (Moon & DeWeaver, 2005; Merali, 2001; Lee, Choe, & Kim, 2000; Kim, 1997a., 1997b; Min, 1995; Moon, Wolfer, & Robinson, 2001; Tardif, 2003).

In the literature, the term acculturation disparity is used interchangeably with the term acculturation gap, both terms referring to a gap between family members' rates and processes of adaptation to a new culture. Merali (2001) contrasts the exposure that immigrant parents have to the new culture with the greater exposure of their children, who, having less choice in their degree of contact with the new society, are more inclined to "culture shedding" (p. 26). This is especially the case because of their urgently felt need to gain acceptance within their age cohort in the host group (Baptiste, 1993; Ghuman, 1991, Huang, 1994, & Pruegger, 1995 cited in Merali, 2001). Detailed confirmation of this tendency was reported by Pawliuk et al. (1996) in their study of 48 children from a multi-ethnic Canadian sample.

Effects of acculturation disparity on parents

The results of acculturation disparity often include intergenerational miscommunication and conflicts about values (Rhee, Chang, & Rhee, 2003). For immigrant parents from Asia, there is evidence that stress caused by acculturation disparity impacts their self-esteem, life satisfaction, and psychosocial adjustment (Asakawa & Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; Florsheim, 1997; Gil et al., 1994; Padilla et al., 1986 cited in Rhee, Chang, & Rhee, 2003). One stressor is probably the impossibility of the attempt to reconcile two contradictory Asian-immigrant desires: on the one hand, Asian parents put a high value on their children's obedience and unquestioning conformity; on the other hand, immigrant parents' most urgent priority is for their children to succeed academically and

professionally, and they see that critical thinking, autonomous decision-making and assertiveness are indispensable to this success in the new culture (Rhee, 1996; Uba 1994; Ying, 1998 cited in Rhee, Chang, & Rhee, 2003).

Effects of acculturation disparity on children

Pawliuk et al. (1996) investigated the relationship of acculturation styles and psychological functioning in a multi-ethnic Canadian sample of 48 children aged from 6.5 to 17 and their parents. Children and parents who had different acculturation styles scored significantly lower on a social competence scale than did those who had the same acculturation styles. Parental acceptance of (not necessarily acculturation to) the majority culture was associated with healthy psychological functioning in children.

Pawliuk et al.'s findings bear out those of Koplow and Messinger (1990), who conducted four case studies of emotionally distressed young children. Koplow and Messinger found that disturbances such as failure to integrate cognition with feeling were associated with families in which parents were unable to undertake, or uninterested in, acculturation (that is, in the separation and marginalization modes).

In her large scale quantitative study of 100 Mexican American students, Trias-Ruiz (1992), although her statistical results failed to establish her hypothesis that acculturation disparity is related to children's depression, concluded that methodological flaws such as not having allowed for a gender variable had possibly falsified her figures. Her work certainly does not foreclose the possibility that acculturation disparity impacts the psychological well-being of children.

Effects of acculturation disparity on parent-child relations

A number of researchers have found correlations between acculturation disparity and negative outcomes for intergenerational relations in families. One such outcome is the worsening of communication between adolescents and their parents (Li, 1986; Rick, & Forward, 1992; Sluzki, 1979 cited in Xiong, Detzner, Rettig, 2001). Poor communication is part of a wider problem, the mutual lack of understanding, by parents and their adolescent/young adult children, of each other's point of view. Lee et al. (2000 cited in Lee & Liu, 2001) were able to separate out the normal lack of sympathy between generations from one that was accentuated by acculturation disparity. Szapocznik et al., (1978 cited in Trias-Ruiz, 1992) found more extreme results among Cuban immigrants in the U.S., for many of whom the acculturation process disrupted the traditional Cuban family, often leading to behavioral problems of rapidly-acculturated adolescents.

Differences between normal and intercultural parent-child conflict

Parent-child conflict, also known as intergenerational conflict, commonly occurs during adolescence over issues of autonomy and independence (Laursen & Collins, 1994 cited in Lee & Liu, 2001). When such conflict occurs in a cross-cultural setting, it is inevitably compounded by cultural differences in values and life styles (Lee & Liu, 2001). For example, many Asian immigrant parents desire their children to uphold their cultural values and to carry on their traditions and lifestyles; meanwhile, however, their children are more likely to have adopted Western-oriented, individualistic values, attitudes, and lifestyles, often the reverse of their parents' beliefs and so an additional source of tension in the realignment of parent-adolescent relationships (Cooper, 1988; Hill & Holmbeck, 1996; Steinberg & Silk, 2002 cited in Tardif, 2003). The reader should keep in mind this

type of family conflict, acculturation conflict, as I now turn to a general, and then an intercultural, analysis of parenting.

Summary

In this section, Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict and acculturation theory, I have attempted to show how acculturation interrelates with immigrant family conflict. In order to explore the interaction, I have reviewed some theoretical concepts of acculturation, two models of acculturation, and the impacts of acculturation disparity on parents and children.

Of course, the everyday disagreements, quarrels, and conflicts between parents and adolescent children, with their different stakes in the expansion of teen autonomy, are only too well-known: it is now half a century since the phrase “generation gap” became part of popular culture. But if we are to understand immigrant families, we need to explore beyond this now common notion. For them, the intercultural aspect of intergenerational conflict of immigrant families is unfathomable, and yet inescapable. Obviously, the “generation gap” between parents and adolescents becomes intensified and compounded in cross-cultural contexts; what is less obvious is the pattern of ramifications that takes place during the period of transition from culture to culture. The need to better understand such conflict, in its manifestations in Korean-Canadian families, was my purpose in undertaking the present study.

I will look at Korean-Canadians family conflict later in this chapter, after reviewing the present state of our knowledge of cross-cultural parenting in general, and then of conflict response.

2.2 Cross-cultural parenting

Parenting is a process that involves “a series of actions and interactions on the part of parents to promote the development of children” (Brooks, 2004 p.5 cited in Keller et al., 2006). According to Harkness and Super (1995 cited in Myers-Walls, Myers-Bowman, & Posada, 2006), parenting, embedded as it is in cultural settings, is considered “central to the transmission and expression of cultures” (p. 147). Also, researchers have agreed that differential patterns of acculturation are most pronounced in parenting beliefs and practices (Phinney, Ong & Madden, 2000; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993 cited in Lee & Liu, 2001). Therefore, when discussing immigrant parent-child conflict, it is crucial to include parenting as part of a conceptual framework.

This section will discuss some ways that culture manifests itself in parenting, and show how an understanding of the characteristics and outcomes of cross-cultural parenting deepen the understanding of immigrant parent-child conflict.

Cultural influences on parenting styles

Parenting style refers to a constellation of parent-child interactions in a variety of situations, constituting a “pervasive interactional climate” (Mize & Petrit, 1997, p. 291 cited in Stevenson-Hinde, 1998). According to one model (Baumrind, 1967, 1971, 1989, 1991 cited in Kim & Rohner, 2002), there are four parenting styles derived from two variables: parental warmth (responsiveness) and parental control (demand). Baumrind characterizes parental warmth as “the parent’s emotional expression of love” (1996, p.410 cited in Myers-Walls, Myers-Bowman, & Posada, 2006), and parental control as “parents’ attempts to integrate the child into the family and society by demanding behavioral compliance” (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 489 cited in Myers-Walls, Myers-

Bowman, & Posada, 2006). On this basis, Baumrind posits four parenting styles: authoritative/democratic (high warmth and high control); authoritarian (low warmth and high control); permissive (high warmth and low control); and neglectful (low warmth and low control). This typology is plausible and has gained wide acceptance; however, as we will see, it is problematically Eurocentric.

Characteristics of cross-cultural parenting

The findings of Kim and Wong (2002) call into question the applicability of Baumrind's classification to Asian-American groups, because some Asian-American parents, though showing more parental control than did the European parents, at the same time displayed more warmth. In this regard, Gorman's (1998) interpretation of Chinese parenting is illuminating: Chinese parenting style may seem controlling or authoritarian; however, it has much in common with authoritative style. Gorman arrives at this view by re-conceptualizing "seemingly strict childrearing practice" as "training" (p. 79). She differentiates the motivation of Chinese mothers from that of the authoritarian parents described by Baumrind (1967, 1971 cited in Kim & Rohner, 2002). In the authoritarian style as defined by Baumrind, the strict code of behavior stems from a desire to control the child, so that the focus is on the needs of the parent; in contrast, in the Chinese concept of "training," the code of behaviour, even if equally strictly imposed, arise out of parental care and concern, so that the focus is on the developmental needs of the child. Gorman suggests that a more accurate description of these Chinese mothers' parenting practices is vigilant rather than controlling.

Nevertheless, numerous studies have claimed that authoritarian parenting is more prevalent among Asian parents than among Euro-American parents (Chao, 1994;

Dornbusch et. al., 1987; Steinberg et. al, 1992 cited in Kim & Rohnner, 2002). Chinese parenting in particular is often described as ‘authoritarian’, in so far as it tends to be highly restrictive and controlling, and stresses unquestioned obedience to authority rather than open two-way communication between children and their parents (Chao, 1994; Chiu, 1987; Kelley & Tseng, 1992; Kriger & Kroes, 1972 cited in Gorman, 1998). The fact that some Asian parents’ surface appearance of being controlling is quite compatible with an authoritative style containing a high degree of parental warmth makes it problematic to classify Asian parenting style as either authoritarian or authoritative. The confusion inherent in trying to map a Eurocentric typology onto Asian-background parenting becomes even more apparent when we look at outcomes: what seem to be identical parenting styles can produce divergent outcomes that contradict European expectations.

Outcomes of cross-cultural parenting

Parenting studies of Euro-Americans have associated authoritative style with positive outcomes (e.g. school performance, psycho-social development) for children and adolescents, whereas authoritarian style and permissive style have been associated with negative outcomes in those areas (MacCoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991 cited in Purdie, Carroll, & Roche, 2004). However, the same conclusion does not seem to hold true for other cultural groups. For example, Kim and Wong (2002) found a high level of successful academic functioning among Chinese students in spite of their parents’ authoritarian parenting styles. Similarly, and again in contrast to research findings based on Euro-American parents, permissive parenting by Korean-American fathers was found to be associated, almost to the same extent as was authoritative parenting, with positive academic achievement (Kim & Rohnner, 2002).

One possible explanation is that peer influence during adolescence might be moderating the adverse effects of authoritarian parenting (Steinberg, Dormbusch & Brown, 1992; Steinberg et al., 1994 cited in Gorman, 1998), that is, the style of parenting that discourages independent thought. Another explanation, suggested by Okagaki and Divecha (1993), may lie in immigrant parents' perceived necessity to use a heavily authoritarian style in their attempt to force the positive adjustment of their children. That is, in the belief that insistence on conformity to external standards is the surest method of getting their children to succeed in a new and strange society, these parents become unnecessarily authoritarian with academically adept children who would have succeeded anyway.

However complex the explanation, the fact that similar parenting styles produce dissimilar outcomes in different cultural groups is clear evidence of cultural influence. Thus, when applying Euro-American concepts of parenting styles to parents from elsewhere, we need to take careful account of cultural variables; otherwise, the whole notion of effective parenting eludes definition.

Outcome: parental confusion as to effectiveness

Immigrant parents are likely to be confused about what constitutes effective parenting, as each culture has a different paradigm of socialization goals (Darling & Steinberg, 2002 cited in Kim & Wong, 2002; Duran, 2002). As Maiter and George (2003) pointed out, effective parenting in a certain cultural group can be construed ineffective in another cultural context. Such cultural differences in socialization goals can be understood through Kagitcibasi's three cultural models of self (1996a, 1996b, 2005 cited in Keller et

al., 2006). These are: the model of independence, the model of interdependence, and the model of autonomous relatedness (See Table 2.2)

Table 2.2 Cultural models of self

The model of self	Socialized individuals	Focuses of socialization strategies
Model of Independence	are separate, autonomous, bounded, self-contained	Psychological states or personal qualities to support self-enhancement and self-maximization
Model of Interdependence	interrelate with others and are heteronymous	Acceptance of norms & hierarchies to contribute to the harmonic functioning of the social unit (e.g. family)
Model of autonomous relatedness	combine interpersonal relatedness with autonomous functioning	Both harmonic integration into the family and autonomy as an agent

From this model, we see that the goals of Asian parents in a collectivistic culture which values interdependence will be different from the goals of Western parents in an individualistic culture which values independence. Indeed, as Keller et al (2006) showed, immigrant parents do struggle to bring about the socialization of their children in a cultural environment that has socialization priorities different from (and sometimes inimical to) those embedded in their own cultural assumptions and their accumulated life wisdom. Immigrant parents may or may not be aware of these differences in priorities; even if they are, they may well lack the strategies to pragmatically function as “effective parents” in the host culture sense of that term, an inability likely to result in more frustrated parent-child relationships, and perhaps in increased conflicts.

Outcome: increased parental rigidity

It appears that common features of cross-cultural parenting include emotional reactions and increased rigidity. Duran’s (2002) analysis is that children who are going through “westernization” often act in ways (questioning all authority, parading their

egalitarianism) that are not intended to be disrespectful or disloyal (they are just trying out newly observed roles), but which are misperceived as such by their parents. Naturally, parents' reflex reaction to this dreadful prospect of complete loss of control is to tighten up the rules and their enforcement. In this way, parents become more authoritarian than they used to be, and than they would have been had they remained in their own culture.

Duran supposes that this strictness of Asian-American parents originates in the pressure they put on themselves to guarantee the successful socialization of their children. Of course, when parents tighten up the rules, and apply them rigidly, tensions build up and conflicts break out.

So far, this section has reviewed the literature on cultural variations in parenting. I have questioned the applicability of Euro-American parenting styles to Asian cultural groups, elucidated counter-predictive outcomes of parenting styles across cultures, and examined some characteristics of cross-cultural parenting. I will now explore in more detail the characteristics of Asian parenting, focusing on its differences from Euro-American parenting.

Asian Parenting

Emphasis on filial piety and familial interdependence

Asian parenting goals derive from a very different set of socialization priorities than those of parents from European and North American cultures. In contrast to the Euro-American emphasis on developing children's autonomy and independence, Asian parents accord those goals minimal priority and instead emphasize filial piety and family cohesiveness (Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Kim & Wong, 2002).

Filial piety

Filial piety is a central doctrine in Confucianism, and therefore, as Hong and Ham (2001) explained, a tenet of parenting practice in Asian societies where Confucian beliefs remain strong. They define it as an internalized responsibility in children for reciprocating the love and care they have received from their parents by devoting themselves to honoring their parents' wishes at the cost of pursuing their own.

Familial interdependence

Rudy and Grusec (2001) also pointed out that, whereas American parents generally encourage the autonomy and independence of their children, Asian parents expect theirs to be interdependent, cooperative, or compliant. Also, according to Gorman (1998), while mainstream American parents stress individuality and personality traits, Chinese mothers attach less importance to such psychological attributes than to the relationship that their children have with others.

Negative impacts of Asian's parenting in cross-cultural settings

Some studies have demonstrated negative effects of traditional Asian parenting. The lack of open parent-child communication was found to be negative for children's academic and psychological adjustment (Baumrind, 1991; Baumrind & Black, 1967; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989 cited in Moon & DeWeaver, 2005). Korean American college students' perception of traditionalism in their parents was a predictor of depression (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987 cited in Lee & Liu, 2001). According to Kwak and Berry's 2001 study, adolescent Korean immigrants perceived strict parental control as rejection, even hostility. Evidently, when immigrant parents insist on traditional parenting styles, it

tends to increase the possibilities of conflict with children who are rapidly adopting new cultural norms.

Summary

In this section, cross-cultural parenting, I have reviewed the literature on cultural variations in parenting, questioning the applicability of Euro-American parenting styles to Asian cultural groups, elucidating counter-predictive outcomes of parenting styles across cultures, and examining some characteristics of traditional Asian parenting, focusing on ways in which it differs from Euro-American parenting, and which therefore, in intercultural setting such as immigration, are potential sources or aggravations of parent-child conflict. As family life spirals out of control, the temptation to resort to more and more traditional demands (e.g. that children must obey blindly) becomes harder and harder to resist, as it becomes more and more counterproductive and adversarial. If research is going to be able to translate into better responses to immigrant family conflict, we need an understanding, not only of immigrant families, but of the dynamics of their conflicts. I will now survey the literature in that field.

2.3 Conflict response

One of my research questions was “How do Korean mothers respond to intercultural-intergenerational conflict with their adolescent children?” This question addressed conflict response, because I wanted to understand the all-round experience of what this conflict felt like from the parents’ viewpoint.

To provide a conceptual framework for such understanding, this section will review the literature on types of conflict responses and on coping styles, and will compare conflict

response across cultures. This will provide a basis on which, in the next chapter, I will be able to describe the Korean mothers' responses to their experiences of conflict.

2.3.1 Response to conflict

Definition

Rhoades and Arnold (1999) defined a response to social conflict as “any procedure, strategy, or behaviour that is used to manage to resolve a perceived interest or goal incompatibility” (p. 361). They point to the wide variety, in conflict literature, of models and styles, all claiming to elucidate procedures, strategies and behaviours in conflict situations. In this literature, the term “conflict style” is used interchangeably with “conflict management style,” both usages referring to process to make conflict less destructive, more productive (Burgess & Burgess, 1997).

Since the topic of this study is culture conflict within the family, the scope of this review will be confined to interpersonal conflict.

Five-style model of conflict management

This model has been widely used (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979; Thoma, 1976 cited in Lee, 2002); Blacke and Mouton, 1964; Pruitt and Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1992 Kim et al., 2007). The five styles are: dominating, obliging, compromising, avoiding, and integrating. (See Table 2.3). Each of these five has a certain degree of concern for oneself and a certain degree of concern for others (Blake and Mouton, 1964; Pruitt and Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1992 cited in Kim et al., 2007; Lee 2002). In an elaboration of this five-style model, Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) suggests that the selection of a particular styles not only depends on personal traits, but also varies according to the

circumstances, so that, for example, a person might be highly dominating (or competing) in a work or school situation, in an attempt to maximize the benefits to self, with little concern for the impact on their rivals, but may be much more compromising or obliging (or accommodating) in family situations, in an attempt to maintain harmony.

Table 2.3 Five-style model of conflict management

1) Dominating/ Competing style	- high concern for self and low concern for others - pursuing one's wishes at the other's expense
2) Obliging/ Accommodating style	- low concern for self and high concern for others - giving in to the other's wishes without attending to one's own.
3) Compromising Style	- intermediate concern for self and others - seeking an outcome which is intermediate between the preferred outcomes of both parties
4) Avoiding style	- low concern for self and others - taking a form of withdrawal or reflecting indifference to conflicts
5) Integrating/ Collaborating style	- high concern for self and others - represents a desire to fully satisfy the wishes of both parties

Four-style model of conflict response in intimate relationships

This is a possible conceptual model by means of which to explore responses to mother-child culture conflict. Taking conflict in close relationships to be “an interpersonal process that occurs whenever the actions - physical, affective, & cognitive actions – of one person interfere with the actions of another” (Peterson, 1983 cited in MacMillin, 1991, p.365), this model, initially developed by Rusbult and her colleagues (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986 cited in Fingerman, 1998; Healey & Bell, 1990; Rusbult, 1987 cited in Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001), was also used to analyze reactions and responses to conflict between aging mothers and daughters (Fingerman, 1998; Usita & Bois, 2005). The model consists of a four-part taxonomy – exiting, voicing, displaying loyalty, neglecting – based on an active-passive axis and a constructive-destructive axis (See Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Four-style model of conflict response in intimate relationships

1) Exiting	- Active and destructive style - Actively leaving the relationship (or the conflict scene abruptly)
2) Voicing	- Active and constructive style - actively communicating to improve relationship and conflict situation
3) Displaying Loyalty	- Passive and constructive style - waiting and hoping for the situation to get better over time - showing concerns of and attempts to accommodate the other's wishes
4) Neglecting	- Passive and destructive - avoiding the partner, treating the partner badly, and/or ignoring the other's wishes or requested

Parent-adolescent conflict

Some research has found that mothers have more conflict with adolescent children than do fathers (Galambos and Almeida, 1992 cited in Canary & Messman, 2000). There is also evidence of more and worse conflicts in hostile and coercive families than in warm and supportive families (Rueter & Conger, 1995 cited in Canary & Messman, 2000). These findings would suggest that, in addition to the conflict styles of the individuals, we need to take into account any gender and family dynamic prior to conflict, when thinking about how parent-child conflict are handled. A further complication of parent child conflict is that, unlike conflict between peers, parent-child conflict is influenced by “[the] involuntary association, [the] imbalance of power and resources, and obligations for the parent to function as a caregiver” (Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995, p.52).

2.3.2 Coping styles

Compas et al. (2001 cited in Wadsworth & Compas, 2002) defined coping as “conscious volitional efforts to regulate emotion, cognition, behavior, physiology, and the environment in response to stressful events or circumstances” (p.246). Thus, if the stress of a life-changing transition away from one's cultural boundaries endangers

psychological well-being and damages the parent-child relationship, it will demand a lot of one's coping capacity. The nature of such stress will determine the form that the family conflict takes, and the way that it gets handled. For this reason, models of stress and coping are the ones most commonly applied to acculturation and cultural adaptation (Berry, 1997; Ward 1996 cited in Ward & Kennedy, 2001). Bearing in mind, though, the somewhat tenuous nature of many of these application attempts (Ward & Kennedy, 2001), I will focus on the two best-established models of stress and coping.

The direct vs. indirect models

Cross (1995 cited in Lee & Liu, 2001) distinguished two simple types, direct and indirect. Direct coping involves actively managing, resolving, or making efforts to control stressful demands, and includes problem-solving or support-seeking moves. Indirect coping involves changing oneself (e.g. forbearance or self-distraction), as a means of adjusting to stressful demands, rather than attempting to change the situation.

The four-style model of coping

Lazarus and Folkman (1984, cited in Mikulincer, & Florian, 2001) distinguished problem-focused, emotion-focused, distancing, and support-seeking styles (See Table 2.5). As Mikulincer and Florian (2001) pointed out, the first and fourth styles tend to have positive outcomes, while the second and third styles, after possible initial benefits such as emotional balance, tend to have negative outcomes.

Table 2.5 Four-style model of coping

Coping Styles	Description
Problem-Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attempts to channel resources to solve the stress-inducing problem - consists of cognitive and behavioral maneuvers aimed at making changes in the environment and eliminating the external sources of stress.
Emotion-Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attempts to ease inner tension without trying to solve the distress-eliciting problem - consists of cognitive strategies aimed at understanding and alleviating distress (e.g. self-preoccupation, self-criticism, overt displays of distress, and wishful thinking)
Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attempts to prevent the intrusion of threatening thoughts into consciousness (e.g. suppression of painful emotions/thoughts; repression of painful memories) - attempts to disengage from the stressful situation (e.g. withdrawing the problem-focused efforts or consuming alcohol or drugs)
Support Seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attempts to maintain or restore proximity to a significant other who can help cope with stress (e.g. the seeking of love, reassurance, and affection; the search for information, advice, and feedback; the seeking of material aid and services)

Conflict response and culture

Since the focus of this study is intercultural conflict, I need to consider how culture comes into play when managing or responding to conflict. Pedersen and Jandt (1998) claimed that, in our response to conflicts, culture shapes our perceptions and alternatives, and defines for us the outcomes as either positive or negative. As Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) pointed out, what we do about conflict is related to who we are and what cultural norms we cling to. They stated that, unlike people from individualistic cultures, who tend to use more self-defensive, controlling, dominating, and competitive styles in managing conflict, people from collectivistic cultures tend to use more integrative and compromising styles. They associated Asian culture with a preference for a self-critical or self-effacing, harmony seeking mode, though of course there are personal variables, and as Kim et al.'s (2007) study of Chinese, Japanese and Korean workplace conflict resolution reminds us, cultures within Asia are far from being all the same.

Summary

I have reviewed two conflict styles and two coping models. I have also pointed out that conflict management may be shaped by cultural notions of human relations. All the conflict/coping styles discussed here provide a basis on which to explore the ways that Korean mothers respond to culture conflict, but my exploration will not be restricted to these concepts, as I attempt a more nuanced cultural interpretation.

2.4 Korean immigrant family conflict

Unlike the three previous sections of this chapter, on acculturation, parenting, and conflict, this section can report little pertinent research about Korean-Canadians.

As of October 16th, 2007, the Social Work Abstract Index Database had zero entries for “Korean + Canadian.” It had 48 entries for “Korean + Family,” but not a single study that included Korean-Canadians. Various other searches for Korean-Canadians produced knowledge of some distinctive aspects of some Korean groups in Canada, for example, the ethnic identity of second-generation Korean adolescents in Edmonton (Eom, 1996), and filial piety among Korean immigrants in Calgary (Kim, 1996), but only Kwak and Berry (2001) dealt with acculturation. This comparative study is germane, as it showed that parents from three ethnic groups (Vietnamese, Filipino, and Korean parents) differ in their attitudes towards their children’s acculturation process; however, as it is a quantitative study, it says nothing about the acculturation experience of those parents.

This means that the present study is the first to address conflict resulting from problems of culture in Korean-Canadian immigrant families. Therefore, I had recourse to Korean-American studies.

Two studies explored conflict between Korean-American parents and their children.

Hauh (1999) revealed the conflictual issues that 93 Korean-American adolescents had with their parents. Two issues (i.e. “pressures me to study” and “interacts poorly with me”) (p.viii) were present in all four gender-dyads (i.e. daughter-mother, daughter-father, son-mother, and son-father), but the predominant conflict issues varied, for example, “compares me to others” and “shows bias based on my gender” for daughter-mother dyad and “treats me like a baby” for mother-son dyad. Many of the adolescents felt angry, then “belittled and unwanted” (p. viii). Hauh (1999) found that the adolescents appeared to communicate more with their mothers than with their fathers. My research design does not discriminate the gender of adolescents, but differential communication with mothers and with fathers coincides with my own findings. Hauh’s verbatim presentation of the adolescents’ perspective complements mine of the mothers’ perspective.

Unlike Hauh (1999), Moon, Wolfer, and Robinson (2001) included the parents’ views and also included both groups’ preferred sources of help in times of conflict. The authors surveyed 197 Korean-Americans about parent-adolescent conflicts. Their findings correspond with Hauh’s, including for example, parents’ lack of time with their children, and mutual complaints about attitudes and pressures. As for sources of help, neither the parents nor the adolescents would want to talk to relatives. The children preferred to talk to peers; the parents preferred to talk to church leaders, but that finding is constrained by their exclusive recruitment from Korean churches. Moon et al. (2001) limited their task to the discussion of survey results, so that there is, again, no description of actual conflict experience.

A number of other researchers found statistically significant relationships among variables in relation to family conflict. Kim (1997) found correlations between cultural

conflict, parenting styles, and the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents. Park (2003) found that conflictual intergenerational relations produce negative psychological outcomes (e.g. low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, a sense of marginality, and the development of negative coping strategies). Moon and Deweaver's (2005) study of 304 Korean-American adolescents indicated that both gender and socio-economic status have a statistically significant relationship with family conflict. Huh-Kim's (1998) study of 149 Korean-Americans (parents and children) found that value differences (e.g. individualism and collectivism) between parent and child had an adverse effect on familial relationships, and caused psychosocial distress in the adolescents.

Summary

This final section of my literature review has looked at Korean-Canadian and, mostly, Korean-American studies, all of which provided helpful background. There are, however, clear gaps in the qualitative research on immigrant family conflict. Especially, there is a silence where the voices of mothers should be.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed what is known about parent-child conflict during cultural transitions. I have discussed acculturation theory, especially acculturation disparity, and culturally predetermined parenting practices. Acculturation and cross-cultural parenting influence not only the occurrence of intercultural conflict but also the course of action that mothers take to deal with it. I have also explored types of conflict and coping styles, as a basis on which to explore the ways that Korean mothers deal with Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict events with their teenage children. The relevant literature

shows that intercultural conflict is a reality for many immigrant families, but little attention has been paid to what the experience is like from the perspective of the mothers.

Also, few studies have examined Korean-Canadians' experience of this problem. The history of Korean immigration to Canada has been unlike that to other countries, in their socio-economic origins, in their motives for coming here, in the transience of many parents' irregular stays in Canada, with its fragmentation of the family unit; therefore, Korean-Canadian families have their own dynamic, and we cannot extrapolate their problems from those described in Korean-American research. As a contribution towards filling this gap in the research, my study offers a rich description of the Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict of Korean-Canadian mothers of adolescents. This description will provide a greater understanding of what is involved in their conflict experience. The methodology I used to achieve this descriptive purpose is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore some Korean-Canadian mothers' experiences of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict. According to Berg (2007), "qualitative techniques examine how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others and explore how people structure and give meaning to their experiences" (p.14). Qualitative research is descriptive (Creswell, 1994); is interested in people's perceptions (Mason, 2002) and meaning (Creswell, 1994); seeks to understand the experiences of selected individuals (Royse, 2004); and adds richness and depth to our understanding of phenomena (Royse, 2004). As Royse (2004) mentioned, qualitative research is not interested in testing a hypothesis or theory; rather, it is fundamentally exploratory and inductive, generating new understanding or theory from finding out what's going on.

Based on these features of qualitative research, we can see its appropriateness to the aims of this study:

- (i) my research is exploratory, attempting to understand Korean-Canadian mothers' experience of culture conflict with their children, a topic about which key variables are unknown and theory is undeveloped.
- (ii) the mothers' experiences were not quantifiable facts: they can only be constructed or reconstructed in interviews, not by survey questions and not in hypothesis testing.
- (iii) my study attempted to obtain a rich descriptive account of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict phenomena from the Korean mothers' perspectives, through their perceptions and feelings about the conflict events and about their own behaviour during them.

(iv) this research was interested in exploring the meanings that the mothers attached to their experiences, as I believe such exploration leads to a deeper understanding of the problem.

All in all, by using a qualitative method, I can most effectively share my understanding with interested parties. This chapter will explain my research design; present background information about my sample; explain the process of data collection and data analysis, and discuss some issues of validity and trustworthiness.

3.1 Theoretical basis

My qualitative research is informed by a post-positivist epistemological viewpoint, and my method has been guided by an overall strategy of thematic analysis. The following section will show how a thematic analysis approach, coming from a post-positivist position, has provided a theoretical basis appropriate to my research task.

Post-positivism

Corman (2005) described post-positivism as “a philosophy of science that respects the spirit of science in the context of fundamental reforms of positivistic principles” (p.21). Corman explains that while post-positivists “value a scientific approach to explaining social phenomena”, they also “accept many of the criticisms of the different positivisms, and have developed positions that transcend them” (p.22). In other words, post-positivists work within the limitations of positivism, attempting to resolve these limitations by incorporating some of the assumptions of those who take interpretative approaches.

Like positivists, post-positivists emphasize objectivity, but take a different view of it. Traditional positivists' view of objectivity depends on being "free" from "contamination by ideas" (Corman, 2005, p.28), but post-positivists accept that interference from subjective reality (in the form, for example, of the researcher's preconceptions) is unavoidable. As Corman (2005) explains, post-positivists adopt the hermeneutical position that human understanding plays a role in all scientific research. This is a paradigm shift from the positivist notion of realism, which is the belief that social phenomena possess an essential reality independent of their perception (e.g. by the researcher). Thus, post-positivists assume that subjective understandings have a key impact on the scientific method of objectivity (Corman, 2005). In common with interpretivists, post-positivists view objectivity as "an emergent collective interpretation", not the "inherent property of a particular observational act" (Corman, 2005, p.31).

These differences aside, for post-positivists, just as for positivists, objective reality and truth remain desirable goals for research inquiry (Corman, 2005), so they view scientific methods as "the most powerful tools" (Kincaid, 1996, p. xv, cited in Corman, 2005, p. 31) to build knowledge. That is, they propose a rational study of an elusive reality, and in this endeavour they believe that the interference of the perceiver's own values can be reduced by utilizing a rigorously systematic approach to the evaluation of research method and to the logical determination of truth (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). In order to ensure such rigour, post-positivists also address methodological concerns such as validity.

This post-positivist program has had a practical application to my qualitative research. Following Patton (2002), I needed to prepare myself to deal with "imperfections in a phenomenologically messy and methodologically imperfect world" (p. 93), and – as I am

a Korean (though not a mother) -- I also needed to acknowledge that “some subjectivity and judgment may enter in” (p. 93). Realizing that value-free inquiry would not be possible, I needed to examine how my own values and preconceptions might affect what I would see, hear, and record in my research. That is why, in order to minimize the biases emerging from my own personal perspective, and to emphasize “empirical findings -- good, solid description and analysis” (Patton, 2002, p.93), I decided to include rich description as the vehicle for reporting of my research, and used “reflexivity” (see p.49) to analyze it. In this way, I was in a better position to separate my subjectivity (e.g. my voice, perceptions, and biases) from that of the mothers I interviewed.

As a means of maintaining awareness of my values, making any biases explicit, taking steps to mitigate their influence, and parsing their inevitable influence on my research activities, I adopted rigorous research techniques and procedures based on Thematic Analysis, whose suitability to my post-positivist-epistemological basis I will now explain.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is described by Van Manen (2003) as the “process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meaning and imagery of the work” (p.78). According to Pope and Mays (2006), “thematic analysis often includes themes that are anticipated” (p. 70), for example, those that are prompted when reviewing the literature, as well as “those that emerge (i.e. that arise, directly or indirectly, during the fieldwork)” (p.70). Similarly, Liamputtong (2005) emphasized that the themes analyzed are inherent in the material, so that they emerge from the material and from its particular perspective.

Thus, thematic analysis, in contrast to the positivist program, rejects a simple deductive approach to data analysis, and resembles the inductive process of coding that is used in grounded theory. Patton (2002) and Pope and Mays (2006) pointed out that the techniques and procedures of thematic analysis make it broadly similar to grounded theory, the only exception being that thematic analysis does not involve theoretical sampling or further data collection for testing emerging theories. In other words, thematic analysis, like grounded theory, involves “coding incidents in the data and identifying analytical categories as they emerge from the data”: the researcher groups the data into themes and “examines all the cases in the study to make sure that all the manifestations of each theme have been accounted for and compared” (Pope & Mays, 2006, p.69). Thematic analysis can move beyond the description of emergent themes, to examine their interconnections and to identify relationships (Pope & Mays, 2006).

Notwithstanding the similarities between thematic analysis and grounded theory, I chose the former over the latter, for the following two reasons: First, I was not, in this research, interested in generating a theoretical construct, or in the in-depth analysis of the “social process” of culture conflict phenomena, whereas social process is a core element of the types of outcome found in grounded theory research. Therefore, I did not propose to do theoretical sampling, a technique essential to what Glaser (1999 cited in Tuckett) described as a “pure” version of grounded theory (p.493). Second, my primary focus was on exploratory and descriptive accounts of Korean mothers’ experience, through their own thoughts, reactions and interpretations, because, as evidenced in Chapter II, Literature Review, no such work has yet been done. Building on the insights of this study, future researchers might use grounded theory to account for Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict.

For me, however, thematic analysis, with its requirements for a rigorous systematic approach, a reflexive process and inductive reasoning, was the most useful analytical strategy by means of which to seek an in-depth understanding of both the objective and the subjective aspects of the intercultural conflict experiences I recorded. From my post-positivist viewpoint, I had a great curiosity, both about the objective and about the subjective aspects of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict phenomena. Guided by the assumption that the objective reality of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict could not be isolated either from my subjective perceptions or from those of the mothers, my exploration embraced the precise ways in which such conflict is actually experienced by these particular Korean-Canadian mothers, probing for what it means to them and what subjective interpretations get attached to their experiences. As a result of my social work with immigrant families, I have observed the extent to which the experience of culture conflict is felt in unique ways by the different members of a family, as well as by families from different cultural backgrounds. I therefore realized that I needed a means of tapping into, and identifying themes in, the stories and viewpoints of the six mothers, a means which thematic analysis could best provide.

3.2 Participants

Selection criteria

The sample consisted of six Korean-Canadian mothers, residents of the Vancouver area, all of whom met the following criteria:

- they had children aged 14 – 19
- they were first-generation immigrants
- they had lived in Canada for at least one year

- they were not currently receiving psychiatric or counseling services.

The rationale for the third and fourth criteria was to eliminate the possibility of extrinsic variables in:

- atypical cases, such as the settlement issues particular to new arrivals
- abnormal cases, such as family breakdowns due to severe family conflict

Recruitment

The six subjects were recruited through a chain referral method (snowball sampling) whereby two participants who (with whom I established first contact) were asked to refer other Korean mothers they knew. This word-of-mouth means of recruitment enabled me to contact a target population who would otherwise have been reluctant to talk about such sensitive topics with someone they did not know.

Characteristics of the participants

All six women showed the general middle class characteristics that are typical of the recent group of Korean immigrant families. They had come from larger cities in Korea (mostly from Seoul), and were living in the Vancouver area. Their ages ranged from 40s to 50s. They have high level of education (mostly post-secondary education). Their employment status varied: two mothers were employed, two mothers were self-employed, and two mothers were a homemaker. In terms of religion, they were mostly people of faith: three were Protestants, one was Catholic, one was Buddhist; only one had no religion. Chapter IV Findings provides a fuller description of the five participants.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Data collection

I conducted “semi-structured,” individual face-to-face interviews in order to collect data. Mason (2002) described the semi-structured interview as “a thematic, topic-centered, biographical or narrative approach” (p.62), in which, although researchers may have in mind some topics they want to cover, they are “unlikely to have a complete and sequenced script of questions” (p.62). Accordingly, I formulated a semi-structured interview guide, containing five open-ended questions (see Appendix 1)

Advantages of semi-structured interview

The open-ended, highly flexible nature of my interview guide enabled me to minimize the imposition of my own framework. It also allowed me to accommodate unexpected topics, and, when any such topics came up, to pursue the line of questioning they suggested. This fluidity was essential to my interview method, because my research questions could not have been answered if I had only collected the interviewees’ initial responses: it was of paramount importance to engage the interviewees in exploring ideas which were as yet not fully formed, or which they could not at first articulate.

Advantages of individual interviews

The individual nature of the interviews was useful in eliciting in-depth information that Korean women might have felt uncomfortable to disclose in a group of their age and class peers.

The interviews were conducted from January to March 2005. Each interview lasted for about three hours. They were audio-taped and transcribed for the purpose of analysis. All

the interviews were conducted in Korean. As that is my first language, I undertook the translation. Only those parts of the transcript that are quoted in my thesis (see Chapter IV, Findings) have been translated.

Data Analysis

As the techniques and procedures of thematic analysis are broadly similar to those used in the inductive coding process of grounded theory (see p. 39), the thematic analysis in this study relied on “a systemic process common to the grounded theory methodological package” (Glasser, 1999; Tuckett, 2005a cited in Tuckett, 2007, p.493). My data analysis was largely guided by the coding techniques (open coding and axial coding), discussed in grounded theory by Strauss and Corbin (1990), in which I needed to search for similarities and differences among the data. I also made use of Mason’s (2002) qualitative data analysis technique, categorical indexing, whereby we “identify meaningful segments of data, to organize these segments into categories, and finally to describe the meaningful connection among these categories” (p.150).

In order to break down the massive data into manageable chunks and to discover meaningful themes, my data analysis procedure had two steps:

Step 1 Coding:

In this first step, I labeled meaningful segments of the raw data that represented culture conflict phenomena. I did this by considering my research questions, my theoretical framework, and my professional knowledge. Close examination of discrete paragraphs and sentences resulted in the marginal coding of 203 concepts, basic units, which refer to “conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of

phenomena” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990 p. 61). I then transferred the codes to separate pages for the next step of data analysis. These concepts included my own terms, terms from the literature, and “in vivo codes,” the term that Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 69) used for the informants’ own words and phrases.

Step 2 Categorizing:

This second step involved two grouping processes.

The first grouping process

I compared the 203 concepts obtained in Step 1 for similarities (convergence) and differences (divergence), in order to allocate them into groups. In other words, I identified the ideas of what the six interviews have in common as well as what differences they have in their experiences. This grouping process yielded four categories, which denote the properties of culture conflict phenomena.

In this way, the initial 203 concepts fell into four categories:

- Category 1, incidents of conflict (77 concepts)
- Category 2, the mothers’ responses (52 concepts)
- Category 3, the mothers’ perceptions of culture conflict on the cultural adaptation/ identity of their children (29 concepts)
- Category 4, the effects of conflict (45 concepts)

The second grouping process

Within each category, I again explored the similarities and differences among the concepts and grouped them together into smaller categories. These smaller categories were more abstract than the 203 concepts coded in Step 1.

This second grouping process revealed 30 meaningful sub-categories in total:

- 12 sub-categories in Category 1, incidents of conflict
- 7 sub-categories in Category 2, the mothers' responses
- 4 sub-categories in Category 3, the mother's perceptions of cultural adaptation
- 7 sub-categories in Category 4, the effects of conflict

Like the four categories in Step 1, these thirty Step 2 sub-categories were developed via reference to my research questions (and my ideas on their topics), theories in the literature, and my professional experience. I then went through a “complex process of inductive and deductive process thinking” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.114) to identify themes by relating those thirty sub-categories to the original four categories.

To ensure that the categories were valid, I referred back to the transcripts, a process of extended deliberation which enabled me to apply Patton's (2002) internal homogeneity and external homogeneity of categories. As a result, I felt confident that my categories had internal consistency, while also being distinct from one another.

Throughout the whole course of my data analysis, all the concepts and categories were analyzed to make sure that they were true to the underlying meanings of the culture conflict experienced by the six Korean Canadian mothers. To do that, I needed to go beyond what they said in order to determine what they meant.

3.4 Validity and Trustworthiness

Hammersley (1987) defines validity as “the accurate representation of features of a phenomenon that an account is intended to describe, explain, or theorize” (cited in Hall & Callery, 2001, p.258). In order to deal with validity issues in my research, following Maxwell (1996), I identified three possible validity threats:

1. The possible inaccuracy of my transcripts and translated quotations
2. The possible imposition of my own framework or meaning
3. The possible biases of the researcher.

Validity threat 1: inaccuracy

This threat was guarded against in three ways:

- i) To ensure the accuracy of data, all six interviews were audio-taped, and all the tapes were transcribed in their entirety.
- ii) To verify the written accuracy of these six transcripts, I used a “members’ check” strategy (Maxwell, 1996, p. 90): two participants were randomly chosen and given the opportunity to review the transcript of their own interviews. Both confirmed that the transcripts were an accurate record of their statements.
- iii) To confirm the congruency between the Korean and English versions of the extracts that appear in the **Findings** chapter, sampled verification was conducted by an independent translator and then by a professional editor whose first language is English. Thanks to a lengthy discussion with the professional editor, I was able to ascertain that the translated quotations are accurate in ideas and in tone.

Validity threat 2: imposition

This threat was guarded against in two ways:

i) Question format

Following Maxwell's suggestions, I avoided "leading, closed, or short-answered questions" (p.90); instead, the use of semi-structured interview techniques (see p.43) gave the participants sufficient opportunity to reveal their own perceptions.

ii) Peer review

The peers were two bilingual social workers with Master's degrees. They both reviewed two randomly selected interview transcripts. That is, both reviewers read both transcripts, and discussed with each other, then with me, the concepts and categories that I had derived from those transcripts. Their comments helped me revise my categories so as to represent more accurately, or more objectively, the meanings gleaned from the data. For example, their comments prompted me to realize that a considerable amount of data which I had sorted under a category I had labeled "MEANING" actually represented EFFECTS of culture conflict experience. As a result of this insight from the peer reviewers, I created a new category labeled "EFFECTS" and transferred the relevant data to that new category. In this way, the whole process – a remarkably arduous one – culminated in a product commensurate with its degree of endeavour.

Validity threat 3: bias

This threat was guarded against by incorporating reflexivity, which I will explain after first discussing the problem.

Bias problem

Miles and Huberman (1994 cited in Maxwell, 1996) and Shweder (1980 cited in Maxwell, 1996) explained this threat of bias as the potential selection of data that match my own preconceptions and existing knowledge, as well as the potential selection of data that

stand out to me, but might not to others. Maxwell (1996) pointed out that it is not possible to eliminate the researcher's theories, preconceptions, or values, and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 cited in Maxwell, 1996) viewed this impossibility as one aspect of "inherent reflexivity" (p.91). Qualitative research does not attempt to eliminate these potentially skewed selections of data; instead, it strives to raise awareness of "how a particular researcher's values influence the conduct and conclusions of the study" (Maxwell, 1996, p.91); hence, "explaining your possible biases and how you will deal with these is a key task" (p 91). Finlay (2002) stated that "to increase the integrity and trustworthiness of qualitative research, researchers need to evaluate how intersubjective elements influence data collection and analysis" (p. 531), and suggested reflexivity as a tool for such evaluation.

Solution: reflexivity

Reflexivity can be defined as conscious, explicit self-aware analysis of the research process and "encompasses continual evaluation of subjective responses, an intersubjective dynamic, and the research process itself" (Finlay, 2002, p. 532). Similarly, Pope and Mays (2006) described reflexivity as a process that requires researchers to attend to the effects of their own prior experience, assumptions and understanding of "how we construct what we see" (p. 20). This attentiveness is crucial to qualitative research because it is "co-constituted: a joint product of the participants, the researcher, and their relationship" (Finlay, 2006, p.20).

“Three dimensions”

As a strategy to counteract (not preclude) my potential biases, I implemented reflexivity along its three dimensions as outlined by Patton (2002). These dimensions of reflexivity are:

1. Self-reflexivity, which is self-awareness or a certain degree of self-analysis
2. The reflexivity of those studied, which involves the subjects’ worldviews or their perceptions about the researchers
3. Reflexivity about the audience, which involves attention to “how what we report will be heard and understood” (Patton, 2002, p. 495)

Implementation of the first dimension

To implement self-reflexivity, I borrowed two suggestions from Pope and Mays (2006).

First, I made memos about my personal characteristics such as age, social class and professional status, in order to understand the distance between the researcher (myself) and those researched (Korean-Canadian mothers).

Second, I clarified in my own mind my perceptions on Korean culture, Korean-Canadians, my relationships with Korean-Canadian mothers, and my experience of cultural conflict, together with my personal and intellectual biases about it. In this way, I have realized that I have certain insider’s views on Korean people or Korean culture, which may tend to have resulted in subjective, even judgmental evaluation of some aspects of Korean culture. For example, I became aware of certain biased views I held about Korean-Canadian mothers. In my biased view they made insufficient attempts to integrate into Canadian society, they were over-reliant on their family for their life needs, and they had an under-developed sense of self-identity.

Examining my own life to unearth the origins of such biases, I surmised two possible origins: my mode of acculturation and my status. My having assimilated meant that my identification was predominantly with Canadian, as opposed to Korean, society. As for my status, I am significantly different from the Korean-Canadian mothers: I am fully functional in English, I am a foreign-trained professional presently working in my field, I am financially independent, I am single, and I have never had children.

Not just as pre-analysis preparation, but throughout all my research activities, I, as a researcher at the same time as a member of Korean culture, kept all these reflections at the forefront of my mind, and, to locate and acknowledge their possible effects on my data collection and analysis, I revisited each particular bias at relevant times.

Implementation of the second dimension

To counteract the reflexivity of the sample population that I studied, I reflected on who they are and how they may see me in the research equation. As the participants, although they were not my clients, were aware of my profession as a counselor outside of this research, I could see some possible negative effects on my capacity to conduct the interviews, effects both on myself and on them. For my part, I might have been distracted by the fear of damage to my reputation as a counselor, because in my interviewer-role I needed to be neutral, to steer clear of empathy with their problems and expressions of understanding and the like. Maintaining this neutral demeanour might make me come across as uncaring, a concern that might prey on my mind and interfere with my research. As for effects on the subjects, if they misconstrued impartiality as indifference to their problems (i.e. culture conflict), they might have felt that they were being used without

receiving any reciprocal value from me, or that they were being taken advantage of, that they had, as it were, lost ownership of their own stories by telling them for nothing. If that was the case, they would almost certainly hold back and not give full and frank disclosure.

To minimize the threats of my distractedness and their hesitancy, I repeatedly reminded myself of, and explained to the participants about, the aims of the interviews and my temporary role as a researcher, to be seen as distinct from my “counselor-hat.” I tried to create openness about my role as a researcher, and its inherent limitations, in order that both sides of the equation could engage in an optimally authentic voicing of their experiences.

Implementation of the third dimension

To counteract the reflexivity of the audience, I have continuously reflected, throughout the drafting of this thesis, on its potential readership, and on how such an audience might hear and use what I have written. I have been particularly conscious of three groups of potential readers: researchers who are interested in Korean-Canadians, multicultural service providers and policy makers, and Korean-Canadian families. These reflections have made me aware that my responsibilities as a reporter/researcher are various: I must make a theoretical and pedagogical contribution; I must make pragmatic suggestions with a view to more effective multicultural services; I must convey to Korean-Canadian readers the authentic voices of the researched. Ever mindful of the scarcity of Korean-Canadian studies in this area, whenever I consider future researchers, and the practitioners who are in need of researched evidence on which to base their practice, I constantly feel that I owe it to them to lay down a foundation for the studies that I hope will build on it. I

can see no better way to provide this foundation than to capture the authentic voices of the mothers.

By my attempt to implement these three dimensions, I have been able to realize that the subjects and I inevitably brought into our research interactions all the biases and perceptions I have discussed above. This realization prompted me to examine how they might influence my data collection, my data analysis, and my report of my findings. Of course, influences that are examined are influences that can be addressed. I have tried to do that by maintaining my reflexivity through the entire process of this research, in order to separate out, from the complex web of influences, the six mothers' experience of culture conflict, in an account that is as valid and trustworthy as it is possible to make it.

Chapter summary

This chapter has explained the reasons for adopting a qualitative research method based on post-positivism, and the ways in which this research was carried out.

The qualitative approach enabled me to obtain an in-depth understanding of the culture conflict experiences of Korean-Canadian mothers, through a rich descriptive account of the experiences of six such mothers, and of their responses, their thoughts on the cultural adaptation of their children, and the impact on themselves of culture conflict in their families.

The subjects of this study were Korean-Canadian mothers of children aged from 14 to 19. For data collection, I used semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, which enabled me to pursue the topics that emerged as well as the topics that I had anticipated. For data

analysis, I used thematic analysis, which “relies on [a] systemic process common to the grounded theory methodological package” (Glasser, 1999; Tuckett, 2005a cited in Tuckett, 2007, p. 493). Hence, my data analysis was largely guided by the coding techniques discussed in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and by Mason’s (2002) categorical indexing. To address validity issues, I followed Maxwell’s suggestions: a check by participants of their interview transcripts, the verification by experts of quotations I had translated, a peer review of my concepts and categories, and the use of reflexivity to counteract possible validity threats and to increase the overall trustworthiness of this research.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS

This chapter will consist of a general description of the six Korean Canadian mothers, and then four sections, each of which corresponds to one of the categories that emerged from my analysis of the thoughts of the six Korean-Canadian mothers on intercultural and intergenerational conflict, as revealed in their responses to my interview questions about their experiences of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict.

In order that they not speak here with disembodied voices, I provide individual descriptions of the six women, focusing on information that may be pertinent to the beliefs and attitudes they expressed in the interviews.

They are all urban women, five from the capital of South Korea and the other from the third largest city. Also, all of them are well-educated, five being university graduates. Some further similarities, as well as distinctions, can be seen under the following descriptors.

Family Size and Pattern

The family size ranges from two to six. They are nuclear families, in the sense that no grandparents or other relatives reside in their households. Mother A lives with her only son (in grade 8), and the mother F lives with her two children (a daughter in grade 7 and a son in grade 3). The children in the other families range from pre-kindergarten to post-secondary. Thus, in terms of family composition, they are typical; however, in terms of family pattern this is not so in all six cases. The husbands of Mothers B, C, D and E are living with them here, but Mother A and F are in “goose families” (see pp.6-7), a

subvariety of the transnational family pattern. Mother A's husband is a professor at a Korean university. Mother F's husband runs his own architecture business in Korea. Of the four husbands who are residing with the families, those of Mother C and D are employed, while the husbands of Mother B and F own and operate their own businesses. Thus, there is a spectrum of employment situations.

Occupations

With the occupations of the mothers themselves there is again a spectrum. Mother B runs their business together with her husband. Mother E and her husband each have their own businesses, both of which occupy positions of some eminence in the Korean community. Mothers A and C are also occupied outside the home. Both work for social service agencies, Mother A in employment service and Mother C in immigrant service. Mother D and Mother F (who prior to immigration was a government official) are homemakers.

Language competency

This relates to occupation, of course. The homemakers, Mothers D and F, had, at the time of their interviews, relatively little proficiency in English. That was also the case with Mother B, in whose business role there is no call for her to use English. Like her, Mother E does not routinely use English in her business activities, though she is able to communicate in English with school personnel. Mothers A and C obviously have a command of English sufficient for working in Canada. In fact, Mother A has a degree in social science from a major Canadian university, and Mother C was an English teacher in Korea.

Length of stay in Canada

There is no necessary relationship between how much English they speak and how long they have lived in Canada. Mothers B and E have been here noticeably longer (8-10 years) than the other mothers (1 to 5 years), with no apparent gains in their language abilities.

Altogether, the lives of these six women are far from identical in the texture of their family lives and in the context of their social fit. With this human perspective in mind, I will now turn to the categories of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict that emerged from what they said in the interviews.

The first of these four sections will present six triggers of conflict, with reference to particular incidents of conflict that the six Korean mothers experienced with their adolescent children. The second section will describe ways in which the mothers reacted during those incidents. The third section will report the mothers' perceptions on the role of this type of conflict in cultural adaptation in general. The fourth section will report the mothers' perceptions on the effects of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict, and on its general meaning in their lives.

4.1 Six triggers of culture conflict

Based on my interview questions (see Appendix 1), I listened to the mothers' stories about conflicts that they have faced with their adolescent children, including their accounts of differences between any conflicts, or at least difficulties, that they had experienced in Korea and those that they had been experiencing in Canada. Their answers revealed six sources of such conflicts.

4.1.1 Conflicts related to different concepts of adolescence

The six mothers expressed at length their puzzlement about what they take to be the concept of adolescence in Canada and its difference from that in Korea. They said that this difference frequently triggered disagreements or conflicts between mother and child. As adolescents in Korea are generally considered still children, their mothers would not expect them to exercise autonomy or to try to set self-boundaries, and are therefore puzzled when they do so here.

... the concept of being an adolescent here is really different. The gap between the meanings of the word is really huge. In Korea, high school students follow their parents' guidance, but Canadians [high-schoolers] here are like college students. Their mothers' opinions are not that important. I can't influence my daughter's thoughts. Whenever my daughter has a decision to make, she puts over 80% or 90% of her own opinion into her decision, and my opinion is just a secondary reference that she may or may not consider. This is the BIGGEST PROBLEM I'm finding here! ...
(Mother F)

... The difference between Korea and Canada is the way adolescents are treated. Here it seems that they are considered adults once they turn 16. Usually school teachers treat them that way... One time when I went to school to discuss my son's wanting to get his ears pierced... his teacher told me not to treat my son as if he was one of my belongings, and said I shouldn't interfere in such matters as ear piercing, hair styles, or clothes choice... He said this very confidently and assertively as if he was right. This is what came out of the teacher's MOUTH! This is a REAL [CULTURAL] DIFFERENCE! ... I believe this is not right. ... I have realized that I cannot let my children be influenced by the guidance of those kinds of teachers... Children will be disconnected from parents if we follow what the teacher said.
(Mother E)

Mother E's discomfort about the teacher's endorsement of adolescents' self-boundaries and self-determination is a very common trigger of culture shock among these Korean-Canadian mothers.

In the same vein as Mother E, Mother B frequently characterized her children's attitude as "rebellious" when their decisions about what they propose to do are based exclusively on their own wills.

When they realized that schools actually subscribe to this concept of adolescence, one that is so different from the Korean concept, the mothers felt embarrassed about how to dialogue with the teacher, and became confused about how to discipline their children. As a result, when the mothers observed that their children's accelerated development of autonomy was influenced by their Canadian peers, and, unlike in Korea, would not be "corrected" by teachers, the mothers started expressing their disagreements directly to their children, and conflicts arose.

4.1.2 Conflicts related to the communication styles of adolescents

The mothers reported that they have often experienced conflicts because their children's styles of communicating with them lack the desired reticence. They felt angry when their children talked to them in a direct, open manner, as when communicating with an equal. From the point of view of the mothers' culture, open communicativeness to one's seniors is disrespectful: they have no template for egalitarian communication with young people.

...They [Korean children in Korea] don't point out faults frankly to adults, but my son does criticize me, which upsets me... My son says, "Mom, why are you so defensive? I'm just talking about mistakes you made, not about something wrong with yourself." I realized that this is a REAL cultural difference. ... They are very OUTSPOKEN whenever they disagree with us, but in Korea if children are like that, they will be regarded as BAD children ... This is what is really different here and bewilders me sometimes...
(Mother A)

In Korea, when parents tell their children what to do, we expect children to answer 'Yes' on most occasions. But here they seem very assertive. They do not just say yes. That's why we often disagree. Then it turns into arguments and conflict...
(Mother B)

...My younger child is always expressing her own opinions... When she is told what she should do, she always demands that I give the reasons. She wasn't like this before... now, she will not simply accept that there are things she has to do whether she wants to or not ...she even asks me, HER MOTHER!, to explain why...
(Mother C)

The ensuing arguments that Mother B refers to, arising from the bewilderment mentioned by Mother A, sometimes resulted in a level of contentiousness that grew quite out of proportion to whatever small matter had occasioned it. In such reactive conflicts, mother and child found themselves talking about how to talk, disagreeing on whether or not it was alright to disagree.

4.1.3 Conflicts related to academic effort

All six Korean mothers stated that they got into conflicts when their children were not putting what they considered enough effort into their studies. These mothers' goal is grades that are high enough to meet the requirements of good universities. Believing that "studying hard" should be given top priority throughout all their child's school years, they press them all the time. They said, however, that their children do not see the reason for this pressure, which is consequently a trigger of frequent conflict between them.

... I came to Canada to reduce the "study-conflict" with my daughter... You know, in Korea, mothers are supposed to use their ENTIRE energy to encourage or to force our children to study hard... but I didn't have confidence in that battle...I had heard that this country [Canada] motivates children to study by themselves ... However, I now really DOUBT that... I have fought with my husband very frequently about how much I should push her...yes, she does her homework, but that's not enough! ... I often think that I would be a more generous or more permissive mother and I wouldn't be so controlling towards her, if she got better grades at school ...

(Mother C)

...I noticed that my son really enjoys cooking and he has the talent to become an excellent cook! ... I know that he has been considering a career as a chef, yet he and I know that it's out of the question because his dad would never agree to that. But I think it may be possible for him to enjoy cooking once he gets a business PhD, if he happens to run his own restaurant...

(Mother A)

...Like other Korean mothers, I think my daughter should get a university education, so she can have a better career...I told my daughter that she can enjoy life after university or marriage...but she cannot understand my point... She thinks that it's a real hardship to spend too much time just studying while one is young ... she said she doesn't value that kind of life...
(Mother E)

Mother C “pushes” her daughter to study harder, though her degree of control or monitoring is susceptible to the influence of her daughter’s academic grades. For Mother A, her son’s inclination for cooking is outside the frame of reference for acceptable careers, though she reiterated several times that she admires his cooking skills and enthusiasm, and that he could pursue a non-academic goal as long as he has a good academic degree. This postponement of the child’s personal goals is an idea shared by Mother E’s picture of university (or marriage) first, enjoyment later — “enjoyment” seeming to mean, during one’s school days, anything that is not academic work.

To my knowledge, this kind of mother-child conflict about school is a social phenomenon in Korea too; yet to these six mothers it manifests itself as an intercultural problem, presumably because of the challenge conveyed in their children’s tone of voice — challenges they wouldn’t have to listen to in that culture, but do in this one. How can you put an absolute value on something, without being able to explain why it is valuable? The mothers conceded that they have no clear justification that they can offer their children as to why they hold “academic excellence” to be so valuable; they just know that in Korea explanation would not have been necessary; their word would have been beyond query.

Compounding this nebulous matter of “academic excellence,” Korean culture has a strong streak of competitiveness. The mothers were often dismayed at the low level of competitiveness that their children exhibit, seeing it in stark contrast to the keen sense of competitiveness in Korea.

One big problem has to do with his method of university exam preparation and studying... One time, he said he was ALL(!) prepared for his exam. (Laughter). We [Koreans] could never say we had studied ENOUGH! We can't close our books until the very last moment before an exam starts...YET my son relaxes if he thinks he is sufficiently prepared! And, one time, he LENT HIS BOOK TO HIS FRIENDS THE DAY BEFORE AN EXAM! I don't understand this..... [Koreans] are from a absolutely competitive society and believe that we will lose out if we don't do MORE or do BETTER than others, but people here have the concept that we can ALL do well together... I feel this is REALLY different ... This is a real cultural difference ... (Mother A)

...My daughter says she does study, and I know she completes her school assignments, but I always say "the amount of studying you do is what everybody else does...IT IS NOT ENOUGH! ..." (Mother D)

...the efforts she [my daughter] puts in her studying will not make her ANY BETTER in life. It's not really any effort at all ... She should know that IT IS JUST NOT ENOUGH if she makes the same effort as others [her peers] do. She should learn that she needs to work HARDER than others. I often feel frustrated when I think that she is not able to understand this ... (Mother F)

... if Korean students spend their time like Canadian students, they cannot get the competencies to survive in this society. They must not waste their time... they must work harder than their Canadian counterparts. My children should make greater efforts to become equal to Canadians... to obtain what Canadian kids already have... (Mother F)

Mother A stated that her son gets good grades (A's and B's); however, she still thinks that he is not using his full capacity, and that he could get even better grades if he became more competitive. Mothers D and F define "making ENOUGH effort" as "doing MORE than others." In other words, their benchmark for their own children is how much other Korean children do. Hence, these mothers do not do any goal-setting for their children's school work. Rather, they see their task as being to constantly compare their children's effort with how much effort other Koreans make.

This competitiveness of their mothers must come across as unreasonable, even incomprehensible, to Korean-Canadian adolescents in a Canadian school setting, but of course, to judge from this researcher's own early life in Korea, it comes from the

mothers' own experience of school in Korea. As children, they were graded on a curve; as university applicants, they faced fierce competition for few places: certainly, "*all doing well together*" was unheard of. In the end, they came to realize that their children were just not made of that competitive stuff: still, the lack of congruence with their own lives has bred disagreement, conflict, frustration, and mutual incomprehension.

4.1.4 Conflicts related to adolescent sexuality

Their children's attitude to sexual matters often feeds into conflicts and disagreements. For the mothers, it is a major cultural difference, as they strongly believe in total abstinence before marriage: some do not even want to allow their children to go out with the opposite sex until after Grade 12.

Mother E's statement of this view is representative.

... You have to think when you first start going out with somebody whether this person can be your spouse. If you are not so sure about it, you'd better draw a line that you shouldn't cross, in order to stay just good friends... If you meet a person important enough to make you think about marriage, you'd better keep your virginity until marriage... I believe it is the best wedding present!

(Mother E)

In the following narratives, the references to Valentine candy and *Friends* by Mother C and to miniskirts by Mother D typify the mothers' fear of current western trends in adolescent sex and sexuality, so utterly different from what is socially sanctioned in Korea.

... Last Valentine's Day, my daughter received a lot of candy and dolls [from boys]... when I saw them, I thought this would have been a very big issue, perhaps a conflict, if we were in Korea. I didn't know how I should respond to it...should I tell her it's wrong, just ignore it, or regard it as just an ordinary thing? Or had I better say that's nice?... I am really embarrassed by the way she acts ... This is in fact a cultural conflict. She showed it to me very proudly ... I don't really know what I'll do when she starts going out with a boy ...

(Mother C)

I noticed one day that my daughter was crazy about Friends! I hadn't realized how unsuitable that TV program is for adolescents. There are a lot of sex

scenes... the six actors and actress seemed very promiscuous. I said to my daughter, "It's ridiculous!" My daughter responded "Mom, they are not exceptions." ... I wondered whether I should let her watch the program or not... (Mother C)

...My daughter likes to wear skirts. We looked around clothing stores together, but we couldn't find one that was right for her, because all the skirts were so short... that I couldn't let her wear them...I said I would get a longer skirt for her from Korea but a pretty one ... (Mother D)

On miniskirts, Mother D's is not an isolated voice, and others were less conciliatory. Mother F's impetuous treatment of her daughter's miniskirt was a gut reaction driven by her concern about the girl's budding sexuality. In the culture of both these mothers, wearing miniskirts is just not acceptable in normal sexual development.

Well... I think I've become more open-minded than I used to be. I remember now... I saw her [my daughter] wearing a skirt that was too short two years ago... I was totally SHOCKED... I threw it away... but I've now become different ... it was the very first time that she had worn that kind of skirt. I came to realize that my response at that time was too aggressive, and wasn't really necessary... I now try to think about her clothes differently and understand better...Well...HOWEVER, if she dresses like that again, I CAN'T predict how I will react to it ... (Mother F)

Mother F's reaction, trashing the skirt in the heat of anger, was influenced by her Korean culture. Her daughter would have seen her reaction as being different from the attitudes that she could observe in most Canadian mothers. Although Mother F's self-assessment is that her reaction was excessively aggressive and unnecessary, she is still not certain whether she would react differently another time, so embedded does she feel in her cultural background.

Exacerbating such conflicts, sex education in schools is seen by these mothers as inadequate, and culpably so. Their expectation of the school is that it should carry a shared responsibility to reinforce parental guidance, and that means promoting abstinence and monitoring teens' activities. Mother C was therefore frustrated to find out that

Canadian schools regard it as up to parents to supervise a child's sexual development, and regard their leaving it to teachers as an abdication of parental responsibility.

...I was shocked when I visited my daughter's school... Since then, I cannot trust the schools because they are doing nothing about the sexual activities of students ... We will be in big trouble if she has a so- called "boyfriend" here...
(Mother C)

These very different understandings of teens' sexuality and sexual activities resulted in enormous frustration and anxiety for the mothers, and confusion too, as they wrongly assumed that schools condone free sexual choice for adolescents. Of course, once parents do realize that the entire responsibility for the sexual morality of their children depends on them, they become more vigilant. In its turn, this stricter monitoring leads to its own issues of parent-adolescent relations; that is, to further conflict.

4.1.5 Conflicts related to the mothers' monitoring of their children's "culture shedding"

The mothers spoke of their anxiety at being in a new and unfamiliar culture, and explained that, as a result of this anxiety, they tended to tighten up on the way they monitored their children's behaviour, scrutinizing it for signs of this "alien culture." The comments of Mothers B, C and D below typify this dynamic: there are some western cultural norms whose effects on their children they fear may be "negative" unless they monitor for them closely enough to prevent exposure.

I often say to my children, "There are some aspects of the culture here that you shouldn't learn. Try not to adopt whatever looks good to you"... I know that I should stop controlling my daughter, but I cannot stop it. I am always thinking about the life she has ahead of her... I don't want my child to experience problems or failure in this foreign country...
(Mother D)

Children are vulnerable to bad cultural influences from [Canadian] teens. I see that there are many other things that my children shouldn't be exposed to ...
(Mother B)

I feel anxious about my children's exposure to the different culture here. I'm anxious about their being different, per se.... Following Korean cultural practice, I would know many effective ways to deal with whatever life brings ... But I don't have any life experience here that I can refer to... [for my daughter]... so I am anxious...
(Mother C)

The mothers' protectiveness includes a strict dress code and curfews for their children. These mothers also expressed how difficult it was for them to consider making any exceptions at all to these strict rules. Their being so adamant embittered the usual mother-child quarrels about friends, clothes, hairstyles, and after-school activities.

From an overview of all the mothers' stories, and drawing on this researcher's own extensive acquaintance with Korean and Korean-Canadian cultural dynamics, three reasons suggest themselves for this heightening of the maternal monitor.

First, Korean mothers lose faith in school, where the rules seem so slack compared with Korea. Perceiving this as a vacuum in vital guidance towards appropriate development of sexual awareness and personal autonomy (witness Mother E's encounter, p.56), they see no alternative but to fill this vacuum themselves, in the only way they know how.

The second reason lies in their limited understanding of the host culture. The anxiety that all the mothers reported may stem from their rush to judgment of a culture they have had negligible exposure to. Such possibly baseless anxieties might well create a natural urge to protect their offspring against whatever "monsters may be lurking in the shadows." Of course, without the requisite knowledge of the culture, a mother cannot be someone her child would consult about whatever vicissitudes ordinary life may bring; better, then, to keep their children away from such occurrences altogether, by keeping them on a tight restraint— even if that denies them their chance of normal adolescent growth.

The third possible reason for the mothers' over-protective monitoring is their own uprootedness. Having left behind their jobs, extended family, social circles and other spheres in which they were able to succeed and be prominent, they have in Canada no corresponding sphere available to them for success in their own lives. It is understandable, then, that they would identify with their children, finding in their children's success a substitute for their own. Mother F is a case in point: *"My daughter's doing well is the only thing we are looking for,"* as is this from Mother D: *"Happiness or sadness, love and pleasure, all depend entirely on my child."* These mothers see the meaning of their otherwise empty existence as being invested in their children. According to this perspective, the only way for them to feel that they have any control over their lives is to make absolutely sure that the children are protected against all the baleful influences of the world beyond their horizons.

4.1.6 Conflicts related to the adolescents' dual cultural stance

The mothers claimed that their children not only "shed" their parents' culture in favour of the new more liberal one, but also keep shuttling back and forth in their cultural stances, in a constant attempt to leverage their needs for freedom, respect, and pocket money. The mothers complain that their teenagers, consciously or not, proclaim the virtues of whichever of the two cultures strikes them as providing a sounder rationalization of their demands and heavier ammunition in their arguments against their parents. Naturally, the mothers see this picking and choosing of cultures as self-serving, so it frustrates and angers them, as these exclamatory responses show:

...Korean children [adolescents] mix the two cultures from here [Canada] and there [Korea]. Korean parents provide EVERYTHING for their children, paying for whatever they need... This is nice for them, so they [children] TAKE IT. (Laughter) ... Canadian teens appear freer, without strict parental rules...

They [our children] like greater freedom... so they TAKE THAT TOO ... They select things from both cultures, based on whatever is MORE CONVENIENT for them ... This is what really upsets parents ... (Mother B)

...As long as you are supported by your parents, you have to RESPECT our rules. If you don't like the rules and you want to be like your Canadian friends, TRY SUPPORT YOURSELF! What you are saying about Canadian ways... a lot of freedom, openness, mutual respect between parents and children... that's good. If you like those things, you'd better also adopt your Canadian peers' way of supporting themselves... but you just want to count [financially] on us to get whatever you want. This is the Korean way, isn't it?... You've got to know there is NO WAY that you can do this ... understand?

(Mother E)

4.2 The mothers' responses to conflict about culture

The interview questions elicited from the mothers a range of answers that cluster into: emotional reactions; attempts to change their children; attempts to use communication; cognitive responses not congruent with their behavioural responses, and adjustment to cultural differences.

4.2.1 Emotional reactions

- Outrage

All the mothers I interviewed spoke at length about their emotional outbursts when faced with culture-driven conflict. They said they had cried or given vent to anger during disagreements caused by cultural misunderstanding. They consider their children's open, assertive communication to be "talking back", in what seems to them a rude, even aggressive manner. Miscommunications along those lines would begin when their children made suggestions or requests such as this one to Mother A: "*Mom, I don't want to talk with you at the moment, so could you please leave my room for a while? Let's talk about it later*", or such as this one to Mother B: "*Mom, could you please be a little quiet? I'm trying to watch TV now.*" The issue is not the "territory" or the noise: the very fact that a child could be so bold as to casually, off-handedly, request even the slightest

modification in the behaviour of an adult appears to these Korean mothers to be presumptuous, an audacity, an affront to their dignity as parents. It drives them to tears and rage. Such free and easy communication by teenagers, and such emotional responses to it, results in “reactive conflicts” (see p. 57).

- Guilt

This appears to be an inextricable aspect of their intercultural conflicts: most mothers said they could have avoided conflict if they had been more patient or more conceding, as in these examples:

All those conflicts happened because of my own imperfections . . . (Mother D)

... in fact, I am a bad, crazy mother ... (Mother C)

This attribution of conflicts to their own imperfections came up repeatedly in other mothers’ answers, as if this is an inevitable emotional cycle of indignation, then venting, then guilt. If so, the mothers’ self-condemnation may not be, in itself, a matter of cultural conflict; it may be just to do with the impulsiveness of their reactions to those conflicts. Certainly, hindsight tells them that when guilt sets in, it is in proportion not to their inability to cope with a conflict, but to their having been incapable of preventing the conflict in the first place. Their self-blame may account for the length of time during which they remain at a non-coping, emotional stage. These two quotations capture this dynamic:

...Unlike my son, I do blame myself a lot for problems with others ... [including with my son] ...I often think about the problems that wouldn’t have happened if I had been nicer ... (Mother A)

...I cried a lot in the bathroom...I was very regretful...I should have understood her [my daughter] more... sometimes I threw things at her... because I have a bad temper... I could have been more patient with her... If I had been, this

[conflict] wouldn't have happened... I prayed for understanding and more generosity ...
(Mother B)

4.2.2 Attempts to change their children

The mothers all described approaches they had used in the hope of re-shaping their children's behaviour, and even their thinking, to fit with their own cultural norms. From my analysis of the interviews, there emerged two general approaches.

- Verbal coercion

The verbal means that they used ranged from simple decrees to ultimatums, usually financial. Mother D, while her daughter was already in the process of putting on a sweater, issued an injunction against it. Mothers E and F, when their children were not respecting parental guidance or authority (an attitude all the mothers find unacceptable), responded with ultimatums:

...It's not acceptable, you wearing that sweater. It's too revealing... I will not let you wear it. If you don't like this rule, try to become independent. You take everything you need from me... so you also have to abide by my rules and do as you're told. As long as you like my financial support, you can't just say you don't like my supervision. I cannot accept that...
(Mother D)

...When my children do not respect me, do not heed my advice, do not take my opinions seriously, or do not respect their parents, I will give up on them. I won't support them anymore ... And, I told my daughter, "If you keep ignoring your parents' opinions or do not take them seriously... if you continue not to listen to what I say... I may decide to stop supporting you ... you will lose the big support, I mean, the financial support ..."
(Mother F)

...I told my son, "I won't support you if you do not follow our traditions, for example, respect for parental authority" ... If you really want to have as much freedom as your Canadian friends have, you need to be as independent as they are...go and get a part time job. I won't give you the money for university, etc... Do you think it's fair that you receive all the money you need, and demand such freedom? No way!" ...
(Mother E)

Similarly, Mother C tried to change her daughter's lack of competitiveness by verbally requesting her agreement that she would move from public school to private school:

I put my older daughter on the waitlist of a private school myself... then I asked her to fill out the application form. She did not listen to us because she does not want to move schools. ... I asked her repeatedly, on many occasions, for over a month! She continued to refuse to fill out the form... we were very patient... My husband and I took turns telling her that she needed to fill out that form until finally we said she must do it by the end of the week at 12 o'clock!

(Mother C)

These mothers perceive that their children's excessive display of autonomy or repeated rejection of parental authority is the influence of their peers. Because such cultural norms are unacceptable to them, their response, if verbal exhortation and browbeating don't work, is to warn them that they must change, or that otherwise their parents will cut off their financial support.

- Withdrawal

Even when, at a later stage in their conflict history, the mothers have become more accommodating in their disagreements, their final position is to strike a take-it-or-leave-it attitude, an exit-line like: "If you obey me, I will support you; if you won't obey me, I won't support you." What is not acceptable is, ipso facto, not negotiable. Case closed.

None of the interviews contains any case of a threat to cut off money actually being carried out, so threatening, and withdrawing from the scene, would seem to be "battle maneuvers."

4.2.3 Attempts to use communication

Mother B concluded that her own ineffective communication style had escalated emotions and resulted in a cycle of "reactive conflict" (see p.58). She surmised that what she termed her own lack of life wisdom and cultural knowledge might be the causes of

this communication problem, and, accordingly, she changed her approach from lecturing her daughter about her academic work to trying to communicate with her about it:

*“... you seem to be finding it difficult to keep up with your work in school... let’s consider a tutor or an after-school program...” I did try first to listen to her opinion and tried to be patient ... and she said, “Mom, ok... I will take some after-school programs”...(exclamation) ...If I had said “You must get into an after-school program because you are behind!” she would have answered, “WHY SHOULD I GO TO SUCH A PLACE!” ... but I did it differently...so she said instead, “OK, mom. I will think about it...” and eventually she said “I will go.”... This is a little change!... I think I changed... I could not afford not to change...
(Mother B)*

Similarly, Mother F admitted that the communication approach is novel and tricky, but she said it is necessary for her to adopt “Canadian ways” of communication. Mother A, to address her son’s low sense of competitiveness, took an egalitarian approach, providing him with ample explanation, and advice rather than decrees, as did Mother E in her persuasion of her son about sexual morality.

*I find communicating in a different way challenging... the way of expressing ourselves ... I don’t know much about Canadian ways [of communication]..., but I need to learn more... I know that I must learn it... If I can’t understand my children, who else can understand them? I am the person who can solve problems with my children. I have to find the ways that best fit the personalities of my children, to resolve our disagreements and conflicts... it’s just a matter of time...
(Mother F)*

*... I have started to look at [my son] as an individual who is my equal, instead of seeing us in a hierarchy ...I learn a lot from my son ... I feel that I have no influence on my son ... I’ve realized that our world changes very quickly, and this society is different... so what I have learned from my own life experience may not be always useful for my children ...
(Mother A)*

In terms of communication skills and other active coping strategies, one of the mothers took the unusual step of seeking help outside the family: Mother B joined a parent self-help group.

When nothing works, the only resource we have to turn to is ourselves ... we need to change ourselves... there are no other ways. I’ve totally realized that changing myself is the only way to make the situation different ... I decided to participate in a self-help program ... it’s a bit expensive, but it seems worth it if

I can find better ways to deal with my daughter ... I have read a lot of books as well...
(Mother B)

In fact, in the early stages of conflict, these mothers made little attempt to communicate with their children, instead insisting on strict obedience, then refusing to discuss the matter further. Only later did they come to realize that resolving parent-child conflict was their responsibility. Mothers B and F both stated that they found themselves the only ones in their families who were able to resolve these conflicts. Taking ownership of the conflict in this way seems to have been the driving force that moved them from the state of emotional discharge to the state of active coping. The other mothers made similar attempts to put aside irritation, rage, and frustration, in order to examine their situation from a different angle.

4.2.4 Incongruent levels of response

Mothers A and D described how their actual reactions to cultural conflict often did not turn out as they had imagined. In other words, despite the sincerity of their attempts to alter their responses (for example, from verbal arm-twisting to the new, open communication), they all too often ended up reacting in the same old ways.

Of course, our children here are different [from typical Korean children]... It's natural, and in fact they ought to be different... But, sometimes I don't feel good about it. I mean...I understand why they are different and why they take egalitarian attitudes ..., but in my heart I cannot accept it. I know I should accept it because I brought him here, into a different world. I try to think it's natural that he has become different [from typical teenagers in Korea]. However, I often get upset at him... my son can't stand it when I say, "You are being rude", but I can't help saying that sometimes. When he asks me "What is rude about what I have said or what I have done?" I don't know how to answer ...
(Mother A)

Similarly, Mother D stated that she understands that self-motivation and determination are important in life, and that she should be different from the way she was in Korea, but she

still often does not let her daughter decide things for herself. It is just too difficult for her to put that idea into practice because it is just too different from the way things are in Korea:

... my head say to me, "I shouldn't intervene"...and I decide EVERY DAY not to intervene too much...but I can't actually do it. I always think ahead of her... about a lot of things... [her skirt or school work]... Until I get used to this, I feel as if I am going to go crazy... (Mother D)

The incongruence is between the way that the mothers think about cultural differences and the way they feel about them, between “head” and “heart.” Yes, the mothers do want their children to learn this culture and to become well-adjusted people in Canada (assertive, communicative), but that doesn’t necessarily mean they are going to celebrate when their children act in what they perceive are Canadian ways. This cognitive/behavioral incongruence explains why Mother A, in spite of having understood that an egalitarian relationship is definitely what her son needs, still took offence the moment he conducted himself, accordingly, as her equal. Against all her own expectations, she blurted out “*You are being rude!*”

Both of these mothers, A and D, understand the inevitability of the new and different teen culture that their children will absorb from Canadians, but are not yet able to match their feelings to their understanding. This way-stage in the acculturation of their parents poses, from the standpoint of the children, two problems. For one thing, all that instinctive emoting (“*You are being rude!*”) is a grating impediment to the adolescents’ culture-learning. For another thing, it casts a new cloud on their ability to relate to their mothers. When the women were behaving in complete accordance with Korean cultural norms, at least their children knew where they stood with that: now that they have to try to fathom

double messages and inconsistent reactions, there is extra strain on an already strained relationship.

4.2.5 The mother's adjustment to cultural difference

Throughout their interviews, four of the mothers stated that they had ended up partially accepting some culturally sensitive issues that they had originally considered non-negotiable. Mothers F and E's relaxation of her child's curfew, Mother B's acceptance of a career plan that did not have an academic foundation, and her "*emptied mind*" (i.e. reduced expectations), Mother A's willingness to have a "non-hierarchical" relationship with her son, and Mothers A and B's affirmations about generosity and greater understanding of cultural differences, are all examples of the mothers dealing with culture conflict by making concessions to the norms of new culture.

4.3 The mothers' thoughts about the relationship between culturally-triggered conflict and the cultural identity/adaptation of their children

The miscellaneous nature of their answers

When asked, in their interviews, "How do you think this kind of conflict influences the cultural identity/adaptation of your children?" only Mothers A and C gave direct answers, and, of those two, only Mother C perceived the existence of any influence:

... my opposition to the ways that he [my son] does things won't bother him anyway... He won't be influenced by me ... He will go with the way he considers right or necessary here...
(Mother A)

Well, I think the pattern of poor communication that she has with me may occur again outside the family. When communicating with other people, like her friends, I am not sure whether she can be open, assertive enough...
(Mother C)

Unlike Mother A's assumptions about her child, Mother C's concern about hers is that the non-open, non-egalitarian communication that happens between them may continue happening in her child's other personal communications. But Mother C does not think that cultural adaptation is to be shaped by parents in any case:

Well, I don't think that mothers are supposed to support the [cultural] adaptation of children... it's up to them [the children]. They will learn something about Korean [culture] and learn something about here... so they have to decide ...Just because they need to adapt [to this society] doesn't mean I want to push them into this [Canadian] way... (Mother C)

The other mothers' answers wandered away from the question in various ways. Mothers B, D and F, and Mother C too, said they didn't see how it was even possible for them to have any influence on their children's adaptation to Canadian culture, because they don't even know (and might never know) what that really is. (Mother A has a degree from a Canadian university; Mother E has lived here 10 years, so probably those two either have, or feel they have, a certain amount of knowledge). Mothers B and C, for example, declared:

... I don't know much about this culture, so what can I do? I don't see any role for me in her cultural adaptation... (Mother B)

I understand the pluses and minuses of Korean culture, but I am not aware of what is inside this culture [Canada]... I feel that I'm just seeing the outside...without being able to recognize anything bad that remains on the inside ... (Mother C)

Mothers B and F talked about causes rather than effects. Mother B's logic worked by reversing the cause-effect relationship of the interview question, in offering her view that it is cultural identity crises that trigger culture-conflicts in the family (not the other way round):

Well... they become rebellious... the reason for their rebellion is their confused cultural identity...they may feel stressed because they cannot fully belong to Canadian culture in school. They will be confused about "Am I Korean or Canadian?" ... this kind of internal stress builds up inside and comes out in the form of rebellion... parents are stressed too in the course of helping them...so we press them... In this way, conflict is inflamed!" (Mother B)

Mother F also talked about the causes of culture-conflict, not, as asked, about its influences. She believes the reasons for it are parents' limited capacity to learn a new culture, and so their attempts to push their children into their own (Korean) ways.

There is some (effect). I think, we [I] need to change, but there is limit that we [parents] can change. After over 40 years of life (in one culture) ...life standards and norms that are now all set... the degree that parents can change is likely to be small...but we [parents] need to try to learn this culture ...but we [parents] are more likely to press our children to follow our Korean ways...

(Mother F)

Sometimes non-answers can tell qualitative researchers more than answers do, so we need to try to explain this discourse event. True, one possible explanation is a technical one: the researcher, in this instance, might have miscalculated the balance between the need to say enough to frame the question while at the same time the need to avoid making it a "leading question", erring on the side of framing the question in too bare a way to contextualize it enough for most of these participants.

A more interesting explanation arises if we look not at the interviewer, but at the interviewees. Why might it be that, throughout all their interviews, they could speak at vast length about causes, but here not about effects? Could the point be the newness to them of the whole notion of cultural adaptation? If that is indeed the explanation for their non-answers to this one question, the rationale would be that talking about causes involves talking about the past, so about things that have happened, so a relatively concrete domain; whereas talking about future effects is too hypothetical to prompt a ready answer.

Be that as it may, all the mothers had a lot to say about what they think is essential to the cultural adaptation of their children. Even though these comments are not directly

responsive to my interview question, their sheer length is one indicator that they represent an important aspect of the mothers' experience of cultural conflict, so they are worth including in the findings.

The mothers' criteria for the success in the cultural adaptation of their adolescent children

Their comments can be grouped around three criteria whose fulfillment would satisfy the mothers that positive cultural adaptation had been achieved. They want their children to succeed, during their adolescent years, in laying the foundation for the rest of their adult lives; they do not want adaptation to Canadian culture to happen at the expense of a complete disappearance of their children's identity as Koreans; they want to be sure their children will not be victims of racism or such like prejudice.

Success obtained during the period of adolescence

Success, in their terms, is clearly defined by Mother F:

I haven't really thought about how I can influence her adaptation here as a Canadian. Rather than thinking about what I should do to make her better adjusted in this society, I have been thinking more about how I can help her get through her adolescence in such a way that she finds it less difficult and more satisfying. I think adaptation to Canadian society is the kind of thing that can be dealt with after high school ... If she can get through her teens successfully and intelligently, I guess there will be no big problems for her cultural adaptation later on ...
(Mother F)

Mother F added that academic achievement (e.g. university graduation) is the measure of success for an adolescent. Mother F stands out as the only one who explicitly linked academic success to cultural adaptation, so I would read her comment as glossing all the mothers' often repeated emphases on the need for their children to make a greater effort than Canadians do to seize academic success, to keep their eye on that prize. Whether

they think academic work is something their children do instead of adapting to Canadian culture (work harder than normal Canadians: be different), or whether they think it is something they do in addition to adapting (be like Canadians: the same, only better) is an unanswerable question.

Retention of Korean identity

Mothers B, C and E spoke about the importance of this second criterion (e.g. “*Taking pride in being Korean*” as Mothers B and E put it). They also stated that they put a high value on maternal contributions to the preservation of traditional mores, such as respect for parents and family cohesion. Mother E stated:

...Well, about cultural adaptation...I often emphasize good Korean traditions to my children. Even if they stay here for the rest of their lives, I think I need to help them preserve our cultural virtues...like respect for the old and filial piety ... Being friendly with teachers and other adults by being on first name terms is good, but it doesn't mean that our children can be impolite or rude. This is what I must teach my children about Korean traditions... (Mother E)

Mother E's hopes for the preservation of traditional values (e.g. parental authority, filial piety) in her son is representative of all the mothers' views, with the notable exception of Mother F, who vehemently expressed resistance to this belief, and vowed to have no part of it:

... I don't know what I want to pass onto my children...I don't like Korea. I have actually more things that I want them [my children] to discard than things I want them to preserve about Korean traditions, for example the burden on the eldest daughter. I realize that many are useless and worthless as I now look back over all the years of my life... if I had spent all my effort and time for myself, my life would have been a lot better... I hate [many aspects of] Korean tradition... male favoritism... etc. All these useless traditions prevent Korea from developing properly... I never want to pass that on to my daughter and son... (Mother F)

She viewed some Korean cultural values such as age-based hierarchy and gender discrimination, part of Korea's Confucian heritage, as hindrances to her children's aspirations.

Mother F had experienced and observed gender discrimination in her ten years as a government official in Korea, during which time, in addition to unfair promotion practices, her family obligations as the eldest daughter often drained her attention and energy away from her career, a common plight for female Korean employees. As Mother F's experience was excitedly communicated in her interview session, it became clear that it had made her more discriminating than the other five mothers about which aspects of Korean culture are worth retaining, such as family cohesion, and which ones, such as patriarchy, are better not retained.

Coping with racial discrimination

This third criterion of what successful cultural adaptation means to these mothers can be seen in the comments of Mothers D and F.

... Cultural adaptation amounts, doesn't it, to having the kind of life that makes you confident you will not have to experience any racism... (Mother D)

Although there may be less racism here than in other countries, it certainly exists here... for sure. In order for our children to forestall any racism being aimed at them, they need to try harder to get better at everything than their Canadian counterparts are ... Then they can truly live in a Canadian kind of way... (Mother F)

Mother B emphasized the importance of exposing their children to what she believes to be the "true" Canadian culture.

...Many Canadians send their children to private schools. I'm hoping that my children study hard to be part of this sort of Canadians, so that they can experience true, authentic, white, upper- middle class Canadian culture. I cannot see, experience, and learn that culture, but I hope my children can ... (Mother B)

Apprehension about racism is yet another incentive to urge unstinting effort in pursuit of academic excellence, which the mothers consider the surest way to deflect the racism of the host society, and to win membership of what they regard as the hallowed culture of the white upper-middle class. Children's cultural adaptation seems to be viewed by the mothers as a byproduct of a level of academic success which itself is enough to confer authentic mainstream status.

These three refrains, the desirability of merging, via the academe, with a privileged "white" culture together with the desirability of continuing to be Korean, may appear paradoxical, but it is a paradox that can be elucidated through the lens of immigrant status. As discussed in **Chapter I Introduction** (pp. 5-7) and in **Chapter IV Findings** (pp. 59-60), the socioeconomic profile of these mothers prior to immigration was upper middle class. As immigrants, while the economic part of "socioeconomic" remains so, there is a radical shift in their social status. Accustomed to being people who made a valuable contribution to society, accustomed to positions of some prominence in their business or professional circles, they are now bereft of such status. Even those who are employed have positions well below what they would be doing had they remained in or returned to Korea. In addition, what they have in common with many other visible minorities is a language barrier: even those of the mothers who can function in English still lack the linguistic nuance that gatekeeps social inclusion. Socially marooned, their talents invisible, it is natural for these women, as they themselves say – witness Mother F ("the only thing we are looking for") and Mother D ("all [my emotions] depend on my child") - to live through their children (for full comments, see p.67). Themselves disadvantaged, they can work to obtain their children's membership of an advantaged group. As products

of Korea, where academic excellence is Route One to lifelong success, they naturally emphasize that type of success as the one their children must aspire to.

Yet, at the same time – the other side of this paradox – to surrender the notion of Korean identity, in the absence of Canadian social status, would leave them culturally annulled. Interestingly, it is the mothers of the two transnational families (A and F) who hold the most flexible views on Korean identity. One possible assumption might be that, shuttling between two cultural universes, they view their children as global citizens, in which case whether to be “still Korean” or “more Canadian” is not a question that need arise. In contrast, it is Mothers B and E, whose families have lived in Canada considerably longer than any of the others, who put the greatest emphasis on retaining Korean-ness, as if the further they drift from Korean shores, the more they strain their eyes for glimpses of the shoreline. The longer immigrants live in a host society, the more experience with marginalized social status they may have (Phinney & Onwuhghalu, 1996; Rogers, 2001 cited in Mahalingam 2006). Mahalingam (2006) claimed that in such circumstance immigrants tend to develop an “idealized cultural identity” (e.g. pp.4-5) on the premise that “such ideals could help individuals to cope, to assert and to feel proud of their identity” (James, 1994 cited in Mahalingam, 2006 p.5). Presumably, this sense of displacement, common among Korean immigrants, would be less in need of coping mechanisms if their status in Canada met any measure other than economic affluence.

4.4 Interpretations of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict

The mothers’ responses to interview questions consisted not only of describing episodes of conflict, but also of interpreting their causes and their immediate effects. Although, as we have seen (see pp. 76-77) most of them could not hypothesize about the long-term

effects on their children's future adulthood, they did speak extensively about observable effects, and what caused those effects, and what those effects in turn caused. In fact, these cause-effect interpretations of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict are themes that thread through all six interviews.

These themes clustered into three groups: the mothers' confusion as to their roles; their visions of new forms of parent-child relations; and mediation of family conflict. These are listed here in approximate developmental sequence, as the mothers move from an initial stage of confusion, are driven by despair to re-strategize, and arrive at a stage where they can act as a bridge between father and child.

4.4.1 Role confusion

When they noticed that their children were absorbing, apparently uncritically, western values, Mothers B, C and F felt unsure what their role as parents should be. In what way, if any, should they intervene in their children's culture-learning? Mother B expressed her concern and anxiety, and Mother F her confusion, over this dilemma:

...I think conflict arises from this point.... the things that seem natural to children are not the same as the things that seem natural to parents. My daughter will ask, "Why does my mother always object to the ways that everybody does things?" ... I cannot just tell her that this was not the way when I was growing up, nor the way kids are supposed to be in Korea ... I'm concerned about [my children's] acceptance of the culture or values here that I don't know much about ... I don't know what to do about that. ... I feel anxious...
(Mother B)

... if I step back and look at myself, everything seems to be because I expect too much and my own ambition, in her life... whether or not she does well in everything in life, in fact, should be based on her own evaluation. I think I should let her be herself... yet that doesn't seem to be the right attitude for a caring mother to take ... I am confused... I will have to move on anyway, with this kind of on-going confusion and conflict... I just want her to appreciate what I've done and what I will do for her, and hope that it can empower her... In five years, I might find that everything I have done now has been wrong, and my

understanding [of my role] might be the complete opposite of what I think at this point in time...
(Mother F)

Mother B now realizes that what one sees as “natural” is subjective and culturally dependent. She recognizes that essentializing it has contributed to the culture gap, as she and her daughter have discrepant perceptions of what “natural” means. To understand a problem, though, is not to solve it: in Mother B’s case, understanding the problem involves seeing the remoteness of any solution, and her anxiety is an effect of that remoteness.

Mother F’s daughter makes decisions based on her own assessment of the situation and her own thinking. Because this approach to decision-making by adolescents, without the tutelage of their mother, is not the practice in Korea, Mother F was in two minds about the rights and wrongs of trying to steer her daughter’s new set of attitudes in a positive direction.

Mother C, in a similar case of role-confusion, reported her doubts about intervening in a particular concrete issue, the perennial problem of appropriate dress:

I didn’t know to what extent I should step in ... one time she was leaving for school in a low-cut sweater. I know it was not really that bad compared to other girls here, but to my eyes it was very indecent...I didn’t know whether I should do something about it or not ...In such a “free world”[(Canada)], ... I don't know how much I should intervene...and I'm not sure whether if I say something it will make any difference, ... if it does, that's good...but, I'm worrying that my comments on those things would have no effect but to make us hurt each other's feelings ...
(Mother C)

Again we see that what has been learned from experience is not yet a new approach, just an indecisiveness and a fear of pain. Mother C has an un-nuanced understanding of Canadian culture – a “free world” in which anything goes – so her capacity for genuine communication with her daughter is limited. Reading the culture as permissive, these

mothers cannot know when permission should or should not be granted, or the bases for granting it.

4.4.2 New parent-child relationships

Eventually, Mothers A and C did envisage a new relationship with their children. Mother A re-defined her mother-son relationship by abandoning the precept of filial piety, a wrenching decision, as it is a core value in the Korean family.

...I had to re-think the meaning of parent-child relationship from the beginning ... I've realized that it will not be possible for me to retain the typical traditional parent-child relationship with my son, so I have abandoned my high expectations of him. I no longer expect filial piety from my son and I just want him to live his whole life happily... If we had stayed in Korea, I doubt that I would have been like this ...
(Mother A)

She also ventured a new definition of parental authority that was sharply different from the one she had had in Korea. She stated that she found herself not being “an influence” on her son. Her new understanding of notions of authority in the different culture allowed her to put her son and herself on an equal footing, a stance that is non-existent in her own culture.

She explained:

... I have started to look at [my son] as an individual who is my equal, instead of seeing us in a hierarchy ...I learn a lot from my son ... I feel that I have no influence on my son ... I've realized that our world changes very quickly, and this society is different... so what I have learned from my own life experience may not be always useful for my children ...
(Mother A)

Mother C too, once she had grasped the concept of the autonomous adolescent, realized that a different maternal role was needed. What prompted her to contemplate the possibility of a new way of relating was the failure of verbal pressure to force her daughter to enroll in a strict private school.

...I've realized that people make decisions on their own without being pushed or influenced by others. This society does not work that way... One does not simply follow what others do ... It's clear to me now that even though I am a parent, I can't make my children do things the way I want, even if I believe that some ways of doing things are simply the right ways. I have realized that I just can't simply push her to do things just because I think it's right or good for her ... because I now know that won't work here...
(Mother C)

It appears that incidents of cultural conflict are primarily what give rise to the mothers' appreciation of cultural differences in the raising of teenagers. The cross-cultural experience that the mothers accumulated as a result of these incidents was instrumental in moving them on to a vantage point from where they were able to contemplate change.

4.4.3 Conflict mediation

Mothers F, E and B disclosed that their culture conflict had put them in the position of being a bridge between their husbands and their teenage children, attempting to mediate disagreements and conflicts. To head off conflict between her children and their father, Mother F had to communicate with them on his behalf.

My husband seldom tries to communicate directly with our children. He just talks to me when our children seem to be doing something that he does not like. He comes across to them as very generous, and they see him as a good dad. It falls to me to deal with our children and raise issues with them, so my children see me as the one who is always going against them. Although his opinions are the same as mine ... he just talks to me behind the scenes.... That's why my husband does not really have disagreements or conflicts with the children, unlike me...
(Mother F)

Mother E said she has often had to play the part of her husband's advocate:

My children sometimes have bad confrontations with my husband (their dad). They are rebellious and fight back... I tell them "there is no way you can fight back against dad, whether he is right or wrong... Whatever the circumstances, you just can't fight back ..." I try to calm them down and get them to understand him, and to communicate with him (dad) later...
(Mother E)

...I tried to empty my mind. I'm now thinking that even if my child does not go to university, it will be OK if she can find something else she wants to do with

her life. My husband is not like me, and doesn't accept the way she is. I bought a book for my husband, but he didn't read it. It's difficult for me to cope with everything by myself. I'm alone. My husband still will not try to communicate with her. It's frustrating... so I often have to communicate with my daughter when my husband is away on business trips. ... I think the only person who has to resolve conflicts is me because her dad cannot or won't...

(Mother B)

The mothers did not explicitly mention their conflict/argument with their husband as a result of culture conflict. As a Korean-Canadian myself, however, I feel that these findings will be illuminated by their depiction of the triangular father-mother-child dynamic that I know to be so typical of Korean families. Mother B was cast as a mediator of conflicts around academic matters: she communicated with her daughter only when her husband was not at home; she bought a book on parenting for her husband to read.

These representations by these mothers indicate an inability by a Korean husband to communicate with his children about problems. In fact, this researcher detects a note of marital tension emanating from these accounts of child-rearing difficulties.

According to the mothers' narratives, their bridging between father and child seems to be a function of the attitudes to parenting held by Korean fathers, of whom we see two types. The first type of father, as depicted by Mother B, is so strict, or authoritarian, that their children do not even attempt to communicate with them. The second type of father, exemplified by Mother F's husband, has two faces: a visible generous one, and one hidden from the children, seen only by the wife. Sometimes, these two typical attitudes co-exist in one father.

Judging from the mothers' versions, the fathers seem uncommunicative with their teenage children, and unwilling to take ownership of the intercultural problems of the family. If

true, this would explain the children's confrontations with, or awkward avoidance of, their fathers, as well as the fathers' misunderstanding, or void in understanding, of their adolescent children. This regrettable state of affairs is what places the mothers in a situation where they have to act as a bridge. An effect of this new maternal function is that the subsequent conflicts between mothers and children tend to be either muted or more vituperative.

4.4.4 The attribution of parent-child conflict to cultural transition

From the mothers' stories, it seemed that they were inclined to see their day-to-day conflicts with their children in the context of cultural transition, rather than as instances of a universal struggle over autonomy. However, they made no distinct separation between cultural conflict and typical mother-teen arguments: it was just all part of one and the same headache. Often, the actual issues themselves were the routine hassles that plague parents everywhere: Internet use (Mother C and D), attentiveness to school work (all six mothers), the suitability of companions (Mothers B, C, D and E). Of course, these issues are not discrete to Canadian culture; still, the mothers felt that the issues would have played out differently in Korea.

...If I had raised her in Korea, my story would have been TOTALLY DIFFERENT. Everything would have been under my control, or gone according to my plan until she graduates from high school...When she turns 20 years old, I mean when she becomes a college student, I would apply different rules [from those for teenagers]. Conflicts happen here in Canada because I'm being pushed to apply those rules before the appropriate age. If we were in Korea, everything would have been OK because the rules or principles laid down by parents, without being questioned, would have had to have guided everything in her life...
(Mother F)

...We [my daughter and I] would have more serious arguments about the amount of Internet use if we were in Korea, but here in Canadian culture it doesn't seem much of a problem ...
(Mother C)

...Probably, the conflicts with my daughter would have been really serious if we had been in Korea... My husband and I might have severely scolded her for her

misbehaviours and her for hanging around with bad friends. She might have left home... Her situation would have been really bad if we had stayed in Korea ...
(Mother B)

... Because they [my children] were educated here in Canada, they seem to have become more individualistic... I mean they don't want to be controlled or supervised by me... They do things the way they want to ... Yes, they are like this because they live here in Canada... They don't want to tell us all the details of their day-to-day lives or their studies ... They wouldn't have been like this if they had been in Korea...
(Mother E)

For better (computer time is “*not so much of a problem here*” for Mother C) or for worse (Mother F feels she is “*being pushed*” to treat her daughter as older than her true age), all these mothers see a cultural divide as the cause of their conflicts – not necessarily a cause of issues, but a cause of conflict that the issues generate.

Whether they ignore cultural differences altogether (e.g. “*Doesn't all culture value on respect for parents, though?*” said Mother D), or exaggerate them (e.g. “*They are really different here from before*” said Mothers A and B), these cultural differences loom so large for the mothers that they seem unable to ever see past them. Were there such things as non-culture-specific causes of conflict? What about the generation gap? Do Canadian parents go through the same aggravations? There is nothing in the mothers' accounts of conflict incidents to suggest that questions such as those crossed their minds. The intercultural situation in which they find themselves makes it appear to them that mother-child conflict must be a product of cultural transition.

Chapter summary

In accordance with the Thematic Analysis procedure discussed in **Chapter III, Methodology**, the present chapter has reported on the findings of the study in terms of themes that emerged from the interview data.

Section 1 of this chapter described six triggers of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict. These triggers are mostly highly contentious issues such as school work, sexuality, teen attitudes and mutual accusations of manipulation, not the underlying causes. Reading the conflicted discourse that the mothers reported occurring around these issues, we see sharp cultural differences between the mothers and the adolescents. In this cultural divide, once a conflict has been triggered by one of these issues, any of the other issues can catch fire in the same episode.

Section 2 described the mothers' responses to Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict, finding five categories of response, from undesirable ones (emotional reactions; cajoling, browbeating and threatening) to more constructive ones (communicativeness; accommodation). Unsurprisingly, the mothers' attempts at constructiveness were often more real in their intentions than in their implementations, and several of their reports of such incongruence have been discussed in this section.

Section 3 continued the reflective note from the end of Section 2. Section 3 is a fascinating snapshot of qualitative research, because the question failed, but the answers succeeded. The question was about how, if at all, conflicts such as the ones described in Sections 1 and 2 affect children on their journey along the path of cultural adaptation. To answer this question calls for some meta-analysis, and with one egregious exception, these mothers could not do that. It would seem that a critical mass of experience and reflection needs to have accrued before meta-analysis is possible, and five of these six mothers were below that threshold.

This interview problem notwithstanding, their answers are worth attention in their own right. From these answers, we find that (1) it is important for adolescents' success to be ultimately measurable in academic terms; (2) it is desirable for their children to retain at least some elements of Korean culture, and not "go Canadian" all the way, but that – in spite of (2) – (3) being accorded white upper-middle class status (which can only be achieved by (1)) is the only real armour against racial discrimination. The centrality of the role of the mother, though uncertain in some other areas (see below, Section 4), was emphasized, in as much as they are ever-present conduits of Korean cultural values.

Section 4 tried to get at what the concept of Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict means to these six mothers, its congregate import in their consciousness. Four meanings could be discerned in the data. These conflicts made them feel very confused about their proper roles as mothers in the new culture, forced them to figure out new ways of relating to their adolescent children, and tended to put them in an often uncomfortable position as channels, sometimes back-channels, between husband and child, a burdensome position which itself could be unhealthy for their own relationship with the child. There was also some confusion about the degree to which the conflicts were cultural. But it is here where they demonstrate cultural adaptability and change.

A number of the topics that kept recurring in the mothers' interview responses are also topics that are addressed in the literature that was reviewed in **Chapter II**. That chapter discussed the findings of various bodies of research on issues of acculturation, parenting, and conflict, as well as Asian, especially Korean, cultural studies and immigrant studies. The extent to which my small study can be said to confirm or disconfirm any of the

findings in the literature is largely the subject of my next chapter, which will bring together all the chapters so far.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRAXIS

The aim of this study was to understand Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict, as that phenomenon is experienced by Korean-Canadian mothers who are in situations of conflict with their adolescent children, and in particular to learn how the mothers themselves see the meanings of such experiences.

This chapter will evaluate the study in three ways, examining to what extent its findings contribute to the relevant literatures, to what extent its limitations might be remediable in future research, and to what extent it can relate to praxis.

5.1 Discussion of findings

For the most part, the themes of conflict experience described by the six Korean mothers are also found in the studies reviewed in Chapter II, and the findings about them are mostly consistent with those of previous research. Inconsistent findings will be discussed later in this section.

5.1.1 Consistent findings

Triggers of conflict

In Tardif's (2003) comparative study, a Chinese group of mothers and adolescents reported later age expectations for the onset of autonomy in adolescence than did an Anglo group. This age expectation was also expressed by the Korean mothers in the present study, who believed, for example, that adolescents could sort out autonomy issues after they had graduated from high school, or after they had started to support themselves.

Perhaps fearing its domino effect on the family unit, the mothers went to considerable lengths to stifle early autonomy, resorting to financial threats and prolonged silences.

Szapocznik and Kurtine (1993, cited in Herz & Gullone, 1999) suggested that conflict is triggered when adolescents voice resentment at the over-protectiveness of parents who have become culturally ineffectual. Their suggestion is borne out by the experience of the Korean mothers, in whose culture there is no room for the questioning by children of any parental decision whatsoever, let alone questioning it in the resentful or defiant tone that many Canadian teens affect.

In addition to autonomy and adolescent communication style, another trigger of conflict between the Korean mothers and their children is the parents' repeated pressure to study. This finding is consistent with those of Moon, Wolfer and Robinson (2001). In their study of 197 Korean-American parents and children, school work was identified as the top area of family conflict. Though the six Korean mothers were not asked to rank-order causes of conflict, this issue of academic diligence did occupy a significant share of the content of their interview sessions.

The mothers' responses to conflict

In her exploration of cross-cultural parenting among multi-ethnic groups in the U.S., Duran (2002) noted the tendency of these parents to react emotionally to the attitudes of their children who were in the process of "westernization." Such reactions have clear parallels to those of the Korean mothers, who, by their own accounts, felt so angry that they yelled and threw things, so frustrated that they sulked, and so guilty that they cried. Strong emotional reactions were especially provoked by an egalitarian attitude in the

behavior of their children, which would inevitably be construed as a mark of disrespect, rudeness and challenge. The mothers were as aghast at this affront as they would have been at a slap in the face, so that no reaction was possible other than an emotional one.

Another parental response that appears to be not uncommon in immigrant families is verbal browbeating, which perhaps starts as part of the emotional backlash, but then persists on with a dogged determination. A growing body of research has traced this reaction in various immigrant mothers. They may be trying to appreciate the changes their children are going through, but the moment they feel that their own authority is threatened, their first line of defense is to revert to control mode, even if they subsequently think better of it and make a more conscious effort to align themselves with the adolescents' growing pains (Graber, Brooks-Gunn, & Peterson, 1996; Holmbeck et al., 1995; Steinberg & Silk, 2002 cited in Tardif, 2003). These scholars' reports are echoed in the process that the Korean mothers delineated, a process in which, until they pioneered new relationships, they initially used verbal means, including the verbal threat of cutting financial support, to try to force their children to conform, to mould them into the shape they expected them to be.

In common with the parents described in the earlier research, this initial reaction by the Korean mothers to any challenge against their authority appears to exhibit some features of the "dominating style" of conflict response (see p. 26), except that their concern for their children remained paramount. Indeed, none of their accounts shows any evidence of the "neglecting" or "distancing" styles of conflict management. Presumably, those styles would not be viable options in normal mother-child relations. In line with Canary et al. (1995 cited in Canary and Messman, 2000), some features of parent-child conflict, such

as “an involuntary association, an imbalance of power and resources, and obligations for the parent to function as a caregiver” (p. 263) must have shaped the mothers’ process of managing culture conflict.

This process reportedly included a certain amount of positive transformation, in which the mothers moved from helpless emotional reactions to active coping, or came to believe that they ought to do so. This outcome is consistent with Maiter and George (2003), who showed that, although cultural values and norms were important to immigrant mothers, they are not static: rather, they were shown to have been mediated by the social environment in which they were encountered by those immigrant mothers. This finding concurs with mine, in which similar social mediation was also seen, when one Korean mother abandoned the valued tradition of filial piety, and when others attempted the new social norm of communicativeness.

Interpretations of the conflict experience

Jamieson and Thomas (1974 cited in MacMillin, 1991) stated that conflict, typically perceived as a negative experience, can, however, be beneficial in growing and change in relationships. This positive outgrowth of conflict in general is evidently true of conflict in parenting, according to Paikoff and Brooks-Gunn (1991 cited in Gorman, 1998). They argue that conflict experience holds benefits for parenting, in that parents can develop conflict management behaviors such as negotiation skills. Those studies resonate with the Korean mothers’ reflections on their overall experience of intercultural conflict with their children, especially in their burgeoning awareness of different parenting practices that seem to them worth trying, and in their overtures at relating in new ways to their children. Like earlier studies, the present one again portrays the evolving nature of cross-cultural

parenting, the endless quest to discover and re-discover “what is effective parenting” in a new cultural environment.

Previous research (Lee & Liu, 2001; Tardif, 2003) has argued that intergenerational conflict is compounded by intercultural factors. This argument is definitely endorsed by the findings of the present study. Although the Korean mothers realize that parent-child conflict would have happened even if they had stayed in Korea, they perceive the cultural differences that abound in the new environment as a significant contributor to their conflict. They do not see their conflicts here as merely the inevitable tensions inherent in adolescence. Those problems are predictable, whereas there is no way that immigrant mothers can predict what the culture conflicts in a brand new culture will be about, or what they will feel like -- especially not mothers from the monolithic culture that is Korea. Thus, the mothers treat the new culture with suspicion. Whether they accurately estimate the power of its influence is another question.

Immigrant mothers have a double intake of culture-learning. They have their own direct exposure to the culture, whether it be slight or considerable, on top of which they have the indirect exposure that is delivered to them by their children. This faster rate of their children’s acculturation need not be entirely problematic; for example, Huang (1997) pointed out the advantages of having children who can act as interpreters and in other ways be of benefit as the family negotiates its way in the new social structure. In the present study’s findings, this specific “scout” function of immigrant children was not a theme; other advantages, however, did come up in the mothers’ general appraisals of the whole experience. In a much broader and more nebulous way than in Huang (1997), some

of the mothers thought their own acculturation had been catalyzed by that of their adolescent children.

5.1.2 Findings inconsistent with previous research

I have found only one study whose findings differ from those of the present one, and the difference is only in part, and not clear-cut. Tardif (2003) has already been cited twice in this chapter as a study that supports two of the findings about the mothers, namely, their view on the age of autonomy and their sense of culture conflict as being a subset of general mother-teen conflict rather than being a distinct phenomenon (see p. 91). It is only on the question of emotional reactions that there is a difference between Tardif (2003) and the present study, and that difference is easily accounted for as a cultural one. Tardif found that the acculturation disparity between the Chinese parents in his study and their children was not a predictor of the emotional intensity of the general mother-child conflict. This could mean, if anything, that Korean mothers, or these Korean mothers, are more expressive than Chinese mothers, or those Chinese mothers.

In any case, the scope of Tardif's study did not include any measure, even a rough estimate, of the actual strength of the Chinese mothers' emotional reaction to their culture conflict; his study was only interested in the relationship of that reaction to overall conflict. Therefore, Tardif's study and my own are not essentially comparable.

Thus, with the isolated, and partial, exception of Tardif (2003), none of the research I reviewed in the theoretical framework contradicts my findings. Needless to say, those findings might have been different, and so might have been more contradicted, if I had applied different methods, and/or used a different sample. These methodological

considerations, as they prompt some of my ideas for the conducting of future studies, will be included in the **Section 2** of this chapter, after some final emphases about findings.

5.1.3 Other studies

This sub-section contextualizes some other findings, ones that turned out to be significant in my analysis, within related research that did not fit into the framework of my **Literature Review in Chapter II.**

Academic effort

Lee and Larson (1999) illustrate the importance of academic effort in Korean society, which accords it a value bordering on mystique. In order to go through “exam war” (Cho, 1993; Fararo, 1987; Rohlen, 1983; Scholland, 1990; White, 1993 cited in Lee & Larson, 1999, p. 250) while preparing for the intensely competitive university entrance exam, twelfth graders in Korea are subjected to spending 58% - 75% of their waking hours on their studies (Chung, 1991; Chung et al., 1993; Yim, 1987 cited in Lee & Larson, 1999). According to a survey conducted by the Korean Consumer Agency (News Chosun, 2007), more than 54% of parents send their children to private after-school programs and see nothing untoward in spending as much as “four times more on average on private education than their counterparts in any other major economy” (Thatcher, 2008 p. A11).

Another study not included in my conceptual framework but whose ideas overlap with my own findings is Mahalingam (2006). Mahalingam discussed how necessary social and cultural capital is for the negotiation of social status, and how, consequently, immigrants’ lack of such capital defines their marginalization. This notion of under-capitalization (socially not economically) helps understand immigrants’ investment (economically and

personally) in the academic success of their children. Though lacking status in their own lives, they can vicariously experience success if their children succeed. Indeed, “most Korean people believe academic achievement determines everything in their lives” (Thatcher, 2008 p.A11).

In the interviews with the six mothers, there is ample testimony for the centrality of education in the lives of Korean families; in fact, as with most Korean immigrants of their generation, the very reason for their decision to immigrate was so their children could do well in school, go to university, and, as they suppose, become part of an Ivy League set (“Ivy Leaguism” is a pale version of the untranslatable *hak-bul-ju-eu*, with its connotations of freemasonry and access to the corridors of power). Understandably, to find out that the Canadian way is different, and that their children want to be that way too is devastating for Korean mothers, like the one who had heard, before coming here, that Canadian schools teach children to be independent learners – “*However, I now really DOUBT that*”.

The children’s “dual stance”

The term “dual stance” that is used by Nobel, Poynting and Tabar (1999) is “strategic hybridity” (p. 29). In their identity study of Arabic-speaking youth in south-western Sydney, they found that the youngsters mixed, strategically, some elements from their parents’ cultural background and some elements from Australian society, “in often contradictory ways” (p.29). The authors theorized ethnic identity as a movement between such strategic hybridity and strategic essentialism. Poynting was also one of the co-authors of a recent study that investigated the same concept, finding in strategic hybridity both positive values (cultural competencies available to subsequent generations) and

negative values (marginality that becomes fossilized down the generations) (Skrbis, Baldassar, & Poynting, 2007).

The Korean mothers did not know how to think about acculturation and identity, but they knew enough to recognize strategic hybridity when it was in front of them -- especially the strategic part -- and they had their own articulateness about it, complaining about children who are Canadian when they want freedom and Korean when they want financial support.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

This section will offer some research suggestions that arise from these findings, and will then offer further suggestions that arise from the limitations of the present study.

5.2.1 Suggestions arising from the findings

Research about mothers

The mothers' answers generate further questions. We know from the present study that not all mothers remain trapped in distress about Intercultural-Intergenerational Conflict, and we know, conversely, that not all mothers achieve the positive transformation from a purely emotional state to a cognitive state, but we don't know the variables that select a given mother into one sort or the other. For example, it would be instructive to find out whether "positive transformation" is predictable from a positive history of the mother-child relationship prior to immigration. It would also be germane to the patriarchal Korean milieu to investigate in what ways, if any, mother-son relationships differ in this regard from mother-daughter relationships.

A different kind of research into culture conflict and motherhood might consist of studies that, after an interval of time, followed up on developments in the same families. Some of the mothers, at the time of the interviews, had younger children, as well as the adolescent children that were the focus of the study. For culture-learning specialists, it would be of interest to find out what happens in those families when the younger children enter adolescence, for example whether their mother applies to them what she has learned from her first experience, or whether the new adolescent receives/processes helpful input from the older sibling. Various kinds of comparative studies suggest themselves in connection with such research agendas.

One specific task for future research would be to weigh the various influences that cause a mother to ultimately accept, if grudgingly, her child's position, including positions to which she had taken violent exception in the first place, or even found incomprehensible. In a sense, this kind of final acceptance is itself a Korean way: the "accepting mother" figure is part of the folklore. Koreans have a saying that "In the end, a parent can never win against a child". However, alternative explanations for the mothers' change seem equally plausible: maybe the mother's own acculturation or strategic hybridity made the once-absurd position less unacceptable, or maybe her acceptance of it is a stage in the evolution of the cross-cultural parenting. Future researchers could seek ways untangle these causes and motivations.

Another specific question, requiring an analysis deeper than that attainable in the present study, is to find out whether Korean mothers actually have a concept of acculturation: that is, are they conscious of its existence as a phenomenon? Perhaps not: perhaps they are only aware of their children's needing to get along with the host society just enough to

succeed in it, academically and materially. Thus, suggested future research questions are: What do mothers think cultural adaptation means? Do they think that their children's acculturation comes about all by itself, or, if not, what exactly do they think brings it about? What is the mother's role in this, if any? Answers to these questions might dispel some contradictions apparent in the mothers' answers in the present study, such as their contradictory statements about their roles – on the one hand reduced, but somehow at the same time vital links with enduring Korean values.

Research about adolescents

Now that the present study has described parent-child conflict from the perspective of the mothers, companion studies from the perspective of the adolescent are obviously desirable. Ideally, the children of these same mothers would be available. As well, comparative studies could elicit responses on the same topics from mother-child pairs. Through their schools, it should be possible to capture larger samples of adolescents than is the case with busy moms, though tolerance for interview-length may be less.

Research about fathers

One of the findings of the present study is the bridging position of the mothers, sometimes conducting shuttle diplomacy, between father and child. This would seem to affect the marital relationship as well as the maternal relationship. However, the fathers' perspective is only available by hearsay. There is some literature showing that father-child conflict effects differ from mother-child conflict effects (Ma & Shek, 2001; Johnson, 1987; Parke et al., 1989; Dubois, Eitel, & Felner, 1994; Shek, 1999b), and that adolescents differently experience these two sets of conflicts (Hauh, 1999), the latter a Korean-American study. None of this literature, however, factors acculturation into its

results; and of course, there are not yet any studies of Korean-Canadian father-child conflict.

5.2.2 Suggestions arising from the limitations of the study

Research design

As explained in **Chapter III, Methodology**, I made the decision to do a qualitative study and to use Thematic Analysis, because it is an exploratory investigation in an area that has not yet been theorized. Obviously, all methodological decisions come with their own limitations. A definite drawback of this study was the very general nature of the theory that it had to be related to. The study had to rely on global theories such as parenting styles or conflict management, in the absence of intercultural theory that is directly relevant to immigrant family conflict.

A logical step that could come next, or better after replication studies, would be to use Grounded Theory in further qualitative studies of similar groups. Later, if some sense of the variables were to come from the qualitative studies, various hypotheses could be formulated, on the basis of which quantitative studies might be undertaken.

The participants

The size of the sample, six, was adequate for this exploratory study; however, it was too small for the findings to be generalized to a larger population. An additional reason for non-generalizability is the narrow range of characteristics (highly educated, middle class, well-off). A further problem is that some of the participants, unlike Korean-Canadian mothers, were professional women.

Therefore, research with larger samples needs to be conducted, in order to theorize Intercultural-Intergenerational conflict and typical ways of dealing with it. Also, the recruitment of subjects from a broader background should yield more comprehensive findings, about Korean mothers who experience and handle culture conflict differently from the mothers in this study.

Data collection and analysis and validity concerns

It is the virtue of post-positivist research to embrace its subjectivities. Non-post-positivists may be more inclined to criticize the results. In any event, a suggestion is that future studies be co-researched, so that the same set of subjective filters are not at play in all the stages from recruitment to orientation to interview to transcription and translation to analysis and to running validity checks. In order to further adjust for subjective filters, it would be even better if the co-researchers were not both Korean and/or not both female.

5.3 Implications for cross-cultural social work

Implications for the social work field

Julian, McKenry, and McKelvey (1994) contend that, while global theories of human development, and the strategies presently on offer for family service, are all well and good, there is a professional obligation to go beyond those admittedly useful fields of knowledge. They insist that it is only by knowing the variations between cultural groups that social workers can understand their problems and address the needs of the members of such groups. If that is true, then the findings of my study can be seen as providing insight into practice. So informed, social workers who are already familiar with one or more other cultural groups would be likelier to guard against any possible risk of misapplying such knowledge across cultures in a homogenized way. As one example,

they would be aware that, unlike for other immigrant groups, in Korean families it is the emphasis on academic studies that creates more domestic arguments than anything else, and the most heated arguments.

Appropriately expressed and disseminated, these findings would begin to shed light on the areas of life that are culturally problematic for one such group, and the meanings its members ascribe to their experience of those problems. The size of this group continues to increase rapidly, and the economic and political indications are that this growth will not abate, so cross-cultural social workers will have a duty to become reliably informed about the cultural dynamics, expectations and norms of this group.

This study concludes, with Razak (1998), that culture conflict is not caused by acculturation disparity alone. On the contrary, culture conflict is a highly complex system of interacting problems. The implication of this for the front line worker is, in a word, flexibility. Inflexible workers will jump to conclusions based on stereotypes: for example, a worker might simplistically assume that a Korean family conflict must arise from a “controlling-mother” problem. Such a mis-assessment might result in incorrect decisions, or might cause the worker to miss other signs: more flexible thinking would make room for other possible appraisals of the mother, perhaps seeing her as someone who is struggling to understand what effective parenting is, or as someone who is stating cognitive positions that are not congruent with the state of her feelings.

Another error to avoid (Razak, 1998) is the attempt to superimpose a western cultural model onto the analysis of a Korean family suffering from the type of conflict described in this study. Usually, the problem is not that the mother lacks cultural information. She

may very well be aware of culturally different ideas such as the child's right to independent choices and the communication style of speaking as equals. Reiterating these concepts to her will not help the situation. Indeed, nothing will help the situation that does not include a sensitive appreciation of the internal discord the mother is undergoing, as she runs up against those differences in the course of her day-to-day parenting.

A further implication of this study for practitioners is the need to be constantly aware of the complexity of the conflict situations. Given such awareness, practitioners can avoid making routine diagnoses and applying routine prescriptions.

Implications for service planning and policy

It follows from the above that service planning for Korean families needs to take into account four factors: the extent of their confusion, the root causes of their emotional turmoil and of their attempts to wield control, the ambivalence of their feelings around what they should and what they shouldn't accept from their children, and the elusiveness for them of the whole concept of cultural adaptation. Moving from understanding the problem to remedying it, service planning needs to incorporate the norms and values, the parenting paradigms and the assumptions behind them, and the conflict management strategies, of both cultures.

There are tenuous implications in the manifestations of culture conflict described in this study for changes to policies on immigrant family services. Historically, immigrant settlement services have focused on the socio-economic aspects of adjustment such as employment training, rather than psychological aspects such as cultural adaptation. However, the Korean immigrants in this study, as well as probably others, are a new

demographic with new service needs such as programs imparting to them intercultural understanding and Canadian multiculturalism. Their needs are less material than the historical ones, but clearly no less profound.

Implications for cross-cultural researchers

The findings in this study may constitute the first beginnings of a body of knowledge on Korean-Canadian immigrants. The very fact that it is the first study on this topic of Korean-Canadians already implies the eventual existence of a series of such studies, to be made available through professional as well as academic publications.

Research should not be restricted to academic studies, but should include action research by all interested stakeholders. If this small study stimulates such an interest, and if in this way it contributes to more sophisticated services for troubled immigrant families, then it will have helped to reduce conflict and promote harmony.

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Appendix 1 A semi-structured interview guide

Explore incidents of culture conflict

1. What are some difficulties you have had with your child since immigration?
2. What are some differences between your difficulties or conflicts here in Canada and those you had in Korea?

Explore mothers' responses to culture conflict

3. What do you do when you experience such cultural conflict with your children?
*Explore verbal, cognitive, behavioural, and emotional responses

Explore mothers' thoughts on the effect of culture conflict on the cultural adaptation of their children

4. How do you think such conflict will affect the cultural identity or cultural adaptation of your children?

Explore meanings of conflict experience

5. How do feel about the difficulties or conflicts that are different from the ones you had in Korea, and that you had not predicted? In what ways have such conflicts affected you or your family here?



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services and Administration
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Riano-Alcala, P.	DEPARTMENT Social Work & Family Studies	NUMBER B04-0896
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT		
CO-INVESTIGATORS: Seo, Seonae, Social Work & Family Studies		
SPONSORING AGENCIES		
TITLE : Class Project SOWK 554 - Koreans' Intercultural - Intergenerational Disagreement / Conflict (I IDC) and Its Implications		
APPROVAL DATE	TERM (YEARS) 1	DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL: Jan. 9, 2005, Consent forms / Contact letter / Nov. 25, 2004, Advertisement / Questionnaire
<p>CERTIFICATION:</p> <p>The application describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Board and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term (one year) provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.</p> <p><i>Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:</i> Dr. James Frankish, Chair, Dr. Cay Holbrook, Dr. Susan Rowley, Dr. Anita Hubley Associate Chairs</p>		

Changes or completion: The Behavioural Research Ethics Board must review and approve any changes to the research methodology and/or consent documents. The Board must also be advised immediately of termination or completion of the project.

Annual Review: If the project is ongoing, submit a progress report prior to the anniversary date of approval.

Forms: Changes, termination or completion, or progress reports for annual review should be submitted on a Request for Annual Review or Amendment of an Approved Project form.

<http://www.ors.ubc.ca/ethics/behavioural/b-forms.htm>

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2255 Fax: (604) 822-8656
www.swfs.ubc.ca

Seeking Participants for Korean family study

- *Are you a Korean parent who experiences difficulties in your relationship with your adolescent children aged 14 to 19?
- *Do you sometimes wonder if your difficulties wouldn't have happened if you hadn't immigrated to Canada?
- *Are you a Korean adolescent aged 14 to 19 who feels that you are living in two different worlds? Have you experienced cultural disagreements or conflicts with your parents?
- *Do you sometimes wonder if you would have had a better relationship with your parents if they understood Canadian culture better, and valued it more?

If you can say "yes" to any of these questions,
we would really appreciate it if you can share your stories with us.

We are conducting a research project, entitled "**Korean Canadian intercultural-intergenerational disagreement /conflict (I IDC) and its implications.**" The purpose of this research is to understand Korean family issues in Canada, how these issues affect the adolescents' adjustment to Canadian life, and how parents cope. The findings contribute to a new perspective on bicultural parenting practices, and of help to family service providers in Canada. This research will be used for an MSW graduate thesis, as well as for a graduate research course. This study is directed by the principal investigator, Pilar Riano, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, School of Social Work and Family Studies at UBC.

If you are interested to participate or want further information please contact co-investigator, Seonae Seo (BA, MA, MSW student at UBC) at

Your Participation involves one three-hour focus group session, and might then involve a ninety-minute face-to-face individual interview with the co-investigator. Sessions will be conducted in both English and Korean.

In order to express appreciation for the commitment of your time and the cost of your transportation, a pack of coffee to the value of \$5-\$10 will be given to each parent, and a stationary set to the value of \$5-\$10 will be given to each adolescent, at the end of their focus group.

Participation is entirely voluntary and all information gathered will be kept strictly confidential. Knowledge of your identity is not required. Names and identifying features of individuals will not be recorded unless participants request that their names be used.

Date: Nov. 25, 2004

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www.swfs.ubc.ca

Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

Korean Canadian intercultural-intergenerational disagreement /conflict (IIDC) and its implications

Principal Investigator: Pilar Riaño, Ph.D. Assistant Professor
School of Social Work and Family Studies, UBC
Phone: (604) 822-8656

Co-Investigator(s): Seonae Seo, BA, MA, MSW student
School of Social Work and Family Studies, UBC
Phone:

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Seonae Seo. I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of British Columbia. I'm researching the types of disagreements and conflicts that from time to time occur in Korean immigrant families between adolescents and their parents. The purpose of this research is to understand Korean family issues in Canada, how these issues affect the adolescents' adjustment to Canadian life, and how parents cope. This research project is one of the requirements of a graduate research course, and will be used for a graduate thesis.

If you are a Korean aged between 14 and 19, or the Korean parents of a 14-19-year-old, you are invited to take part in this project. Adolescents can join (with permission), even if their parents don't, and parents can join, even if their children don't.

We would like to hear what you have to say about any difficulties you have experienced with parent-adolescent conflicts. There will be an adolescents' focus group, and a focus group for parents. Then there will be some individual face-to-face interviews with the co-investigator. The focus groups will last about 3 hours and the interviews will last about 1 and 1/2 hours.

Date: Jan. 09, 2005

Page: 1 of 2

The focus groups and individual interviews will take place at the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Tri-City Service Centre, 163 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam. Alternatively, if you prefer, the individual interview can be conducted at any convenient location, such as your home.

These interviews will be scheduled from February to March, 2005. You can do it either in Korean or in English, whichever language you prefer.

The interviews will be audiotaped and then transcribed. Your name will be changed to a pseudonym at the time of transcribing, and nothing that identifies you personally will be included. Also, you will have an opportunity to view the transcript and to provide feedback.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw any information about yourself you do not wish included in this study. Your refusal or withdrawal would not jeopardize receipt of services from S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Data obtained from you will be put in a secure storage, separate from any personally identifying information. It will be destroyed five years after the work is presented to the department, or published, unless you give permission for it to be used in related research.

In order to express appreciation for the commitment of your time and the costs of your transportation, a pack of coffee to the value of \$5 will be given to each parent, and a stationary set to the value of \$5 will be given to each adolescent, at the end of the focus group session(s).

If you would like to participate in this study and share your experience, please call Seonae Seo, the co-investigator, at

Also, if you have any questions or want to get further information with respect to this study, you may contact Seonae Seo, the co-investigator, at or her research professor, Pilar Riano at (604) 822-8656

Thank you for your attention and consideration. I sincerely look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Seonae Seo

Date: Jan. 09, 2005

Page: 2 of 2

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2080 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2255 Fax: (604) 822-8656
www.swfs.ubc.ca

Consent Form

Korean Canadian intercultural-intergenerational disagreement /conflict (I IDC) and its implications

Principal Investigator: Pilar Riaño, Ph.D. Assistant Professor
School of Social Work and Family Studies, UBC
Phone: (604) 822-8656

Co-Investigator(s): Seonae Seo, BA, MA, MSW student
School of Social Work and Family Studies, UBC
Phone:

Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to understand Korean family issues in Canada, how these issues affect the adolescents' adjustment to Canadian life, and how parents cope. We would like to hear what you have to say about any parent-adolescent difficulties or conflicts you have experienced. The findings will contribute to a new understanding on immigrants' parenting practices, and provide an information package that family service providers, who are helping Korean families, will refer to. This research will be used for an MSW graduate thesis, as well as for a graduate research course.

Study Procedures:

Participation in this research involves one three-hour focus group session, and, for selected participants, a ninety-minute face-to-face individual interview with the co-investigator. With your agreement, a follow-up interview might be scheduled, to provide further information. The focus groups and individual interviews will take place at the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Tri-City Service Centre, 1163 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam. Alternatively, if you prefer, the individual interview can be conducted at any convenient location, such as your home.

Date: Jan. 9, 2005

Page: 1 of 3

These interviews are scheduled from February to March 2005. In your focus group and your interview, you can do it either in Korean or in English. Several questions will be asked regarding your experience(s) with intercultural disagreement and conflict between parents and adolescent children. The interview will be audiotaped and then transcribed. Your name will be changed to pseudonyms at the time of transcribing, and nothing that identifies you personally will be included. Also, you will have an opportunity to view the transcripts and to provide feedback.

Confidentiality and voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you will be free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw any information you do not wish included in this study. We encourage all participants to refrain from disclosing the contents of the discussion outside of the focus group; however, we cannot control what other participants do with the information discussed. Data obtained from you will be stored in a secure location separate from any personally identifying information, and will be destroyed five years after the work is presented to the department or published, unless you give permission for it to be used in related research.

Remuneration/Compensation:

In order to express appreciation for the commitment of your time and the costs of your transportation, a coffee pack to the value of \$5 will be given to each parent, and a stationary set to the value of \$5 will be given to each adolescent, at the end of the focus group session(s).

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions or want to get further information with respect to this study, you may contact Seonae Seo, the co-investigator, at _____, or her research instructor and the principal investigator Pilar Riano, at (604) 822-8656.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at (604) 822-8598.

Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your access to further services from S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

Subject Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Subject